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**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHAMPTON**

Faculty of Humanities

**The Sound of the English Picturesque in the Late Eighteenth Century:  
Native Vocal Music and Haydn's *The Seasons***

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

December 2011

## ABSTRACT

In eighteenth-century England, the art-forms of painting, poetry and gardening were often collectively labelled, the 'sister arts'. The increasing interest taken in the apprehension and appraisal of scenes of English landscape by artists in these fields, alongside an emerging taste for nature 'tourism', gave rise to the term, the 'picturesque movement'. English music was seldom considered as belonging to this 'sisterhood' or discussed as a medium for conveying artistic expressions of national scenic beauty. When the picturesque was discussed alongside music it was adopted as an analogy to explain the tactics of novelty and surprise deployed by contemporaneous German composers of instrumental music; these 'plays' with regularity and expectation were felt to be similar to the techniques of landscape gardeners who had studied and adopted the elements of surprise and irregularity observed in picturesque 'beauty spots'. Recent musicological references to the picturesque have also preferred to employ it in this way in order to problematize the subversion of formal characteristics in the fantasias and unconventional symphonies by German composers.

This thesis addresses the silent aporia in these discourses – namely the apparent absence of any participation in the picturesque by English composers, natives of the country most associated with the picturesque sensibility. Revealing the connections between the veneration of national landscape and eighteenth-century English vocal music, it is the 'pictorialisms' present in their texts, and their musical treatment, which are the focus of this project. In the process, secular song, the glee and national theatre music are positioned as appropriate sites for expressions of a uniquely English, painterly engagement with national landscapes, making possible reclamation of a neglected repertoire through the lens of the picturesque. And at the end of the project, Haydn's oratorio, *The Seasons*, is shown to be as much a part of the English picturesque expression as a product of the German Enlightenment.

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- where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
- where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
- I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
- where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself.
- Parts of this work have been published as: 'The Sound of the English Picturesque in the Age of the Landscape Garden', *Eighteenth Century Music* 9/2 (2012).

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**Date:** .....

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## Part 1

### 1 Coloured for sight and sound: picturesque landscapes and the muse

Why brand these pleasure with the name,  
Of soft unsocial toils of indolence and shame?  
Search but the garden of the wood,  
Let yon' admir'd carnation own  
Not all was meant for raiment or for food  
Not all for needful use alone;  
There while the seeds of future blossoms dwell  
'Tis colour'd for the sight, perfum'd to please the smell.<sup>1</sup>

Human beings find encounters with certain natural landscapes pleasurable. We seek out scenery to pique our sense of wonder, tranquil spots to slow the heart rate and to promote contemplation, and peaceful retreats to banish everyday drudgery and stress. We seem to realize that, in William Shenstone's words from 1750, 'not all was meant for raiment or for food'. For British aestheticians in the eighteenth century, and poets such as Shenstone, the cause of these pleasures was a new and pressing concern as they sought to establish why particular scenes from nature pleased and how the components of these scenes worked on the human mind. And for artists of the period this delight in nature's beauty came to be expressed in much of their work. In eighteenth-century England this response is associated with the emergence of the landscape garden, a native landscape painting school and nationalistic pastoral poetry. These shared concerns led those art-forms to be collectively termed, the 'sister arts'.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> William Shenstone, *Rural Elegance*, included in *Roach's Beauties of the Poets etc.*, vol. 3 (London: J. Roach, 1794), No. X, 7.

<sup>2</sup> See Ralph Cohen, ed., *Studies in Eighteenth-Century British Art and Aesthetics* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985), 1.

English music, indeed *any* music, was seldom spoken of as belonging to this sisterhood, despite the prevalence of aesthetic commentary on music at the time.<sup>3</sup>

The particular kind of beauty felt to be found in certain natural landscapes, and its effect on the senses, was given a name – the picturesque, a term that was, according to Malcolm Andrews, ‘coming into vogue’ in the early eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> In addition to the notion of ‘picturesque’ beauty, the coinage was extended to embrace poetry, painting and gardening that objectified the beauty of natural landscape – this response was said to *be* picturesque and to be *expressive of* the picturesque. And these art-forms, together with the tourism and tourist literature that emerged in its wake, formed what has since been termed, the ‘picturesque movement’.<sup>5</sup> So if a painting could convey a picturesque landscape, a landscape garden could express the picturesque through its artful arrangement of natural components, and a poem could articulate picturesque sentiments, how could the English composer contribute to this picturesque chorus? Answers to that question are hard to come by in either primary or secondary literature; as we will see in the following chapter, English music, particularly in the late eighteenth century, struggled both for identity and respectability. Notwithstanding a recent musicological turn in its direction, this struggle persists. This study proposes that compelling connections between the picturesque and music from the land of its origins have, in fact, been overlooked. And by positing that English music belonged as much to the picturesque movement as did

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<sup>3</sup> But see John Wheelock, *An Essay on the Beauties and Excellencies of Painting, Music and Poetry, Pronounced at the Anniversary Commencement at Dartmouth College* (Hartford: Eben. Watson, 1774), 5-8. Wheelock is something of a rogue voice in this discourse. His short paper talks of all three forms as ‘sister arts’, although he elevates music to a more ‘noble’ level than painting as it can both ‘enrapture the martial mind with glowing thoughts for victory’ and ‘inflame the friendly mind with sympathy and compassion’.

<sup>4</sup> For an explanation of the etymology of the term ‘picturesque’, probably derived from both the French ‘pittoresque’ and the Italian ‘pittoresco’, see Malcolm Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque: Landscape Aesthetics and Tourism in Britain, 1760-1800* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1989), vii-viii. Nonetheless, it was England where a fully-fledged theory of the picturesque was first essayed. Furthermore, the English landscape garden had no real parallels in Italy or France at the time and neither country had a culture of countryside touring to compare with England. For a discussion of picturesque features in continental gardens and the English influence, see John Dixon Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 2002), 90-193.

<sup>5</sup> See Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, eds., *The Politics of the Picturesque: Landscape, Literature and Aesthetics since 1770* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), introduction.

the sister arts, I demonstrate how native music played a major role in developing picturesque tastes.<sup>6</sup>

Those eighteenth-century theorists who did discuss how music could invoke the picturesque, tended to do so by using music as an *analogy* to explain how principles of design and organization, and a mix of styles and affect, could best be employed in garden design. Similarly, parallels were observed between music that harnessed the effects of humour and surprise, and the irregular lines and eye-catching surprises of landscape gardens. Invariably, it was Italian and German music that were used as models.<sup>7</sup> That a fully-formed discourse of the musical picturesque failed to emerge during the eighteenth century can be attributed to narrow avenues of musical enquiry, prejudice and dogma. Today the situation is little different. Modern-day scholarship has left this stone unturned through a widespread indifference to English music of the Georgian age. Those few musicologists prepared to pursue intersections between the picturesque and music have tended to adopt the picturesque to propose new readings of instrumental works from the Viennese canon. Their conclusions suggest that prevailing aesthetic currents in England found sympathetic and enthusiastic advocates amongst Austro-German musicians, rather than English ones.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> I have deliberately referred to the picturesque movement as an English phenomenon since much of the writing on the subject, and the picturesque arts discussed then and now, originated there. As a consequence, it is music in England, not Britain that is the concern of this project. Where I have referred to Britain, it is either to account for the fact that some of the early thinking on the subject was done by Scots or to allow for the interest in Scottish and Welsh beauty spots at the end of the century. Nonetheless, these locations were invariably sought out, and discussed as picturesque wonders, by the English.

<sup>7</sup> See Annette Richards, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 71-2.

<sup>8</sup> See Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, a key text for a study of this kind, and A. Peter Brown, 'The Sublime, The Beautiful and the Ornamental: English Aesthetic Currents and Haydn's London Symphonies' in *Studies in Music History Presented to H. C. Robbins Landon on his Seventieth Birthday*, eds. Otto Biba and David Wyn Jones (London: Thames and Hudson, 1996), 44-71; Simon McVeigh, *Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 159-60; Thomas Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar: Music, the Visual Arts and the Rise of an Attentive Public in the Age of Haydn* (Aldershot; Brookfield, U.S.A: Ashgate, 2001), especially 222-3 and 295-7. See also M. J. Gelbart, *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music": Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 40-79. Gelbart's references to the picturesque in this chapter are somewhat different to the above examples in tracing the development of nature in art from the pastoral to the picturesque, in the process seeking parallels between the picturesque and the imagery in Scottish folk song texts. He also discusses the 'othering' of Scottish folk song in its reception and sees parallels between the inclusion of beggars and bandits in picturesque paintings and the characterization of folk heroes in folklore.

By pursuing an interdisciplinary approach, and an open-minded attitude to music long since banished into obscurity, I aim to restore some of these connections. The new case I make for the musical picturesque establishes mutual artistic intentions and choices made by artists of different art-forms – demonstrating the sentiment not just that the natural world is a worthy subject for art but that specific, national locations - and their details that particularly delight - provide the inspiration for the English artist's muse. In focusing on the historical, political and social contingencies of these artists and their work, this enquiry leans more to the poetic rather than the esthetic end of Jean-Jacques Nattiez's spectrum.<sup>9</sup> And in favouring analyses (principally of vocal music) that trace imitations and portrayals of nature, programmatic and mimetic aspects of musical practice dominate this discourse at the expense of hermeneutical approaches motivated by a doctrine of absolute music. This is a method that, as Alex Rehding has pointed out, has been perceived as the less glamorous domain of eighteenth-century musicology and has, until very recently, been comparatively neglected.<sup>10</sup>

The work of Annette Richards, despite a purview that admits only Austro-German instrumental music, does, though, go some way to preparing the ground for such a discourse. Richards's book, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque* (2001), reveals an aesthetic sense shared between the subversion of man-made symmetries in English garden design - much admired in Germany at the time - and the spirit of improvisation found in the fantasias of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach and Beethoven, and the 'London' symphonies of Haydn. Richards explains that her work is founded on an 'abstract' application of the picturesque, not its 'colloquial' form or in 'obvious pictorialisms'.<sup>11</sup> By contrast, in this investigation, the consultation of the colloquial and the pictorial is of particular use in conducting a search for the picturesque in English music.

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<sup>9</sup> Jean-Jacques Nattiez, *Music and Discourse: Towards a Semiology of Music*, trans. Carolyn Abbate (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press), 11-12.

<sup>10</sup> Alex Rehding, 'Eco-Musicology', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 127/2 (2002), 315. Rehding's article is a book review of three German language titles on the subject of music and nature in eighteenth-century music.

<sup>11</sup> *The Free Fantasia*, 5, 5n.

It could be argued that 'picturesque music' is just another way of labelling eighteenth-century music that is concerned with the pastoral topic. And since picturesque artists' precursors, such as the poet Alexander Pope, wrote about the appreciation of the natural world through referral to a classical intellectual catalogue, their responses could be said to belong in the pastoral domain.<sup>12</sup> Further, the fact that picturesque theory and practice invoked the topic of the natural environment and set up the countryside as a desired binary opposite to the city, suggests the musical engagements with the picturesque would be likely to draw on the time-honoured currency of pastoral musical signifiers.<sup>13</sup> But the picturesque movement engendered emphatic differences from traditional pastoral tropes such as idealistic arcadia, mythical character archetypes and the artist in retreat from the city. The pastoral represents (even more than a sense of place) a state of mind, an artistic rejection of the iniquities of the city. Pope, the arch neo-classicist was forever stressing his splendid isolation in Twickenham (today, of course, as much a part of the metropolis as Trafalgar Square, despite the riverside setting and the tranquility of Horace Walpole's Strawberry Hill). Some scholars see the pastoral as imaginary and idealistic (Terry Eagleton) or as a metaphor (Michael Spitzer), useful formulations when considering the picturesque as an aesthetic with a more practical and realistic application.<sup>14</sup> For John Barrell, the picturesque is best considered as a kind of *anti-pastoral* in that it resists notions of the countryside as a resource to be happily worked and lived off found in pastoral poetry, and instead, concentrates on visual images that charm and improve morale.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> For definitions of the pastoral see Paul Alpers, *What is Pastoral?* (Chicago; London: Chicago University Press, 1996), 44 and Harold Toliver, *Pastoral Forms and Attitudes* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1971), 1-19.

<sup>13</sup> See, for instance, Raymond Monelle, *The Musical Topic: Hunt, Military and Pastoral* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006), especially 35-94 and 186-204, for a discussion of the semiotics of the pastoral in eighteenth-century music.

<sup>14</sup> See Terry Eagleton, 'England's Dreaming', *The Guardian*, 2 July 2011 (a review of Roy Strong's *Visions of England*) and Michael Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought* (Chicago; London: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 208.

<sup>15</sup> John Barrell and John Bull, eds., *The Penguin Book of Pastoral Verse* (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 297. Several literary scholars have addressed the delineations between pastoral and picturesque: see, for instance, J. R. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Poetry* (London: Hutchinson Educational, 1970), 11; Robert Aubin, *Topographical Poetry in XVIII-Century England* (New York: Modern Language Association of America, 1936), 16; Sandro Jung, *Poetic Meaning in the Eighteenth-Century Poems of Mark Akenside and William Shenstone* (Lewiston, New York; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2002), 181. Ann Bermingham's categories of 'rustic' and 'topographical' are also helpful, see *Landscape and Ideology: The*

Paul Alpers's contention that the pastoral is as much a *mode* (a set of devices and a language) as a *genre*, challenges the common tendency to gloss any art with a rural setting as pastoral as well as helping to define the boundaries of the pastoral tradition. In seeking to separate the picturesque from the pastoral, it is helpful to turn to Alpers's observation that the classical pastoral tradition developed a particular diction of narration and lyricism spoken by certain stock characters. These characters spoke of the pastoral state of mind, an elusive yet attainable bliss. The locale for these narratives and lyrics was the countryside, the idyllic situation both where this bliss was to be found and from where these characters spoke. In this poetry, its characters and its language are its primary markers, the countryside its backdrop.<sup>16</sup> For eighteenth-century thinkers in England, this backdrop moved centre stage in the picturesque, its art predisposed to articulate a scene's beauty, to contemplate its details and to consider its overall design. Similarly, in discussing picturesque music, I will demonstrate and justify how the picturesque deserves to be treated a separate musicological classification, obviating the need to adopt the term, 'pastoral' in the rather too broad and indiscriminate manner that is has often been applied by musicologists in considering music in any way connected to the natural landscape. To avoid confusion, 'pastoral' is a term I will adopt only when discussing the pastoral tradition to which I have just referred, preferring instead the terms 'rural', 'landscape' and – when written texts describe a variety of scenery or take in more than one contemplated view – 'topographical'.

As well as establishing the ontological singularity of the musical picturesque in the light of the pastoral, I also interrogate the status of picturesque music as it stands in current musicological discourse. In so doing, I propose that there are in fact more interfaces with the picturesque than have been suggested in the existing literature, and that English music's appeal to the visual sense operates most effectively through the

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*English Rustic Tradition, 1740-1850* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), 10. Horace Walpole made a contribution to this debate when he pointed out that there was no evidence of different kinds of taste for classical gardens, suggesting that setting mattered more than considerations of style or design. See *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening; Introduction* by John Dixon Hunt (New York: Ursus Press, 1995), 20-4.

<sup>16</sup> *What is Pastoral?*, 22-4. Alpers also makes here a neat comparison between Theocritus's and Virgil's approaches to the pastoral, Theocritus creating a pastoral world through the medium of shepherd poets, Virgil conjuring an idyllic situation that can serve as a commentary and as contrast to challenging political realities.

setting of appropriate *written texts*. A sense of national pride in the English landscape, celebrated elsewhere in the purple prose of the tourist guide and captured within the frames of landscape pictures and borders of landscaped gardens, will then be shown to be have been an instinctive reflex of English vocal music.

English music's troubled historiography has prevented a debate about post-Handelian music in the round that might begin to identify potential engagements with the picturesque.<sup>17</sup> But can English composers of the period really be accused of being oblivious to these artistic currents? Are they blind to the picturesque and cloth-eared to the possibilities of musical expressions of it? Since the picturesque was so ubiquitous an expression of national identity (to the point that it became 'played out' in the new century – a subject of ridicule) it is these notions that I believe to be worth challenging.<sup>18</sup>

### **The picturesque in theory**

The term 'picturesque' has long held a widespread colloquial usage. It has passed into our everyday lexicon, frequently summoned up adjectively when we encounter or survey a scene that might suitably be framed as a certain kind of painting. Its reach goes further than the mere 'pretty' which often tends to apply to singular objects or a scene viewed as one ('a pretty dress', 'a pretty village'). Pretty is applied more commonly and casually. The picturesque is a more complex reaction, one that implies greater reflection on the part of the subject and can cause the observer to be moved towards mental reflection. As Anthony Ashley Cooper, The Third Earl of Shaftesbury

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<sup>17</sup> Histories of English music, such as those by John Caldwell and Roger Fiske, have attempted to address the poor coverage of the period between 1700 and 1900. Even here the tone can be apologetic or, at times, despairing. John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, vol. 2 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999); Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973).

<sup>18</sup> Since the picture is complicated by the widespread influx of 'émigrés' and 'settlers' after the example set by Handel, I should make clear where I draw the line on the definition 'English'. Many composers of Italian, French, German, and Czech descent resided in England for up to forty years, some dying there, but often they were employed for reasons of their 'foreignness' and were perceived as imports long after they had settled in England. If born in England, or to English parents, even if extensive musical education was gained abroad, I classify them as English. For the sake of argument, Stephen Storace was English, Muzio Clementi wasn't. I discuss the issues of citizenship and nationality more fully in the following chapter.

put it in his *Miscellaneous Reflections*, 'who can admire the outwards beauties and not recur instantly to the inward'.<sup>19</sup> It describes a mix of mostly natural components, although the appearance of man-made objects, or a human presence, can enhance the effect. These painterly compositions have a satisfying and balanced blend of effects and contrasts. In *The Picturesque; Studies in a Point of View*, the pioneering twentieth-century theorist of the picturesque, Christopher Hussey, described his first recognition of a picturesque composition thus:

I remember clearly the shock with which I suddenly became conscious that [the picturesque] was only one of many aspects of reality. It happened in the library of a country house built, in 1837, by my grandfather. Through the windows of that room you see, in a valley below, a castle, partly ruined, on an island in a lake. A balustrade cresting a cliff forms the foreground, a group of Scots firs and limes the side-screens. Beyond, a meadow melts in the woods, rising to a skyline...I had often agreed that it formed a perfect picture, which has time and again been copied by my family, myself included, in water-colours, some of which are hung, with other examples of the family talent, on the staircase.<sup>20</sup>

The picturesque, then, demands an *interplay* between those objects, a reflexive dialogue that sees those objects reflected in different lights as they are surveyed in context and 'in the light' of their neighbouring objects. Something picturesque is necessarily more dynamic than that which is pretty.

So describing a scene as picturesque invests a slice of nature with the kind of value that we place on works of art. The art-nature relationship is a nexus of particular complexity in the realm of aesthetics: is nature beautiful to us because it resembles art or is it the reverse? And does our appreciation of one improve with greater

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<sup>19</sup> Quoted in John Dixon Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape: Poetry, Painting and Gardening During the Eighteenth Century* (Baltimore; London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 142.

<sup>20</sup> See Christopher Hussey, *The Picturesque: Studies in a Point of View* (London: Cass, 1967), 2. Hussey, the first twentieth-century writer to conduct research on the picturesque (in the 1920s), held that the picturesque response is an *experiential* tendency, a visual habit that is acquired and begins with the imagination first – the desire to experience nature rather than reason with it, in other words a 'lower cognitive' pleasure for Platonist thinkers. Hussey had excellent picturesque credentials. He was the grandson of Edward Hussey, who designed Scotney Castle in Kent on picturesque principles in the early nineteenth-century. Hussey grew up there and inherited the property.

understanding and knowledge of the other? These were key questions for eighteenth-century thinkers engaging in the new discipline of aesthetic thought, for whom the word, 'nature' had a broader, Aristotelian, sense of meaning life as humans experience it.<sup>21</sup> But at the beginning of the eighteenth century, writers such as Alexander Pope and Joseph Addison frequently did intend to refer to nature as 'the countryside'. Pope and Addison were exhibiting a new tendency towards the contemplation and relish of the natural landscape. There were two important prompts to this reflex. The first was the lavish, Edenic descriptions of Milton in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* of 1631.<sup>22</sup> The second was the Grand Tours undertaken in the first half of the century by men such as Addison and Shaftesbury; the dramatic Alpine scenery they experienced and the lessons learned about the classical gardens described by Pliny and Horace caused them to reflect on, and discuss in print, matters of natural beauty and pastoral tranquility on their return home. Pope, a scholar absolutely steeped in the classics, cultivated a garden paradise on Augustan lines at his home in Twickenham and discussed the composition of his local scenery in the poem, *Windsor Forest*.<sup>23</sup> Shaftesbury, in *The Moralists*, and Addison, in his essays for *The Spectator*, both attempted to gauge the relative beauty and ideal arrangement of natural landscapes. Addison, writing in 1712, had this to say on the subject:

...we find the works of nature still more pleasant, the more they resemble those of art: for in this case our pleasure rises from a double principle, from the agreeableness of the objects to the eye, and from their similitude to other objects.<sup>24</sup>

In England in the mid-to late eighteenth century, nature, in the form of native landscape, was found to be 'still more pleasant' as painters, gardeners and writers expressed appreciation of their natural surrounds through their work; in other words,

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<sup>21</sup> See Aristotle's *Poetics*, translated with an introduction and notes by James Hutton (New York; London: Norton, 1982), 45-7.

<sup>22</sup> Introduction to *Poetry of the Landscape and the Night: Two Eighteenth-Century Traditions*, ed. Charles Peake (London: Edward Arnold, 1967), 11.

<sup>23</sup> See Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 5. See also John Sweetman, 'Nature and Art in Enlightenment Culture' in *The Enlightenment World*, ed. Martin Fitzpatrick et al. (London: Routledge, 2004), 289. Sweetman mentions the important religious dimension of nature worship for Pope who spoke of natural landscapes as God's design.

<sup>24</sup> Joseph Addison, 'Essay V', *Essays on Taste and the Pleasures of the Imagination from 'The Spectator'* (London: John Taylor, 1834), 26. Addison explains in this essay how this 'agreeableness of the objects to the eye' is a primary pleasure, the 'similitude' to other objects being a secondary pleasure, hence a 'double principle'.

they created **art about nature** (see figures 1.1 and 1.2). Because these figures felt moved to articulate their feelings about natural beauty in the landscape, we can by extension say that their art *about* nature stated that they recognized **art in nature**, properties and objects arranged in such a way that appealed to their visual sense, and, in turn, produced reflective, appreciative sentiments in the mind.<sup>25</sup> Art *in* nature was also what the picturesque theorists strove to classify and the travelling tourist and garden perambulator sought to recognize and contemplate.<sup>26</sup>

The theories of Britons such as Addison, Pope and Shaftesbury, then, had represented an awakening to the glories of the rural outdoors and emphasized the enjoyment to be had in engaging with it. The development of the English landscape garden that followed is perhaps the purest expression of this awakening. It was possible to claim that the garden, with even more force than with landscape painting, possessed the dual benefits of both resembling nature and being 'about' nature.

In picturesque theory, the experience of the strolling visitor to the landscaped garden is one that excites and challenges the senses. Unlike the contemplation of a landscape painting, the viewer places themselves in the landscape, a landscape that is living and breathing rather than arrested in a given time.<sup>27</sup> The viewer also has a choice of vistas from which to gaze. The visitor encounters a natural landscape allowed into the arena of boundaried grounds by man, a slice of nature *landscaped* by man rather an artifice *cultivated* by man. This takes the form of encounters and events such as the viewing of grottoes, follies, concealed views, serpentine lakes, doglegged paths, unpredictable undulations and sudden surprise outlooks.

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<sup>25</sup> See Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 2. See also Roy Porter, 'Enlightenment and Pleasure' in *Pleasure in the Eighteenth Century* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1996), eds. Roy Porter and Marie Mulvey Roberts (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 2.

<sup>26</sup> For a discussion about the various interpretations of the term, 'nature', and its implication for music in the age of the Enlightenment, see Rehding, 'Eco-Musicology', 305-320.

<sup>27</sup> For some scholars, such as Simon Schama (see *A History of Britain*, vol. 3: 'The Fate of Empire', 1776-2000 (London: Bodley Head, 2009), 13-33) there is something about the picturesque that is underpowered and unconvincing because of the artificiality engendered in its most well-known genre, the landscape garden, a mere theme park compared to the country later intrepidly explored by the romantic poets. Schama overlooks not only the associated participation of landscape poetry, painting and tourist literature of the period - representations of real landscape - but also that, even though the landscape garden represented man's efforts to imitate nature, its existence owed as much to a contemplation of the real thing, much as was the case with a written tour guide.



Figure 1.1 Paul Sandby, *A View of Vinters, Boxley, Kent, with Mr. Whatman's Turkey Paper Mills* (1794)



Figure 1.2 Holkham Park, Norfolk

Garden artists sought to compose the most appealing assemblies of these natural and man-made components, compositions that increasingly through the period were seen to require as natural an appearance as possible – as man’s hand became less apparent so the garden acquired value and authenticity. This preference for the more realistic, less manicured approach would perhaps have pleased Addison who, writing at the beginning of the century about the resemblance of art to nature, felt that ‘there is something more bold and masterly in the rough, careless strokes of nature, than in the nice touches and embellishments of art’.<sup>28</sup>

Gardens at Stowe and Stourhead, heavy with classical allusion and allegory (see figure 1.3), were followed by the landscaped parklands of Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown and the richer, less tidied designs of Humphry Repton. England could justifiably claim that these ‘natural’ gardens were innovations not encountered elsewhere in Europe. Indeed, tourists from Germany, Italy and France, making pilgrimages to England to see the innovations for themselves, were struck by the ‘naturalness’ of the English designs compared to their manicured and geometric gardens.<sup>29</sup>

Although picturesque writers invested much of their thought on defining and evaluating the beauty of natural landscapes, man-made structures were seldom considered inimical to the picturesque either. Both Repton and Gilpin wrote at length about the picturesque effect of certain materials, proportions and placements. For Repton, it was ‘impossible to fix or describe the situation applicable to a house, without

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<sup>28</sup> Addison, ‘Essay V’, *Essays on Taste and the Pleasures of the Imagination*, 26. See also Jung, *Poetic Meaning*, 84. Any *fabriques* within the late eighteenth-century garden would reference the Gothic style, a deliberate attempt to stress Anglo-Saxon roots rather than classical learning. See Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 41.

<sup>29</sup> William Gilpin, despite not travelling abroad, claimed that England was superior in landscape to other countries because of its unique mixture of hedgerows, oaks, parks and ruins (a legacy of the Reformation and Civil War). This helped to give the English landscape garden its distinctiveness, its raw materials. See Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 89. Shaftesbury, Pope and the poet, James Thomson all made unfavourable comparisons with French gardens and polemicized that the French style stood for tyranny, whereas the English garden stood for freedom. See Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape*, 63 and David Watkin, *The English Vision: The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design* (London: Murray, 1982), 5.



Figure 1.3 Stowe Gardens, Buckinghamshire

at the same time describing the sort of house applicable to the situation'.<sup>30</sup> And in a number of case studies in his *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* he repeatedly affirmed the importance of house designers considering the buildings' proportions not only in themselves but in relation to their surroundings.<sup>31</sup> William Gilpin's character in the *Dialogue upon the Garden at Stowe*, Callophilus, says of the Temple of Bacchus, 'Don't you think this Building too is a very genteel one and is extremely well situated? These Trees, give it an agreeable, cool Air, and make it, I think, as elegant a Retreat for the Enjoyment of a Summer's Evening, as can well be imagined'.<sup>32</sup> Joseph Heely, in his *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil, and the Leasowes*, argued that architecture should be considered one of the sister arts:

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<sup>30</sup> Humphry Repton, *Observations on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1980), 170.

<sup>31</sup> For instance, *ibid.*, 149.

<sup>32</sup> See *Dialogue*, 14. Also see Humphry Repton, 'Sketches and Hints on Landscape Gardening and Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening' in *The Art of Landscape Gardening* (London: Archibald Constable & Co., 1907), 186-204.

Architecture and gardening may be called sister arts, tho' diametrically opposite in their principles; the excellencies of the first are founded in a mathematical exactness, and regularity; in the latter, on an assemblage of scenery without either: yet when both unite, each graces the other so powerfully, and affords so striking a contrast, that, it is much to be lamented, they are ever seen but in inseparable connection.<sup>33</sup>

But it was the architect, Robert Adam, who perhaps most eloquently explained how much ground was shared between landscape art and architecture:

Movement is meant to express the rise and fall, the advance and recess with other diversity of form, in the different parts of a building, so as to add greatly to the picturesque of the composition. For the rising and falling, advancing and receding, with the convexity and other forms of the greater parts, have the same effects in architecture that hill and dale, foreground and distance, swelling and sinking have in landscape. That is, they serve to produce an agreeable and diversified contour, that groups and contrasts like a picture, and creates a variety of light and shade, which gives great spirit, beauty and effect to the composition.<sup>34</sup>

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Christopher Hussey pitched in to the debate in discussing matters such as skylines and harmonization, stating that visual unity of a building in its setting was paramount. Hussey asserted that the picturesque principles of light and shade, variety of form and richness of texture applied as much to architecture as to landscapes.<sup>35</sup>

But the English picturesque was about more than a bordered space benefiting a patron and a few fortunate acquaintances. The inspiration for the gardens - the land beyond - was the object of aesthetic contemplation too, observed in the rural guides and the landscape tourism that they necessitated and prompted in turn, as well as the native landscape now increasingly represented by national painters and in the poetry of a new breed of landscape poets.

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<sup>33</sup> Joseph Heely, *Letters on the Beauties of Hagley, Envil and the Leasowes; With Critical Remarks, and Observations on the Modern Taste in Gardening* (London: 1777), vol. 1, 21.

<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity*, 22.

<sup>35</sup> Christopher Hussey, *English Country Houses: Mid-Georgian, 1760-1800* (London: Country Life, 1956), 23.

This notion of a national pride in native countryside brings to the forefront the issue of aesthetic versus style in art. The term 'style' implies a set of shared principles and characteristics and is often useful in disseminating norms and shifts of artistic practice across time. The implication of the term, 'aesthetic' is one of universality and timelessness; it is pre-formed, and for the artist always available – it has merely to be accessed appropriately. The picturesque was a *style* (art about nature) identified in English art and commentary of the mid-to late eighteenth century. But this movement was not just an artistic school. It was a philosophical arena. And English aestheticians of the time posited that the picturesque was more than a particular brand of art. It was an ever-present aesthetic category, either pitched midway between the beautiful and the sublime (the two causes of pleasure identified in 1757 by Edmund Burke in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*), or as an amalgam of, and interplay between, the two.<sup>36</sup>

In the second half of the century, two English aestheticians that wrote about the picturesque in these terms were Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight, both of them owners of properties with landscape parks in Herefordshire (see figure 1.4, Gainsborough's painting of a view at Price's property, Foxley).<sup>37</sup> Price's analytical approach to the picturesque was initiated by his dealing with each sense in turn. His contention that the picturesque must be conceived physically, rather than mentally, was shared by Knight who spoke of the arts as being classified by their sensory appeal; improved perception heightened pleasure. Knight, however disliked Price's rigid

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<sup>36</sup> For a discussion of the interplay between sublime and picturesque, see David Punter, 'The Picturesque and the Sublime: Two Worldscapes' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 220-39.

<sup>37</sup> Sir Uvedale Price, *Essays on the Picturesque, As Compared with the Sublime and the Beautiful; And, On the Use of Studying Pictures, for the Purpose [sic] of Improving Real Landscape*, vol. 1 (London: Robson, 1796); Richard Payne Knight, *An Analytical Enquiry into Principles of Taste* (London: 1805). Perhaps the most influential German thesis on picturesque ideas was by Christian Cayus Lorenz Hirschfeld. His four volumes of *Theorie der Gartekunst* (Leipzig: 1775-1785) discussed the man-made entity of landscape gardens - as opposed to natural landscapes - and compares the experience of strolling through landscaped gardens with the act of reading a novel. Hirschfeld demonstrated a thorough knowledge of English garden art and as such his work constituted a considerably rich addition to the already substantial body of German writing on the English landscape garden.



Figure 1.4 Thomas Gainsborough, *Study of Beech Trees at Foxley* (c. 1760)

imposition of standards for picturesque beauty and claimed instead that evaluations of natural scenery were subjective judgments sourced from the eye of the beholder.<sup>38</sup>

Price attempted to codify this kind of pleasure as a separate cause from those of the beautiful and the sublime, and in doing so extended Burke's two categories to three. In response to Burke's thesis, he maintained that picturesque pleasure was initiated by qualities such as surprise, irregularity, crookedness of line and occasional roughness, qualities found in natural landscapes formed ecologically over thousands of years.<sup>39</sup> Price saw no difficulty in proposing that an aesthetic category could also be conceived as the child of two others: natural landscapes that attracted the eye and

<sup>38</sup> Richard Payne Knight, *The Landscape, a Didactic Poem in Three Books Addressed to Uvedale Price, Esq.*, 2nd edn. (London, 1795), 19n. See also Sir Uvedale Price, *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful. In Answer to the Objections of Mr. Knight in the Second Edition of 'The Landscape'* (London: D. Walter, 1801), 79.

<sup>39</sup> Pope talked of this necessary variety as 'concordia discors'. See Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 17. At the end of the century, Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's garden designs came under attack from Price and Knight for their manicured neatness and lack of variety. See, for instance, Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 62-80.

moved the soul such as babbling streams, peaceful, shady woods and smooth, grassy slopes (Burke's 'beautiful') were contrasted with those that invoked awe, even terror, such as precipitous mountains, raging torrents and stormy skies (the Burkean 'sublime').<sup>40</sup>

Price and Knight's theories were certainly influential but it was the late eighteenth-century writings and paintings of cleric and painter William Gilpin, that reached a wider audience.<sup>41</sup> Gilpin employed a more empirical approach than the Herefordshire squires and his essays and guides (which contained paintings of real and imagined landscapes), detailed first-hand descriptions as well as rather prescriptive theories of the picturesque (see figure 1.5 for a scene in the Wye Valley painted by Gilpin). These were of more practical use for tourists rather than the guidance for gardeners that Price and Knight provided. Gilpin's writings gained a following, evidenced by the number of eager travellers who sought out his recommendations with guidebook in hand.<sup>42</sup> Gilpin also spoke of the picturesque as a separate aesthetic category but, as with Price, his thinking suggested that the picturesque's essential requirement of *mixture* could contain elements of both the beautiful and sublime.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Price, *Essays on the Picturesque*, vol. 3, 153-5.

<sup>41</sup> See, for instance, William Gilpin, *Three Essays: On Picturesque Beauty; On Picturesque Travel; and On Sketching Landscape: To Which is Added a Poem, On Landscape Painting* (London: R. Blamire, 1792).

<sup>42</sup> Donna Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside: Hunting, Walking, and Ecology in English Literature, 1671-1831* (Basingstoke; New York: Palgrave, 2001), 19. John Brewer tells how visitors were increasingly allowed to view grounds of private estates but were expected to tip gate-keepers and guides and to behave with gentility. See John Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination: English Culture in the Eighteenth Century* (London: HarperCollins, 1997), 639. See also Tom Williamson, *The Transformation of Rural England: Farming and the Landscape, 1700-1870* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), 11, for a discussion of the three broad types of landscape found in the eighteenth century after enclosure, as defined by Oliver Rackham: ancient countryside (hamlets, irregular shaped groves, intricate footpaths), planned countryside (open fields, linear boundaries, heavily farmed) and the Highland zone (upland areas, moors and dales). It is likely that the first type was roamed quite freely, the second was mostly out of bounds, and the third was felt 'off limits', although visitors became increasingly adventurous in exploring these areas in the last two decades of the century. Ann Birmingham muses on the irony of the English countryside being discovered by travellers, *after* much of enclosure's effects had taken place. See *Landscape and Ideology*, 9.

<sup>43</sup> Peter Bicknell, *Beauty, Horror and Immensity: Picturesque Landscapes in Britain, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), xiii-iv. See also Watkin, *The English Vision*, ix, on John Ruskin's idea that the picturesque could occasionally be viewed as 'parasitical sublimity'. In his 1996 essay, 'The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental: English Aesthetic Currents and Haydn's London Symphonies', Peter Brown's reading of Haydn's 'Drum Roll' symphony sees him claiming that the juxtaposition of the 'sublime' slow introduction with the otherwise 'ornamental' (picturesque) fast music is a fine example of the picturesque acting as a



Figure 1.5. William Gilpin, *Goodrich Castle* (c. 1770)

Moreover, Gilpin sometimes spoke of the picturesque as a *species* of beauty, revealing that the picturesque was, in Ann Bermingham's words, often 'coded as feminine'.<sup>44</sup>

### **Picturesque art and how music belonged in the eighteenth century: the musically capricious, the ornamental and the pictorial**

Uvedale Price and the composer, painter and musical pedagogue, William Crotch, are two examples of contemporaneous English commentators who sought connections between the picturesque aesthetic and music. Crotch sought to illuminate analogies between the visual picturesque and a picturesque of sound but, for him, the picturesque was used to polemicize against what he saw as the lowest type of music,

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foil to the sublime, thereby rendering sublime gestures as enhanced climaxes. He cites the contrapuntal development in the second movement of Symphony No. 99 as an example of this mixing of styles, in his words, 'sublime in treatment, ornamental in content.' See Brown, 63.

<sup>44</sup> Ann Bermingham, 'The Picturesque and Ready-to-Wear Femininity' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 81. Bermingham makes the point that, whilst the implication of this gendering of the picturesque was that femininity was to be associated with surface appeal and a visual rather than intellectual attitude, the picturesque was 'remarkable...[in] its demand that surfaces be taken seriously, that they be treated, not in depth, but *as depth*'. She goes on to argue that the emergence of picturesque ideas in women's fashion magazines at the end of the century was a kind of feminine reclamation of the picturesque terrain. See 89-90.

below those of the beautiful and sublime. Price, however, saw the requirements of irregularity, variety and surprise of picturesque scenes as narrative and formal elements found in the best music, invoking music primarily to advise as to the most artful composition in a scene of nature. In *Essays on the Picturesque* (1790) he stated that

the qualities which make objects picturesque...are equally extended to all our sensations, by whatever organs they are received; and that music (though it appears like a solecism) may be as truly picturesque according to those of beauty or sublimity...But should any person [...] call a capricious movement of Dominico Scarlatti, or Haydn, picturesque, he would, with great reason, be laughed at; for it is not a term applied to sounds; yet such a movement, from its sudden, unexpected, and abrupt transitions, from a certain playful wildness of character, and an *appearance* of irregularity, is no less *analogous* to [...] what is grand or beautiful to the eye.<sup>45</sup>

In other words, shared techniques for stimulating the ear and the eye can have similar effect on the mind. When he found similarities of emotional effect between music and scenery, Price appeared on the brink of admitting for music a share of the third aesthetic's scope but his wariness of such a daring leap of faith is betrayed by his, in Annette Richards's words, 'notion that the conjunction of the decidedly visual "picturesque" with music might be thought untenable'.<sup>46</sup>

Price made many references to music in his work and one of the most persuasive of his analogies between the virtues of picturesque music and picturesque gardening was his contention that in both art forms the picturesque corrects the boredom occasionally visited by unstinting beauty. The picturesque is the 'coquetry of nature; it makes beauty more amusing, more varied, more playful'.<sup>47</sup> So, for Price, the picturesque could just as well be *heard* and *felt* as seen. Other English garden

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<sup>45</sup> Price, *Essays on the Picturesque*, vol. 1, 53-6. Emphasis mine.

<sup>46</sup> Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 110.

<sup>47</sup> Price, *Essays on the Picturesque*, 86. For Price's advice to landowners to be, in fashioning their gardens, inspired by female (natural) beauty, see Tim Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority: Poetry, Criticism and Politics from Thomson to Wordsworth* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 124. Also see Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 649, for Burke's ideas about the beauty gendered as female. This was advice that Sir Francis Dashwood took literally; his grounds at West Wycombe Park in Buckinghamshire were arranged to depict the naked female form.

theorists, such as William Gilpin and Humphry Repton, though unwilling to cast music into their theoretical ambit, nonetheless used language that can easily be mapped onto music aesthetics. Repton, an active landscape gardener, and more idealist than aesthetician, tabulated a series of technical requirements that combined in several possible permutations to provide pleasure through imagination and artfulness (see table 1):<sup>48</sup>

Table 1

|                     |
|---------------------|
| Congruity           |
| Utility             |
| Order               |
| Symmetry            |
| Picturesque effect  |
| Intricacy           |
| Simplicity          |
| Variety             |
| Novelty             |
| Contrast            |
| Continuity          |
| Association         |
| Grandeur            |
| Appropriation       |
| Animation           |
| Seasons/time of day |

It is possible to appropriate all of these terms, and claim them as common and familiar metaphors for the process of musical composition. Order, for instance, can stand for musical structure; symmetry and periodic phrasing for symmetry; passagework and virtuosity for intricacy; loudness, broad melody and ceremonial music for grandeur; and fast tempo (and passagework again) for animation. Utility can pertain to music's *function* and its usefulness.<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> *The Art of Landscape Gardening*, 58-61.

<sup>49</sup> In German aesthetics, the idea of the moral goodness that music could instill was first discussed at length by Alexander Baumgarten, taken up later by figures such as the theoretician,

It may seem surprising for Repton to have insisted on order, congruity and symmetry given Price's and Knight's preference for investing the picturesque with irregularity and freedom, and Gilpin's insistence on a roughness and untamedness to separate it from the beautiful. But Repton's juxtaposition of order and symmetry with novelty and variety *in itself* is irregular. The novelty and variety is thrown into sharp relief by the presence of order and symmetry. So this kind of picturesque theory concerns itself with the analogy of design and the holding of attention (the gaze), as germane to music as to the landscape garden.

Adopting Sir Joshua Reynolds' tripartite model of artistic styles (the grand, the splendid, and the composite) and aligning them with Price's three aesthetic categories, William Crotch arrived at more negative conclusions about picturesque music than Price.<sup>50</sup> Crotch, associated with contemporaneous thought on music aesthetics principally for his lectures given at Oxford and London from 1798 to 1832, assessed a wide range of music past and present and found picturesque (or 'ornamental' as he preferred to call it) music to be that which is skittish, humorous and novel; for him the lowest of the three types. Crotch may have built his theories on the small but significant mention of music in Burke's *Enquiry* where he states that 'great variety, and quick transitions from one measure or tone to another, are contrary to the genius of the beautiful in music'.<sup>51</sup> For Crotch,

To be amused and delighted is a meaner enjoyment than that of being soothed and charmed; while both are less noble to the mind than feeling itself elevated and expanded. The humorous incidents of a drama make men laugh; the tender and happy parts excite the smile of approbation; but the tragic scenes petrify them into silent,

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Johann Georg Sulzer. See Carl Dahlhaus and Ruth Katz, eds., *Contemplating Music: Source Readings in the Aesthetics of Music*, vol. II (New York: Pendragon Press, 1989), 578-9.

<sup>50</sup> John Sime, *Sir Joshua Reynolds* (London: Methuen and Co., 1904), 36. Reynolds had in turn borrowed them from Cicero's idea of great, middle and plain styles, as had Addison in *An Essay on Taste*. See also Roger Barnett Larsson, 'The Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century Musical Thought in Britain' (Ph.D. diss., SUNY Buffalo, 1980) 9, 27 and Stephanie Ross, *What Gardens Mean* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), 174.

<sup>51</sup> Edmund Burke, *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, edited with an introduction and notes by James T. Boulton (London: Routledge Classics, 2008), 122.

serious, breathless attention. The superiority of the tragedy over the comedy, and of both over the farce, is therefore obvious...<sup>52</sup>

Crotch went on to associate the ornamental with a modernity that lacked the (sublime) gravitas of earlier, nobler models:

In all cases where the order of the invention or adoption of the sublime, beautiful, and ornamental styles can be ascertained, we find the sublime is the earliest, and the ornamental the latest; and it is acknowledged that the undue prevalence of the ornamental style is a sure indication of the decline and decay of any art. It was thus in painting, in architecture (both Roman and Gothic), and in sculpture...<sup>53</sup>

When Crotch made mention in his treatise of the capability or otherwise of instrumental music to represent visions, events or concepts, it was in dismissive terms, assuring his readers that when 'composers (however eminent) endeavour to represent by musical notes actions of animate beings or forces of nature such as rainbows and sunrises they have exceeded the true limits of musical expression'.<sup>54</sup> And his writing, through its regular references to the effect of the various styles on the emotions of the listener, makes clear that he believes only in its indexing of the Stoic passions of pleasure, pain, desire and fear.

So the picturesque in music was invariably spoken of in abstract terms or in the language of the codified passions. But although many English writers queued up to dismiss the possibility that musical sound could convey happenings or prescribed scenes, it was, nonetheless, increasingly likely towards the century's end that writers

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<sup>52</sup> William Crotch, *Substance of Several Courses of Lectures on Music: Read in the University of Oxford and in the Metropolis*, by William Crotch, ed. Bernarr Rainbow (Clarabricken: Boethius Press, 1986), 41. Rainbow has pointed out Crotch's frequent analogies between painting and music and his many references to Sir Joshua Reynolds. See introduction to *Substance of Several Courses of Lectures*, viii. Crotch, a keen painter, appears to have been influenced by Reynolds's opinion that landscapes were the lowest form of painting. See Stephen Copley, 'William Gilpin and the Black-Lead Mine' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 51. For musicological discussions of Crotch's lectures, see Brown, 'The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental'; McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 160; Richards, *The Free Fantasia* 109-13.

<sup>53</sup> Crotch, *Substance*, 66-7.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., 58. Included in Crotch's list of representations are 'the flight of an eagle', 'great whales', 'a dog running over the fields' – all clear references to images portrayed in Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. This is a subject that I cover in greater detail in chapter 6.

in the press would report on how symphonies, overtures or concertos had conjured visions in their mind's eye. The term to describe music that invited these readings was invariably 'picturesque', the implication being that, either the orchestration or material had produced *pictures* in the listener's imagination, or the combinations and alternations of different affect had suggested some kind of narrative structure that could be 'seen'.

These responses to instrumental music, though, *diverged*, a sure symptom of this wordless music's abstraction as well as its essential 'picturesque' invitation to unfold one's imagination, just as German commentators had seen Emanuel Bach's fantasias promoting a kind of transportation into the realms of a personalized dreamworld. The poet, Anna Seward, when recording her reactions to music by Handel heard during the 1786 Handel commemoration, expressed surprise at the 'picturesque effect of the choruses, which caused the ear to *perform the office of all the other senses*'.<sup>55</sup> As Roger Barnett Larsson points out, when Sir Charles Burney employed the term 'picturesque' to discuss music, often instrumental music, he meant it in this very sense.<sup>56</sup> There was often agreement as to what the different types of sounds represented but they were just as likely to index human action as landscapes empty of people. Here is a review of a performance of Haydn's 'Military' symphony from 1794:

They [the cymbals and drums] mark and tell the story: they inform us that the army is marching to battle, and, calling up the ideas of the terror of such a scene, give it reality. Discordant sounds are then sublime; for what can be more horribly discordant to the heart than thousands of men meeting to murder each other.<sup>57</sup>

Presented by Haydn with music that gripped their attention, and appeared to speak to them (albeit in sonic code), English audiences discovered meaning in the sounds by translating them into visions and scenes. This example demonstrates the broader possibilities of applying the term 'picturesque,' to admit a listener response that

<sup>55</sup> Italics mine. Quoted in McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 24-5. This was the third of the Handel commemorations, the first being in 1784.

<sup>56</sup> Larsson, 'The Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque', 154-5.

<sup>57</sup> *Morning Chronicle*, 5 May 1794, quoted in H. C. Robbins Landon, *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn* (London: Universal Edition, 1955), 522.

visualizes the sublime of terror, a quite different form of the sublime than that used by Price and Gilpin to describe awesome and striking spectacles from the natural world. This colourful reading functioned partially to account for the unusual inclusion of cymbals and military drums in the slow movement of the 'Military'. And this, along with other similarly pictorial reactions to Haydn's symphonies in the press at the time, is also uncannily redolent of the kind of interpretative reception that the Swiss theorist Jérôme-Joseph Momigny indulged in his *Analyses Pittoresques et Poétiques* of the early nineteenth-century, the natural landscape being only an *element* of these pictorial reactions.

Burney's and Seward's use of the term 'picturesque', then, meant something subtly different from Price's and Crotch's version and, indeed, applied rather too broadly for it to belong exclusively to the aesthetic appreciation of natural landscapes. This certainly indicated that audiences were prompted to 'hear' visions but these visions were only sometimes ones of rural beauty. Crotch and Price's musical picturesque made the mind wander over the sounds as the walker roams over landscape. Burney and Seward's version, on the other hand, meant pictures in the mind's eye – all sorts of pictures.<sup>58</sup>

### **Music and the picturesque today: absolute music and the picturesque of the mind**

In 1994 Malcolm Andrews wrote, perhaps partly tongue-in-cheek, that 'the Picturesque [has now been] gendered, politicized, deconstructed, rehistoricized'.<sup>59</sup> The recently renewed interest in the picturesque that Andrews refers to, reflects moves in Anglo-American cultural history that view aesthetics as ideology, developing tropes such as town versus country, art as a promotion of the common good and expressions of nationhood.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> See Leigh Eric Schmidt, *Hearing Things: Religion, Illusion and the American Enlightenment* (Cambridge, Mass., London: Harvard University Press, 2000), 15-37, on the 'age of the eye'.

<sup>59</sup> Quoted in Tobias Plebuch, 'Listening to Picturesque Music', *19th-Century Music*, 27/2 (2003), (a review of Annette Richards's *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*), 156.

<sup>60</sup> See Copley and Garside, *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 3.

After two landmark studies on the picturesque, in the 1920s by Christopher Hussey and in the 1960s by Walter Hipple,<sup>61</sup> postmodern academics in the Humanities, as Andrews suggests, have turned the picturesque into something of a pet topic. Many scholars have sought to expose the picturesque as an emotionally underpowered interregnum between the Neo-Classical and the Romantic. Others have underlined the political contingencies of an art of landscape and have sought to undermine the picturesque by framing it as an aesthetic cover for the power games of an ambitious landowning elite which aggrandized status and excluded the common people. There is just as much work, however, that views the picturesque as an important staging-post on the way to the romantic poetry of Wordsworth, Keats and Coleridge and the landscape paintings of Turner and Constable, introducing a crucial and - by the end of the eighteenth century - proud and sentimental, shift in attitude to the native landscape and a new sentiment, that of 'feeling through the eyes'.<sup>62</sup> Annette Richards's postmodern musicological move to create new readings of the central Viennese classics that go beyond traditional applications of music analysis, is very much of a piece with this recent scholarly turn.

Few musicologists have shown a willingness to explore shared ground between music and eighteenth-century picturesque theory. But to some extent, Annette Richards picks up a gauntlet laid down, not just by today's literary theorists, historians and art historians, but by today's musicologists of eighteenth-century music. Work on the Kantian sublime in the music of Haydn by James Webster, Richard Kramer and Lawrence Kramer has opened the way for the consideration of late eighteenth-century Viennese instrumental works as non-mimetic sounds of, and conduits to, elevated thought, independent of pre-conceived narrative.<sup>63</sup> This kind of music engages the listener in a story that is without location, characters and plot. Part of the craft of the

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<sup>61</sup> Hussey, *The Picturesque; Studies in a Point of View* (passim). Walter John Hipple, *The Beautiful, the Sublime, and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-Century British Aesthetic Theory* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1957).

<sup>62</sup> See, for instance, Kim Ian Michasiw, 'Nine Revisionist Theses on the Picturesque', *Representations* 38 (Spring 1992), 76-100 and James Whale, 'Romantics, Explorers and Picturesque Travellers' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 175-95.

<sup>63</sup> Richard Kramer, *Unfinished Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 153-170; Lawrence Kramer, 'Recalling the Sublime: The Logic of Creation in Haydn's *Creation*', *Eighteenth-Century Music* 6/1 (2009), 41-57; James Webster, 'The *Creation*, Haydn's Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime' in *Haydn and his World*, ed. Elaine Sisman (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997), 58-102.

composer is to construct a narrative that maintains the listener's gaze (and here I intentionally mix the linguistic metaphors of the two practices).

In the late eighteenth century one of the ways in which this was seen to be achieved was in the embracing of those techniques of rhetoric that chimed with Enlightenment ideals of 'sympathy' and reflected new listening practices, demanding that the composer lead the listener by the hand and tell the narrative with persuasion.<sup>64</sup> Adam Smith's modern theories of 1795 serve to support the efficacy of this formulation. But, although, like Crotch, he saw instrumental music as inferior to vocal music and incapable of imitation, he nonetheless held that it

...supports and enforces the imitations of the other arts [...] by producing upon the mind, in consequence of other powers, the same sort of effect which the most exact imitation of nature, which the most perfect observation of probability, could produce.<sup>65</sup>

This kind of music, music 'about itself', self-sufficient in its meaning, is an early identification of absolute music. It describes music that is ineluctably a sonic journey travelled, experienced *through* time rather than as a picture in a frame, art *frozen* in time.<sup>66</sup>

It is this idea of instrumental music that has formed the basis for the work of Webster and the Kramers on the sublime. The central question that Richards poses is this: if music can adumbrate the sublime, to what extent can it adumbrate the picturesque? Music's separateness from the other arts makes claims on the territory of the picturesque problematic. How can a series of sounds *be* picturesque and how can man-made sound represent a picturesque scene? Richards's book alights on the keyboard fantasias of Emanuel Bach and the late symphonies of Joseph Haydn to

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<sup>64</sup> Essential here is David Schroeder, *Haydn and the Enlightenment: The Late Symphonies and their Audience* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) and Matthew Riley, *Music Listening in the German Enlightenment: Attention, Wonder and Astonishment* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).

<sup>65</sup> Adam Smith, *Of the Nature of that Imitation which Takes Place in what are called the Imitative Arts*, Part II, 29, reprinted in *Essays on Philosophical Subjects: Adam Smith*, eds. W.P.D. Wightman and J.C. Bryce (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 203.

<sup>66</sup> Daniel Chua makes the point that an instrumental music of thought was so called because it traced the 'movement of the mind before speech'. In Daniel Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 196.

expose their shared aesthetics with landscape painters and gardeners as well as English novelists such as Laurence Sterne. Sterne's German admirers saw his writing as an embodiment of the same picturesque sensibility as the English garden landscapers through his analogous employment of surprises, digressions and non-linearity. In turn, Austro-German commentators explained the digressive and tangential strategies of Emmanuel Bach's keyboard fantasias in terms of similar tactics found in Sterne's novels, much admired in Northern Germany at the time. Richards cites the theories of Price and Crotch to present the fantasias of Emanuel Bach and the 'London' symphonies of Haydn as belonging to this picturesque kinship, supporting her thesis with a variety of contemporaneous German reception. This reception grapples with the effusions of 'genius' of these two masters by making comparisons with the English gardens and Sterne's novels; Haydn is the Viennese Sterne, Emanuel Bach the composer of landscapes of the mind.<sup>67</sup>

There are two problems that Richards's hermeneutics raises. First, since she confirms the view that the English set the picturesque pace in the design of its country houses, landscape gardens and parks (and was therefore a suitable and receptive setting for the performance of Haydn's 'picturesque' symphonies), the absence of reference to music by native composers is left unaccounted for. Or put another way, why is there is no explanation for why English composers appear to resist the stylistic principles of the picturesque, a question I address and account for in the following chapter. Second, the music is discussed as *resembling* nature rather than imitating or expressing sentiments about it. Inevitably the outcome of this approach is to rule in the notion of these works as being autonomous and non-representational, and further, to contribute to the narrative of the internalized genius producing organic works of art, ruling *out* mimetic, representational approaches with potential to intersect with the preoccupations of the picturesque movement. It is these intersections that I intend to trace and restore.

My thesis adopts the principles of the 'new historicism' by placing validity - and relevance to the topic in hand - on music that has virtually vanished from the repertory. By erecting a framework built on an exploration of English musical life and

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<sup>67</sup> *The Free Fantasia*, 71, 142.

English musical thought of the time, I pursue a synchronic history of the English musical picturesque in order to assess English music's contribution to the picturesque 'moment'. By the lights of my argument, the English music that best exemplifies the picturesque largely lies within the years 1760-1800. It is, at forty years, a long moment but this is a periodization that I find hard to resist. Within this period the English landscape garden throws off its classical bondage and develops a more indigenous style; the landscape painting school gains confidence in portraying local scenes and breaks free from principles borrowed from Italy and France; a 'topographical' poetry school takes up James Thomson's pioneering spirit and develops a poetry of the English countryside; the theories of Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight gain wide circulation; and the guides of Gilpin embolden tourists to venture out and marvel 'in the field'. In the history of English music this period also is easily viewed discretely: after the death of Handel and George II, the differences in exposure between highly trained, motivated and court-sponsored foreign composers and those from the homeland become starker. Certain avenues are closed off to the English composer. In Part 2, I assess whether it is true that they find a 'home', carving a distinctive niche in national theatres, glee clubs, pleasure gardens and benefit concerts, making possible the expression of the picturesque, at this time finding a voice elsewhere in the arts.

But first, chapter 2 works with the existing picturesque discourse and tests its efficacy to account for a picturesque *absence*. Here I show how English composers appear unable and/or unwilling to produce picturesque music as defined by Crotch, Price and Richards. Three factors emerge as militating against this kind of musical picturesque from developing amongst homegrown composers: a prolific, innovative and sharp-elbowed body of imported composers; an arsenal of English critics who suggest that this picturesque style appeals to a short attention span and is just not the English way; and a growing and increasingly voluble section of society who believe that the profession of music is not a suitable one for an Englishman.

Chapter 3 lays the ground for a renewed search for the English musical picturesque, a search that requires the setting of a new framework. By tracing how the picturesque movement infiltrates the arts of landscape painting and pastoral poetry, I

move away from a picturesque paradigm founded on instrumental music, and abstract connections with form and narrative, towards one founded on the representation of pictures and their conveyance through the English language.

Chapter 4 begins the process of locating the picturesque language in English music by examining late eighteenth-century English song, a genre that in setting to music verse, both topographical and sentimental, heightened the lyrical and oratorical voice present in the poetry. The English glee is shown to be a particularly fertile genre for picturesque settings; as glee clubs became established, a firm idea of appropriate subject matter and sentiment emerged, the glorification of the English countryside being one of its principal subjects.

Chapter 5 examines the English musical theatre tradition of the period and reveals a similar intention to celebrate native landscapes through the prisms of sentimental stories of pastoral folk. In these entertainments the locations, though sometimes imagined, are incontrovertibly English and the qualities of rural life are constantly stressed as qualities that please *visually*. Scenery is both a theme and a crucial part of the staging. Later in the century, some English opera is set in Gilpinian beauty spots, such as the Peak District. Also more exotic locations prized for their picturesqueness, such as the Bay of Naples in Stephen Storace's *The Pirates*, are adopted.

My final chapter, in a sense, brings the journey full circle in focusing on music from the Viennese canon. But my study of Haydn's *The Seasons* shows how Haydn and Gottfried van Swieten, by yoking Thomson's picturesque of the pictorial and elegiac to an oratorio with a spiritual message, efface other, more abstract ideas of the picturesque. Haydn, who in four busy years, absorbed English cultural trends with wide-eyed enthusiasm, shows, in this work, a chiming sympathy with the English picturesque movement.

## 2 Late for the picturesque?

The English in the eighteenth century ‘discovered’ their own countryside. Their response was to walk through it, to marvel at it, to discuss its quality and quantify its value, to write about it in poetry and prose, to imitate it in landscape gardens and to paint it. These responses exhibited the picturesque, demonstrating the expression of enthusiasm for, and pride in, this landscape and, in the process, speaking of a particular kind of pleasure gained in the experience. According to Uvedale Price and William Crotch, it was not just the gardeners, poets and painters that could take part in this aesthetic response. Composers could too.

Price and Crotch spoke often in terms of instrumental music. And when Crotch spoke of the picturesque in vocal music he avoided discussing the relationship between the music and the text and confined himself to talking about *style*. Crotch’s picturesque was found in the notes and their arrangement *tout court*, not their deployment in association with the words. As if to confirm that the picturesque was best considered as a paradigm of instrumental music, Annette Richards has maintained that Price and Crotch were on the right track and has shown how much further they might have gone with their theories by examining keyboard fantasias and late Haydn symphonies.

But where is the landscape in this music? And if these landscapes are figured in certain forms of music, which landscapes, or which *type* of landscapes are enfolded within those sounds? The answer, according to these theorists, is that those sounds *behave* and *move* in the same way as natural landscapes.<sup>1</sup> This music has a *shape* (its design in space) and a *topography* (a shape that unfolds through time – it takes time to hear, just as it takes time to walk through it or ‘take it in’). If these sounds are wordless, these picturesque designs in sound pique the listener’s mind into imagining

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<sup>1</sup> The fact that music figured ‘movement’ and ‘motion’ was, for the majority of eighteenth-century British critics on music, its only imitative facet. The ideas of critics such as James Harris, Daniel Webb, John Potter, William Jones, James Beattie, Thomas Robertson and Thomas Twining are discussed in greater detail in chapter 3. These figures are labelled ‘The British Critics’ by John Neubauer in *The Emancipation of Music from Language: Departure from Mimesis in Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1986).

things, into contemplative thought. These thoughts have their own shape and topography. These are *landscapes* of thought.

And what are these thoughts? What does the listener end up thinking about or imagining? For Price, Crotch, and by extension for Richards too, this matters little. The salient feature of the mind's activity is that it is provoked into mental reflection – just as it might be when viewing these attractive and awesome scenes from nature. Occasionally we come across testament that eighteenth-century audiences *did* imagine picturesque scenes upon hearing picturesque music. Often listeners reported the same results, suggesting as Charles Burney's and Anna Seward's use of the term 'picturesque' implies, that there may a certain index of sounds that signify types of nature. But just as often as they were prompted to see idyllic corners of the countryside they saw things that had nothing to do with the topic of nature appreciation. By calling this response 'picturesque' they really meant music that makes us 'hear' visually. Despite the occasional outbreaks of consensus, nobody attempted a comprehensive lexicon of picturesque music. The signs that *were* discussed were limited in scope and arbitrary in application. As Joseph Addison opined,

...music cannot be very descriptive yet it is certain there may be confus'd notions of this nature raised in the imagination, by an artificial composition of notes; and we find that great masters in the art, are able sometimes to set their hearers in the heat and hurry of a battle, to overcast their minds with melancholy scenes and apprehensions of death and funerals, or to lull them into pleasing dreams of groves and elysiums.<sup>2</sup>

In this chapter, I hold up these formulations of the musical picturesque to scrutiny by asking the following questions: why is it that mostly German (and a little Italian) instrumental music was apparently most in tune with the picturesque? And the corollary to that question: why is it that English music is either not discussed as being picturesque or does not appear to engage in the kind of compositional tactics that most strongly characterize the sound of the picturesque? The picturesque is, first

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<sup>2</sup> Joseph Addison, *Essays Moral and Humorous, also Essays on Imagination and Taste* (Edinburgh: Chambers, 1839), 117. Despite Addison's colourful detail, the Stoic passions of pleasure, pain, desire and fear are clearly invoked here.

and foremost, an English phenomenon. Why is English music perceived as not taking part?

If we are to talk about an English musical response (or lack thereof) to the picturesque, we need to define what it meant to be an English composer in the late eighteenth century and what kind of identity that provided. This chapter explains the struggle of the English composer to gain respectability, to find a foothold in the profession and to overcome English prejudices that either favoured foreign music or looked down on the musical profession as unworthy. A different kind of prejudice amongst some English critics held that music had gone to the dogs and that the music of thirty years' vintage and older was far superior. The modern music that they critiqued as being merely commercial and crowd-pleasing matches, as we shall see, the music that Price, Crotch, and now Richards label as picturesque. Being an English composer was hard enough in the late eighteenth century. But to make things harder, writing music that is picturesque was, according to a vocal lobby, not something that the English should attempt. This music was, for these critics, shallow, effeminate and best left to foreigners.

English composers, for a variety of reasons, then, are a small group in this period. Their music and the niches in which they gained some kind of success were specialized and have been overlooked (as I will discuss further in Part 2). The stories I now outline have hardened into tropes that have affected the way the history of English music has been written. As will become clear, these provide the explanations for why the English are painted out of the picturesque as its definitions stand. Although they contain gaps and holes that I address in Part 2, the stories are true enough. I now pick up their strands to address the notion of a picturesque 'absence' in English music.

### **Citizenship and a sense of national identity**

Our own received wisdoms about English music in the eighteenth century speak of a polarized English musical scene in the late eighteenth century, the dominance of

imported composers or settlers producing a dearth of opportunities and a resulting 'inferiority complex' felt by English composers – the beginning of a barren period that led later commentators from Germany to dub England, 'das Land ohne Musik' (the land without music).<sup>3</sup> At the time, for all the hopes of establishing a national gallery inspired by John Wilkes's lobbying, and the broader sense of patriotism engendered by the threats from warlike neighbours and the collapse of the colonies,<sup>4</sup> there was little appetite for celebrating the Englishness of home-grown English composers. This was despite (occasionally unconvincing) talk from the likes of John Potter and Charles Dibdin about a uniquely English musical 'solidity'.<sup>5</sup> Neither was there any attempt to hold back the incoming tide of composers from abroad or, for that matter, much of an outcry about the absence of an English Haydn or Mozart, with an international reputation and a dominance of the local repertoire. Although the simple, serious or even 'chaste' - to adopt William Weber's description - airs of Purcell, Arne and Boyce were held up as preferable examples of English reserve compared to Italian willfulness,<sup>6</sup> English music rarely merited discussion in the period from 1750 – a period of prolific writing on music in the English language. Indeed it was largely ignored in the historical sections of Charles Avison's treatise and in Charles Burney's *General History*. This tends to suggest a perception of a lack of quality but it also

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<sup>3</sup> This was a slogan coined in Germany during the First World War but one that has stuck and been applied widely to post-Handel English music. The contemporary English composer, Hugh Wood, has bemoaned the fact that 'a piece of war-propaganda' has promoted 'feelings of inferiority' amongst English musicians. Hugh Wood, *Staking Out the Territory and Other Writings on Music*, introduced by Bayan Northcott, ed. Christopher Wintle (London: Cosman Keller Art and Music Trust in association with Plumbago Books, 2007), 34. Elsewhere, Bennett Zon has called the slur a 'demeaning musical epithet' and even a 'libel'. See 'Histories of British music and the Land without Music' in *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell: Sources, Style, Performance, Historiography*, eds. Emma Hornby and David Maw (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2010), 311-2 and *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, vol. 3, eds. Peter Horton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), xv. See also Peter Holman, 'Pride or Prejudice?', *The Musical Times* 133 (1992), 504-5.

<sup>4</sup> See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (London: Pimlico, 2003), 3-5.

<sup>5</sup> In *Observations on the Present State of Music and Musicians* (London: 1762), John Potter airs his somewhat trenchant views of the Germans, Italians and English. See 39-44. Also see Charles Dibdin's attack on the Germans in *The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin* (Sheffield: The Author, 1788), 199. The lack of manliness was an insult levelled at Italians by Jonathan Swift in 1728, and one aired repeatedly in eighteenth-century England. Swift was then contributing to an already substantial and concerted campaign against Italian opera, evinced in the satire of *The Beggar's Opera*. See Ann Beedell in *The Decline of the English Musician 1788-1888: A Family of English Musicians in Ireland, England, Mauritius, and Australia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 52.

<sup>6</sup> William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 198-9.

speaks of the small size of the repertory, especially in the instrumental music genres in which picturesque music was perceived to be at work.<sup>7</sup>

In her book, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, Linda Colley argues that a sense of national identity and patriotism grew steadily through the eighteenth century, particularly through changing attitudes to art.<sup>8</sup> Aristocrats in thrall to the German court and Grand Tourists elevated German and Italian art, and this stance was slow to shift. But gradually, native models gained exposure and greater support from influential patrons. For Colley, this growing national confidence had certain causes such as Britain's expanding empire and the resulting influence on the world stage as well as increasing self-consciousness in the face of an expanding number of immigrants.

But the identity of eighteenth-century English music and its composers after Handel's death is seldom clearly characterized in writing of the time. And the notion of 'a school' of English music is prevented from forming through the absence of any meaningful academy of musical instruction. Furthermore, the presence of a large body of composers and performers recruited from abroad by the English throne and the peerage, prevented both a distinctive English musical profile from developing and suppressed employment and exposure. The idea that English musicians could assert their Englishness through their art, and under a banner of national pride and distinctiveness, was certainly not a commonly expressed one and it was, anyway, an impulse that gained relatively slow traction in the other arts. Vestiges of the old privileging of Italian models lingered persistently.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression*, 2nd edn. (London: C. Davis, 1753), 42-53; Sir Charles Burney, *A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, vol. 4 (London: Robson and Clark, 1789). See also Roger Fiske on the situation in the early 1800s whereby Constable, Austen and Wordsworth are emerging but a comparable figure in English music appears not to exist. Fiske speculates as to the reasons for this and suggests an excess of competition and collective losses of heart. See 'Concert Music II' in *The Blackwell History of Music in Great Britain*, vol. 4, eds. H. Diack Johnstone and Roger Fiske (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990), 259-60. See also John Caldwell, *Oxford History*, vol. 2, 136, for the reduced flow in chamber music and symphonic output explained by the 'challenge' laid down by Haydn.

<sup>8</sup> *Britons*, 147-94.

<sup>9</sup> See *Britons*, 8. Colley calls for future work to be done to establish whether British music was part of this national revival. Any sign of Nationalism in Music is, for Carl Dahlhaus, 'beside the point' in the eighteenth century. He cites Herder's 'national spirit' - a product of the age of revolution - to explain the notion of national schools in art expressing a sense of shared identity

In fact it could be argued that a sense of patriotism in the music of England was expressed, rather cryptically, by the recruitment of foreign professional composers and players. England, in other words, could boast of its musical scene as strength through cosmopolitanism – luring the best continental talent to its shores. Historians of English music have not always presented as sanguine a view of this situation. Reflecting in 1911 on the troubled development of English opera, Cecil Forsyth wrote in resentful tones:

...when the initiative on external matters was wholly in the hands of the court circle, we find a ridiculous devotion to French ideals [during Charles II's reign]; later on we get the aristocratic cult of Handel and J. C. Bach, and later still the democratic worship of many strange gods, good and bad – Clementi, Dussek, Cramer, Moscheles, Mendelssohn, Wagner, Tschaikowsky.<sup>10</sup>

Forsyth was a product of the Royal College of Music, one of the newly thriving musical academies in Britain, and his remarks are representative of a confident new generation of English musicians schooled at that time who were distrustful of their tutors' cosmopolitan tastes.<sup>11</sup> Forsyth's *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera* takes on the issue of English music's neglect and impoverishment, and, emboldened by this new atmosphere of English musical self-assurance, positions the unhappy story of English opera through the ages as a story from which his seniors could learn salutary lessons. In a later passage that betrays a whiff of the arguments about class of the period, Forsyth goes on to develop a powerful polemic against a 'court circle' in thrall to foreign cultures which inhibits the development of a national musical identity:

...the aristocratic class [are] negligible from the standpoint of musical philosophy but important from that of musical history, because its members had, as they still have, the

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from the early nineteenth-century onwards. See Carl Dahlhaus, *Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. J. Bradford Robinson (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 40. Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis are, in some respects, responses to Linda Colley's entreaty and identifies aspects of Herder's 'national spirit' - if not quite Dahlhaus's 'Nationalism' - both prior to and during the 'age of revolution'.

<sup>10</sup> Cecil Forsyth, *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera* (London: Macmillan, 1911), 92n.

<sup>11</sup> David C. Wickens, 'England' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, second edition, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London: Macmillan, 2002), vol. 8, 222.

money and the power to maintain in exotic and ridiculous pre-eminence any foreign culture of which they approved...These people, the most vitalized in all that concerns our national history were, as they still are, artistically the most de-nationalized. They wished to be amused pleasantly and lazily, and if in doing so they could at the same time hall-mark their amusement with the stamp of exclusiveness, they counted it so much to the good.<sup>12</sup>

Covering much the same ground, if without Forsyth's axe-grinding against the monarchy, is a section of William Gilpin's *Dialogue Upon the Gardens at Stow* of 1747. Speaking through the character, Callophilus, Gilpin expresses the view that the English ought to be more proud of their own art, and that, even though foreigners had a respect for English 'productions' and found visits to England stimulating because it was an artistic nation, his homeland did not display it often enough, or publicly enough:

...I might still add another Advantage, of a public Nature, derived from these elegant Productions of Art; and that is their Tendency to raise us in the opinion of Foreigners. If our Nation had nothing of this kind to boast of, all our Neighbours would look upon us as a stupid, tasteless Set of People, and not worth visiting. So that for the credit of the country, I think, something of this kind ought to be exhibited amongst us. Our public Virtues, if we have any, would not, I dare say, appear to less Advantage which recommend by their Embellishments of Art.<sup>13</sup>

The commemoration to celebrate the life and work of Handel in 1784, was undoubtedly a national celebration of the kind that Gilpin had in mind for paintings and sculptures. The event rejoiced in a figure whose music, especially in that of the English oratorios, was seen as a paragon of English culture. For John Brewer, the event 'created a point of unity in a musical culture that had become fragmented for political as well as cultural reasons'.<sup>14</sup> Patriotic though the Handel pageant was, it was not part

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>13</sup> William Gilpin, *A Dialogue upon the Gardens of the Right Honourable the Lord Viscount Cobham at Stow in Buckinghamshire*; introduction by John Dixon Hunt (Los Angeles: William Andrews Clark Memorial Library, University of California, 1976), 51.

<sup>14</sup> Brewer, *Pleasures of the Imagination*, 405. Brewer goes on to cite the commemoration as 'an essential ingredient in Britain's patriotic repertory of "ancient" and pious music, a repertory that stood against foreign innovation and invasion', without clarifying that this repertory represented very little music of actual English origin. Brewer's point is that the cultivation of a solid repertory of 'ancient' works is essentially a very British act, one that had been prevalent in

of a wider paean to English music of past *and* present. This was partly attributable to its political dimensions, both nationalistic and, by extension, royalist, the ex-Hanoverian Handel being the subject of much Georgian pride.

What muddies the water considerably, however, is the complex issue of citizenship. As far as we know, politicians declined to debate the relative Englishness of the likes of Johann Christian Bach, Georg Friedrich Abel or Jan Dussek. When we talk of English composers and English music who, and what, lies within the appropriate section of the Venn diagram? Do we have to contemplate the messiness of a composer being English for the purposes of one genre and not another, or even a composer, being foreign on arrival in the country, but undergoing a process of indoctrination to become adopted and accepted? It seems there was little paperwork surrounding passage and residency for citizens born and raised elsewhere, merely documentation issued on arrival as a kind of 'letter of introduction'. Visas or work permits were niceties for a later and more bureaucratic age.<sup>15</sup>

The case of Handel is straightforward: German to his boots, he was nonetheless fond of the country he resided in for forty years and his popularity ensured that he was often claimed as 'English', his roots sometimes forgotten. For many composers working in England but born abroad there is not such a neat, indeed emotive, history. Meredith MacFarlane's four rubrics for categorizing the music performed in England are instructive here.<sup>16</sup> Her somewhat schematic delineation of composers of this music into 'native', 'touring', 'resident foreign' and 'true foreign', are undeniably modern projections unlikely to be recognized at the time. But they go some way to explaining the situation.<sup>17</sup>

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the past but had perhaps been in need of re-energizing in response to the popularity of new foreign music.

<sup>15</sup> I am grateful to Dr Jonathan Conlin for correspondence on this vexed and historically elusive issue.

<sup>16</sup> See Meredith McFarlane and Simon McVeigh, 'The String Quartet in London Concert Life 1769-99' in *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, eds. Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), 175.

<sup>17</sup> Although she suggests a period of ten years' residence to qualify as English, her first, rather loose category of 'native', defines itself merely as being none of the above.

Given the dramatic rise in concert activity between 1760 and 1795, and the consequent rise in continental musicians to meet that demand, a French, Italian or Bohemian professional was a commonplace not worthy of comment, at least in the capital. They were accepted however, not as naturalized Englishmen, but as necessary and desirable 'others' that were a part of the fabric of a thriving and cosmopolitan scene with a thirsty demand for new music.

English composers of instrumental music, prevented from exposing their music in front of the intelligentsia and the press, developed a siege mentality and inhibition that explains the tailing off in production of an already thin catalogue of instrumental music from the 1790s.<sup>18</sup> Indeed, when Burney turns to the 1780s and 1790s in his *History* he concentrates on the merits and demerits of English performers almost to the exclusion of English music (save for some pasticcios by Dibdin, Arnold and Shield and instrumental music by the 'late Earl of Kelly'), a fact lamented by William Jackson in his review of Burney's *General History*.<sup>19</sup> So the emergence of a distinctive national musical identity faced the obstacles of a competitive market, a market made more crowded by the arrival of foreign composers and the favoured passage sometimes granted to those visitors by their wealthy and influential patrons. Moreover, one of the domains from which Englishmen felt squeezed out - instrumental music - is one of those that historians have preferred to concentrate on. And it is this domain where those seeking a picturesque expressed by music of the time have tended to look.

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<sup>18</sup> For a survey of late eighteenth-century English instrumental music (and the marginalization of its composers owing to the preference for music from foreign settlers) see Caldwell, *The Oxford History*, vol. 2, 124-37 and McFarlane and McVeigh, 'The String Quartet in London Concert Life', 161-96.

<sup>19</sup> Burney, *General History*, vol. 4, 675-7. See also Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Oxford University Press), 443. Nonetheless, Matthew Gelbart persuasively argues that the contact with the 'outside world' in the form of immigrants helped to forge a national consciousness, which lends support to the early nineteenth-century view of the English glee as a genre that England could proudly call her own and one that had a distinctive national character. See *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, 26. See also Brian Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture in Eighteenth-Century England* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2006), 150-1. This is a notion I explore further in chapter 4.

### **English composers in the marketplace**

Wilkite dissent of the 1770s and, twenty years later, popular protest over Pitt's war with France, prefigure a wider debate about the access to a say in national affairs. These, however, are not causes that could have a bearing on the plight of under-used and under-appreciated English composers. To a certain extent both these issues symbolized the growing awareness of the rights of the citizen and in the case of the protests against war, both in the wake of the French Revolution and earlier, the Seven Years War, employment and national resources were the matters at stake. Although English composers could legitimately protest about the effects of diminished prospects of employment, they had no notion of 'unionizing' as a corporate body in protest at such a situation. As Ann Beedell notes, English musicians of the time were not in the habit of exploiting their position to provide a platform for political protest as occurred habitually in Italy and France. Indeed English composers instinctively 'knew their place' as subordinate vehicles in order to, in Beedell's words, 'reflect and serve Polity', otherwise known as the public good, a sentiment expressed by, amongst others, Dr John Brown.<sup>20</sup>

The native composer's dilemma can to a large extent be explained by the unique position late eighteenth-century England found itself in after the death of Handel in 1759. Dubbed the 'Saxon Timotheus' by Burney, this favourite adopted son, monarchically sponsored figurehead and anointed national hero, had his reputation hardened into a cult through repeated panegyrics in the years between his death and Haydn's first visit to English shores in 1791. This was articulated nowhere more forcefully than in John Potter's *Observations on the Present State of Music and Musicians* of 1762 where he asked, 'what had we to boast of, before he settled in England, and new-modelled our music? Nothing, but some good church music'.<sup>21</sup> Not only was his method and style held up as a paradigm in English musical literature, but also his example made it possible, and indeed desirable, for England to continue to recruit

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<sup>20</sup> Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 45. See also 61 for Thomas Bewick's recollection of various street Ballad singers' expression of popular protest during the French wars and how they were often vigorously repressed. Burney, in his preface to his *History*, says that music '...like vegetation, flourishes differently in different climates; and in proportion to the culture and encouragement it receives' (italics mine). *General History*, vol. 1, vii.

<sup>21</sup> *Observations*, 43-4.

more composers from the European mainland, many of whom found opportunities greater and pay more favourable here than at home. London was not short of wealthy societies hoping to spread their influence or of aristocratic figureheads aiming to gain prestige by sponsoring the cream of European talent. As Johann Mattheson had observed, as early as 1713, England was the best place for a musician to make meaningful sums of money.<sup>22</sup>

The setting up of the King's Theatre as a commercial venture for the production of Italian opera and the Licensing Act of 1737, produced at a stroke a competitive market-driven environment unlike anywhere in Europe.<sup>23</sup> This environment operated on the unwritten rules of the survival of the best connected – in this case French, Austro-German, Italian and Bohemians boosted by royal and aristocratic patronage. This may have been a nominally free market but it appeared to be rigged in favour of the King's countrymen and Italians, both well trained and lucratively remunerated.<sup>24</sup> It is a truism, though, that markets have gaps. Italian opera was, for the English, an acquired taste, and an expensive one to boot. It left an opening through which the organisers and producers of English theatre music were able to drive a coach and

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<sup>22</sup> Fiske, 'Music and Society', 17-18. See also Deborah Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians, 1750-1850: A Profession of Artisans* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 10. Rohr's research concludes that in the second half of the eighteenth century, composing and performing were 'artisinal' and thus attracted comparatively low wages.

<sup>23</sup> See Stephen Rose, 'The Musical Map of Europe' in *The Cambridge History of Eighteenth-Century Music*, ed. Simon Keefe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 7-8. See also Vanessa Agnew on Burney's comments about the harm to the national wealth of wages 'carried out of the Kingdom' by foreign musicians and how it might be redistributed and reinvested with the cultivation of a national 'Musical Talents'. Vanessa Agnew, *Enlightenment Orpheus: The Power of Music in Other Worlds* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 141; Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 84-5 and Peter Jones, 'Italian operas and their Audiences' in *The Enlightenment World*, 323-36.

<sup>24</sup> It could be argued that other modern ideals of social democracy such as Rousseau's appeal to the 'common good' can be observed in the audience-led agenda of the London concert scene but this appeared to benefit foreign visitors more than English composers (see Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 216). Nevertheless patriotism and English music coalesced in a different way with the various afterpieces and comic operas, such as Dibdin's *Plymouth in an Uproar*, whose subject matter asserted a rabble-rousing celebration of English victories and a scarcely veiled xenophobia. See Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 230. Matthew Gelbart argues that notions of a national music form when critics, musicians, and concert promoters stress the *origin* of the music as opposed to its function, culminating in the Romantic era in the cult of the composer as a subjective creative force. See *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, 12. There is little evidence for this process occurring in English music post-Purcell, particularly in native opera and the tiny genres of English symphonic and chamber music. In chapter 4, however, I show how the English glee clubs cultivated a national identity for the music and its creators.

horses. Building on the success of *The Beggar's Opera*, English composers and librettists found that sentimental and comic tales of ordinary English folk had a willing and voracious local audience in London, in particular. The successful launch of English 'country' opera was one that several grateful English composers were able to cling to for gainful employment in the late eighteenth century. In a congested musical market, here was a possible niche for the English composer.

Those of the nobility that did employ English composers in the late eighteenth century, such as the King himself, George III, demanded very little new music beyond the occasional birthday ode, musical sweetmeats that were enjoyed, by definition, just the once. Moreover, compared to monarchies on the European mainland, the Hanoverians were not able to draw on extensive revenue to finance regular music-making at the court. According to Roger Fiske, such patronage that did exist in this period helped only foreigners: Frederick, Prince of Wales employed Giuseppe Sammartini in the 1730s and 40s and J. C. Bach's passage to England was sponsored by the German Princess Charlotte, George's wife.<sup>25</sup>

The presence of a burgeoning landowning elite during the eighteenth century might suggest that one avenue of employment for English composers could be found instead in the non-commercial setting of the English country house. Muzio Clementi, lured to England by the novelist William Beckford, spent fully seven years in solitary study and practice at Beckford's Dorset mansion. The odd 'star-struck aristocrat', in Fiske's phrase, built theatres but only the occasional English work was performed at these outposts.<sup>26</sup> Music was required at the country seat of Southside, Wimbledon where a dedicated music room was built, ostensibly to entertain Frederick, Prince of Wales. This was a relatively isolated example and, as the Prince rarely visited, not a particularly representative one.<sup>27</sup> The patronage extended to architects and landscape artists by the landed elite was rarely extended to English instrumentalists, let alone composers. Yet it was in the church and private music clubs such as glee and catch clubs where aristocratic patronage extended itself to provide opportunities for English composers. The somewhat minimal training that native composers did receive took

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<sup>25</sup> Fiske, 'Music and Society', 11. See also Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 25.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 11-12.

<sup>27</sup> Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 57-8.

place within the cathedral and church choir-school framework and landowners were often in a position to recruit and pay these musician-composers. The fact that opportunities for the native composer also lay within glee and catch clubs is no coincidence. Frequently glee singing and composing was a profitable side-line for church composers as they were able to draw on ready-made group of singers and rely on connections made in the church to work for and belong to the clubs.<sup>28</sup> The prospects for English composers in the period, then, were not bleak, as long as they were able to gain access to the English language theatres or were able to attract the attention of a patron connected to the church or a private club. Noting that surveys of concert music in English histories of music conclude that there was only a small amount of English musical activity taking place, Emanuel Rubin argues that this is small wonder when the glee tradition is continually discounted.<sup>29</sup>

### **The English composer and the absence of instruction**

Throughout the whole of the eighteenth century there is a distinct lack of English instructional literature on methods of composition. Such that there is, is either poorly expressed, restricted to specific aspects of composition such as figured bass and species of counterpoint, or is unapologetically disparaging about 'modern' methods. Both the *Treatise on Harmony* (attributed to Johann Christoph Pepusch but probably compiled by his pupil James Hamilton, the Earl of Abercorn) and *A Treatise on the Art of Music* by the Reverend William Jones of Nayland, represent a conservatism that held that the music of the recent past, rather than the present, was exemplary. In the introduction to *A Treatise on the Art of Music* Jones nails his colours firmly to the mast:

I confess very freely, that my feelings give their testimony to the style which is now called ancient; and in explaining the rules of music so far as they are known to me, I quote *Corelli*, *Purcell*, *Geminiani*, and *Handel*, as naturally, and I hope as reasonably, as

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<sup>28</sup> See Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 70.

<sup>29</sup> Emanuel Rubin, *The English Glee in the Reign of George III: Participatory Art Music for an Urban Society* (Warren, Michigan: Harmonie Park Press, 2003), 9.

writers on Poetry and Oratory fetch their examples from *Virgil*, *Horace* and *Cicero*, or as *Aristotle* exemplifies his precepts from *Homer* and *Sophocles*.<sup>30</sup>

Here Reverend Jones applied strong political and religious overtones (and a preference for a classical artistic framework) in a pedagogical context. Jones was an unashamed traditionalist who peddled in print, and from the pulpit, a particular brand of ecclesiastical conservatism and trenchant anti-Newtonism that was to be widely heard in late eighteenth-century Britain. A broad disapproval of modern scepticism towards authority and tradition and theological inconstancy was, for Jones, often articulated in his broadsides against transient fashion and ‘popular’ tastes in music – a breathtaking manoeuvre on reflection but one increasingly widely held (notably by a proponent of the ‘ancient’ cause, Sir John Hawkins, who I introduce in the next section). The poetry and drama of the classical world was agreed by those with an education to be immutably, timelessly great, serious of purpose and tried and tested over time in the arena of the well-informed. In music this was no different; modern music (and thus, by extension, picturesque music) was frivolous, emphasizing humour and caprice, appealing to a lightweight, unthinking, *secularized* audience.<sup>31</sup>

The only treatises that remotely approach the thoroughness and modernity of continental manuals available at the time were published in the last decade of the century. A. F. C. Kollman’s *An Essay on Musical Harmony* of 1796 and *An Essay on Practical Musical Composition* (1799) contain comprehensive instruction in a wide range of styles and techniques, allied to a wealth of varied musical examples. Thus they add up to the kind of flexible, wide-ranging and open-minded pedagogy denied to native composers until then.<sup>32</sup> Faced with this paucity of written guidance many English composers resorted to self-training.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Rev. William Jones of Nayland, *A Treatise on the Art of Music, in which the Elements of Harmony and Air are Practically Considered, and Illustrated by an Hundred and Fifty Examples in Notes...* (Colchester: W. Keymer, 1784), iii.

<sup>31</sup> William Weber reveals that Jones was an unashamed Tory, opposing Wilkes and his followers and supporting George III when his authority was questioned during the war with America. Weber hints that the ancient cause is invariably a Tory one. See *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 201-4.

<sup>32</sup> See Thomas McGeary, ‘Music Literature’ in *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, 412.

<sup>33</sup> Fiske, ‘Music and Society’, 4.

A picture of a piecemeal and conservative teaching ethos in England is hard to resist, and it is particularly telling that whereas continental composers travelled to England to enhance the prospect of having their works performed, a few intrepid English counterparts, without established schools of music with whom to enroll, made the journey *in reverse* to complete their musical education. Stephen Storace's obituary states that 'it [was] then the fashion to send [...] young musicians abroad, for the improvement of their taste', true certainly for instrumentalists but, despite the travels of Thomas Linley the younger and Thomas Attwood, this was by no means an established route for English composers. But the notice goes on to mention that Storace was 'placed in a *concevoirto*, or musical college in *Italy* where he thought the study of composition much more respectable than *drawing the bow or scraping the cat gut*'.<sup>34</sup>

It is just as valid to portray this situation as a *decline* as much as an absence. In England, musical training had, since the Renaissance, often occurred under the auspices of the church rather than the court.<sup>35</sup> The late eighteenth century was a time where the church faced upheaval in the wake of a new Evangelism that partially caused a decline in native church music. As music's role reduced, so choirs either broke up, reduced in number or received less training and practice. A proper musical education had been traditionally associated with the boarding schools attached to cathedrals and parish churches. What is more, a great deal of *secular* music-making went on in towns that possessed full-time cathedral or parish church choirs.<sup>36</sup> As demand for church musicians dwindled - organists too began to be frozen out in this climate - so musical activity, and therefore musical instruction, withered on the vine, a situation observed

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<sup>34</sup> Quoted in Jane Girdham, *English Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London* (Oxford; Clarendon Press, 1997), 9. That Storace received his training in the San Onofrio conservatory in Naples, was perhaps, as Jane Girdham points out, more a case of family connections - his father hailed from the area - than of Storace following a well-worn route for native composers. His later travels did nothing for his standing at home when he returned after a successful stint of staging operas in Vienna: he found himself cold-shouldered initially at the King's Theatre and frozen out of the Haydn-Salomon concerts, briefly finding a niche instead at Drury Lane. See 9-10, 20. For more on the training of English musicians, see Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians*, 1-79.

<sup>35</sup> See Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians*, 9,59.

<sup>36</sup> See Roz Southey, 'Competition and Collaboration': Concert Promotion in Newcastle and Durham 1752-1772', in *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, 55-72.

with alarm by those old enough to remember a more thriving music academy.<sup>37</sup> Although the university degrees and doctorates conferred on musicians (often organists and choirmasters) recognized a certain amount of compositional skill on the part of the recipient, these universities had little responsibility for teaching; the four main centres of Oxford, Cambridge, London and Edinburgh required no residency or the completion of a formal course of study. Invariably exercises in contrapuntal working were required to be submitted, as were complete compositions in a specified style of genre, but many awards were honorary. Susan Wollenberg attributes this situation to the decline of the idea that music was placed centrally in the quadrivium, a state of affairs not fully arrested, Deborah Rohr believes, until about 1870.<sup>38</sup>

Charles Avison's call for an English academy in the image of the 'genius' Francesco Geminiani in 1752, might have provided a stimulus for an English composing school were it to have got off the ground.<sup>39</sup> It may have signalled his narrow partiality for Italian composers but the sentiment, likely to have been well-received, was echoed ten years later by John Potter in his *Observations on the Present State of Music and Musicians*.<sup>40</sup> The formation in 1776 of the Concert of Antient Music can be seen as a belated response to Avison's proposal. But the Concert's inauguration was hardly a patriotic venture, neither was it a seat of learning or a conservatoire. It did however provide an opportunity for amateurs to gather and perform music of at least twenty years vintage. The formation of The Academy of Ancient Music back in 1710 had similar aims at the outset but had the added dimension of acting as 'a seminary for the instruction of youth in the principles of music, and the laws of harmony'.<sup>41</sup> There is scant evidence, however, that the Academy provided instruction in the art of composition, insofar as it was perceived in England as formal instruction (there was nowhere at this time that functioned as did Padre Martini's academy in

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<sup>37</sup> See Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 53-4.

<sup>38</sup> For more on university music degrees in this period, see Rohr, *The Careers of British Musicians*, 66-8 and Susan Wollenberg, *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 9-19.

<sup>39</sup> Charles Avison, Section II: 'On the Analogies between Music and Painting' from *An Essay in Musical Expression* (London: C. Davis, 2nd edition, 1753), 88.

<sup>40</sup> Potter, *Observations*, 97. See also Daniel Defoe's 1729 initiative to counter the 'expensive importation of foreign musicians' by forming a musical academy to be sponsored by the governors of Christ's Hospital School, cited in Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music*, 110. The scheme never came to fruition.

<sup>41</sup> *Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music*, 7.

Bologna). According to the 1770 published history of the Academy it was devoted to the 'study and practice of that which is old' through the rehearsal, and performance for subscribers, of older works.<sup>42</sup> Writing in 1770 the anonymous author of *An Account of the Academy of Ancient Music* was not chary of adding a political dimension to the pamphlet:

The friends of this institution are sensible of the prejudices which its very name [...] may excite; and that those persons, who think no music can be good which is not *new* will hardly be induced to join in the support of an establishment...<sup>43</sup>

This is an unarguable premise in any modern context but was a relatively uncommon and novel one in the context of eighteenth-century England. The author was, however, keen to press not just the imperative of preserving music of the past but to endeavour to seek lessons from it and entertain in the process. This was an agenda that sought to improve and to seek moral regeneration in the face of a new music that privileged periodically phrased, melodic clarity over harmonically conceived, contrapuntal models – a sign of music's increasing frivolity and appeal to a 'lower' audience. This is a viewpoint aired repeatedly in France by the followers of Rameau in opposition to the acolytes of Rousseau. These 'Rousseauists' believed that music should avoid quasi-scientific contrivance (harmonic trickery) and register as closely as possible the expression of the human voice and its ability to communicate through language by placing 'natural' melody at the top of the musical hierarchy.<sup>44</sup> (Modernist histories have tended to append the term '*galant*' to this stylistic development).<sup>45</sup> The *Account* goes on:

The members of the academy [...] desire, if possible, to perpetuate the existence of a society calculated for the improvement of one of the noblest of the sciences, and the communication of rational and social delight, to which end they wish for the assistance

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.,12.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.,12.

<sup>44</sup> See, for instance, Cynthia Verba, *Music and the French Enlightenment: Reconstruction of a Dialogue, 1750-1764* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 31-50.

<sup>45</sup> This pre/post-1750 bifurcation, its implications for the confinement of the musical *galant* to a notional early classical trope, and a reaction against the Baroque is eloquently challenged by, among others, David Yearsley in *Bach and the Meanings of Counterpoint* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 110-16.

of those, who profess to love and admire music; such as are susceptible of its powers, such in short as are capable of distinguishing between the feeble efforts of simple melody, and the irresistible charms of elegant modulation and well-studied harmony.<sup>46</sup>

A subtly different grievance appeared elsewhere in the *Account*. Here the writer railed against a (predominantly German) taste for dramatic effects and unexpected alterations of texture and affect – a style often associated with the ‘Mannheim school’ of symphonists that more obviously figures the picturesque than does the *galant*:

Every judge of music is aware of the effects of compositions in the *minor* third of the several keys, and that by hearing of such the sweetest sensations are excited; and the artful contexture of *fugue* and *canon* are the admiration of all who are skilled in the science: These two kinds of music are in danger of being lost; for the compositions of this day are almost soley in the *major* third and their structure little better than divided counterpoint and what is still worse, on a *monotonic* bass [...] For reasons, which no-one is willing to avow, *Adagio* music is exploded and we are content to forego the Majesty and Dignity of the *Largo* and *Andante* movements, with all the variety arising from the interchange of different airs and measures, for the noise and rattle of an unisonous *Allegro*, to which no name can be given...<sup>47</sup>

It is not clear why music ‘in the *major* third’ might preclude the application of fugue and canon but the appeal against the ‘modern’ preferences of arresting *Allegro* openings with extended reiterated tonic pedals, the presentation of opposing affect, and the dramatic harnessing of surprise and shock is clear enough. (As we will see in the next section on the dispute between the Ancients and the ‘Moderns’, it is this German ‘modernism’ that eventually offended the most).

In contrasting ways both Pepusch, and Charles Avison lent their support to this polemic. Pepusch, a leading light in the Academy up till his death in 1752, and eulogized in the *Account* of the Academy, ensured that music of the preceding centuries did not, in Herbert Schueller’s phrase, ‘fall in to oblivion’.<sup>48</sup> Avison’s manifesto, on the

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<sup>46</sup> *Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music*, 11-12.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*,16-17.

<sup>48</sup> Herbert Schueller, ‘The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns’, *Music and Letters* 41/4 (1960), 319.

other hand, was expressed through a carefully considered set of compositional principles outlined in *An Essay in Musical Expression*. Avison was not an unreconstructed contrapuntist – he counsels a careful balance between attention to ‘air’ and to harmony and avoidance of giving way to ‘a dry rule of Counterpoint’.<sup>49</sup> His preference for the Italian Baroque was articulated through his championship of Geminiani, Alessandro Marcello, Arcangelo Corelli and came some years later than Pepusch’s revival of Renaissance polyphonists.<sup>50</sup>

Avison’s high visibility in the concert scene of the north east of England saw his preferences reflected in a relatively conservative repertoire in that part of the provinces. Concert programmes in the Newcastle and Durham area contained music by his favoured Italians, as well as Handel, well into the 1790s, after Avison’s death in the 1770s.<sup>51</sup> Thomas Ebdon, the organist of Durham Cathedral from 1763, was to sustain his enthusiastic stewardship and presided over a subscription series that concentrated largely on Handel oratorios until the concerts fizzled out in 1793.<sup>52</sup> This, together with London’s flourishing Madrigal Society, formed initially in 1741, The Concert of Antient Music and The Academy of Ancient Music, contributed to the establishment in late eighteenth-century England of a ‘canon’ of older works, perhaps for the first time.<sup>53</sup>

So this promulgation of a compositional ideal, be it Handelian or Geminianian, was located in a sizeable literature, centred on a like-minded and influential group of commentators and teachers – the ‘Ancients’. The Ancients’ philosophy was founded on notions of the importance of good technique, the balancing of well-crafted melody and a sound understanding of harmony, but crucially was underpinned by the repeated appeal to ‘good taste’. John Potter averred that ‘taste’ and ‘principles’ were analogous

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<sup>49</sup> *Essay*, 53.

<sup>50</sup> Avison’s influential 1752 essay gave rise some twenty years later to *The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin*. Charles Dibdin’s vigorous critique of all things German was now principally aimed at German symphonists but, into the bargain, poured forth criticism for earlier crimes against music with unrelieved counterpoint, clearly a shot across the bows of Johann Sebastian Bach. See Dibdin, *Musical Tour*, 199.

<sup>51</sup> See Norris L. Stephens, ‘Charles Avison’ in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., vol. 2, 254-6. Avison controversially asserted Geminiani’s superiority over Handel. He found Handel to be inconsistent, falling short especially when writing ‘on demand’, a view echoed by Hawkins. See also Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 212.

<sup>52</sup> See Southey, ‘Competition and Collaboration’, 55-70.

<sup>53</sup> See McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 3-5 and Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 168-97 and 248-57.

respectively to 'elegance' and 'correctness'. Principles, by which he meant training, are learnt before taste can be acquired. Music which possesses one without the other is not worth the candle.<sup>54</sup> And good taste here was invariably invoked not philosophically or aesthetically but as a clinically technical element that, whilst being often instinctive could also be 'caught' and more crucially 'taught'. 'Taste' was a term widely bandied about in 'ancient' circles. John Hawkins and John Potter were two conservatives who believed that a proper education provided the correct taste, in Hawkins's case this meant an education in the proper 'science' of music and a knowledge of musical classics. A 'taste' for modern symphonies was a different kind of taste, one governed by the transience of 'fashion'.<sup>55</sup>

It was the characteristics of the modern instrumental idiom, particularly those of German symphonies, that offended the 'ancient' mindset, which viewed as, in particular, did a figure such as Sir John Hawkins - that music that sought merely to entertain was morally degenerate:

The prevalence of a corrupt taste in music seems to be but the necessary [sic] result of that state of civil policy which enables, and that disposition which urges men to assume the character of judges of what they do not understand. The love of pleasure is the offspring of affluence, and, in proportion as riches abound, not to be susceptible of fashionable pleasures is to be the subject of reproach.<sup>56</sup>

*Picturesque* art, in its musical manifestation, with its irregularities, surprises, and provocations, lying at the extremes of the modern aesthetic, would be considered beyond the pale, as Hawkins seems to suggest at the conclusion of his *General History*:

It is obvious to men of understanding and reflection, that at different periods false notions have prevailed, not only in matters of science, where truth can only be

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<sup>54</sup> Potter, *Observations*, 6.

<sup>55</sup> See Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, vol. 2 (London: Novello, Ewer & Co., 1857), 919. Potter, referring more to the art of composition, believed that the 'correct' principles were to be acquired in order to produce tasteful music. See *Observations*, 6. Both Potter and Hawkins's ideas recall Hume's 'good judge' in that it takes 'practice' to acquire good taste. David Hume, 'Of the Standard of Taste' in *Four Dissertations* (London: A Millar, 1757), 229. One of the good judge's other requisites, that of exposure to a wide variety of examples, is less likely to have found favour with Hawkins or Potter.

<sup>56</sup> *General History*, vol. 2, 919.

investigated by the improved powers of reason, but in those arts wherein that discriminating faculty, that nameless sense, which, for want of a more proper term to define it by, we call taste, is the sole arbiter. In painting, architecture, and gardening, this truth is most apparent: the love of beauty, symmetry, and elegance, has at times given way to a passion for their contraries; fashion has interposed in subjects with which fashion has nothing to do.<sup>57</sup>

Hawkins's objections in this passage make explicit his recognition of a picturesque style of music, a style he could not countenance. But for those who not only enjoyed the modern music that Hawkins reviled, but were also willing to argue that it represented *progress*, the Ancients' formula for good taste was very much open to debate.<sup>58</sup>

### **Ancients and Moderns; Burney and Hawkins**

The tetchy disagreements between the two chroniclers, Hawkins and Charles Burney, encapsulates for historians the ancient-modern dispute, an eighteenth-century English version of an argument that had raged elsewhere in Europe and already had an (at least) two hundred year's history.<sup>59</sup> Sir John Hawkins's reputation suffers not only from his *General History*'s solipsism - and the almost unsporting comparisons with the erudite Burney - but because his claim for what constitutes true modernity and progress appears confused. Hawkins's dogmatic insistence on the pre-eminence of the ancient music of Italy from the second half of the sixteenth century to the first half of the eighteenth align him with a politically motivated group of conservatives that included Roger North, Arthur Bedford, Thomas Tudway and William Jackson. The

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 919.

<sup>58</sup> For a broad discussion on the concepts of modernity, and their contingencies in an eighteenth-century context, see Matei Calinescu, *Five Faces of Modernity: Modernism, Avant-Garde, Decadence, Kitsch, and Postmodernism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1987), 3-47. Calinescu argues that the moderns believed that taste gradually becomes refined, and that modern art constitutes a new, better form of beauty.

<sup>59</sup> See Schueller, 'The Quarrel of the Ancients and Moderns', 315. The musical antecedents for this dispute are, explains Schueller, traceable back to sixteenth-century Italy and the argument between the 'modern', Zarlino, and the 'ancient', Galilei, but also significant are the later debates in Italy, France and England about the relative merits between classical and modern literature from the early eighteenth century onwards. Eighteenth-century England's ancients and moderns rehearse some of the same arguments aired in France in the 1750s in the feud between Rameau and Rousseau.

writings of these figures tended to brook no argument about artistic merit; the 'classics' had invested in them an intellectual gravitas and moral seriousness of purpose. Only certain subjects were appropriate and a proper education was required to create as well as appreciate these great works of art. For music without a text the requisite techniques of the masters were to be harnessed and understood.<sup>60</sup> Hawkins clearly felt that aesthetic judgment in this sense was not a natural but conversely a *learned* reflex, for him the definition of taste.

But as Thomas McGahey points out, the quarrel between those who might very broadly be termed Handelians and symphonists had two levels. On the one hand, it went right to the heart of the debate about whether music was governed by the influence of the spheres and could be related to Cartesian cosmic orders or whether human nature was the best judge through the governing discernment of the ear, pitting the proponents of the quadrivium curriculum (such as Hawkins) against the psychological empiricists schooled in the writings of Bacon and Locke. Yet the dispute was waged as much on the ground as in print – between competing composers and concert promoters.<sup>61</sup>

One area in which Hawkins and Burney clearly differed was in the importance attached to music in the 'curriculum'. Hawkins felt that music (being one of these 'great arts') was an essential facet of an education and of humanity as a whole. It was capable of encompassing the most profound of sentiments and thoughts:

...the author having entertained an early love of music, and having in his more advanced age not only become sensible of its worth, but arrived at a full conviction that it was intended by the Almighty for the delight and edification of his rational creatures ...It may perhaps be objected that music is a mere recreation, and an amusement for vacant hours, conducting but little to the benefit of mankind, and therefore to be numbered among those vanities which it is wisdom to contemn [sic]. To this it may be answered, that, as a source of intellectual pleasure, music has greatly the advantage of most other recreations; and as to the other branch of the objection, let it be remembered that all our desires, all our pursuits, our occupations, and enjoyments are

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<sup>60</sup> Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 206.

<sup>61</sup> See McGahey, 'Music Literature', 410.

vain. What are stately palaces, beautiful and extensive gardens, costly furniture, sculptures, and pictures, but vanities? <sup>62</sup>

Burney, on the other hand, averred that music was not essential for man's existence but maintained that it was an adventitious luxury that civilized and bonded society, heightening its senses and therefore its capacity to live harmoniously.<sup>63</sup> Their fiercest arguments raged over Burney's championship of the symphonies of their day. Hawkins could find nothing but vacuity and showmanship in them:

To this disposition we may impute the gradual declination from the practice and example of the ablest proficients in harmony, discoverable in the compositions of the present day, which, as they abound in noise and clamour, are totally void of energy. Music of this kind, constructed without art or elegance, awakens no passion; the general uproar of a modern symphony or overture neither engages attention, nor interrupts conversation; and many persons, in the total absence of thought, flatter themselves that they are merry.<sup>64</sup>

Burney's defence often cited Haydn as the apogee of the approach under attack from Hawkins and was keen to point out the lessons learnt by Haydn from Emanuel Bach's music:

If Haydn ever looked up to any great master as a model, it seems to have been C. P. Em. Bach: the bold modulation, rests, pauses, free use of semitones, and unexpected flights of Haydn, remind us frequently of Bach's early works more than of any other composer. But in writing for violins he has surpassed his model in facility and invention; freaks, whim and even buffoonery, appear natural to Haydn, which in the works of his imitators seem downright caprice and affectation.<sup>65</sup>

John Marsh, the professional lawyer and amateur musician, regretted that concert programmes never seemed to mix ancient and modern styles, a move he felt

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<sup>62</sup> Hawkins, *General History*, Author's Dedication and preface, vol. 1, xiii.

<sup>63</sup> See Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, 133.

<sup>64</sup> *General History*, vol. 2, 918-9.

<sup>65</sup> *General History*, vol. 4, 596. The disputes between Burney and Hawkins are even enshrined in a catch by John Wall Callcott, entitled *Have You Sir John Hawkins' History?* John Wall Callcott's catch comes down emphatically on Burney's side.

would benefit all parties.<sup>66</sup> However, despite Marsh's consensual and inclusive remarks, it was clear in which camp he belonged:

From the great change, which took place in the style of instrumental music about forty years ago, so as to produce a perfect contrast to the music before that period, by the mixture of wind and string instruments, introduced in the modern symphony, and from this happening at once, and without any regular gradation, it has been ever since too much the fashion for musical amateurs to attach themselves to one of the two styles, and to reprobate the other. Elderly people in general prefer, as is natural enough, the style they have been used to, and complain of the inferiority of the present basses to those of the ancient composers, as well as of the want of fugue and labored contrivance in modern pieces; whilst others, admiring the brilliancy of the modern symphony, think, that the ancient music is dull, that it is deficient in light and shade, and that what contrivance there is in it is intelligible only to professors, and some few amateur performers.<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore Marsh was able to demonstrate that symphonies by Haydn were both popular and great because of their skilled synthesis of ancient and modern *in the same movement*:

It now seems improbable that the modern style would have [...] failed in turn [...] had not the great Haydn by his wonderful contrivance, by the variety and eccentricity of his modulation, by his judicious dispersion of light and shade, and happy manner of blending simple and intelligible air with abstruse and complicated harmony, greatly improved the latter [modern] species of composition, insomuch that, instead of being able, as was before the case, to anticipate in great measure the second part of any movement, from its uniform relation to the foregoing, it is on the contrary, in his works, impossible to conceive what will follow, and a perpetual interest is kept up.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> See *A Comparison Between the Ancient and Modern Styles of Music*, reprinted in *Music and Letters* 36/2 (1955), with an introduction by John Cudworth, 155-64. In the concert programmes that Marsh supervised in Chichester he deliberately juxtaposed new and old music in the programmes. See Brewer, *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 403.

<sup>67</sup> John Marsh, *Hints to Young Composers of Instrumental Music, Illustrated with 2 movements for a Grand Orchestra, in Score* (London: Clementi et al., 1805), 1.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

Several English composers joined Sir John Hawkins in marginalizing the music of Haydn and fellow symphonists. We cannot be certain which symphonies they refer to, nor indeed whether they might be described as picturesque, but the reactions certainly engender a strong hostility to a foreign, tasteless ‘otherness’: Thomas Robertson, writing in 1784, found the ‘unlimited modulation’ of Haydn’s music distasteful<sup>69</sup> as did William Jackson who, in a phrase that recalls Carl Friedrich Cramer’s remarks about Emanuel Bach’s fantasias as ‘method behind madness’, likened the symphonies of ‘later composers’ to the ‘ravings of a Bedlamite [...] sometimes the key is perfectly lost by wandering so far from it’.<sup>70</sup> Jackson, who was, as we have seen, concerned that the English too often harked back to the glories of Handel, felt unable here to present Haydn as an example for forward-looking English composers.

For the composer, Charles Dibdin, the ‘strong effusions of genius turned into frenzy’ aroused his displeasure.<sup>71</sup> In *The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin* (1788), in a colourful turn of phrase that clearly *does* censure the musical picturesque, Dibdin likens Haydn to ‘a rope-dancer who, though you cannot too much admire how prettily he frisks and jumps about, keeps you in a constant state of terror and anxiety for fear he should break his neck’.<sup>72</sup> In the *Musical Tour* he broadens his attack by accusing ‘Germans’ of novelty for its own sake and vapid, ear-catching provocations:

As to the other *Germans* - as they have no *opera*, so they import no vocal music; and thus by torturing sounds into new positions, to make old ideas wear a novel shape,

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<sup>69</sup> McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 160. McVeigh, however, points out that Robertson later acknowledged the excitement that this approach could engender in the listener.

<sup>70</sup> William Jackson of Exeter, *Observations on the Present State of Music in London* (Printed for A. Gruebber et al.: Dublin, 1791), 16-17. Here Jackson apparently associates musical incomprehensibility with mental illness. This contrasts compellingly with Friedrich Rochlitz’s study, published in an 1804 issue of *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung*, of the inmate of a lunatic asylum named Karl who played the keyboard with such sensitivity and had a gift for tuning pianos. This is generally symptomatic of a preparedness on the behalf of German commentators to be able to contemplate, and assimilate, discourses of insanity in a musical context. See Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 130 and 145-9 for her discussion of Cramer on Bach fantasias.

<sup>71</sup> Dibdin, *Musical Tour*, 182.

<sup>72</sup> *Ibid.*, 182.

*difficulty* is the only characteristic of their compositions; and by this means the ear gets accustomed *not* to what *pleases* in music, but to what *surprises*.<sup>73</sup>

Once again the picturesque is invoked through references to 'surprises' and even 'old ideas' [that] 'wear a novel shape'. Charles Dibdin's resentment towards German symphonists is writ large in his *Musical Tour* and, whilst his criticism is presented in the form of an objection to their technical methods, he is undoubtedly motivated by jealously: Dibdin was writing here at a time when he had been ostracized by the whole of the London musical establishment who were fed up with his irascible and unreliable nature. His anti-capitalist sentiments also perhaps betray an unconscious adoption of the role of spokesman for English composers, uneasy about diminished opportunities and limited exposure. Dibdin's attack betrays the anxieties of a home-grown musician sensing that his musical 'turf' was under siege from foreign composers:

Nothing is more certain than that music-sellers set their faces against composers of acknowledged talents. They give immense sums for whatever performances are heard at the theatres, not because of their merit but because they stand a chance of being popular, but the private productions of Englishmen, whose labours would do infinite credit to the cause of music, are treated with contempt, and suffered to remain unpublished, while the kingdom is inundated with German compositions, which, I will be bold to pronounce, is the very innovation that has gone so far towards the destruction of musical simplicity. It is not therefore because these German compositions are superior to English ones, that they have a better sale, but because the copy-right costs nothing. The mode of their introduction to the public is exactly the same as would be the mode of introduction to English compositions. The music-seller publishes a set of lessons, his journeymen, the teachers, circulate these lessons at the schools; and thus, good or bad, they instantly become a fashion and we all know that under the influence of fashion, beauty is neglected for deformity, and nature turned into caricature.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 99. Dibdin appears to have overlooked the fact that German opera thrived in such centres as Berlin, Munich and Stuttgart. It is possible he was dealing in value judgements, though, and meant they have no 'good' opera.

<sup>74</sup> Charles Dibdin, *A Letter on Musical Education, by Mr. Dibdin; Addressed to a Father, and Through Him to Those Parents whose Particular Pleasure is the Accomplishment of Their Children* (London: 1791), 16-17.

These symphonies had found an enthusiastic audience among English concert-goers; but for Dibdin this was a sure sign of their debased quality; they appealed to a public engaged in an endless quest for the new.

All of these discussions point to a problem of intelligibility, centred not on the complexities of dense counterpoint but on confusing lurches of affect, mood and style. Jackson felt that Haydn favoured 'dischords so entangled that it is past the art of man to untie the knot'.<sup>75</sup> The case of Haydn's Symphony No. 53, *L'Impériale*, is germane here. The work was repeatedly programmed in concerts in the 1780s and, as Roger Fiske points out, audiences were reported to be fascinated by the wide-ranging modulations of the development section in the opening movement. For Fiske, this is explained by Haydn's treatment of material which 'did not involve much counterpoint' and so listeners found the argument 'easy to follow and fascinatingly novel'.<sup>76</sup> The Ancients, on the other hand, demanded to know what 'excessive modulation' signified - and frenzy was of course to be frowned upon. Burney invoked his friend Dr Johnson when explicating the seeming incomprehensibility of Emanuel Bach's music:

Emmanuel Bach used to be censured for his extraneous modulations, crudities and difficulties; but like the hard works of Dr. Johnson, to which the public by degrees became reconciled, every German composer takes the same liberties now as Bach, and every English writer uses Johnson's language with impunity.<sup>77</sup>

Burney had clearly reached a 'reconciliation' with this music, had assimilated its 'difficulties' and 'liberties', and it is therefore tempting to suggest that he counselled both a patience, and an intellectual rigour, that he felt was clearly lacking amongst Dibdin and his fellow complainants. Burney explains that several of Bach's works received a critical lashing because critics did not know, 'the circumstances that gave them birth [...] or the author's original intention'. Bach, Burney goes on, felt his

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<sup>75</sup> *The Harmonicum* 4 (1826), 46.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., see, 250. Jones and Hawkins deplored the methods modern composers used for developing thematic material. Perhaps they had Haydn in their sights for the techniques of motivic 'saturation' employed in, say, the opus 33 Quartets and, perhaps the *L'Impériale* symphony. See Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 211.

<sup>77</sup> Burney, *General History*, vol. 4, 596.

principal keyboard works were those where, 'he indulged his own feelings and ideas' and composed in, 'the most vocal manner possible'.<sup>78</sup>

William Crotch's opinions, which we encountered in the previous chapter, though comparatively more diplomatic, had a polemical dimension, framed by a burgeoning rediscovery of older music and an unswerving fealty to the Handelian style.<sup>79</sup> As we have seen, 'ancient' attitudes seemed deliberately to harden in the face of these stylistic facets, without actually recognizing them as being picturesque. Notwithstanding Uvedale Price's thoughts about the picturesque and music, it is not until 1805 when Crotch emphatically attributed these tendencies to the *sound* of the picturesque, or the 'Ornamental' as he prefers to call it, that this is exposed in critical English literature. Crotch was in his twenties when he delivered his 'Several Courses of Lectures in Music', and relatively fresh from his Oxford doctorate in Music. His lectures show that he was, to some extent, infected with an English conservatism which still seemed to prevail in English criticism at this time. Notwithstanding his reservations over Haydn's strivings to be witty, Crotch even-handedly described Haydn in his correspondence to Burney as 'original, ingenious and extraordinary'. Crotch was most critical of composition that seeks to 'amuse and surprise', and dazzle by means of novelty with 'powerful effects, strong contrasts and sudden transitions';<sup>80</sup> musical wit is the ornamental's stock-in-trade and, as it is incompatible with 'delicate refinements of taste', is present in 'low' music which seeks merely to entertain.<sup>81</sup> Thus wit places the ornamental-picturesque below the beautiful and the sublime in the aesthetic hierarchy.<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Ibid., vol. 4, 596. This calls to mind Bach's 'speaking principle'. See Carl Dahlhaus, *Realism in Nineteenth-Century Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 22.

<sup>79</sup> For an account of the Academy of Ancient Music's development and programming, see *Account of the Institution and Progress of the Academy of Ancient Music*; Simon McVeigh, introduction to *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain*.

<sup>80</sup> Crotch, *Substance*, 19; 80.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>82</sup> See Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 110-1. Simon McVeigh confusingly, in this context, concludes that the modern symphony's identity is fashioned by its embodiment of all three of these aesthetic categories. See *Concert Life*, 161 as well as A. Peter Brown in 'The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental', 44-71.

Yet although Crotch associated this approach with Haydn's symphonies, it is his choral music, chiefly *The Creation*, which he finds most objectionable. Sacred choral music for Crotch evidently demands a certain decorum and believes that, as the 'buffoonery' in Shakespeare's tragedies invite censure, 'some subjects, some passages, some movements, strike me as too light for the Sacred Oratorio'. Conversely, Crotch found himself agreeing with Benjamin Latrobe's appraisal of Haydn as being 'Admirable in his Piano Forte Music [...] In his quartetts without a rival [...] Infinitely superior to every composer of symphonies'.<sup>83</sup> Ironically it is the abstract application of the symphonic picturesque in an oratorio that most exercises Crotch.<sup>84</sup>

So the widespread (if by no means universal) hostility to foreign progressives amongst influential critics did not improve the situation for home-grown composers. The infiltration of those progressives soaked up all the best positions for composers in the capital; the road to wealth and influence was paved with 'modern' materials but modern style invited opprobrium from a significant body of the cognoscenti. The irony is almost painfully sharp.

### **Music and the English gentleman**

Taste, for Hawkins and his ilk, could only be acquired through an education, a knowledge of the central tenets enshrined in theology, classical philosophy and art.<sup>85</sup> In music, this notion manifested itself in the establishment of an agreed canon of classics and was extended in appeals to avoid unnecessary affectation, histrionics or virtuosity in modern music. And in the same way that propriety and grace were

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<sup>83</sup> Letter to Burney, March 1805 in Appendix to Burney, *General History*, vol. 2 of 1935 edition, with critical and historical notes by Frank Mercer (London: G.T. Foulis, 1935), 1039.

<sup>84</sup> As we shall see in chapter 6, Haydn's employment of the 'low' picturesque finds a suitable location in an oratorio on a so-called 'low' subject, *The Seasons*. Here I argue that Haydn's use of the picturesque techniques, to which Crotch refers, convince particularly since they are deployed to illustrate visual ideas.

<sup>85</sup> Hawkins's opponent, Charles Burney, whilst acknowledging this, was also concerned to appeal for a more democratic basis for taste formation that accounted for the views of the common man. See Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, 206-11.

recognized as the correct behaviour for gentlemen of taste, comic disruptions in North German music were discouraged for upsetting an agreed sense of decorum.<sup>86</sup>

But was this 'ancient' notion of good taste one that the educated man-about-town might recognize or was it a narrow, academic distinction that failed to allow for matters of taste in art to be considered in the round? For many educated urban gentlemen in the eighteenth-century, enthusiasm for music itself, let alone certain types or styles of music, was considered unbecoming and unmanly.<sup>87</sup> There is a substantial literature devoted to a peculiarly late eighteenth-century English antipathy towards the theatre and especially music in general. Lord Chesterfield's admission that, when he attended an opera, he left his 'sense and reason at the door', betrayed - beyond a mere critique of Italian opera - a common scepticism that music could aspire to the intellectual and moral planes of literature, sculpture or painting, and was widely viewed as no more elevated than frivolous entertainment.<sup>88</sup> In a letter to his son dated June 1749, Chesterfield averred that, 'a taste of sculpture and painting is, in my mind, as becoming as a taste of fiddling and piping is unbecoming a man of fashion. The former is connected with history and poetry; the latter, with nothing but bad company'.<sup>89</sup> This view might have sounded like philistine pragmatism if expressed within earshot of foreign visiting musicians but the likes of Chesterfield and the Whig peer, Henry Richard Vassal Fox, positively revelled in this position.<sup>90</sup> Garret Wellesley,

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<sup>86</sup> See Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 130 The contemporary musicological association of the *galant* with a post-1750 'enlightened', anti-Hawkins reaction against the enmeshed counterpoint of the Baroque and the limitations of its codified passions, its *Affektenlehre*, is particularly unhelpful when considering the late eighteenth-century society gentleman's attitude to manners, social behaviour and taste relating to the arts since, as we have seen, both ancient and modern camps claim that good taste is on their side.

<sup>87</sup> For a broader discussion about the behaviour and manners of the urban middle class gentleman in the eighteenth century, see David Castronovo, *The English Gentleman: Images and Ideals in Literature and Society* (New York: Ungar, 1987), especially 36-40.

<sup>88</sup> This is an English view expressed at the beginning of the eighteenth century by Addison. Addison, even went as far as stating that the lack of English opera during his lifetime indicated that the English were 'higher-minded' than the French or the Italians. See Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 44.

<sup>89</sup> *Chesterfield's Letters to his Son* (New York: Dodge Publishing Co., c. 1897), 108. The poet, George Cowper also belittled the status of the musician when, in his poem, *The Task* he expressed incredulity that a commemoration for a mere composer (Handel) could be held in a house of God. See *The Task* (Ilkley; London: Scolar Press, 1973), Book VI, lines 630-55. For an in-depth discussion of Cowper's position - and the opposition to it of poet, Anne Seward - see Gillen D'Arcy Wood, *Romanticism and Music Culture in Britain, 1770-1840: Virtue and Virtuosity* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 20-54.

<sup>90</sup> See Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 62.

the 1st Earl of Mornington, and the father of The Duke of Wellington, was considered by his circle to be rather eccentric in playing the violin; indeed his son, a promising violinist himself, soon found his musical pursuits embarrassed him and gave up the instrument as soon as he began his military career.<sup>91</sup>

This intellectual debate about good taste and the concomitant traducing of music seems to identify a section of polite society that either resisted music altogether or attended performances without seeing the activity as anything more than a pleasant diversion and an opportunity of mixing and 'networking' in like-minded circles. This may be confirmed by the notable existence of a very visible London *beau monde*, a tightly knit social group who would enthusiastically patronize a great many concerts in the capital as a focus for meeting, greeting, seeing and being seen.<sup>92</sup>

'Fashion' and 'good taste' in this context, whilst not necessarily engendering a neat binary distinction, nevertheless present a degree of separation – music seen as a convenient focus for social interaction through entertainment but not necessarily a desirable pursuit for the educated, and enlightened.<sup>93</sup> The empiricism of John Locke, his belief that only the quantifiable and experienced were intellectually viable, provides, a century later than its emergence, the philosophical backdrop to these sentiments. Since Locke's theories held powerful sway over Enlightenment theoreticians in England, music could only suffer.<sup>94</sup> Locke was scathing about it: it was not 'natural' or 'reasoned' and in education it should have no place:

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<sup>91</sup> *Personal Reminiscences of The Duke of Wellington by Francis, The First Earl of Ellesmere*, edited with a memoir of Lord Ellesmere by his daughter Alice, Countess of Strafford (London: John Murray, 1903), 80.

<sup>92</sup> See William Weber, 'Musical Culture and the Capital City: The Epoch of the *Beau Monde* in London, 1700-1870' in *Concert Life in Eighteenth Century Britain*, 71-89.

<sup>93</sup> For both the late eighteenth-century aristocracy and emerging *bourgeoisie*, fashion and good taste were seen to meld more convincingly in the pursuit of luxury goods and artefacts, especially since the acquirement of such possessions and the aspiration towards an *identity* through luxury was given philosophical authenticity and moral authority by David Hume (and earlier in the century by Bernard Mandeville in *The Fable of the Bees*). See M. Berg and E. Egar, 'The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates' in *Luxury in the Eighteenth Century: Debates, Desires and Delectable Goods*, eds. Maxine Berg and Elizabeth Eger (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002), 15-24.

<sup>94</sup> See Edward Feser, *Locke* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007), 1-28, 163-72.

*Musick* is thought to have some affinity with Dancing, and a good Hand upon some Instruments is by many People mightily valued. But it wastes so much of a young Man's Time to gain but a moderate Skill in it; And engages often in such odd Company, that many think it much better spared: And I have amongst men of Parts and Business, so seldom heard any one commended, or esteemed for having an Excellency in *Musick*, that amongst all those Things, that ever came into the Lists of Accomplishments, I think I may give it the last Place.<sup>95</sup>

As we have seen, however, the arch-empiricist, Burney, struck a far more nuanced stance on music. Whilst acknowledging that music was not a necessity, he held that life was very much poorer without it.

The pervasiveness of Lockean thought in eighteenth-century England prefigured a creeping secularization that, on the one hand, can explain the relegation of music from the 'sound of the spheres' to the background noise of the chattering classes. It could be said also to have influenced the new Puritanism in the Anglican church - and, moreover, the nascent denomination, Methodism - that rejected the Popery and ecclesiastical ritual that had gradually pervaded since the Glorious Revolution of 1688. Music was perceived to be a part of this indulgence, and organ voluntaries and sung canticles were widely dispensed with.<sup>96</sup>

Harry Diack Johnstone, doubts whether English composers prior to, during and immediately following Haydn's visits, even had the ability, inclination and wherewithal to 'move the senses', affected as they were by a 'growing rationalism', a wariness and suspicion of 'inspiration and enthusiasm'. Johnstone cites a new attitude reflected in a society that values a kind of pragmatic materialism, trusting in the new scientific god of progress that delivers the Industrial Revolution, logically extending the Lockean rationalism that pervaded the close of the century.<sup>97</sup> Dr John Brown, in his *Dissertation on the Rise, Union, and Power, the Progressions, Separations and Corruptions of Poetry and Music* of 1763 even suggested that high art was not intrinsic to the Anglo-Saxon

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<sup>95</sup> John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education*, ninth edn. (Dublin: S. Powell, 1728), 302.

<sup>96</sup> See Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 53-8.

<sup>97</sup> H. Diack Johnstone, preface to *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, xv.

psyche as they were a ‘colonizing’ people<sup>98</sup>. Thirty years on, Britain’s activities on the world stage made it hard to demur. In this atmosphere the determined self-improvement of a Haydn and driven ambition of a Mozart was simply unlikely to be found. Johnstone goes on to invoke Nikolaus Pevsner’s pronouncement in the Reith Lectures of 1955 that conservatism is ‘a power of long standing in English art’, all too appropriate, he says, for the late Georgian era.<sup>99</sup>

So ‘good taste’ was discussed both in the context of the typology of art-forms (for instance, Lord Chesterfield’s disdain for music as an art) and, in a subset of this, within a musical forum (the ancient-modern quarrel). Certain types of music were tasteful for some but for others music *per se* could not be representative of good taste. Both the ancient that held music to be a pillar of the fine arts, and the modern, who believed it should hold a place in a civilized person’s life, took a number of blows. And these developments could only inhibit any embryonic English musical picturesque as defined by Price and Crotch. The invitation to imaginative ruminations provided by the peregrinations of an Emanuel Bach fantasia, or the suggestion of extra-musical narrative of a Haydn symphony, would be derided as vacuous by some, and not worth attempting by others.

In English music of the late eighteenth century, identities tend to be forged in a negative sense – English music signified by what it is *not* and from what it disassociates itself. It is possible to trace a curious mixture of, on the one hand, suspicion of foreigners ‘abroad in our land’ and, on the other, a faddish yen for the musical fashions of another country. The former attitude is found in English composers’ resentment at foreign colonization of musical posts and the Ancients’ disapproval of modern music. The latter is exemplified in the demand of audiences of various different social groups for Italian opera, foreign symphonies, concertos and sonatas. Inherent in this mixture is a clear disjunction between composers and theorists on the one hand and consumers on the other. Thus it is perfectly plausible to account for the notable absence of picturesque style in English music through the first group’s alignment of picturesque alternation of affect with a particular ‘foreign’ flamboyance and disregard for ‘rules’ of

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<sup>98</sup> Cited in Beedell, *The Decline of the English Musician*, 44.

<sup>99</sup> Johnstone, preface, *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, xv.

taste and propriety of gesture and the second group's tolerance, patronage and sponsorship of a flourishing coterie of composers from overseas.

### **The English absence and the search for a presence**

Several tropes emerge from this overview: the powerful lobby of ancients and their complex about modern, invariably foreign 'improvement'; the displacement of native born artists by the forces of capitalism that favoured European opportunists and pushed them to the margins through the commodification of the concert scene; the growing debate about what it is to be English, British or foreign and how to be a true gentleman; and to what extent a shared national identity is necessary to repel alien threats and to present a united front to that threat. Our search for the picturesque in English music necessarily holds these tropes at the forefront of our considerations.

Through the persistent bolstering of a Handelian stylistic benchmark, the backward and restricted instructional treatises and the powerful 'ancient' lobby against the ear-catching novelty of 'foreign' instrumental music, experimentation with a 'picturesque' compositional mode was a venture widely discouraged. Furthermore, English composers inclined to air such music in public found the concert scene hard to penetrate; battling with the foreign competition was often a fruitless pursuit. The negativity towards the profession of music, particularly composing, also prevented a robust national culture of new music, a national school as in painting, poetry and gardening, to develop. And this negativity has affected the historiography associated with the period – English musical histories have been disinclined to search beyond these stories to try and uncover a native musical movement operating outside the structures erected through canonical procedures.

But this discourse speaks, loud and clear, of an aporia, a disconnect. England is the cradle of the picturesque. And yet, by all definitions of picturesque music that we have, English composers were unwilling to, were incapable of and were discouraged from writing this kind of music. But I am not ready to accept this version of events. Some English composers *did* find a home in the profession, homes widely considered

by historians as specialized and insignificant, thus helping to exclude music produced there from the canon. Might not picturesque enthusiasm amongst these composers be articulated in their work?

In what sense *could* a nascent awakening to the glory of English countryside, celebrated in the purple prose of the tourist guide, and captured and glorified within the frames of landscape pictures and landscaped gardens, register with the English composer? Can it be traced at all in his music? Is a sense of national pride in the English landscape a viable topic for English music of this period? Could the English composer, through their music, *have a say* in the debates about what pleases in scenes of landscape in general, and English landscape in particular, through their music? The picturesque is so much a part of English culture by the century's end that it is inconceivable that English music might not participate.

### **3 The abstract, suggestive and representational picturesque**

If we are satisfied that the rubric founded on the writings of Price and Crotch, the German reception of Emanuel Bach's fantasias and Haydn's 'London' symphonies is the only game in town then England might justifiably be thought of as the picturesque land without picturesque music. But what if, instead of tracing patterns in the score, discussing the vexed arguments about styles and their mixture and interpreting the language of wordless music as a notional 'appearance' of the picturesque aesthetic, a shift of focus towards the language and sentiment of the texts set in 'lower' forms, such as English song and opera, was considered? An examination of their *subject matter* and the particular musical voices found in the utterance of this subject matter promises a more fruitful method of illuminating these connections.

This chapter prepares the way for this change of direction by formulating new associations between the picturesque and music that move away from the search for analogues of design, and the subjective response of the viewer-listener, and refocus on the real landscape itself and the language used to eulogize about it – the places that are painted, written about and visited. This is sentimental behaviour enacted by the English people about the English natural environment. I will then be able to show that English music contributes not only to the shared national aesthetic of landscape appreciation but also a nationalistic sentiment enfolded within a more literal, vivid, pictorial sense of the picturesque.

English music might not fit analytical perceptions of picturesque music as, to paraphrase William Shenstone's call for buildings to wear the clothing of weathered decay, being 'irregular of surface and pleasing in its variety'.<sup>1</sup> Yet is it possible that English music could observe and communicate affection about the countryside in a different fashion, through heightened (sung and harmonized) utterances of the English language and an illustrative, pictorial language of sound? Which English composers most participated in the rural celebration found in English landscape poetry and painting, and most communed with their creators?

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<sup>1</sup> Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, quoted, 48.

Answers to these questions ought to go some way to fill the apparent picturesque vacuum in late eighteenth-century English music. In this chapter I set up these interdisciplinary picturesque connections, reinforcing them by first examining the British critical debate about imitation and expression and contemporaneous discussions about its interfaces with literature and painting. Secondly, I reveal the shared aesthetic ground between painting, poetry and the picturesque and how music, in harnessing poems and pictures, belongs with them. But first, having uncovered the reasons for the English indifference to a certain theory of the musical picturesque, I need to show that the problem at hand lies not with English music but with existing theories of the picturesque. The reason why the connections cannot be made is because these theories, reliant solely on matters of reception, are ill-equipped to reveal the connections that I believe to be present.

### **Nuancing the abstract picturesque**

For Annette Richards, musicology's service to the picturesque is to 'shed new light on the fantastical elements of instrumental music...[by] C. P. E. Bach, Haydn and Beethoven', a postmodern rescue act for a 'critical form that has lost its currency'. Since, as Richards admits, the picturesque is a 'visual mode', this takes a lot of explaining.<sup>2</sup> This is a task she undertakes in her landmark monograph, *The Free Fantasia and the Musical Picturesque*. Richards's methodology has little use for what she calls the 'colloquial' picturesque, which would involve the recognition of 'pastoral associations or obvious pictorialism' and instead favours the abstract qualities inherent in the picturesque - irregularity, freedom from formal regulations, narrative disruption - as critical tools for surveying the maverick originalities of Emanuel Bach's and Haydn's late symphonies.<sup>3</sup> Richards's intention is to create new readings of the central Viennese classics, participating in the reconfiguration of the historical narrative - the simplistic bifurcation of music pre and post 1750 - and privileging matters of

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<sup>2</sup> *The Free Fantasia*, abstract.

<sup>3</sup> *The Free Fantasia*, 5.

aesthetics over formalistic analysis (although, as we shall see, this approach leads back inevitably to a close examination of the score).

This intention to concentrate on abstract, non-mimetic notions of the picturesque conveniently allows Richards to move with a critical tide that seeks to explain instrumental works of the late eighteenth century in terms of absolute, self-referential music, the sound of universal truths rather than ventriloquial effects. Unpacking how these sonic narratives might work leads Richards to seek 'intersections' with picturesque theory with its technical rules about *flouting* conventions, bending straight lines, confounding expectations, prompting sentimental reflection and rumination. The invitation of the landscape garden to explore and to discover, to walk its grounds reflectively, provided a happy temporal analogy with the listening experience, the work as layout and design, the score as landscape. Moreover the division of aesthetic categories by Uvedale Price into a tripartite system of beautiful, sublime *and* picturesque allows both a continuation of the recent musicological emphasis on aesthetics and, at the same time, enriching, sophisticating and nuancing the existing discourse.

Richards's theoretical conceit relies on connections made by contemporaneous critics such as Carl Friedrich Cramer, Johann Nikolaus Forkel, Christian Friederich Michaelis and Johann Karl Friedrich Triest between the irregular, digressive, quasi-improvisational tactics of Haydn and Emmanuel Bach, and the landscaping of English landscape gardens. That there was increasingly a taste for English gardening styles in Germany appears to explain both the popularity of works fashioned in this way and allows the speculation that these composers were, intentionally or not, in tune with the prevailing *Geist*. Inherent in this is a particularly eighteenth-century sensitivity - or at least a growing awareness amongst exponents of the sister arts - to an audience beyond a narrow group of patrons. Agreed commonalities of gesture and poetic strategy (employing terms such as 'variety' and 'novelty') could be discussed in isolation from considerations of meaning or message. In other words this is a clinical

analysis of form and the reaction to form.<sup>4</sup> The suggestion that music possessed of the picturesque sensibility entices the listener or performer towards contemplation of landscape accommodates the notion of music as a catalyst, prompting reflections on the self in the landscape and a landscape that is imaginary and personal; a landscape emphatically not represented, portrayed, painted or real in any way.

In addition to visual referents Richards asks us to consider that the voracious German appetite for the eccentric writing of Laurence Sterne belongs also to this German predilection for disruptions of form and diversions from the narrative trunk route. This is broadened into a discussion about humour. Haydn, according to Triest, is a jester just like Sterne's Yorick in *Sentimental Journey*.<sup>5</sup> Humour is not inimical to English landscape appreciation. But its appearance in this discourse shows how far Richards has travelled from the source of the theory.

The viewing of the German reception of English landscape gardens and the novels of Sterne as a Teutonic sympathy with the English picturesque found in the 'returned compliments' of Haydn and Emanuel Bach's music, can look like a series of historicist projections built on a sequence of happy accidents. And ultimately German comparisons between Bach fantasias and Sterne novels are a function of the German critical impulse to account and rationalize - and to a certain extent defend - the waywardness of Bach's genius. Making connections between Sterne's style and the picturesque is, however, a function of the contemporaneous German reception. Sterne's novels do not appear in any English discourses on the picturesque, either in the eighteenth century or today.

Furthermore, in this discourse the topic of natural landscape gets obscured in order to admit this music *post facto* into the realm of absolute music, music about itself, the sound of universal, philosophical truths.<sup>6</sup> Such analogies inevitably lapse into abstracted theories of form and design; that is unless the critic pursues the notion of the fantasias possessing what might be termed a 'narrative' – Sterne's play with

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<sup>4</sup> For discussion of the notion of listening to form in music, see Marc Evan Bonds on the contemplation of musical construction in his discussion of late eighteenth-century instrumental music in *Music as Thought* (Princeton, N.J; Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2006), 29-48.

<sup>5</sup> *The Free Fantasia*, 142.

<sup>6</sup> See Rehding, 'Eco-Musicology', 313-9.

conventions of story-telling and plot mapped onto Bach's non sequiters, diversions and digressions.<sup>7</sup> In these cases, the music can be perceived to be in a dialogic relationship with the picturesque, a function of the ways in which it is heard and experienced – its reception. Nonetheless, when German writers, particularly when referring to a particular brand of humour (*Laune*), talked of a certain kind of narrative strategy that could be traced also in their knowledge of English landscape gardens, much admired in Germany at the time, their recognition of shared rhetorical techniques between Bach, Haydn and English landscape gardens can only be considered a convenience. There was no equivalent German word for picturesque and thus an overarching aesthetic rubric that allowed Bach, Sterne and English landscape gardens into its remit is somewhat elusive. Canons are reinforced in myriad ways. This picturesque discourse applies another coat of academic varnish to the Austro-German canonic behemoth – more proof that there are inexhaustible reserves of critical thought to be expended on this repertory. But there is something unspoken here, something disturbingly anomalous. This story is about an *English* sensibility, imported to the continent and either admired, digested and assimilated by Emanuel Bach and Haydn or acquired by some mysterious process of osmosis or trans-North Sea pollination (that old saw of being 'in the air').

Our existing framework for the musical picturesque not only makes us not look hard enough for it but also makes us look in the wrong places. The theory begins to look a little flimsy when we consider its basis in a rather too neat piece of abstraction. To talk of instrumental music in terms of its irregularity of phrase, subversions of formal expectation, and harmonic wanderings from 'the path' is in fact a musicological approach rooted in analogy and formalism. The danger is for the late symphonies of Haydn and the fantasias of Emanuel Bach to be taxonomically badged as the picturesque by one remove whereby the picturesque object becomes a musical score inscribed with the analyst's markings. 'Design' and 'narrative' rather than 'sound', 'topic' or even 'subject' then become the lenses through which the musical picturesque is observed. This approach seems to lead inexorably back to the score, to analysis of

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<sup>7</sup> Equally, for those intent on the idea of musical language possessing a doctrine of grammar, syntax, and form, Bach's play with conventional musical language might be perceived to produce incomprehensibility, a musical nonsense. See Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning*, 193-4.

compositional techniques and strategies as if we are interrogating the composer, grafting in a study rather than enquiring into the immediacy and efficacy of the work itself, and, as a corollary to this, investigate its meanings.<sup>8</sup>

Formal analysis does of course have a crucial role to play in our exploration of music's share of the picturesque aesthetic. And musical formulations of the picturesque that make possible cognitive receptions such as contemplation, sentiment and fantasy about the natural landscape must surely be ruled in. Abstractions that refer inwards to codes of technique and craft, however, must reflect outwards to connect with these aspects of the imagination, these *listening* responses that are persuaded towards narrative and reflective impulses by the thread of the sonic narrative. Only then can we unlock reasons for why these shared artistic strategies across disciplines appear to unite and coalesce at this historical moment.

It is my contention that the picturesque is so ubiquitous an expression of national identity that its presence assuredly *must* lurk amongst the music of English composers; the absence of any primary sources detailing a putative involvement of English composers in the picturesque movement should not put us off the trail – *any* literature on English music was scarce at the time. Although, as I stated in the previous chapter, musicians were sometimes looked down upon as being a little eccentric, there is a great deal of evidence of painters, poets and gardeners mixing socially, providing us with the ballast to argue that picturesque ideas were discussed, shared and experienced mutually.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Lawrence Kramer is perhaps the most trenchant critic of 'transcendental' procedures of formalism. See 'The Musicology of the Future', *Repercussions* 1/1 (Spring 1992), 1-18 and the preface to *Classical Music and Postmodern Knowledge* (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> For instance, Thomas Gainsborough and Uvedale Price were keen musicians. Uvedale Price (an acquaintance of Charles Burney) and Lancelot 'Capability' Brown belonged to glee clubs for a while. See Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, Appendix A.

### **Towards a representational picturesque music**

The distinctions I seek to make here are between two discrete types of utterance: first, that which may cause synaesthetic responses in the listener who finds pictures amongst the sounds (the picturesque in the mind); and second, painting, gardening, literature and music that seeks to convey messages about the pleasure taken in scenes of nature (the 'intentional' picturesque). The first type embodies a well-known idea of Edmund Burke, who in *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful* wrote that as a function of the essential harmony of our senses people tend to perceive similar causes in the different senses, thus explaining the strong human tendency to see visions in noises and to claim to know the taste of something they have only experienced as smell.<sup>10</sup> This is quite different from the isomorphism recognized by Adam Smith which relates instead to my second (mimetic) type. Smith, accepting that music can seek to imitate, believed that the disparity between the imitated and the imitating gives pleasure. The artists and receiver are satisfied by the resemblance but take pleasure also in the difference.

#### *Classifying picturesque musical types*

Applications of the picturesque to music can perhaps best be understood within *four* categories with the two utterances each split into two:

#### **RECEPTION:**

**The Suggestive (promotes thoughts about the picturesque - landscape or scenes of nature):** this category figures the listener's imagination of pictorial scenes, prompted to ponder, to reflect and *visualize* meaning by music that arrests their attention through the subversion of expectation and convention.

**The Analytic (like the picturesque - transference):** this formulation is the domain of the analyst who aims to account for receptions such as those above by seeking

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<sup>10</sup> *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Sublime and the Beautiful*, ed., Boulton, 18 and also Price, *Essay on the Picturesque*, 56. The synaesthetic reception of Haydn's London symphonies in the local press is also germane here. See, for instance, Landon, *The Symphonies of Joseph Haydn*, 435-551.

causes of such responses in the score. This formulation works through the metonymic use of terms such as 'irregular', 'surprising' and 'ornamental'.

### **POESIS:**

**Music and Poetry (of the picturesque):** where picturesque poetry is set to music.

Here the words and their sentiments are orated in a 'heightened' fashion through singing, and through the synthesis of different vocal lines. Not only is the poetry *spoken* through the music, the musical setting also offers interpretation and illustration.

**The Representational (about the picturesque):** whilst the musical setting of the text is clearly in one sense a 'representation', when music without words strives to imitate scenes and visions it carries the representational burden alone. When the scenes are taken from beautiful nature, this music evinces the picturesque. 'Characteristic' music with a stated 'programme' and tone-painting such as in Haydn's *The Seasons* belong in this category. Theatre music can clearly encompass both this type and the poetic.

The concentration on the first two types of theory in recent scholarship has thrown up two aporia: firstly, if the picturesque is predominantly an English aesthetic and style, why is it that only foreign composers appear to be in tune with it? Secondly, English music is left marooned by this analysis, cut adrift from the picturesque concerns occupying the nation's artists in other spheres.

So from this point, I want to focus on music's participation with the picturesque where it is shown to either work in conjunction with (in the musical setting of) written texts on picturesque subjects, or, occasionally, without a text where the composer declares the picturesque subject imitated (my discussion of the latter is largely confined to chapter 6 where I move away from English music to discuss an intriguing interface between a German oratorio, Haydn's *The Seasons*, and English picturesque ideas and practices). In both versions the visual sense is paramount. In the setting of words the visions derive from the poet's experience, articulating through language both the description and mental reflection on the scene viewed. Here, in a sense, the picturesque art has already been completed by the poet, but the music both speaks it (in a heightened sense), illustrates it, interprets it, paints it and supplements it (these

are all activities that we see in practice in Part 2 of this thesis). With picturesque music without words, the composer is a painter in sound, representing visual concepts through musical metaphor, and, perhaps, natural sounds through sonic imitation. This kind of 'painting' might seem distinctly inferior to that produced with paint on canvas, but clearly a good composer can reach a high point of appropriateness if the thing imitated is recognized in the sounds. Painting is not photography; painting on canvas and painting of sounds are both nodes on the same line of (imperfect) representation. But as we shall see, several eighteenth-century commentators were satisfied that music *could* strive for these effects and achieve them. Surely, then, we have to conclude that if the composer set out to achieve these imitations and has announced that they have taken place, then this is *prima facie* a picturesque statement.

But in England the musical illustration and illumination of visual ideas was an approach attempted mainly through the assistance of prompts from a poetic text. Purely *instrumental* music of this kind formed a small but significant part of the instrumental output of some Italian and German composers and, occasionally, the subject was a natural-historical one.<sup>11</sup> This kind of writing reached its apotheosis in Haydn's two late oratorios. The concerted criticism of it in *The Creation* and particularly *The Seasons* gained wide circulation in England and it was an approach few dared to copy there before or after.<sup>12</sup>

Aligning music with the arts of poetry and painting in this way connects it to the theory *and* the practice of the picturesque. The weakness of concentrating on the parallels between the principles of garden design or the theory of ideal picturesque landscape is that music viewed in this lens is only *like* the picturesque rather than *about* picturesque preoccupations. The landscape figured is also confined to the mind rather than deriving from the outside world to be *contemplated* in the mind.

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<sup>11</sup> See Richard Will, *The Characteristic Symphony in the Age of Haydn and Beethoven* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>12</sup> For a discussion of the nineteenth-century reception of the two late oratorios, see Leon Botstein, 'The Consequences of Presumed Innocence: The Nineteenth-Century Reception of Joseph Haydn' in *Haydn Studies*, ed. W. Dean Sutcliffe (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 9-33.

If contemporaneous criticism did not allow that such effects could take place, would it matter? Would we have to rule them out of court? Absolute music, for instance, was a notion only tentatively proposed by a few writers in the eighteenth century. Does that mean that it did not occur? Few of us, I suggest, would claim that. But the setting of poetry to music both as a kind of elevated speech and interpretative act *and* the painting of visions and sounds and motions (as opposed to ideas formed into arguments or concepts) had a substantial number of supporters in print. Imitative music (of which imitative picturesque music was a part) was not only taking place but it was *recognized* as taking place. This significantly bolsters the argument for a musical engagement with the picturesque alongside the sister arts.<sup>13</sup>

### **The British critical debate: music and its relationship with poetry**

Debates among British critics on music aesthetics tended to concentrate on issues of imitation that bore most heavily on instrumental music. In fact attempts to judge the ability of musical sounds to portray the external world seemed an especially British preoccupation. Although there were numerous disagreements about what music could and could not express, there were, as John Neubauer points out, 'few defenders' for the direct representation of natural sounds.<sup>14</sup> Although figures such as Adam Smith, John Potter and the composer and painter, William Jackson of Exeter, held that music could evoke specific scenes, critics from such varied backgrounds as Charles Avison, James Harris and William Jones demurred. The preferred stance of this latter group was to profess faith in music to index the passions by employing agreed techniques for each of

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<sup>13</sup> Amongst a welter of relevant recent literature here, perhaps ideal starting points might be: Steven Paul Scher, ed., *Music and Text: Critical Enquiries* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Martin Clayton, ed., *Music, Words and Voice: A Reader* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008); Leonard G. Ratner, *Classic Music: Expression, Form and Style* (New York: Schirmer, 1980) and Kofi V. Agawu, *Playing with Signs* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

<sup>14</sup> Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, 74. In France, Boyé (first name unknown) had argued in 1779 against mimesis by saying that the imitation of nature was not music's goal and that music could only be memorable, never 'pittoresque'. See Katherine Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France: La Revue et Gazette Musicale de Paris, 1834-1880* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 4. This was a view endorsed thirty years earlier by Abbé Charles Batteaux. See *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*, eds. Peter Le Huray and James Day (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 3.

the clearly delineated moods. Both Avison (in 1752) and Potter (in 1762) referred to music's capability to rouse the passions, Avison's words finding a striking echo in Potter's ten years later. Avison wrote of vocal music 'raising a Variety of Passions'<sup>15</sup> whilst Potter talked of music's power to 'inspire all the various passions in the human breast'.<sup>16</sup> Despite the use of the terms 'variety' and 'various', Potter and Avison's theorizing still does little to suggest they were able to contemplate more nuanced expressive or mimetic tools beyond those that were sharply defined and indicative of immutable moods.

Harris, Daniel Webb and James Beattie all stated, after Plato, that music was always at its most meaningful when it was allied to words. Here is Beattie on the subject in 1776:

Nor do I mean any disrespect to music, when I would strike it off the list of imitative arts. I allow it to be a fine art, and to have great influence on the human soul: I grant, that, by its power of raising a variety of agreeable emotions in the hearer, it proves its relation to poetry, and that it never appears to the best advantage but with poetry for its interpreter: and I am satisfied, that though musical genius may subsist without poetical taste, and poetical genius without musical taste; yet these two talents united might accomplish nobler effects, than either could do singly.<sup>17</sup>

Music was, though, the *servant* of the words; it was ancillary and aided the expression of those words. Harris, writing some thirty years earlier, believed that when the marriage of the two were merged skilfully a kind of alchemy had taken place; it was a 'force irresistible'. Harris was also keen to stress that the suitable setting of words was an elevating of speech, a 'noble Heightening of Affections' quite different from mere 'arbitrary' differences in pronunciation.<sup>18</sup> These ideas were indicative of a widespread view in British criticism, subsequent to Harris, that fine expression was the goal of

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<sup>15</sup> *Essay in Musical Expression*, 4.

<sup>16</sup> *Observations*, 29.

<sup>17</sup> James Beattie, *Essay on Poetry and Music, As They Affect the Mind; On Laughter and Ludicrous Composition; On the Usefulness of Classical Learning*, 3rd edn. (London; Edinburgh: E. and C. Dilly; W. Creech, 1779), 119-20.

<sup>18</sup> James Harris, 'A Discourse Concerning Music, Painting and Poetry', from *Three Treatises Concerning Art*, excerpts of which appear in *Musical Aesthetics: A Historical Reader*, vol. 1, 'From Antiquity to the Eighteenth Century', ed. Edward Lippman (New York: Pendragon Press, 1986), 177-84.

music. Imitation could only be achieved by imitating the 'affects' (passions) rather than natural sounds. And expression in music also allowed for the efficacious musical setting of words, the *heightening* of the words. Though composers may have attempted to paint pictures, tell stories and mimic sounds in their composition, for many of the British critics, this was a fruitless pursuit. The term 'imitation' was now relegated to describe such attempts.<sup>19</sup> Of those writers who discussed shared ground between music and painting, several were of this mind. But the comparison often led in a different direction, towards ideas of music and representation, and the meaning of music.

### **Music and painting: shared techniques and vision in sound**

Both in the sensitive musical setting of words, and in wordless music that seeks to represent visual scenes, the methods and effects of painting, particularly landscape painting, reveal instructive parallels and common ground. And in analysing artistic expressions of the picturesque, the shared aesthetic goals of these media make comparisons imperative. In eighteenth-century England, treatises and works of criticism were frequently seen to contain comparisons between music and painting. Charles Avison believed there were 'striking analogies to be made':

We may add (for the sake of those who are in any Degree acquainted with the Theory of Music) that the Preparations, and Resolutions of Dischords, resemble the Soft Gradations from Light to Shade or from Shade to Light in Painting [...] Bass, Tenor, Treble versus The foreground, Intermediate Part and the 'off-skip' in Painting.<sup>20</sup>

Avison did not propose that music is capable of conjuring a scene through mimesis as in painting. Conversely he focused on the *poesis* of bringing a composition into being and suggested that, 'as a proper mixture of light and shade, *chiaroscuro*, is necessary in painting, so the Mixture of Concords and Dischords is equally essential to a musical composition'. In invoking the craft of painting, Avison betrayed a belief in the older pre-Enlightenment paradigm of painting as opposed to the later paradigm of music as a

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<sup>19</sup> See Neubauer, *The Emancipation of Music from Language*, 151-66.

<sup>20</sup> *An Essay on Musical Expression*, 26.

language. Music of this kind communicates through the accessing of the codified passions rather than engendering conceptual and goal-orientated notions.<sup>21</sup>

Writing some twenty years later, William Jackson of Exeter, a cleric, composer and painter of landscapes in regular contact with Gainsborough, accepted as read Avison's belief that both composers and painters coveted the ideal balance of contrasts and the control of principal and supporting 'ideas'. Jackson went further on this latter point, however, advocating careful attention to the overall effect of the work of art without striving too hard at the 'painting' of individual effects.<sup>22</sup> Charles Burney's views on music and painting made clear a delineation between the capability of music to *paint* which he allowed and to *discuss and reason*, which he didn't. But Burney went further than Avison and Jackson in accepting that the composition of music is more than a craft that, in its creating, can learn from the principles of painting.<sup>23</sup> Different types of sound, he felt, act as different colours do in painting; in this discussion he used the techniques of the Mannheim symphonists, with their deployment of changing affects and moods, as his illustration. Furthermore, human emotions (for Burney,

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<sup>21</sup> Avison, 'On the Analogies between Music and Painting', 23. For a discussion on the shift from a musical paradigm founded on painting to one on language, see Spitzer, *Metaphor and Musical Thought*, 210-1. Despite Spitzer placing Johann Georg Sulzer at the forefront of the new thinking, it is worth highlighting Sulzer's suggestion of parallels between the improvisatory aspect of writing fantasias with the methods of a sketcher in his article, 'Fantasiren; Fantasie' in the *Allgemeine Theorie der Schönen Künste*, discussed in Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 76-81. This is a comparison made, amongst others, by fellow German theorists Heinrich Christoph Koch and Johann Nikolaus Forkel (in Forkel's case in order to denigrate composers of fantasias). Here it is perhaps best to view Sulzer as making the comparison to demonstrate the virtues of good composition found in the painting of nature – imitating irregularity, contrast and pleasing alternation rather than straight lines and symmetry. This is, for Sulzer, technical guidance for composers that borrows techniques from the rhetorical tradition of seeking to hold the listener's attention and, perhaps, keeping performers on their toes. See Marc Evan Bonds, 'Rhetoric Versus Truth: Listening to Haydn in the Age of Beethoven' in *Haydn and the Performance of Rhetoric*, eds. Tom Beghin and Sander M. Goldberg (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), 111-2.

<sup>22</sup> William Jackson, *30 Letters*, quoted in Amal Asfour and Paul Williamson, *William Jackson of Exeter: New Documents* (Sudbury, Suffolk: Gainsborough's House Society, 1997), 50. For Sulzer on painting and music in *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* see 'Painting in Music' in *Aesthetics and the Art of Musical Composition in the German Enlightenment: Selected Writings of Johann Georg Sulzer and Heinrich Christoph Koch*, eds. Nancy Kavaleff Baker and Thomas Christensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 89-90.

<sup>23</sup> One of Haydn's biographers, Giuseppe Carpani, romantically dubbed his subject the 'Tintoretto of music', following contemporaneous encomiums to Mozart, who was in turn seen as a musical 'Raphael'. See Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 45. Tolley also reports that Carpani thought Haydn mastered the portrayal of landscape in the same manner as Claude. See 255.

more nuanced than the ‘passions’) could be conveyed, a point he makes in mentioning Geminiani’s *Enchanted Forest*: ‘he endeavoured by mere sound to represent the imagination of an audience in the episode of the thirteenth book of Tasso’s *Jerusalem*'.<sup>24</sup>

We can conclude that Avison and Jackson were really employing the analogy between music and painting to advise as to good compositional practice, ensuring that a balance of ‘light and shade’ (*chiaroscuro*) is sought so as not to overload the ear, just as painters seek not overload the eye. Burney, on the other hand, saw the good composer as being in the possession of a palette which can paint a picture that portray emotions and affect them in the hearing. Other writers, though, were more inclined than Burney to talk of the relationship between music and vision. John Potter, although conservative in taste, was bold in his theorizing. After citing Addison’s acceptance that ‘grand masters in the art [...] can set their hearers in the heat and hurry of a battle, to overcast their minds with melancholy scenes and apprehension of death and funerals, or to lull them into pleasing dreams of groves and elysiums’ (quoted more fully in the previous chapter), Potter turned to Handel’s *Saul*.<sup>25</sup> In the oratorio, Potter felt that Handel made us see the funeral pyre and hear the mourners weep.<sup>26</sup> As we saw in chapter 1, Adam Smith assumed that music could be conceived visually (and perhaps even conceptually) in his idea about the pleasure taken in the recognition of imitation but also the imitation’s ‘disparity’, its distance from the imitated. But it was the Reverend Thomas Twining, a friend of Burney, who was perhaps the most radical thinker on this subject. Twining had no doubt that music assisted the conveyance of language’s meaning in word settings, but also pointed out

<sup>24</sup> Burney goes on to state, ‘but Music has never had the power, without vocal articulation, to narrate, or instruct; it can excite, paint, and soothe our passions; but is utterly incapable of reasoning, or conversing, to any reasonable purpose’ and in a footnote on that page: ‘That truly great musician, Emmanuel Bach, some years ago, attempted, in a duet, to carry on a disputation between two persons of different principles; but with all his powers of invention, melody, and modulation, the opinions of the disputants remained as obscure and unintelligible, as the warbling of larks and linnets’. See *General History*, vol. 4, 643.

<sup>25</sup> Addison’s words find an echo in a passage by James Beattie in his *Essay on Poetry and Music* on the pastoral: ‘Some airs put us in mind of the country, of “rural sights and rural sounds”, and dispose the heart to that cheerful tranquility, that pleasing melancholy, that “vernal delight”, which groves and streams, flocks and herds, hills and vallies, inspire’. Beattie, however, refers here to the ‘associationism’ of folk songs and hunting tunes that, on hearing, transport us to rural scenes in our mind’s eye, rather than inferring that this music possessed any potential to directly paint a scene. See Beattie, *Essay*, 132.

<sup>26</sup> *Observations*, 33-4.

that, since this was the case, music possessed its own independent powers of expression, and thus also description:

Those who talk of instrumental Music i.e. of Music by its self, as *unmeaning* [...] and expressing nothing, forget that if that was the case, it could not possibly *add* expression to verse. If it cannot move the passions separately, it cannot conjointly. If it assists [the poetry], it must be by some strength of its own which it brings with it.<sup>27</sup>

Twining's broad and far-sighted formulation allows for the possibilities of music possessing a language of its own and for it having an independent ability to both describe and to paint. Potter's citing of *Saul* suggests that he was of the same mind and his use of a Handel oratorio by way of illustration is scarcely a surprise. Handel, as Winton Dean has shown, had frequent recourse to musical metaphor - particularly in his instrumental parts - to represent visual images. Dean points out that 'he was intensely susceptible to one static group, those associated with the countryside and especially its more permanent features – the weather and the movements of the heavenly bodies. There is something Wordsworthian in Handel's view of nature...'<sup>28</sup> Dean's reference to Wordsworth signifies his recognition that Handel held a similar belief to the English poet that the details of a nature scene were both worthy of reference but possessed of dramatic power too. Dean goes on to mention Handel's skill at conveying sunrises (for instance in *La Resurrezione*), seascapes (*Israel in Egypt*), rain showers (*Joshua*), and the many depictions of birdsong (in *L'Allegro*, *Solomon*, and *Joshua* again).<sup>29</sup> Handel did much to contribute to a kind of musical lexicon of nature images and his treatment of the sound of birdsong, and the sight and sound of rivers, seas and weather events provided later composers in the glee and theatre tradition, as well as Haydn in *The Seasons*, with a compendium of sonic representations with which to draw on during the height of the picturesque.

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<sup>27</sup> Quoted in Kevin Barry, *Language, Music and the Sign: A Study in Aesthetics, Poetics and Poetic Practice from Collins to Coleridge* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 102. Twining, in his preference for instrumental music, was to go further in pursuing the idea of music being *suggestive*, containing signification that the listener could work with and to which they could bring their own subjectivity. In this sense, music was a starting point, a basis for negotiation and a vessel of psychological activity. See Barry, 94-104.

<sup>28</sup> Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), 63.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 63.

### **Picturesque extensions to the sister arts: music's vehicle and music's ally**

For Stephen Copley and Peter Garside, the picturesque is a 'notoriously difficult category to define', the principal causes of this difficulty being the 'disjunctures' between picturesque theory and practice, its status as a category of theory, as a fashionable pursuit, and its legacy of cultural artefacts.<sup>30</sup> And as a result of the growth in academic interest in applications of picturesque theory, aspects of its practice have often been overlooked. Moreover, since three of the four main theorists of the period (Price, Knight, Repton) were concerned mainly with landscape gardens, the other sister arts of poetry and painting have tended to be discussed far less outside of their own disciplines.<sup>31</sup> Writing on the picturesque and music reflects this bias towards theory and gardening; both Price and Crotch discussed the 'appearance' of the picturesque in music and its 'likenesses' to garden design (a picturesque sound rather than the sound of nature). And Annette Richards's diversion into the sketching technique of Alexander Cozens's cloudscapes notwithstanding, it is theory, chiefly garden theory, which drives her methodology. Addressing this imbalance is of particular importance to this study.

As I argued above, English picturesque music is most likely to be conceived as music *about* the natural landscape, not music *like* the natural landscape. And in English landscape painting and English topographical poetry the picturesque is figured in their topic rather than their design. Music, then, belongs in the sisterhood of picturesque art in two ways. First, as in the poetry and the painting, the beauty of the countryside is observed and celebrated. Secondly, music is in *partnership* and *league* with these two art-forms; in partnership with poetry in its setting to music, and in league with painting in sharing its method of presenting and describing scenes of and from the natural landscape. Lastly, I want to stress the nationalistic aspect of picturesque articulation in England. Whilst the picturesque artists and enthusiasts spoke of picturesque beauty abroad - of course the theory stressed a universality not a

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<sup>30</sup> Introduction, *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Christopher Hussey speaks of painting and poetry as being 'infected' with the picturesque. He wryly reports that poetry had 'had the picturesque' but recovered from it. See *The Picturesque*, 5.

parochialism - the acceleration of artworks that took specific scenes from the English catalogue, as opposed to idealized biblical, classical or otherwise European vistas, betokened a new national confidence and pride in the 'natural art' to be found within England's 'wooden walls'.<sup>32</sup> English poetry, painting and music that glorified nature invariably used real English locations as their subject.

English music must find its picturesque voice, not through the irregularity, surprises and mixtures found in patterns of notes, phrases and sections, but in lyricizing and delighting in its native landscape. Since poetry is picturesque music's vehicle and painting its ally, I now want to briefly trace the picturesque nature of English poetry and painting, demonstrating how notions of patriotism and national pride are figured in them and, in showing how these two art-forms embrace the picturesque. In doing so, I prepare the ground for Part 2 where music and the English picturesque take centre stage.

#### *The picturesque as national voice*

The shift from art that indexed the classical sense of the pastoral - either invoking Arcadia as a mythical site to represent all of nature's works or referencing generic Italian and Grecian scenes - to a confident assertion that locations at home were worthy subjects, was the English picturesque's coming of age. This was a move galvanized by a new breed of native poets such as James Thomson (whose *The Seasons* are the basis for Gottfried van Swieten's libretto of Haydn's eponymous oratorio) and George Cowper as well as the landscape painters, Thomas Gainsborough and Richard Wilson amongst others.<sup>33</sup> And the landscape gardening cult encouraged the new

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<sup>32</sup> This is a term that crops up repeatedly in English theatre of the time, the oak being a symbol of English fortitude. The implication is frequently that the land is guarded by the sturdy oak and that England is resistant to invasion.

<sup>33</sup> In the first half of the century, however, the influence of Virgil and Horace on English poets such as Alexander Pope and James Thomson was manifest. But Thomson, in particular, believed that he lived in an age of Augustan glory whose reference points lay within the borders of present-day England. See *The Penguin Book of Pastoral Verse*, eds. John Barrell and John Bull (London: Allen Lane, 1974), 295. George Cowper's poetry, particularly in *The Task*, takes a topographical approach, ranging widely over a series of scenes as the speaker walks through the landscape. The scenes form frames and prompts for Cowper's moral and political reflections, as distinct from the observational topographical verse of, for instance, Mark

culture of 'looking', the encouragement to explore, to marvel, to reflect on and to evaluate.

The picturesque signified a new sensitivity to the enlivening of the visual sense that British landscape could provide. This was a moment when the English took to heart the dictum of the Roman poet, Horace – *ut pictura poesis* (as a picture, so in a poem). Horace's call meant that the poet should stretch their powers of description and use their eyes to inspire their muse. In eighteenth-century England this Horatian move meant that scenes from nature were considered worthy artistically and pleasurable sensations felt through the eye were reflected on in the mind and spoken about.<sup>34</sup> And the landscape garden visitor, wandering through the grounds, was as much part of the picturesque sensibility as the walking tourist, with guidebook in hand.

The veneration of classical civilization and the idea of a particularly Italian artistic pre-eminence was an ineluctable product of the Grand Tours of the first part of the eighteenth century. But as Malcolm Andrews has argued, there was a 'growing impatience' with this stance as well as a nationalistic urge to promote vernacular styles that, towards the end of the century in particular, referenced the Anglo-Saxon roots of the Gothic.<sup>35</sup> There are traces of English nationalistic sentiment as early as 1713 when Thomas Tickell, writing in *The Guardian* in reference to poetry, lamented that 'our countrymen have so good an opinion of the Ancients, and think so modestly of themselves [...] what is proper in Arcadia, or even in Italy, might be very absurd in a colder country'.<sup>36</sup> And as early as 1663 Edward Waterhouse praised the 'interweaving mix of woods, rivers, springs and meadows' of the English landscape.<sup>37</sup> In *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening* of 1780, Horace Walpole appeared to announce English gardening's coming of age: 'we have discovered the point of perfection [...] we

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Akenside and John Cunningham. See Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority*, 38-54. For the move away from imagined and idealistic classical towards the recording of national scenes, in the wake of the setting up of the Royal Academy, see Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 4, 11-13.

<sup>34</sup> Stephanie Ross argues that Horace's idea was expanded in eighteenth-century England to take in comparisons between gardens and poems and gardens and paintings. See *What Gardens Mean*, xii.

<sup>35</sup> Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 11.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., quoted, 11. See also Addison's lament at the dominance of Italian opera in *The Spectator* 18, 1711.

<sup>37</sup> Quoted in Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 14.

have given the true model of gardening to the world; let other countries mimic or corrupt our taste'.<sup>38</sup> By this time the newer gardens eschewed the antiquarian meaningfulness seen in the classical structures dotted around Stowe and Stourhead, for example, and sought a greener, more natural, and more typically English appearance. Structures that were included in gardens were increasingly likely to be gothic or neo-gothic.<sup>39</sup>

This was a further sign that the picturesque was developing a stronger national tone. And the portrayal of *ruined* buildings was not only becoming acceptable but, by the century's end, virtually a picturesque requirement. The taste for ruined gothic buildings evinced a further break with classical ideals in that the Gothic reminded the English of their Anglo-Saxon roots. Seeing these in a state of disrepair - whether by design or through the passage of time and the events of history - added a sublime frisson of sentimentality. Gothic ruins became popular visitor attractions, essential components in landscape gardens, and became the subjects of paintings and the settings for novels and stageworks.<sup>40</sup>

William Shenstone's view, given in his *Unconnected Thoughts on Gardening* of 1764, on the 'naturalness' of ruins, apply just as saliently to painting, and echo William Gilpin's thoughts about the importance of applying the metaphorical hammer rather than the chisel when conceiving buildings within picturesque scenes. His contention that, 'RUINATED structures appear to derive their power of pleasing, from the irregularity of surface, which is VARIETY'<sup>41</sup>, certainly index the apparent picturesque requirements of loose and uneven design that we have observed in the formalistic mapping onto other art forms. But more crucially, Shenstone calls on these buildings to wear the clothing of weathered decay in order to blend into a landscape similarly shaped by nature's motion. Too new a surface shows man's intervention too readily

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<sup>38</sup> Ibid., quoted, 91.

<sup>39</sup> Dabney Townsend sees this move away from the allegorical indicating a new rejection of the idealization of nature towards a new Lockean psychological priority. See 'The Picturesque', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 55/4 (1997), 366.

<sup>40</sup> See Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 41-50 and Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 41-3. The ruined abbey at Netley on Southampton Water was a case in point. Much discussed in print, notably by the poet, Thomas Gray, Netley became the backdrop for an opera by William Shield, discussed in chapter 5 of this thesis.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., quoted, 48.

and the perception of ruins also usefully mines the seam of sentimentality closely allied to the pleasure taken in scenes of natural beauty.

English picturesque fashion and visual art, then, possessed a strong national flavour. Although the English theories of the picturesque spoke in national-neutral terms, in practice it stressed national characteristics and showed how greatly they were valued. That German instrumental music was shown to adumbrate the picturesque did perhaps betoken a (theoretical) taste and sympathy for aspects of picturesque style and attitude. But the practice of the English picturesque, art largely about English landscape, finds its most convincing expression in English music.<sup>42</sup> Before I roll back the rich tapestry of English music's celebration of that landscape, I will briefly demonstrate how the sisters of poetry and painting came to embrace it.

## Poetry

According to the early twentieth-century picturesque theorist, Christopher Hussey, the fact that the picturesque was a visual mode was very much a stimulus to a new breed of English poet, and these poets thus played as significant a part in the development of the picturesque as did gardeners and painters:

Thomson, Dyer, and their immediate followers are usually designated the Landscape poets. I call them the Picturesque poets. All poets look at and describe landscape, at some time or other, in terms of amenity, classical association, or what not. But these poets look at and describe landscape in terms of pictures. Each scene is correctly composed, and filled in with sufficient vividness to enable the reader to visualize a picture after the manner of Salvator and Claude.<sup>43</sup>

For the poet James Thomson, the beginning of the eighteenth century was an Augustan age of glory within the borders of present-day England. His powers of description, love of visual detail and, to use J. R. Watson's phrase, 'feeling for colour',

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<sup>42</sup> But as I stated earlier in this chapter there are compelling elements of the English picturesque in Haydn's *The Seasons* (see chapter 6).

<sup>43</sup> *The Picturesque*, 18.

made him a favourite poet of English landscape painters who appreciated the pictorial bent of his verse. Indeed, J. M. W. Turner appended lines from *The Seasons* to his painting *Buttermere Lake*.<sup>44</sup> Thomson may have rarely revealed the specificity of the scenes described but he made clear that they were native ones as the moral reflections that poured forth from them were directed at the English nation. Thomson glorified the countryside both through an eye for detail and a grasp of the topography of broad sweeps of land. He was also fascinated by the effects of the changing seasons, the weather, and the resultant changes in light. This signalled a crucial change in taste that anticipated the picturesque; even if the subject in a poem or painting was not stated, or was an imaginary amalgam of several experienced sites, the newly energized visual sense demonstrated a significant separation from pastoral reflexes. As Robert Aubin points out, Thomson, through these tendencies, 'lent great encouragement' to those writing observational poetry in the latter half of the century as well as 'nourishing' the rage for landscape gardening.<sup>45</sup> In 'Summer', Thomson emphasized the temporal dynamism of nature's changing seasonal patterns by portraying a scene of the hills to the north-west of London. Both this localism and the fascination with nature's cycles undercut the classical sense of the pastoral as timeless and without specific location:

Now to the sister hills that skirt her plain  
To lofty Harrow now, and now to where  
Majestic Windsor lifts his princely brow.  
In lovely contrast to this glorious view,  
Calmly magnificent, then will we turn  
To where the silver Thames first rural grows.<sup>46</sup>

Later in 'Summer' Thomson's verse takes a nationalistic turn:<sup>47</sup>

And what a pleasing prospect lies around!

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<sup>44</sup> *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 27-30. See also Matthew Brennan in *Wordsworth, Turner and Romantic Landscape: A Study of the Traditions of the Picturesque and the Sublime* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1987), 18.

<sup>45</sup> Aubin, *Topographical Poetry*, 51.

<sup>46</sup> James Thomson, *The Seasons*, edited with an introduction and commentary by James Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 'Summer', lines 1411-6.

<sup>47</sup> The detail of his portrayal perhaps betrays the view at the time that his verse owed much to his study of the techniques of landscape painters. See Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 265.

Of Hills, and Vales, and Woods, and Lawns, and Spires  
And Towns betwixt, and gilded Streams! Till all  
The stretching Landskip into Smoak decays.

HAPPY BRITTANIA! where the Queen of Arts,  
Inspiring Vigour, LIBERTY, abroad,  
Walks thro', the Land of Heroes, unconfin'd,  
And scatters Plenty with unsparing Hand.<sup>48</sup>

Although his concentration on observations of modern rural scenes and sensitivity to the temporal dimension of landscape prefigure the picturesque, Thomson's view of the country as a site primarily of agricultural industry tends to preclude the mature picturesque sensibility of the enjoyment of nature's beauty for its own sake (which leads to perhaps the logical conclusion of landscape as commodity by the century's end). Nevertheless, the benign notion of man's harmony with nature associated with the pastoral is left behind in Thomson's writing and this exemplifies a new fascination with nature, of a piece with wider debates prompted by the scientific discoveries of Newton, a particular hero of Thomson's.

Thomson's use of a technique introduced by the seventeenth-century painter, Claude Lorrain, that of adopting the prospect view, and drawing the eye to three planes of ground, is particularly important because it demonstrates the imperative to view landscape in its best light and to 'describe' it in the most persuasive fashion.<sup>49</sup> It was a retreat from Thomson's Claudian foundations and his moral conclusions that marked a move to the concentration on the definition of picturesque objects, mere observation that focused on individual effects without the reference to an overarching structure.

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<sup>48</sup> Thomson, 'Summer', lines 1438-45.

<sup>49</sup> See John Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place, 1730-1840: An Approach to the Poetry of John Clare* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1972), 13-63. Barrell stops short of describing Thomson as participating in the picturesque but his subsequent discussions in *The Idea of Landscape* imply that his poetry makes an undoubted contribution to the mature picturesque of later in the century when the style became reinforced by the theoretical writings of Price, Knight, Gilpin and Repton.

This is a move that John Barrell sees as a decline: the philology of Gilpin and Repton or the tourist guide description placed within blank verse.<sup>50</sup>

Other poets framed their affection for the English countryside by pursuing through it themes of regret and sorrow. Both George Cowper and Thomas Gray spoke of being touched by English scenes of nature and how they coveted the peace and solitude that it could provide. But their personal considerations then reflected outwards to ponder the rural poor and disenfranchised.<sup>51</sup> In Cowper's *The Task*, the Georgic mores of labouring man as eternal beneficiary is witheringly undermined;<sup>52</sup> Cowper describes the despoilment of rural grace by the cruel scenes of drudgery and thanklessness of agricultural labour thus:

Poor, yet industrious, modest, quiet, neat:  
Such claim compassion in a night like this,  
And have a friend in ev'ry feeling heart.  
Warm'd, while it lasts, by labour, all day long  
They brave the season, and yet find at eve,  
Ill clad and fed but sparely, time to cool.<sup>53</sup>

Cowper's move from personal to empathetic in particular, and his sentimental response in general, is shared by Thomas Gray in his *Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard*.<sup>54</sup> Gray's *meditatio mortis* intersects with what Malcolm Andrews sees as a pointedly English tendency for 'morbid emotionalism' perfectly captured in the landscape gardens of the end of the century, where the invitation to quiet contemplation is stimulated towards imaginative reflections of a nostalgic and

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<sup>50</sup> Barrell refers to an unnamed group of later English poets as the 'Picturesque poets' but his apparent disdain for their lack of poetic facility prevents him identifying or analysing their work in any detail. See *The Idea of Landscape*, 38, 50-4.

<sup>51</sup> Charles Peake brackets together Cowper, with William Collins, Joseph Warton, and John Cunningham, as a group who were concerned with the evocation of the human mood fusing with the natural world. See *Poetry of the Landscape and the Night*, 18.

<sup>52</sup> For a brief and clear explanation of the Georgic classical tradition, and how it figures in eighteenth-century English poetry, see *The Penguin Book of Pastoral Poetry*, 297.

<sup>53</sup> George Cowper, *The Task*, Book IV, lines 374-9.

<sup>54</sup> Jean Hagstrum argues that Gray follows Du Bos' dictum that the best landscapes are *peopled*. See 'Description and Reflection in Gray's *Elegy*' in *Pre-Romanticism in English Poetry of the Eighteenth Century: The Poetic Art and Significance of Thomson, Gray, Collins, Goldsmith, Cowper and Crabbe*, ed. J.R. Watson (Basingstoke; London: Macmillan, 1989), 152.

melancholic nature by the (deliberately) decaying or ruined structures punctuating the landscape.<sup>55</sup> Gray's observations on specific English scenes can be found more readily in his letters than in his poetry,<sup>56</sup> but the Elegy's meditation on mortality, and lamentation on the obscurity of the unfulfilled local dead, is carefully framed by detailed painterly observations of the melancholic stillness of the scene.<sup>57</sup>

Although Cowper's and Gray's poetic output was not dominated by the topic of natural landscape, they still contributed significantly to a body of English 'rural' verse in the second half of the eighteenth century. The words of both these poets and James Thomson were frequently set to music (Gray's *Elegy* on numerous occasions) but it was the countless other, more minor, poets that provided a treasure chest of picturesque national verse for English song composers to set. Their poetry may have lacked the intellectual reach of a Thomson, Gray or Cowper, but they shared with these figures a similarly affectionate view of the landscape. Their assiduous descriptions and elegiac reflections provided the perfect mixture for the growing taste for nationalistic and sentimental song in England. It is this poetry and those songs that we encounter in the following chapter.

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<sup>55</sup> See *The Search for the Picturesque*, 41-2. Hagstrum points out that *memento mori* were common in the contemporaneous paintings of Richard Wilson and Joseph Wright of Derby. See 'Description and Reflection in Gray's *Elegy*', 154. See also Black on Edward Young, the 'graveyard poet', *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 187.

<sup>56</sup> Gray was a pioneer of picturesque travel who cut his observational teeth on a Grand Tour with Horace Walpole. He also toured many British locations and just before he died he embarked on a tour of the Lake District. Like William Mason, author of *The English Garden*, Gray wrote about the most picturesque prospects in a variety of locations. See Michael Charlesworth, 'The Ruined Abbey: Picturesque and Gothic Values' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 62-80, for writers' ideas on viewing Rievaulx Abbey in the North Yorkshire Moors. Perhaps his poem that indulges most readily in topographical observation is *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*: see Brennan, *Wordsworth, Turner and Romantic Landscape*, 15-16. For Christopher Hussey, Gray was the 'greatest pioneer of the picturesque after Thomson. *The Picturesque*', 105.

<sup>57</sup> See Roger Lonsdale, *The Poetry of Thomas Gray: Versions of the Self* (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), 3. Lonsdale describes how in the *Elegy* the outer scene and its details gradually recede as the focus moves to Gray's poetic self. Nevertheless, for J. R. Watson the *Elegy* demonstrates a strong sense of *ut pictura poesis*. See *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 57.

### **The English picturesque in landscape painting**

So for Thomson, Cowper and Gray, amongst other English landscape poets, the English countryside became the focal point for their muse, one that increasingly relied less on classical reference points and Augustan comparisons. For an emerging British school of landscape painters from around the 1760s, a move away from framing local scenes in Italianate dress and stressing the grandeur of Palladian and Neo-Classical structures, real or imagined, was a comparable strategy. The formation of the Royal Academy in 1768 signalled the new intention that Britain should pool its emerging talent as well as the growing awareness that the country possessed a group of painters to be celebrated in their own right. Despite the notion, propped up by the Academy's founder, Sir Joshua Reynolds, that landscape painting was very much an inferior mode to that of 'history painting' or portraiture, native scenes of increasing faithfulness began to be represented on canvas (see figure 3.1).<sup>58</sup>

The seventeenth-century Italian painter, Salvator Rosa, and his contemporary landscapers from France - Claude Lorrain, Gaspard Dughet and Nicolas Poussin - were frequently cited influences, with their subordination of human figures in the landscape to the incidental and peripheral, providing a method and philosophy that the British school felt able to embrace.<sup>59</sup> Also the tendency of Dutch painters, Jacob van Ruisdael and Meindert Hobbema, to paint quaintnesses such as peasants, horses and rough cottages into fine landscapes inspired the English school to portray rural life as well as natural landscape.<sup>60</sup>

The wider mobility of a tasteful gentry and *bourgeoisie*, and a curiosity towards further flung rural outposts nourished by a burgeoning network of turnpike roads, begun to be reflected in a greater range of subjects, scenes that would, towards the century's close, increasingly incorporate places of 'wildness', previously considered

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<sup>58</sup> See Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 24 for Gilpin's acknowledgment of this despite his position as the pre-eminent commentator on landscape painting. Conversely, Andrews cites Gainsborough's weariness with portraits and yearning to retreat to the country with his brushes and viola da gamba.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 26.

<sup>60</sup> See Watkin, *The English Vision*, vii; Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 59; Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 75.



Figure 3.1 Richard Wilson, *Holt Bridge on the River Dee* (1762)

off-limits.<sup>61</sup> This, combined with the development of the rural guidebooks, galvanized notions of tasteful consensus about locations that engendered an agreed sense of the picturesque. Buildings in paintings prior to the flowering of the British picturesque were invariably of grandiloquence, set in relief by the surrounding topography. Latterly, though, Palladian and Neo-Classical houses were granted more withdrawn positions, both so that the surrounding landscape could be portrayed in detail, and that the house could be shown as an important constituent in the picturesque composition (see figure 3.2). Richard Wilson, Paul Sandby, Thomas Gainsborough, and Joseph Wright were all at the forefront of this increasingly prolific landscape school. Though their utilization of landscapes all differed (Wilson was a realist, Sandby's landscapes were often 'peopled', Gainsborough tended to idealize, and Wright favoured night

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<sup>61</sup> John Robert Cozens travelled to Italy in 1782-3 primarily to seek out dramatic scenery, a trip that would have been considered unthinkable in the early years of the century when Grand tourists pursued sites and artefacts from classical antiquity. See Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 209.



Figure 3.2      Richard Wilson, *Croome Court* (1758-9)

scenes), for these artists English landscapes were no longer seen to be wanting in comparison with the classical views and now needed no classical embellishment or allegorical referral. English scenes were now seen to be 'worthy' and 'suitable'. These painters also encouraged a symbiotic and circular relationship with picturesque travellers; collectors of prints would seek out the locations depicted and the artists increasingly painted popular beauty spots.<sup>62</sup> Nowhere is this more evident than in the tour guides written by William Gilpin. Gilpin's contribution to the picturesque discourse was not only to define the elements and parameters of picturesque landscape, but also to identify the real-life exemplars of these standards in native countryside. Gilpin realized that his words were not sufficient to convey these messages and his books were interleaved with numerous sketches and paintings that illustrated his commentary. That some were a little idealized and relied on a touch of

<sup>62</sup> See, for instance, Michael Rosenthal, *British Landscape Painting* (Oxford: Phaidon, 1982), 44-71. Also John Bonehill and Stephen Daniels, eds., *Paul Sandby: Picturing Britain* (London: Royal Academy of Arts, 2009) and Judy Egerton, ed., *Wright of Derby* (London: Tate Gallery, 1990).

artistic license is not problematic. On the contrary, this showed that Gilpin recognized that the scenes described were worthy of artistic expression and that he recognized the art possessed within them.<sup>63</sup>

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The English picturesque, then, best joins with music as part of a cultural practice, not as an illustration of a theory. Music unites with painting and poetry and, through the sharing of similar goals, joins them in the sisterhood. In the setting of picturesque poetry it inherits picturesque subjects. It speaks them in a diction that raises it into an oratorical realm. It also, through its setting, is able to illustrate, colour, and suggest. Poetry and painting, shown to be excellent media for the picturesque, have a crucial relationship with picturesque music.

English song and opera of the late eighteenth century emerged from the shadow of Augustan, biblical or mythical subject-matter and progressed to deal with the expressive glory of landscape that lacked the over-bearing baggage of the classical world. Mirroring developments in landscape painting and poetry, and the rise of the landscape garden in its least 'improved' and most natural state, composers of this music found a sense of national identity that gazed on the landscape of home, free of the symbolized justifications of an ancient Augustan ideal.

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<sup>63</sup> See titles not already cited such as *Observations on the River Wye, and Several Parts of South Wales...Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty* (London: 1782); *Remarks on Forest Scenery and Other Woodland Views (Relative to Picturesque Beauty)*, 2 vols. (London: R. Blamire, 1791).

## Part 2

### 4 Walks and prospect views: solo song and the glee in England

Was a career in music, one that might involve the opportunity to direct, perform and publish one's own music, a realistic aspiration for a young Englishman in the late eighteenth century? And was this an aspiration that was widely coveted? As we saw in chapter 2, few writers were willing to recognize a significant English presence in the musical life of the nation and fewer still were prepared to celebrate the quality of native music. So the answer to these questions is a qualified 'no' – that is unless we are prepared to examine areas of musical life that have not been subjected to the usual canonic processes.

If we look away from the concert repertory of symphonies, concertos, sonatas and quartets (and indeed oratorios) and focus instead on 'marginal', lower forms such as song and English theatre music, we find that there was a good and artistically fulfilling life for the English composer. In the second part of this thesis, these genres emerge as the locations where English music not only found its identity, but also located its native voice, a voice most confidently articulated through the picturesque expression.

For John Hawkins, who felt the picturesque style in German symphonies was low, the genres of song and English comic opera were probably *too* low to be worthy of comment. Had William Crotch detected picturesque music in English song and opera his opinion would have been subtly different; Crotch would have stated that these were *appropriate* sites for the picturesque expression - in comedy and secular song - but he would, nonetheless, have looked down his nose at them. Charles Dibdin, a third figure who objected to the modern symphonic style, will, however, emerge in chapter 5 as a key voice in articulating the English musical picturesque: Dibdin's approach favoured simple, melodic delivery (often by means of the folk-song idiom) in order to express in music a restored connection with nature that he felt had been lost, both through a widespread urban materialism and an increasingly prevalent tendency to

compositional contrivance. Dibdin's method is extreme and individual, as we shall see, but, in his writing and his music, a theory of the musical picturesque that involves improvisatory, 'fantastic' brilliance and the rhetorical manipulations of narrative and formal convention, loses ground to one where music partners picturesque language and describes picturesque scenes.

In this chapter I want to show how embedded the picturesque cult of the late eighteenth century became in English song culture. I will first identify the common picturesque conceits found in the poetry and that appear most frequently in this repertory. This framework will then form the basis for case studies of songs and glees that are settings of verse of this kind. Several of these examples adopt texts by poets often connected with the picturesque in their reception, such as James Thomson, Thomas Gray and William Cunningham.

I will spend some time dealing with English glees separately. Alongside the solo and duet song repertory of 1760-1800 this is a *comparatively* slimmer body of work and a more easily defined, less disparate and self-contained genre than that of 'song'. It is possible to state more decisively that the picturesque influenced the evolution of the glee. Although glees were frequently aired outside the setting of dedicated private glee clubs, their predominant circulation was situated at first in these arenas; the glee was underpinned by its own distinct community of a small group of composers and a demanding and influential patronage. I will show that in the glee club, where the best of British was a platitude hardened into an aesthetic aim, the picturesque was an expression of sensibility, citizenship and patriotism.

The benefits of reclaiming the English glee are twofold: first, it fills in substantial gaps in the history of the English musician and helps to make greater sense of the bustling, thriving but competitive and stratified English music scene in the late eighteenth century. Secondly, it helps to reconnect English music with the aesthetic developments that nurtured it, and it in turn nurtured, repairing in the process the historiographical fissure between music and the sister arts in England.

English secular song of the late eighteenth century is a vast repertory. The growth of the subscription and benefit concerts (many of whose programmes were of a mixed kind, including at least one song), the so-called 'Vocal Concerts' of the 1790s<sup>1</sup> and the continuing popularity of the events held in the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall, Ranelagh and Marylebone, considerably inflate the size of the catalogue.<sup>2</sup> Although it was true that certain popular songs received repeated programming, it was expected that each concert would contain new items. Indeed, a study of the song repertoire for 1760-1800 shows a marked increase in new songs from 1780-1795. Perhaps the rapidly growing business in printed music, and the demand for music in the home, has something to do with this, alongside a growth in concert activity.

The performance of songs that set this 'nature poetry' relied of course on urban spaces but I am not troubled by any contradiction inherent in this. At this stage in the development of English concert life, the city and the town *were* the places to stage music to a paying public. And as will become more apparent in this chapter, it is city and town dwellers who are particularly enthusiastic rural tourists and picturesque artists. But the kind of music that I discuss in Part 2 was still likely to be heard beyond the busy streets, either in the tranquillity of the pleasure gardens (a deliberately concocted retreat from urban bustle) and in private music-making at country houses.<sup>3</sup>

### Song poetry

The texts of English secular vocal music in the late eighteenth century are replete with lyrical descriptions of the rural English landscape; as we have seen, the Horatian

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<sup>1</sup> See Ian Taylor, *Music in London and the Myth of Decline* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 57-8.

<sup>2</sup> Although the fairly ample number of duets complicates the picture somewhat, it is most convenient to divide this output into solo and part-song categories, the great majority of the latter entitled glee or catch, where once 'madrigal' would have been appended.

<sup>3</sup> The secondary literature on English song of the late eighteenth century is slim indeed and is mostly confined to studies of the pleasure gardens concerts and their repertory. See, for instance David Coke, *The Muse's Bower: Vauxhall Gardens 1728-1786* (Sudbury: Gainsborough's House, 1978); Degott, Pierre, 'Paysages Musicaux Et Musiques Paysagères: La Musique Dans Les Jardins D'agrément De Londres Au Xviie Siècle', *Bulletin de la Société d'Etudes anglo-américaines des XVIIe et XVIIIe Siècles* 51 (2000), 201-14. Stanley Sadie briefly touches on songs popular in domestic music-making in the period 1760-1800 in his chapter 'Music in the Home II' in *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, 351-54.

dictum of *ut pictura poesis* was one that guided the inspiration of a substantial body of English poets of the age. The picturesque impulse to select scenes of worth, to 'paint' their components in a verbal representation and to draw sentimental reflections and reactions on the observed scenes, are practices widely found in the contemporaneous poetry of the time. So in one sense, English song settings of contemporary verse held up a mirror to aesthetic practices in the world of poetry. The plethora of picturesque song texts also leads us to conclude that there was a fashion for these types of song. And William Horsley's assertion in the early nineteenth century that the 'descriptive compositions' of the glee composer, John Wall Callcott, were his most popular appears to support this.<sup>4</sup> The growth of scenic print collecting, and the clamour for travel guides that produced a culture of tourism, was part of the same custom. But we cannot merely attribute the existence of this rich array of picturesque song to the pragmatic appeal to popularity, as if their composition was all so much hackwork. It is surely the case that song composers felt as much part of the picturesque muse as poets and painters were and that the picturesque, and its associated themes, was one of the song composers' favourite modes with which to work. Horsley, in his discussion of Callcott's glee, *Queen of the Valley*, makes clear that the composer felt somehow to be in expressive league with the poet set when he speaks of the 'delightful faculty which he possess, of *mentally* filling all creation round with his harmonies'.<sup>5</sup>

As we saw in the previous chapter, comparatively less is written about the part that the sister arts (painting and poetry) played in the picturesque movement compared to the landscape garden. Some literary critics seem reluctant to unite pastoral and topographical verse under that heading. In *The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place*, John Barrell's extensive discussion of Thomson's observational

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<sup>4</sup> *A Collection of Glees, Canons and Catches by the Late J. W. Callcott Selected and Arranged with a Memoir of the Author* by William Horsley, vol. 1 (London: 1824), 15. Study of the pleasure garden concert programmes, for instance, shows how seriously organisers took public reactions to songs; popular songs could be programmed year after year. See McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 110-16. McVeigh also notes the rise of the nature topic in vocal music which he reduces to an 'evocation of pastoral innocence'. Later (see *Concert Life*, 134), when examining the songs performed at Vauxhall Gardens, he damns the pastoral songs performed there as creating a 'specially invented bucolic world, as remote from its urbanized listeners then as it is now'. Whilst a perfectly valid analysis of many Georgian songs that speak neutrally of an idealized Albion peopled by Damon and Phyllis, it overlooks the many songs settings of verse concerned with real locations, of detailed and painterly descriptions and lyrical and elegiac tone.

<sup>5</sup> *Memoir of Dr. Callcott*, 15.

technique in *The Seasons* is convincingly explained in terms of the planar structure of Claude landscapes. Although Claude figures prominently in eighteenth-century literature on the picturesque - his name was also given to a kind of handheld mirror for use in the field, the 'Claude glass' - Barrell prefers not to associate Thomson with the picturesque despite his later reception. In a later chapter, Barrell does associate the picturesque with English poetry, introducing the term 'picturesque poets', without making it clear which poets belonged in the group. What he is clear about, though, is that the picturesque poetry which he has in mind is of inferior quality, following Gray's, and later Wordsworth's, contempt for mere description without moral or psychological underpinning.<sup>6</sup>

These are by no means typical stances in modern literary criticism. Several modern critics have shown how the English poetry of Pope, Dyer, Thomson, and later, Collins, Shenstone, Akenside, Cunningham, Gray and Cowper played its part in forming theories of, and tastes for, the picturesque as well as joining in artistic expressions that evinced the picturesque, as defined by those theories and tastes. In the 1960s, Robert Aubin picked up on this artistic circularity when he made the connection, discussed in the previous chapter, between Thomson's *The Seasons* and the growth in landscape gardens. Aubin also noted that the 'fad' for the picturesque had 'lent great encouragement to descriptive writing'.<sup>7</sup> Some twenty years later, J. R. Watson showed how Gilpin had found the descriptions in Thomson's poetry useful and how Gray's admiration for the wild, stirring but morbid Italian scenes painted by Salvator Rosa had informed his brooding and melancholic portrayal of an English country churchyard in his *Elegy*.<sup>8</sup> Jean Hagstrum has also been keen to stress how Gray's *Elegy* participates in the picturesque: 'In that the Elegy is a series of pictorially static moments with attached reflections it belongs to the neo-classical picturesque'.<sup>9</sup> And in the last few years the work of Sandro Jung has shone a light on the marginal figures of Mark Akenside and William Shenstone (the latter being a favourite poet for English song composers) and their rejection of the Augustan idea of nature as a 'background to

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<sup>6</sup> *The Idea of Landscape*, 50-63, 79.

<sup>7</sup> *Topographical Poetry*, 51.

<sup>8</sup> *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 37-8.

<sup>9</sup> 'Description and Reflection in Gray's *Elegy*', 157.

the celebration of man's importance within the context of creation'.<sup>10</sup> Akenside and Shenstone made nature itself the object of their focus, Shenstone explaining that this writing was elegiac rather than pastoral.<sup>11</sup>

All of these writers' poetry was set frequently to song by English composers – Thomson, Gray, Shenstone and Cowper in particular. And if the source of the words were not specified then we can either draw the conclusion that the poet was not well-known enough to trumpet on the title page or the exact sentiment required was not available from the 'catalogue', and the composer had done the job themselves.

It is a virtually impossible task to discover why English song composers chose the texts that they set, why they repeatedly turned to the same topics, and why they favoured certain poets over others; so few of them recorded these sorts of revelations for posterity. Those composers who did diarise their thoughts, such as R. J. S. Stevens and John Marsh, reveal little about their working practices, preferring instead to concentrate on events and encounters. There is no English Schubert buddying up with a Mayrhofer, nor a Schumann dabbling in music journalism or music criticism. It seems that there is no middle ground between these kinds of journals and the highly technical treatises of Marsh and J. W. Callcott that might answer these sorts of questions. The engaging and forthright recollections of R. J. Stevens do leave a few clues, however:

Stevens's account is a gossipy and entertaining journey through the various glee club meetings and proceedings in the last thirty years of the eighteenth century. Stevens tells us of his regular conversations with nobility and educated gentlemen and frequently refers to the warm relationship with his patron, Lord Thurlow, the Lord Chancellor. Given that we know from the 'Memoir' of Callcott's life, written by William Horsley, that a Judge Hardinge recommended Gray's poem, *Thyrsis* to 'Dr Callcott, Dr Cooke and Mr. Danby'<sup>12</sup> and that according to Charles Cudworth, Stevens was advised as to texts by Lord Thurlow, Alderman Birch and a Dr Relph, we can safely assume that

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<sup>10</sup> *Poetic Meaning in the Eighteenth-Century Poems of Mark Akenside and William Shenstone*, 87.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 181.

<sup>12</sup> *Memoir of Dr. Callcott*, 14.

this was a fairly established method of dissemination for glee composers.<sup>13</sup> Stevens does also talk of 'suitable poetry' but never divulges what it is about it that is suitable. A hint that composers might have encountered or mixed with poets and painters, and that, as a result, might have pooled thoughts about shared aesthetics across their media, comes from Stevens's recollection of a day in the Autumn of 1793:

I went one Evening to meet Mrs. Hughes (wife of the Rev. Thomas Hughes, Prebend of Westminster) at Mrs. Blencowe's in Little King Street, St. James's Square, near Market Lane. Mr. Blencowe was an intolerable miser, tho' a well-educated man; and of considerable Landed Property...His Concert Room, was on the first floor, over a large Baker's Shop...I squeezed into the Concert Room, which was intolerably full of a mixture of Company: all devotees at this miserable miser's shrine. Poets, Painters, Musicians; *all* were crowded together...Blencowe introduced me to Cumberland the Poet; and afterwards to Lawrence the Painter.<sup>14</sup>

### Types of picturesque verse

Clearly in one sense the picturesque texts encountered in this music fall under the over-arching domain of the pastoral. But I should stress again how the picturesque, although occasionally incorporating pastoral characteristics, marks its territory quite clearly from the pastoral. The picturesque is invoked when interest is taken in the details of the landscape rather than treating it as a serene background to the actions and sentiments of man. Here the sense of *place* is often not generalized. The placing of **value** on the composition of a particular landscape and the tendency to ponder its hold on our psychology, are also distinctive signs of the picturesque. The triggering of emotional, personal reflections on one's place in the world is, though, thought to be a later development of the Romantic.

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<sup>13</sup> Charles Cudworth, 'Two Georgian Classics: Arne and Stevens', *Music and Letters* 45/2 (1964), 153.

<sup>14</sup> R. J. S. Stevens, *Recollections of R. J. S. Stevens: An Organist in Georgian London*, ed. Mark Argent (London: Macmillan, 1992), 92. J. W. Callcott's setting of William Collins's *Ode to Thomson* suggests that glee composers' attitude to poetry and poets was more than utilitarian.

My distinction between picturesque texts encountered in English song of the Georgian period fall broadly into two categories of observational approach:

**The framed picture** – the portrayal of a chosen scene or view which is fixed as if the observer is sedentary (as in poems such as John Dyer's *Grongar Hill* or Gray's *Ode on a Distant Prospect of Eton College*).

**The shifting picture** – where terrain is ranged over, as if in a walk (as in passages of Cowper's *The Task* and Gilbert White's *Invitation to Selborne*).

It is important to explain in what sense both approaches involve the topographical and temporal. When the scenery is described by a walking subject it is quite clear how changing heights, gradients and habitats introduce a topographical dimension. But in a fixed scene these levels can also be recorded as the eye shifts between the three planes of foreground, middle ground and distance. Time in the shifting picture clearly *elapses* as the verse progresses through the journey. In the fixed picture, time taken can also be experienced in a way that a landscape painting cannot produce as satisfactorily – that is when the scene can be described in terms of its changes in appearance as the light changes and as the day progresses towards night or vice-versa. The mood and nature of the reflections drawn from the surveyed landscape, in both types, can change in tone and emphasis.

The observed landscape can be *characterized* in one of two ways: the landscape is either the **principal subject**, or the **point of departure**. In the former characterization the scene under observation is relished for its pleasing arrangement, its variety, and its variance of colour. Once painterly details have formed pictures in the mind, the lyricism of the described scene can resonate unaided.

But very often the verse will encompass analysis, explorations of the reasons for the scene's particular worth. When the landscape is treated in this way (as the **point of departure**) the descriptions recede to allow relevant and associated ideas to develop. A number of typical themes are explored or invoked in these kinds of texts. I want to divide these into two sub-categories: those that encapsulate feelings of well-

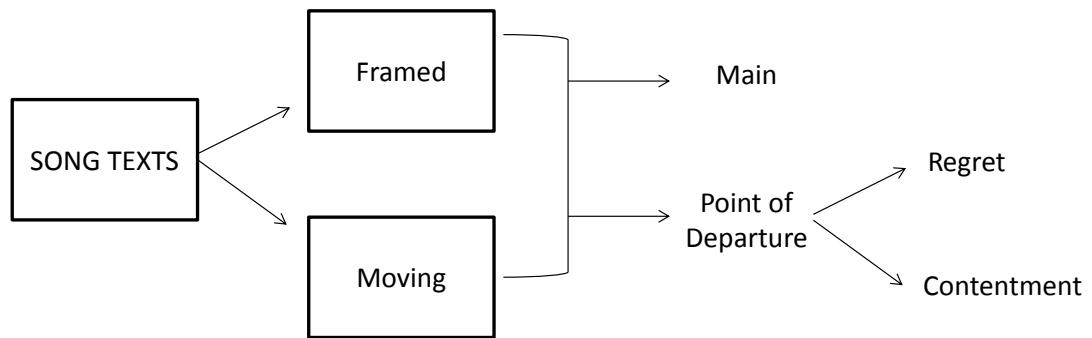
being and those more negative sentiments of regret, fear or horror (although the latter can be a kind of pleasure, a thrill). As we have seen, the sublime, quite contrary to the idea of it holding separate aesthetic territory, is an important element in picturesque scenery and the emotional response to it.

Firstly, the beauty of landscape can be seen as an end in itself. This beauty produces a tranquillity, an exterior peace and a peace of mind. This is the idea of **rural ease** pursued in the pastoral eclogues of Theocritus and Virgil and an established pastoral trope. The landscape can also engender a sense of belonging. Attachments to favoured locations can move the poet to express **pride** in the landscape which can in turn enfold notions of patriotism. **Retirement** (also a well-known pastoral theme from antiquity, and a state of being that Pope liked to revel in), finding a place of rest and retreat, either as a temporary relief from pressures elsewhere, or as a reward for a life of dutiful industry, is also commonly encountered.

But conversely, beauty of landscape can highlight or bring about feelings of **regret** and loneliness. Thoughts of a loved one who shared the love of the countryside, or is associated with it, makes the contemplation of this landscape more poignant and the pleasure it has given is diminished. The countryside provides time for peace and reflection, and stories of poverty and drudgery are rendered sadder by the solemnity of the scene. Landscapes can cause a frisson of excitement tinged with fear too, especially if one feels lost in it, intimidated by it, or spooked by intimations that it holds the mystery of the unknown spirit world. This is the **sublime** landscape which can shock or disorientate, all the more pronounced when experienced at night, especially by moonlight.<sup>15</sup> This discussion can be summarized by the diagram below:

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<sup>15</sup> See chapter 5 of this thesis for discussion of the 'Lunar Men', a group of scientists and artists, mutually fascinated by astronomy and the poetic possibilities of the theme of night.



### Some picturesque song texts

#### *Singing about seeing*

Samuel Howard's 1763 *O Give Me That Social Delight* from 'A Collection of Songs sung by Miss Davies at Vauxhall', sets a text that exemplifies the **framed picture**, but one that presents a *series* of pictures. But although the poem is underpinned by lyrical observations about the moonlit scene, the speaker steps outside the description and the action ('when to the fair meadows we go where Peace and contentment retire') to form a commentary more in keeping with the later theorizing of Gilpin and Price than the customary concerns of a pleasure garden pastoral: 'By nature these Pictures are drawn, How sweet is each landskip dispos'd, the Prospect extends to the lawn, or by the tall Beeches is clos'd'. Not only does the text draw attention to the proper technique of viewing, to take in the contrasting elements, but it points out that there is art in this nature, a perfect composition from this prospect that is suitable for framing in pictures, virtually a textbook definition of a picturesque scene. The speaker then appeals to the companion, Strephon, to come and view a scene that stirs the blood and that inspires creativity and love: 'Come STREPHON, attend to the Scene, the clouds are all vanish'd above, The objects around are serene, As modell'd to Music and Love'. Not only is this slice of nature art in itself, but its ideal composition demands that the artist's muse is awakened by it. In this instance, Howard's song works with a scene that comprises a series of views suitable for painting but its picturesque nature is supplemented by a self-conscious 'meta-picturesque' that justifies each picturesque response in theoretical terms.

As with *O Give Me That Social Delight*, John Wall Callcott's *At Summer's Eve* adopts a questioning, philosophical voice in the appraisal of a fixed picture; here the picturesque is both practiced and interrogated. *At Summer's Eve*, the words taken from Thomas Campbell's *Pleasures of Hope*,<sup>16</sup> demonstrates a similar intention to stress the artful composition of the viewed scene and how the eye is drawn first to the distance. But here Campbell makes clear the role of light, and its effect on the picturesque quality of an important view: 'Why to yon' mountain turns the musing eye whose sun bright summit mingles with the sky...Why do those cliffs of shadowy tint appear more sweet than all the landscape smiling near?' The answer comes immediately: "tis Distance lends enchantment to the view'. Christopher Hussey believes Campbell's poem epitomises the actions of the 'picturesque eye' and the relentless questing spirit of the picturesque traveller.<sup>17</sup> The pleasure of picturesque travelling lies as much in the anticipation of the scene as in the viewing itself.

George Frederick Pinto's *Invocation to Nature*, the fourth canzonet in the set of six from 1804, shows a similar structural awareness of the composition of a painterly scene describing the differing levels of the perspective.<sup>18</sup> There are 'the icy plains above the whispering tides', the outer limit of 'the dreary woods that bound th'extensive view' and the cloudscape 'that Sol's pale luster hides [and which] vary thy tints and ev'ry charm renew'. The eye is excited and in turn 'each passion [is] sooth'd [and] each sense refined'.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> According to the original score, 'as sung by Mrs. Vaughan at Dr. Clement Smith's Concert'. There are two settings of this song, one a solo, the other a duet.

<sup>17</sup> *The Picturesque*, 83.

<sup>18</sup> 'Canzonet' was a term often attached to secular part songs otherwise labelled as glees but single voice accompanied songs could also be tagged with this term. What united the two usages is, according to Emanuel Rubin, probably Thomas Morley's early seventeenth century definition of a 'canzonet' as a short song in *A Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musick*. See Rubin, *The English Glee*, 3-26. There was almost certainly no notion at the time of any difference between canzonets and the songs sung in, for instance, the pleasure gardens but the examples by Stephen Storace, William Jackson, Pinto and Ross show that there is a preference for modern, English rural poetry with its delight in observation as well as allegory. In the *Oxford History of English Music*, John Caldwell states that "canzonet" or "canzonetta" became the favoured item for an accomplished and pleasing, often picturesque, setting with a fully developed piano accompaniment'. 'Canzonetta' was the term adopted by Haydn in his two sets of English language songs, an undoubted example of him following English practice.

<sup>19</sup> The words are anonymous. This song was recorded on Hyperion (CDA66497) in April 1991 by Emma Kirkby (soprano) and Timothy Roberts (fortepiano).

*Love of, and in, the landscape*

The eleventh canzonet of William Jackson's *Second Book of Canzonets* also alludes to the appeal to the heart that picturesque views make: 'Deluding songs of gawdy Art attract the vain fantastic Heart, the Pleasures of Nature yields from sparkling Rills and balmy fields be mine'. The speaker here cherishes the variety of the landscape hereabout and the wish to 'own' it speaks of a proud sense of belonging that comes not from lawful landowning in the economic sense but a knowledge that the countryside can be a free pleasure – every inhabitant has some sort of emotional stake in it.

Jackson's canzonet is a love song to a local countryside but in showing how romance flourishes in such a setting, just as does Howard's *O Give Me That Social Delight*, the love of the landscape provides a **point of departure**: the speaker tells us that the 'untaught music of the Grove...wakes the mind to love'. The passions stirred in Pinto's 'Invocation to Nature' are here the passions for a human partner. In such verdant surrounds the sap of sexual attraction rises. But in *Peace Decks the Morn of Mira' Life*, one of John Ross's canzonets set to the words of John Rannie, it is a favoured spot, rather than the broader area covered in the ramblings of Jackson's canzonet, that glows in the presence of the speakers' love: 'By all the neighbouring hamlets nam'd, "The blooming Beauty of the Green", Gay smiling Plenty marks the spot; all nature strives to deck the cot, Where beauteous Mira love to dwell!' Here, nature is perceived to be at work to dress the favoured scene in verdant finery, a splendour reflected in the beauty of the lover's beau.

The sentimental topic of unrequited love, and, in particular, the **regret** of a love lost, is repeatedly framed within rural boundaries in English secular song of this period. The landscape's beauty is said to have been diminished by the departure, or death, of a loved one. For the 'swain' or the country boy, God is in his heaven when love blossoms and shows his benevolence in a rural scene, a scene that takes on a veneer that shows it in its best light. Psychologically, the joy that love brings and the inspiration the beautiful countryside provides, become merged sentiments. Here the landscape is not enjoyed for its own sake – or, at least, appreciation of it seems to require a particular mindset, a feeling of well-being. The speaker's reflection on the

aesthetics of this countryside, and its reduced worth once its glory cannot be shared with his lover, figures a typical facet of the picturesque response: the pleasure it gives the eye and thus the mind, and the sensibility of sharing in the pleasure it grants. The landscape here, as well as being the backdrop, is characterized as a cherished object which, psychologically, takes on a new appearance for the speaker at the turn of events.

In *How Sweet When Evening Shades the Plain* by George Malme, the landscape discussed is a broad area, a region rather than a scene and, as with the area appraised in Jackson's canzonet, constitutes a **shifting picture**. The terrain the lovers had wandered, previously a thing of splendour, appears spoiled, the loss personified in a pervading gloom. The 'woodland strain' now goes 'unheeded' and the moon and stars 'shine in vain'. *Absence* by James Worgan and Jackson's fifth song from *12 Songs*, opus 7, tell of a similar palling: *Absence* states, 'But not the Sun's warm beams could cheer, nor Hills tho' e'er so green Unless my DAMON should appear to beautify the scene'. And in Jackson's song there is the line, 'Tho' flowers adorn the sprightly green, tho' fanning zephyrs fragrance hear, Joyless to me is every scene, Alas, my Delia is not there!' *The Pride of the Valley* by Matthew Holst also betrays exactly that sentiment. We learn that 'in vain to these sad eyes new charms (the aforementioned streams, mountains and 'green spreading bowr's') display, for the Pride of the Valley is flown away'.

### Case study: the Thomsonian picturesque in Storace's *Canzonetts*

The *Eight Canzonetts* by Stephen Storace, published in 1782 by the London firm of Longman and Broderip, with enough demand to have them republished in separate form about three years later, come from the early stages of his career before his brief but notably successful stints in Vienna and London. Little is known about this period of his life but it seems likely that he spent his time between London and Bath.<sup>20</sup> What drew Storace to his chosen texts and influenced his choices can only be a matter of speculation but his selection of poets settled on six British landscape poets of the

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<sup>20</sup> See Girdham, *English Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, 12.

eighteenth century. Storace set extracts of poetry by Gray, Thomson, John Cunningham and Matthew Prior with two settings each of verse by garden theorist William Shenstone and celebrated bluestocking and friend of Dr Johnson, Elizabeth Carter. These verses are amply furnished with recognizable *topoi* of nymphs, shepherds, standard Horatian characters and timeless Arcadian values but, save for Prior's bucolic offering, there is a broad emotional canvas with which Storace can work, encompassing proto-romantic painterly description, allegorical treatment of love and loss and sentimentality rich with environmental symbolism.

The seventh setting takes a section from one of Thomson's Songs, *To Amanda*<sup>21</sup> that contrasts the renewal of springtime with the yearning of unrequited love: 'In vain the birds around me sing, in vain the fresh'ning fields appear, without my love there is no Spring' (example 4.1). Storace scores this song for two singers and responds to the opposing elements of the frame - spring's optimistic bounty - and the speaker's sense of loss with a judicious juxtaposition of pastoral tranquillity (long-limbed melody over pedal points) and the intensity of frustration (chromatic inflections, restless turn figures in counterpoint). Thomson constructs a picture that typically underpins a pure delight in the scenery of nature - in this case in all its springtime fecundity - with a compulsion to stand outside the scene and impose aspects of humanity's visage. Whereas in *The Seasons* the rural observation is both a frame and vehicle for reflections on human virtue, here his message is that the glory of spring is not a delight and cue for happiness in itself. Rather, it is able to act as reflection or symbol of human happiness, enjoyed only if the mind is at peace with itself. So spring's delight is 'in vain' unless the speaker's love, Amanda, is present. At the song's climax, Storace presents Thomson's sentiment as a clear dichotomy between the 'vain' singing of birds and 'fresh'ning' of fields (two- part counterpoint of rapid scales and triads) with the rootedness of Amanda's love (rhythmic unison, long note values and throbbing tonic pedal).

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<sup>21</sup> Amanda was Elizabeth Young, with whom Thomson was in love. It was unrequited, though, as she turned down Thomson's proposal of marriage in 1743. See James Sambrook's introduction to James Thomson, 'The Seasons' and 'The Castle of Indolence', ed. Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 16n.

flow'r A-wa-ken'd by the ge-nial

flow'r A-wa-ken'd by the ge-nial year the

year the genial year, in vain the birds around me sing in vain the frellwing

ge-nial year, in vain the birds around me sing in

fields the fields ap-pear, with-out my love there is no

vain the fields ap-pear with-out my love there is no

spring with-out my love there is no spring

spring with-out my love there is no spring

Example 4.1 Stephen Storace, Canzonet VII from *8 Canzonetts* (1782), bars 20-39. © The British Library Board. G.295.b.(4.)

The text of the fourth canzonet lifts two well-known stanzas from Thomas Gray's *Elegy*<sup>22</sup> (example 4.2). This provides Storace with material that taps a particular English strain of melancholy captured by the anti-Georgic sentiments of selected poetry of the period. Storace's sensitive, minor mode response to the regretful tone and morbid imagery of this evening scene encompasses a variety of musical metaphor: the droning tonic octaves representing the 'knell of parting Day' as the 'curfew tolls' and the almost pedantic stepwise descents of bars 9-10 for the picturesque archetype of the long-suffering plowman as he embarks on his weary, 'homeward plod'. As he does so, the darkening scene is left to the speaker. Storace figures 'The solemn stillness holds' in the sparse, open textures; periodic closes and half closes; and drawn out durations on the words, 'stillness' and 'lull'. The funereal tone is broken only by the livelier sequence of quavers on 'drowsy tinklings'. Storace's decision to include a da capo to the opening stanza suggests that the tolling continues and that the retreating plowman's outline is still visible.<sup>23</sup>

### **The English glee: conviviality and patriotism**

The eighteenth-century English glee is a genre scarcely touched by today's musicologists. Its low, marginalized status stems principally from its limited distribution and audience, its association with the catch (a generally more light-hearted and lightweight type encompassing ribald and occasionally extremely coarse text) and of course the somewhat thin secondary literature on English music of the Georgian period. In the late eighteenth century, however, the glee and glee culture made a particularly rich contribution to English musical life. Although the principal site of performance were the glee clubhouses or taverns where the members met, glees made frequent appearances also in pleasure garden concerts, benefit concerts, the

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<sup>22</sup> This famous section of the *Elegy* was also set by, among others, John Marsh and Thomas Billington (whose efforts are, for McVeigh, 'misguided'. See *Concert Life*, 139.

<sup>23</sup> *Address to the Thames*, by Samuel Webbe the younger, with words by F. Greville, contains the lines, 'Pellucid stream who with unerring wave, silent, and constant, dost pursue thy way, As the fair banks thy welcome waters love, Through midnight darkness from the morning ray...Ah little by reflection's aid, do they Feel how (an emblem of their common lot;) like thee alas! They end their destin'd way, when lost in ocean, thou art quite forgot...'. This recalls the spirit of Gray's melancholic painterly metaphor using the river as allegorically as does Gray the churchyard. This song belongs in Haydn's collection of English music.

8 Canzonet IV.

Largo

The Curfew tolls, the Knell of parting Day, the  
lowing Herd wind slowly o'er the lea, the Plowman home-ward plods his weary way, and leaves the World to  
darknes and to me.

Now fades the glim'ring  
landscape on the sight, and all the Air a solemn stillnes holds, save where the Beetle wheels his drony  
flight, and drawfy tinklings full, and drawfy tinklings full, and full the distant Fold, The

Example 4.2 Storace, Canzonet IV from *8 Canzonetts*

Vocal Concerts, and in the theatre, either through incorporation of existing or specially composed glees into theatrical entertainments or as preliminary or supplementary elements on the bill.<sup>24</sup> Brian Robins estimates that around 2500 were published between 1760 and 1810 but suspects the true figure to be higher.<sup>25</sup>

The appearance of glees in pleasure garden concerts, indoor concert series and theatre pieces signalled the emergence into the public realm of a previously private concern which mutually benefited aristocrats and glee composers enjoying their patronage. Emanuel Rubin points out that this development gave rise to specially composed 'public' glees for particular performers at particular venues in addition to the programming of glees whose life started out in the clubs. A domestic offshoot of this, labelled by Rubin the 'parlour glee', included both adaptations of popular glees and new compositions deliberately targeted at the home market. This development was to seal the commercial success of this uniquely English musical form.<sup>26</sup>

No less a figure than Haydn recognized the glee's importance: he agreed to arrange accompaniments for some glees during his London visits and his collection of scores acquired during his London visits, now held at the Széchényi National Library in Budapest, contain ten collections of glee and catch books.<sup>27</sup> This is an important discovery and suggests that the marginal status of the glee in English music's historiography is unjustified.

Glees and catches tend to get bracketed together. Often they were published alongside each other, a practice explained by the performance of both categories at institutions named either glee club or catch club. There is little doubt that members and performers knew the difference very well. But the distinction is blurred today and it has taken the patient work of Brian Robins and Emanuel Rubin to unravel the

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<sup>24</sup> Catch and Glee concerts were also occasionally put on at London theatre. For the glee's various performance contexts see Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 103- 134.

<sup>25</sup> *Catch and Glee Culture*, 4. In Appendix C, Robins provides a comprehensive list of the various published glee publications, both in single composer collections and mixed anthologies.

<sup>26</sup> See Rubin, *The English Glee*, 11, 105-9.

<sup>27</sup> Haydn worked on the piano accompaniments for glees by his friend, 'Bertie' Willoughby, The Fourth Earl of Abingdon. See Rubin, 294 and *The Collected Correspondence and London Notebooks of Joseph Haydn*, ed. and trans. H.C. Robbins Landon (London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1959), 299.

confusion.<sup>28</sup> Catches tended to be set to aphorisms, puns or short rhymes and were often treated to contrapuntal working such as rounds or canons. The catch was an essentially humorous vehicle for panegyrics to brotherly fellowship, drinking and the sexual act.

The glee, on the other hand, was a fully formed part song set to more substantial poetry than the catch and, although glees occasionally hymned the glory of Priapus, the vine and the hop, it was capable of sustaining a more nuanced emotional, often unashamedly sentimental outlook.<sup>29</sup> Although glee composers relished the opportunity to set their own words to music, the verse of some of the foremost poets of the age found its way into the glee repertory. This verse was often of structural complexity and breadth of topic, both timeless and topical.<sup>30</sup>

The glee was evidently a suitable site for the exposure of issues of the day, particularly those that impinged on the English gentleman's sense of patriotism.<sup>31</sup> Glee and catch clubs were meeting places where social matters of the day were disseminated, and shared values celebrated, in the singing of songs.<sup>32</sup> These songs spoke not only of shared pleasures but notions of national pride. The picturesque artist customarily united these two aspects, and men who discussed the aesthetics of the picturesque in print, such as Uvedale Price, Sir Henry Hoare and Lancelot

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<sup>28</sup> Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 1-15; Rubin, *The English Glee*, chapter 1.

<sup>29</sup> For McVeigh this places the glee in a negative light, 'as pastoral charm lapsed into the sentimental'. See *Concert Life*, 139.

<sup>30</sup> Rubin attributes this to the fact that England, in the late eighteenth century, was a country that revered language, a land that produced Dr Johnson, the figurehead for the written word. See *The English Glee*, 10. Brian Robins is in 'little doubt that [the glee] was closely related [...] to the prevailing aesthetic concerns of the day', although the relationship between glees and poetry requires 'further detailed work'. *Catch and Glee Culture*, 149. Simon McVeigh points out, however, that there was little mixing socially between poets and intellectuals on the one hand and musicians on the other. Only Charles Burney, thinks McVeigh, gained real acceptance into London's intellectual circles by dint of his extra-musical writings. McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 204. Rubin makes particularly judicious comparisons between the glee tradition and that of the madrigal, believing the glee to be a servant of the verse rather than the reverse which is the case with the madrigal. It is also worth pointing out that glee composers were often organists or choirmasters indulging in a side project as is the case with madrigalists. See *The English Glee*, 34, 209-15.

<sup>31</sup> Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, ix.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 149.

'Capability' Brown, were members of these kinds of establishments and keenly interested in music.<sup>33</sup>

Glee and catch clubs were very much male preserves and some had extremely blue chip membership, counting nobility and many parliamentarians among their membership. And in their arcane rules and stringent admission policies they operated in much the same fashion as gentleman's clubs (some of which survive today). The fuss surrounding the attendance of the Duchess of Devonshire at a meeting of the Anacreontic Society in 1791 (she was hidden from view and the programme of songs was changed so as not to offend her sensibilities) shows how entrenched their activities were.<sup>34</sup> But it is important not to paint the music of the glee into a male corner. The fact that the evening's proceedings were altered to protect the Duchess's feelings hints at changing times ahead. And as glee singing started to filter into arenas outside the clubs and into the domestic sphere, glees with parts for women, and sometimes exclusively for women, began to be written.<sup>35</sup>

In the clubs, the musical tail was starting to wag the dog. The system of prize-giving for the best glees became more and more elaborate and more frequent. And as the glee composers became more prolific, so the music filtered out to the pleasure garden events, the theatre, and indoor concert venues. As composers gained seats on the committees and set up clubs such as The Glee Club and The Concentores Society off their own bat, their influence and control over the music's circulation grew.<sup>36</sup> Although part of the thrill of belonging to the glee or catch club was the exclusivity, the conviviality and the sense of belonging, the composers seemed to yearn for a wider audience. Some of their output (particularly the catches) were really in-jokes set to music. But the more serious glees which dealt with more universal themes (and, in the case of the picturesque glees, more topical ones) had a reach and an appeal beyond

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<sup>33</sup> See Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 13. Fanny Burney's diaries recount an occasion at the Devizes residence of Henry Hoare (owner of Stourhead) when a game of cards was interrupted by one of Hoare's guests playing the overture to *La Buona Figliuola* on the pianoforte. See *The Diary of Fanny Burney*, edited with an introduction by Lewis Gibbs (London: J. M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1950), 46.

<sup>34</sup> See Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 75.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 103-5.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 76-87.

their class confines, being published widely and heard in more egalitarian settings such as the tavern and pleasure gardens.

Another paradox concerning glee culture is that songs sung about the picturesqueness of the countryside should find its primary outlet in an urban setting. But, as Tim Fulford has pointed out, picturesque tourism was an interest that involved many city dwellers.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, in the second half of the eighteenth century, mobility between the town and the country had much increased. The poets, composers, singers and club members would be all too aware of the difference. Indeed, increasing urbanization would make them all too aware of the contrasts.<sup>38</sup>

The rise of the glee coincided with the burgeoning of native landscape poetry, resulting in a preponderance of glees concerned with picturesque subjects. Reference to Rubin's table of poets utilized for the setting of glees reveals a striking number of writers known for their penchant for what might be termed 'picturesque poetry' – Thomson, Shenstone, Gray, Prior are four of the most set poets.<sup>39</sup> J. Merrill Knapp, in his essay on Samuel Webbe the elder's glee output, posits that Webbe worked within three broad categories: Anacreontic 'drinking' songs; 'serious' glees including settings of Congreve, Milton, Pope and Cowper; and 'pastorals'. This assessment works equally well for the entire repertoire.<sup>40</sup> More recently, both Brian Robins and Emanuel Rubin have identified the pastoral as sharing a significant portion of the range of subjects covered in the songs. Rubin, however, goes further by making the point that 'pastoral' is an insufficient term for several of the glees concerned with matters of the natural world.<sup>41</sup> As the clubs celebrated nationhood, references in the texts set to an unrooted *arcadia* were - as in the secular song repertory elsewhere - outnumbered by paeans to countryside of a local character that often sustained a notably topographical exactness,

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<sup>37</sup> *Landscape, Liberty and Authority*, 117.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, 117. Despite the increase in town dwelling there were plenty of people willing to make the move in reverse. Humphry Repton and the poet, William Wordsworth, were critical of townsfolk thinking that they could adapt to life in the countryside.

<sup>39</sup> See *The English Glee*, 226-8.

<sup>40</sup> J. Merrill Knapp, 'Samuel Webbe and The Glee', *Music and Letters*, 33/4 (1952), 346-51. The Bacchanalian verse of the Greek poet, Anacreon, turned him into a heroic figure for the glee club members for whom gargantuan banquets and drinking sessions were the norm at club meetings. One prominent London club was dubbed The Anacreontic Society. See Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 72-87.

<sup>41</sup> Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 140; Rubin, *The English Glee*, 31-3.

as well as painterly level of details such as changing light and the description of buildings. The membership of such important figures in the picturesque movement as Price and Brown, and of various Earls, Dukes, Viscounts, Knights and Marquises representing an aristocratic elite with a taste for the latest in landscape garden design, indicate that many patrons would appreciate and relish the setting of these texts. That there was a clear relationship between patronage and picturesque taste on the one hand and the growth of the picturesque glee is irrefutable.

### Haydn and the glee

The glee's now marginal status as a repertory and as an object of historical enquiry is a function of the decline of the clubs in the early nineteenth century, as well as the more general failure of English secular song of this period to gain a foothold in the canon of choral singing in Britain. In 1790s London, however, it would be a brave assertion indeed to claim that the English glee was peripheral in the musical life of the city. Its detractors, such as William Jackson of Exeter, tended to complain about a perceived shortfall in the quality of the music, rather than deny its importance and popularity. It is true that the glee flourished most in somewhat exclusive settings - subscription-only clubs - and new compositions were often heard behind closed doors, performed to judging committees, sometimes never reaching the public. But the increasing circulation of published glees texts secured for them a wider public.

Brian Robins feels that the glee clubs lent encouragement to rising English composers, who might have felt the cold shoulder of commercial London concert life.<sup>42</sup> Indeed, it is tempting to view the prolific group of Callcott, Cooke, Stevens and Webbe as something of a 'Davidsbund', a like-minded group, spurred on and inspired by each other's excellence and the incentives of the club's prizes in a respectful but intense rivalry.<sup>43</sup> There was also a sense at the time that the glee was the best, most pure,

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 142.

<sup>43</sup> 'Davidsbund' was a term used by Robert Schumann to describe a school of artists with similar motives and ideals. Schumann, however, perhaps had in mind groups who were rather more anti-establishment than these four glee composers. See Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically: Historical and Hermeneutical Essays* (Princeton, N. J.; Chichester: Princeton University Press, 1997), xv.

example of national music. William Horsley felt that glee writing was '...a species of composition, which, at present, is the chief, if not the only characteristic of the English school of music'.<sup>44</sup> Writing nearly a hundred years later, W. A. Barrett held that

The great, if possibly unwitting, achievement of the noblemen and gentlemen who founded the Catch Club in 1761 was to give to native composers the inspiration to create a large body of lyric compositions that would come to fill the purpose of restoring pride in the concept of Englishness in music. That their initial ambition for the Catch Club was founded on the more prosaic precepts of conviviality and sociability is not only a mirror of the Georgian era in which they lived, but also in itself somehow very English.<sup>45</sup>

By the time of Haydn's first visit to the capital, the glee was in rude health, a fact of which he could scarcely be ignorant, considering the deep interest he took in the musical life of the city and the company he kept. Haydn came into contact with several noblemen who were members of the various glee clubs and he met several of the more established glee composers, getting to know John Wall Callcott well through giving him a series of lessons.<sup>46</sup>

Haydn's only mention of glees in his notebooks is when he records the favour he did the Earl of Abingdon in arranging accompaniments to glees written by the aristocrat. We know also that he was present as a guest of the Anacreontic Society on the 12<sup>th</sup> of January, 1791, right at the beginning of his first London stay.<sup>47</sup> Yet given his fascination and deep curiosity for unfamiliar aspects of English culture it is perfectly proper to assume that he adopted an open-minded attitude to glee music.

Haydn's notebooks paint the picture of a man broad of mind and of interests. No ephemera or trivia is deemed too esoteric. But he was much a collector of artefacts as he was of facts. We know, for instance, that he was an enthusiastic collector of

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<sup>44</sup> *Memoir of Dr. Callcott*, 3.

<sup>45</sup> Quoted in Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 154.

<sup>46</sup> Haydn's notebook records a meeting in 1794 with Callcott, William Shield, Benjamin Cooke and Samuel Arnold to improve the book of English 'Parochial Psalmody'. See *The Collected Correspondence*, 290.

<sup>47</sup> Robins, *Catch and Glee Culture*, 75.

English prints, seeking out landscape paintings in particular.<sup>48</sup> His effects also contain many gifts. But although he was showered with them during his two stays in London, he appeared to value them greatly, hoarding them into a substantial treasure trove which he had shipped back to Vienna.

The substantial collection of glees in his library, outnumbering English music from other genres, suggest that his awareness of, and interest in, this repertory goes a long way to supporting his statement that he 'studied the taste of the English' during his time in London.<sup>49</sup> The evidence suggests that, in Haydn's mind, the road to the fame and popularity he sought should be paved with the good intentions of dutifully getting to know his public's cultural behaviour and preferences.<sup>50</sup> Haydn's library of books and manuscripts contains a substantial collection of musical scores, plays, novels, poetry, and philosophical tracts. Amongst the items acquired in London between 1791 and 1795 are a number of chamber works dedicated to him (he is often referred to as 'Dr. Haydn') by touring foreign composers such as Giuseppe Bertini and François-Hippolyte Barthélemon and English composers such as Thomas Haigh and Rothe Nugent. There are a number of works by Johann Samuel Schroeter, presented as gifts by his widow, Rebecca Schroeter, with whom Haydn developed a close relationship. Works of older vintage include a collection of madrigals by Thomas Weelkes, highlights of Handel's operatic arias, arrangements of psalms and Scottish folk-songs (some used by Haydn for his own arrangements). But by far the most dominant genre in the collection is that of the English glee. It is hard to establish what

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<sup>48</sup> See Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 208-9. Tolley points out that the theorist, Johann Georg Sulzer advocated the study and collection of paintings in order to form a basis of all-round taste. However, as I mention in chapter 6, Sulzer's denunciation of the tone-painting in Haydn's late oratorios showed that he was not keen for the practices of music and painting to mix.

<sup>49</sup> Brown, 'The Sublime, the Beautiful and the Ornamental', 45.

<sup>50</sup> Haydn was also interested in what might be termed the 'marginalia' of folk songs and his correspondence with the publisher, George Thompson, show how keen he was to assimilate this aspect of British music and to make his mark on it. See Warwick Edwards, 'New Insights into the Chronology of Haydn's Folksong Arrangements: Reading Between the Lines of the George Thompson Correspondence', *Haydn-Studien, Haydns Bearbeitungen Schottischer Folkslieder* 8/4 (2004), 325-40. See also Nicholas Mathew's work on Beethoven's 'other voices', 'Beethoven and his Others: Criticism, Difference and the Composer's Many Voices', *Beethoven Forum* 13/2 (2006), 148-87. Mathew explains how the canonic 'heroic' voice of Beethoven is the one that is seen to have the most respectability but his political and folk voices are crucial to understanding him as a man and as an artist. I would say that Mathew's argument is equally relevant to Haydn.

proportions of these scores are donations or Haydn's purchases (apart from those addressed to 'Dr. Haydn') but the clear message is that Haydn would be under no doubt as to the popularity and prolixity of the glee in English musical life.

The majority of glees in Haydn's collection are composed by Dr Benjamin Cooke and Samuel Webbe the elder and Samuel Webbe the younger. Cooke studied with Pepusch, took degrees at both Oxford and Cambridge and was an active composer and performer in London until his death in 1793. He was Organist of St. Martin-in-the-Fields, co-organised the Handel Commemoration of 1784 but mysteriously resigned from the Academy of Ancient Music in this decade. He was a member of the Catch Club and a prolific composer of catches and glees. Samuel Webbe the elder was also a member of the Catch Club as well as librarian of the Glee Club. According to Paul Weaver, Webbe probably did more than any other Englishman in furthering the popularity of the catch and glee.<sup>51</sup> Webbe was a Catholic, and like many Catholic musicians, found work as an organist in embassy chapels such as the Sardinian Embassy where Thomas Arne had previously been employed. Webbe was even more productive as a composer of catches and glees, employing, as Weaver states, 'elements of the continuing influence of Handel blend[ed] with the Classical style'.<sup>52</sup> The younger Webbe followed a very similar career path to his father, acting as organist in embassy chapels and being active in glee and catch clubs. He also helped to found the Philharmonic Society and established a Piano Academy in London.

The majority of the glees in Haydn's collection are pastorals, several of which engender the picturesque in their colourful observation of scenes of nature and topographical descriptions of broad vistas. Haydn's book of Cooke's glees, published by Longman and Broderip in 1795, is entitled *Nine Glees and Two Duets (never before printed) Composed by the Late Dr. Benjamin Cooke, Published from the Original Manuscripts by his Son, Robert Cooke*. A handwritten note in the top right hand corner of Haydn's copy states, 'with Mr. Robert Cooke's respectful compliments to Dr. Haydn'. Cooke's pastoral glees in this set contain references to the symbolic arrival of spring: the springtime blooming of flowers and territorial singing of birds signalling the

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Weaver, 'Samuel Webbe' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., vol. 27, 131-2.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 131.

blossoming of love and the blushing courtship of couples. Some of the Webbes' music in Haydn's library is, on the other hand, work adopting more picturesque verse: two single songs, published separately, set texts that evoke the spirit of both Thomson and Gray. In similar vein in this folio is Webbe the younger's six-part glee, *Hence All Ye Vain Delights*. This six-part glee is in two sections, the first entitled 'Melancholy' followed by a 'Tempo di Minuetto'. The words of the first half (by Elizabethan playwright, John Fletcher) are again are strikingly Grayesque:

Fountainheads, and pathless groves,  
Places which pale Passion loves;  
Moon-light walks, when all the paths  
Are safely hous'd, save bats and owls.  
A midnight bell a parting Groan -  
These are the sounds we feed upon,  
Then stretch our Bones in a still gloomy valley;  
Nothing's so dainty sweet as lovely melancholy.

A volume of glees belong to Haydn goes by the title, *The Ladies Collection of Catches, Glees, Canons, Canzonets, Madrigals etc. Selected from the works of the most eminent composers*. This book contains a glee by Webbe the elder, *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow* (discussed below) which sets verse by the Irish playwright and poet, John Cunningham. Cunningham's description of 'shadows nurs'd by Night retire' and 'the peeping sun Beams [which] paint with Gold the village spire' recall the landscapes of Wilson and Sandby, and the sketches of Gilpin.

Haydn's interest and involvement in the glee is further evidence of his determination to assimilate as much English culture as he could in the time he had available on these shores. It also shows a disinterest in the divisions between high and low music promulgated in certain areas of English musical criticism. His refusal to prejudge the musics of folk-song and glee lends them a validity that those with a more parochial view in England were unwilling to countenance. The other point to be made about his curiosity for the glee is that it would have further informed him of the growing English enthusiasm for the appreciation of scenes from nature, confirming

what he had already learnt from his fervour for collecting English landscape prints.<sup>53</sup> In his time in England, Haydn learnt the picturesque language, a lesson that was to bear fruit in his late-flowering oratorio, *The Seasons*.

### Case study: picturesque glees

There is no single recognizable formal design that predominates in the English glee. Strophic forms were rare and, as Rubin points out, were employed only when glees were composed for the commercial market.<sup>54</sup> Indeed itinerant glee composers such as Webbe the elder and Callcott preferred to remove the appellation 'glee' in such examples. What we can discern, though, is the glee composer's episodic approach to the organisation of musical material and the setting of the chosen text. Different stanzas, lines or even phrases tended to be sectioned off, given contrasting textural, metrical and temporal treatment, as the 'Rubrics' in the constitution of the Catch Club outlines:

[The madrigal's] subjects are generally few, always contrapuntally treated, and this often at considerable length, those of the glee are generally many, and only rarely at all developed. Masses of harmony, rare in the madrigal, are common in the glee, and indeed give it some of its best effects. Indeed, the short phrases, incessant cadences, frequent changes of rhythm, and pace of the average glee contrast unfavourably with the 'long resounding' phrases of the madrigal, never brought to an end in one part till they are begun in another, overlapping one another, bearing one another up, and never allowing the hearer to anticipate a close till everything that can be done with every subject has been done, and the movement comes to a natural end.<sup>55</sup>

What this analysis shows us is the importance glee composers attached to the discrete conveyance of individual sentiments, moods, and topics. This approach was clearly an

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Tolley points out that certain dealers were responsible for encouraging a taste in both music and painting. The publishers, Artaria, published both prints of paintings and music and Gaetano Bartolozzi, a picture dealer, was a well-known amateur violinist. See *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 95-6, 214.

<sup>54</sup> *The English Glee*, 195.

<sup>55</sup> Quoted in Viscount Gladstone, *The Story of the Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club* (London: 1930), 27.

excellent fit for the picturesque glee, aiding the representation of a varied landscape and providing an analogy between the differing affect reaching the ear and the differing visual information reaching the roving eye (a technique we encounter particularly in the writing of Benjamin Cooke below).

William Jackson, a painter who was in regular contact with Thomas Gainsborough, as well as a musical critic and composer, was in a good position to talk about the use of observational country verse in the glee repertoire and its musical treatment. But Jackson, whilst recognizing parallels between musical composition and painting, and taking as read Charles Avison's belief that both composers and painters should seek the ideal balance of contrasts and the control of primary and secondary 'ideas', counselled care over the overall expressive effect (in his words 'general expression'). As we saw in the previous chapter, it was the 'painting' of individual effects ('particular expression') that Jackson did not care for. This was a response employed by many glee composers when setting these kinds of texts.<sup>56</sup> It is worth speculating whether this coloured his low opinion of glees: in a stentorian denunciation of the genre, he complained of the 'numerous doleful Ditties with which our Benefit-Concerts are so sorely afflicted'.<sup>57</sup>

#### *Webbe's dreaming spires*

Arguably the purest expression of the picturesque takes place when the landscape is made the subject of the work of art, and this is an approach normally associated with landscape paintings and some topographical poetry. Samuel Webbe the elder's four part glee in E flat of 1788, *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow* sets a text by the Irish poet

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<sup>56</sup> Rubin detects a move away from the kind of 'particular expression' to which Jackson refers, towards the century's close, a sign, for Rubin, of the final emergence from the shadows of the madrigal. See *The English Glee*, 215.

<sup>57</sup> *Observations*, 14. Jackson's objection appears to be that glee textures were harmonically conceived, either with three to six part block harmonies or three to six part counterpoint (on the previous page of the *Observations*, Jackson praises English opera composers for allowing simple melody to shine).

and dramatist, John Cunningham, who wrote a number of 'pastorals', several set by Webbe.<sup>58</sup> Cunningham's poetry was described by Joseph Ritson as

possess[ing] a pleasing simplicity which cannot fail to recommend him to a reader of unadulterated taste. This simplicity may, perhaps, in some of his compositions, be thought too great; but when it is known that they were necessarily adapted to the intellects of a country-theatre, little censure can be justly incurred by the poet.<sup>59</sup>

Ritson's remark hints both at Cunningham's interest in rural settings and subjects and the typical critical reflex of the time to point out the lower literary standing of such writing. Cunningham's sensitivity and painstaking attention to topographical detail in his poetry might also 'incur censure', to adopt Ritson's language, for lacking any extension of his reportage to the philosophical – an approach more likely to be found in the landscape poetry of Thomson and Cowper. But the inclusion of several of Cunningham's topographical poems within the collection of song texts which Ritson's essay accompanies, suggests two things: the perceived suitability of his style to the English song and glee, and the popularity of it with composers, singers and audiences.

Webbe's glee deals exclusively with the verbal painting of a picturesque scene (example 4.3-4).<sup>60</sup> It also expresses a clear delight in it, lingering in painterly fashion on such details as the retreating shadows which, 'nurs'd by night retire'. He is moved to see these 'shadows' as visual *echoes* that dart before the eye before settling into shade, and thus the treatment of the word 'shadows' is imitative, before a curious stasis is engineered with two consecutive perfect cadences on 'retire' (example 4.3).

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<sup>58</sup> See Knapp, 'Samuel Webbe and the Glee', 350-3.

<sup>59</sup> Joseph Ritson, 'A Historical Essay on the Origin and Progress of National Song' in *A Selection of English Songs with their Original Airs, the Second Edition with Additional Songs and Occasional Notes by Thomas Park*, vol. 1, (London: F. C. and J. Rivington et al., 1813), xci.

<sup>60</sup> This glee was performed at The Freemason's Hall on 6 January, 1791 as part of the second concert in the Academy of Ancient Music's 1790-91 series. See McVeigh, *Concert Life*, 244. In *The World*, January 31 1794, a clergyman' contributed a poem after hearing Charles Knyvett (a pupil of Webbe and Cooke and a well-known singer in London circles) and his three sons sing this glee. The poem included these words: 'Hear Nature's voice, hear souls impassion'd, Whose tuneful notes from cordial feelings spring...So soft, so smoothly flows th'harmonic strain, The "Universal Song" it felt thro' ev'ry strain'.

262

*Swiftly from the Mountains Brow*  
**PRIZE GLEE 1788. Composed by S\*WEBBE.**

LONDON. Printed and Sold by J. BLAND at his Music Warehouse No 45 Holborn. Price 1<sup>s</sup>

Allegretto

Swiftly Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow Shadows  
 Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow  
 Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow  
 Swift - ly Swiftly from the Mountains Brow Shadows

Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire Dim do re - tire  
 Shadows Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire Dim do re - tire  
 Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire Dim do re - tire  
 nurf'd Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire re - tire

Swiftly Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow Shadows Shadows  
 Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow Shadows  
 Swift - ly from the Mountains Brow  
 from the Mountains Brow Shadows nurf'd Shadows

nurf'd by Night re - tire re - tire Dim do p || 6  
 Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire re - tire Dim do p || 6  
 Shadows nurf'd by Night re - tire re - tire Dim do p || 6  
 nurf'd by Night re - tire re - tire re - tire Dim do p || 6

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 V 144/583/53 ZR 796/3 (R2)

Example 4.3 Samuel Webbe the elder, *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow* (1788), bars 1-20. Published separately in London by J. Bland of London, 1789. By permission The National Széchényi Library, Budapest. ZR 796/3

In the next section, the peeping sun beams which 'paint with Gold the village spire', to which I referred above, is a detail of colouring which attains a temporal dimension – the sun 'peeps' where once it hid and *now* paints the spire with gold. The primacy the poet gives the feature of the church spire (both syntactically and lyrically) satisfies one of Uvedale Price's requirements for picturesque harmony between trees and village buildings: 'The church, as the centre of the village, should be the object of the landowner's particular attention'.<sup>61</sup> Cunningham's poem, *A Landscape*, provides another parallel. It is a typical example of his style, the poetical eye roving over a series of busy, modern eighteenth-century vistas, visually sensitive to colour and changes in light, both between views and through time. *A Landscape* refers to 'Hamlets, villages and spires / Scatter'd on the landscape lie, / Till the distant view retires / Closing in an azure sky'. Webbe's *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow* contains a strikingly similar description: Webbe chooses this moment to change the meter to compound duple and assigns broad dotted crotchets descending from F<sup>2</sup> in the soprano. Although the tenor and bass lines pre-echo this phrase it is the soprano treatment of the line, supported in compound thirds by the tenor, which springs from the texture, lending particular registral and rhythmic emphasis (example 4.4).

*Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow* is concerned with the changing impressions of a fixed scene, the **framed picture**, with the eye roving from distance to middle-ground and foreground. We can think of this not only as a written eye-witness account but also as a little collection of paintings that record the contrasts imparted to the scene by the day's breaking. Webbe's episodic treatment of the verse enhance this sense that we are to imagine our eye shifting across the distances, as we might on contemplating a Claude painting and provides musical contrast as a means of delineating differing types of visual data. As we will see in chapter 6, Webbe's techniques, and the sense the music gives us of contemplating a succession of different pictures, are frequently encountered in Haydn's *The Seasons*. Knowing as we do that Haydn possessed a copy of this and other Webbe, glees, it is not stretching a point to say that he learnt valuable lessons from the Englishman through acquaintance with these scores.

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<sup>61</sup> Quoted in Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 207.

796

263

Dolce *sf*

and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 tire - - - - - and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -

now paint with Gold now paint with Gold now - - - - -  
 now paint with Gold now - - - - now paint with Gold - - - - -  
 paint with Gold now paint with Gold now - - - - -  
 paint with Gold - - - - now paint with Gold - - - - -

paint with Gold - - - the Vil - - lage Spire  
 now paint with Gold - - - the Vil - - lage Spire  
 paint with Gold - - - the Vil - - lage Spire - - - -  
 now paint with Gold - - - the Vil - - lage Spire - - - -

*p* *sf*

and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -  
 and the peeping Sun Beams now - - - - -

Example 4.4 Webbe, *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow*, bars 21-36

Another Webbe glee, *As O'er the Varied Meads I Stray*, strongly projects a sense of time passing but here the scene shifts since time is *taken* in the act of taking a walk, a **shifting picture**.<sup>62</sup> Wandering in the landscape, and the contemplative nature of this exercise, is crucial to conceptions of the picturesque, as Humphry Repton indicated when he averred that landscape could not be conceived merely as a series of views.<sup>63</sup> The landscape garden is set up, almost provocatively, to invite exploration. Topographical poetry leads the listener by the hand, journeying the landscape. And despite the landscape painting's projection of a prospect, it covers a large amount of ground that the viewer can imagine roving. This Webbe glee describes a walk that produces contentment and stirs strong feelings of gratitude for nature's bounteousness and the solitude it affords.

### *Perambulations*

As with Webbe's *Swiftly from the Mountain's Brow*, the words of Benjamin Cooke's four-part glee, *As Now the Shades of Eve* (examples 4.5-8), also records changing impressions of a landscape affected by the setting of the sun, but here the verse encompasses a **shifting picture** as the speaker embarks on a walk.<sup>64</sup> Cooke responds to a text of considerable emotional range and painterly character with a musical setting of suitably wide stylistic compass and variety. The scene is framed as benign and calm. There is a soft light ('the shades of eve imbrown') and the setting is 'from care remote'. We are told that this landscape is of the kind where 'poets pensive rove', a familiar topos of such poetry, but, perhaps not accidentally, also a gesture towards the habit of eighteenth-century poets, such as Thomson and Cowper, to roam whilst composing (see example 4.5). Gilbert White's *Invitation to Selborne* similarly shows how the poet can lead the reader by the hand around the circuit of the walk:

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<sup>62</sup> Webbe deals with a similar subject in the song, *All Day I Wander Through the Groves*, published in 1799.

<sup>63</sup> See Fulford, *Landscape, Liberty and Authority*, 135.

<sup>64</sup> The words appear in the collection of song and glee texts entitled *A Select Collection of English Songs with their Original Airs* (passim) compiled by the poet and antiquarian, Thomas Park. The title page implies that all unattributed poems in the anthology are by Park.

89

As now the shades of Eve im-brown the Scenes.  
 A favorite Glee for 4 Voices,  
 as Sung by  
Mrs Billington, Mr. Harrison, M. W. Kinney, & Mr. Bartleman,  
at the  
CONCERT of ANTIENT MUSIC,  
Composed by Dr. Cooke?

London Printed for R. Birchall at his Musical Circulating Library 133 New Bond Street

Price 1s

LARGHETTO

GLEE

As now the shades of Eve im-brown the Scenes where  
 As now the shades of Eve im-brown the Scenes where  
 As now the shades of Eve im-brown the Scenes where  
 As now the shades of Eve im-brown the Scenes where

pianissimo for piano  
 pensive Poets rove from care remote from care remote from en-vy's frown the  
 pensive Poets rove from care remote from en-vy's frown  
 pensive Poets rove from care remote from en-vy's frown the  
 pensive Poets rove from care remote from en-vy's frown the

pianissimo for piano  
 joys of inward calm I prove, the joys of inward calm I prove  
 the joys of inward calm the joys of inward calm I prove  
 joys of inward calm I prove, the joys of inward calm I prove  
 joys of inward calm I prove, the joys of inward calm I prove

*This gained a Prize Medal 1782.*

Example 4.5

Benjamin Cooke, *As Now the Shades of Eve*

(1782), bars 1-18. Published separately by R. Birchall, London, 1790.

© The British Library Board. H.2832.l.(6.)

What'er of landscape charms our feasting eyes;  
The pointed spire, the hall, the pasture-plain,  
The russet fallow, or the golden grain,  
The breezy lake that sheds a gleaming light,  
Till all the fading picture fails the sight...  
Now climb the steep, drop now your eye below  
Where round the blooming village orchards grow;  
There, like a picture lies my lowly seat,  
A rural, shelter'd, unobserved retreat.<sup>65</sup>

In *As Now the Shades of Eve*, the speaker also travels until a particularly special location has been reached. There, as with *Invitation to Selborne*, the scene is framed as a picture. But in this case, once the visual splendour has been registered, it gives rise to an emotional response, a visceral sensation of spiritual 'presence' as 'What holy strains around me swell'. This particular scene is valorised as 'favour'd ground' in the text. The delight of this particular spot produces both contentedness and humility in the face of God's creation, a constant theme of James Thomson's nature poetry. Thomson alludes to this most vividly in his preface to the 1726 edition on 'Winter' from *The Seasons*: 'I know no more subject more elevating, more amusing; more ready to awake the poetical Enthusiasm, the philosophical Reflection, and the moral Sentiment, than the *Works of Nature*'.<sup>66</sup>

The shift from tranquil, visual scene-setting to the following stanza's focus on sound and bodily sensation is one that Cooke handles judiciously, the verse's increased tension and introduction of the spiritual met with striking textural, dynamic and tonal contrast (example 4.6). The terraced dynamics of the first stanza are now replaced with crescendo (notably in the approach to the word 'swell') and diminuendo, subito shifts and layered differentiations of dynamic between parts. The sense of transfiguration suggested by the verse is denoted by the move to distant C major, which also perhaps chimes with the allusion to purity in the reference to 'holiness'. Rhythmically, Cooke has replaced the dotted rhythms and legato quaver runs with

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<sup>65</sup> See Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside*, 205-14, for a fuller discussion of this poem and on eighteenth-century writing on the pleasures of walking.

<sup>66</sup> James Thomson, preface to 'Winter', 4th edn. (London: N. Blandford, 1726), 15.

### *Walks and prospect views*

### Example 4.6

Cooke, *As Now the Shades of Eve*, bars 19-48

broader, long-limbed phrases of minims, semibreves and breves within which a currency of crotchet movements moves constantly through the parts and amongst this texture. Cooke here aims for, and relishes in, a sonorous and harmonious noise. This is a sustained, though delicate, ringing sonority, a cushioned wall of sound to reflect the swelling 'holy strains' which are nonetheless not 'wildly rude' or 'tumultuous'. The experience transfixes the wanderer, 'fix[ing] the soul in magic spell'. Cooke's tone changes once again here, the crotchet movement dissipated, the dynamic reduced to a hush with rapid rising and falling swells, the sense of tonality restless. The section closes with the words, 'in magic spell' sung to a whisper in rhythmic unison.

This particular corner of the landscape, the 'favour'd ground' has now gained a status, selected as a painter might choose a scene to convey. As if to emphasize its special value the speaker now tells us that s/he must 'tread soft', a moment of recognition that Cooke sees fit to isolate in the form of a brief slow triple time introduction to the final Allegro section.<sup>67</sup> This peculiar instance of disjunction injects a note of musico-narrative unevenness, an episodic gesture that threatens the unity of the song, but Cooke clearly sees this juncture as a *peripeteia*, requiring a quite separate voice to enunciate it (example 4.7). The closing section deals with the wanderer's reflections on the comparative delights of the scene - the warm spring wind and the attractive stream 'winding' through the vale - with those of love and friendship (example 4.8). As in several other glees of this period, such as *Queen of the Silver Bow* by John Hindle, the enchantment of the scene triggers reflections on mortality and existence itself; the 'sweet notes of love's warblers' (the prevalent melisma *grupetti*) seem to be trumped in the end by 'friendship's solemn theme' (the closing broad, chorale-like texture).

Reflective walks taken alone are a fairly common subject in English secular song of the eighteenth century. A related figure, that of the traveller, also appears on a regular basis. These travellers might be tourists, but more customarily they were commuters, persons moving house, or, more romantically, perpetual wanderers. A

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<sup>67</sup> A similar sentiment is the subject of George Berg's glee, *Lightly Tread, 'tis Hallowed Ground*, written around ten years later.

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Example 4.7 Cooke, *As Now the Shades of Eve*, bars 49-71

4

are the notes Love's warblers sing Love's war  
notes Love's war blers sing Love's  
notes Love's war blers sing Love's war  
are the notes the notes Love's war  
blers sing but sweet-er Friend-ship's so  
war blers sing but sweet-er Friend-ship's  
blers sing but sweet-er Friend-ship's  
blers sing but sweet-er Friend-ship's  
so lemn Theme sweet-er  
so lemn Theme sweet-er  
so lemn Theme sweet-er  
so lemn Theme sweet-er  
Friend-ship's so lemn Theme  
Friend-ship's so lemn Theme  
Friend-ship's so lemn Theme  
Friend-ship's so lemn Theme

Example 4.8 Cooke, *As Now the Shades of Eve*, bars 72-end

number of glees set verse about travellers of these various types. The speaker in Callcott's *O Tarry Gentle Traveller* is intent on persuading the traveller to stay in his dwelling, not only because he must need rest but because it is a spot where one should dwell. The scene outside, beautified by the village spire, is inspiring as well as fertile. The same composer's *Oh Share My Cottage* clearly occupies similar territory. The words of this glee are by Anne Seward, who, as we saw in chapter 1, wrote about the 'picturesque effect' of choruses in *The Messiah*. Seward, a prolific letter-writer, was well-known for writing about her native Lichfield and its surround but she took an interest in picturesque locations further afield. *Oh Share My Cottage* makes mention of the Wye Valley, by this stage established as an English 'wonder' through the writings of William Gilpin, a reputation soon to be reinforced by Wordsworth.

In Reginald Spofforth's *Tell Me the Path, Sweet Wand'rer Tell* the traveller has a fixed destination in mind. It is described elegiacally as a spot bedecked with woodbines, shells, moss, hawthorn, a place where the nightingale - an important pastoral symbol - finds a nest.<sup>68</sup> This is a place of rest, a rural retreat that has taken on an almost mystical significance in the traveller's mind. Retirement to the country was a favourite topic of Gray and Cowper and as the town further encroached into the country - and the polemical writing about the town-country dichotomy grew more vigorous towards the century's end - so English music began to contribute to the debate. Samuel Webbe, as ever, keen to set topical contemporaneous poetry with rich, allusive language, meets this question in *In Rural Innocence Secure I Dwell?* Webbe's text is William Duncombe's *The Letter*, a poem that valorises that picturesque touchstone, the humble cot, as well as lyricising the solitude and peace that it fosters. The speaker's yearning is lent a particular significance by the notion that the move to the cot is, in a sense, a flight, a retreat from the pressures of fame felt so keenly in the city. It is possible that Webbe, by this time approaching fame himself (in London at any rate) rather fancied the idea of such a possession.

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<sup>68</sup> This kind of 'domestic rococo' was briefly fashionable at the end of the eighteenth century. A shell attic made by two spinster cousins, Jane and Mary Parminter, is preserved at their house, A La Ronde, in Devon.

*Picturesque sparkles in the sun: Callcott's building in the landscape*

John Wall Callcott's *Queen of the Valley* (examples 4.9-12) is titled mischievously. The expectation might be that the glee adopts the established pastoral topic of the quintessential fair maid from the typical hillside village. But the queen turns out to be a building. The potential confusion is one that the composer seems willing to exploit to the full; the opening line, 'Thou art beautiful, Queen of the Valley' is treated to a number of antiphonal repetitions of the statement. These are separated by dramatic rests which lend an enhanced sense of the speaker gazing at the object, in rapt contemplation before the words are uttered again in affirmation. At last a lone bass line begins a description of the object of these panegyrics: 'Thy walls like silver, sparkle to the sun' (example 4.9).

The title page provides more confusion. It announces that the words are from 'The Madoc of Southey'. This refers to the 1798 poem, *Madoc* by Robert Southey, an epic rescue tale involving the saving of the primitive Hoamans from the barbaric Aztecs by enlightened travellers from Wales.<sup>69</sup> Callcott's offcut contains no reference to the setting or the story. Ripped from its context the extract, to the uninitiated, seems to form both a picture of, and an elegy to, a built structure (a country house, perhaps? Or a Grecian temple?) in an otherwise natural surround. The scene's description places the principal object of praise, the building, in a green space. The beauty of the building is enhanced by its setting, and in turn, it is fair to venture, the valley by the building.

But the glorification of a building is not Southey's intention in *Madoc*. The preceding text to the lines that Callcott adopts goes like this: 'Hark! From the towers of Aztlan how the shouts / Of the clamorous joy re-ring! The rocks and hills / Take up the joyful sound, and o'er the lake / Roll their slow echoes...' The natives are rejoicing, literally shouting from the rooftops of the city, at their liberation from their rulers. The Queen of the Valley is the *city* of Aztlan, freed from the bonds of the despotic Aztecs, and it now - for the speaker, the Hoamans and their Welsh rescuers - takes on a sheen

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<sup>69</sup> See, for instance, Nigel Leask, 'Reimagining the Conquest of America' in *Robert Southey and the Contexts of English Romanticism*, ed. Lynda Pratt (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006), 133-50.

QUEEN OF THE VALLEY,  
The Words from the Madoc of Southey.  
Composed & inscribed to  
John Heaviside Esq.  
By D<sup>r</sup> CALLCOTT.

near the sea wall.

London. Printed & Sold by R. Bingham, No. 133, New Bond Street.

Prin. 3.

Thou art beautiful  
 Thou art beautiful. Thou art beautiful Queen of the  
 Thou art beautiful Queen of the valley. Thou art beautiful Queen of the  
 Queen of the valley. Thou art beautiful Queen of the  
 Queen of the valley.  
 Thou art beautiful. Thou art beautiful art beautiful  
 valley. art beautiful. Thou art beautiful art beautiful  
 valley. art beautiful art beautiful  
 Thou art beautiful art beautiful. Thou art beautiful art beautiful thy  
 valley. art beautiful  
 thy walls like silver sparkle to the  
 walls like silver sparkle to the Sun thy walls like silver like silver sparkle to the  
 sparkle sparkle

Published posthumously in *A Collection of Glees, Canons and Catches by the Late J. W. Callcott Selected and Arranged with a Memoir of the Author by William Horsley*, vol. 1 (London: 1824)

and a lustre in the sun previously unseen by their eyes. It is the *city* walls that 'sparkle' as do its groves, gardens and lake.

Callcott's five-line extract halts after the words, 'thy temple pyramids arise'. In *Madoc*, the temple pyramids 'high / In heaven...arise, / Upon whose summit now, Far visible / Against the clear blue sky, the Cross of Christ / Proclaims unto the nations round, the news / Of thy redemption'. For the rescue is, in fact, an act by Christian missionaries who have educated the saved Hoamans in the teachings of the scriptures. Callcott has no use for this theological reference and for his coda he borrows from later in the stanza the lines, 'Long, may'st thou flourish in thy beauty, long / Prosper beneath the righteous conqueror / Who conquers to redeem!' In the poem it is the city and the native peoples who are urged to prosper. In the glee, hitherto without reference to people, it can only be the building (and its grounds and estate?) that should flourish. Yet who is Callcott's 'righteous conqueror'? What is their relation to the built structure? Is this perhaps the landowner, lord of all he 'surveys'?

William Horsley, in his memoir of Callcott, seems in no doubt that *Queen of the Valley* is a pure piece of landscape painting, divorced from its political and moral origins, and contingent on the appraisal of the beauties of a house in 'inseparable connection', to adopt Joseph Heely's words, with its rural placement. Horsley makes no mention of *Madoc*, suggesting that Callcott's intentions were to erase all trace of Southeby's America:

*Thou art beautiful, Queen of the Valley [...] may be called a musical landscape*  
throughout the whole of which a delicious tranquillity prevails...It is related of Mozart, that coming suddenly to a place, whence he had a very fine prospect, he exclaimed, "Oh, that some one would *set all this to music*". Such an exclamation may be quite unintelligible to those, who are unacquainted with the secret workings of a composer's mind, and of the delightful faculty which he possesses.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> *Memoir of Dr. Callcott*, 15. On the previous page, Horsley praises Callcott's *Father of Heroes* which contains references to the Wye valley, a picturesque hotspot following Gilpin's *Observations on the River Wye*. Horsley says, 'the effect is grand and highly picturesque throughout; and as the contrasts, and the beautiful *descriptions* with which it abounds, can hardly have escaped the most careless auditor'.

When meanings are divorced from their context in this manner they recede to allow new meanings never contemplated in the original source. An interpretation of Callcott's glee that takes its verse at face value, mindful of the glut of picturesque poetry and paintings at the time, is not only based on common sense but also, quite naturally, takes account of the prevailing artistic currents of the day. So let us pursue an English picturesque reading at this point:

Callcott aurally 'paints' these sparkles with two sonic metaphors, the scalic melisma and the two-note triadic declamation (example 4.10). The composer assigns a markedly differing affect for three further aspects of the house's portrayal, its 'melodious groves', 'gardens sweet', and 'high temple pyramids' whose shadows 'upon the lake lie'. The house's splendour is celebrated in rich five-part counterpoint and sharply delineated rhythms until the opening line returns, this time as a fanfare (example 4.11).

The closing section, set in a more solemn, sedate 3/2, serves as a prayer for the preservation of the house's beauty, a hope enfolded in the belief that the building symbolizes the prosperity and honour of its owner. The wish is for 'long years of peace', peace to thwart threats to the house and its grounds' present glory, and peace for the owner, whose own contentment is guaranteed by this (example 4.12). As at the opening of the glee, the sense of stilled activity and of captivation is again conveyed, this time by the static, drawn-out closing phrase.

In one way there is a sense of familiarity about this glee. Because a country house is an unusual object for a hymn of praise, the words personify the structure by addressing it directly as if it were human and extolling it as if it were the object of desire. And in one way it *is* desired – it is expressed as having a beauty that the speaker almost wants to 'possess', as one might a lover. It is here that the glee's sentiment most sharply diverges from the pastoral and figures more suitably the picturesque. The house is seen to have the potential for beauty, a beauty that natural landscape can possess. It is granted a heightened significance that transcends its functional material surface and is in this manner very much an important - and perhaps the dominant, certainly the most favoured in this text – element in the rural

3

thy walls like silver sparkle sparkle sparkle to the  
 sparkle sparkle to the sun sparkle sparkle  
 sun thy walls like silver sparkle to the sun sparkle sparkle sparkle  
 sun sparkle sparkle sparkle spar...kle sparkle  
 thy walls like silver sparkle sparkle sparkle to the  
 sun sparkle sparkle thy walls like silver sparkle to the Sun.  
 sparkle sparkle sparkle sparkle thy walls like silver sparkle to the Sun.  
 sparkle sparkle sparkle sparkle thy walls like silver sparkle to the Sun.  
 sparkle sparkle thy walls like silver sparkle to the Sun.  
 sun sparkle sparkle thy walls like silver sparkle to the Sun.

### Example 4.10

Callcott, *Queen of the Valley*, bars 23-35

### *Walks and prospect views*

6

lie the long sha - dow of thy  
 lie the long shadows of thy towers. lie the long sha - dow of thy  
 lie the long shadows of thy towers. lie the long sha - dow of thy  
 the shadows of thy towers the shadow of thy towers the shadow of thy  
 on the lake lie the long sha - dow of thy towers of thy  
 towers. thy temple py - ramids a -  
 towers. thy temple py - ramids a -  
 towers. thy temple py - ramids a -  
 towers, and high in heav'n thy temple py - ramids a - rise  
 towers, and high in heav'n thy temple py - ramids a - rise thy temple  
 rise, thy temple py - ramids a - rise thy temple  
 rise, and high in heav'n thy tem - ple py - ramids thy temple  
 high in heav'n thy temple py - ramids a - rise a - rise thy temple  
 and high in heav'n thy temple py - ramids thy  
 and high in heav'n thy tem - ple  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful Queen of the  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful  
 py - ramids a - rise. Thou art beauti - ful thou art beauti - ful

### Example 4.11

Callcott, *Queen of the Valley*, bars 58-83

- 10 -

Long years of peace years of peace years of peace of peace and  
 Long years of peace years of peace years of peace of peace and  
 Long years of peace years of peace and  
 Long years of peace years of peace of peace and  
 Long years of peace years of peace and  
 hap-pi-ness a...wait thy Lord and thee. Queen of the val-ley.  
 hap-pi-ness a...wait thy Lord and thee. Queen of the  
 hap-pi-ness a...wait thy Lord and thee. Queen of the val-ley.  
 hap-pi-ness a...wait thy Lord and thee. Queen of the  
 hap-pi-ness a...wait thy Lord and thee. Queen of the val-ley.

11

Sheet music for the song "Queen of the Valley". The music is in common time (indicated by "C") and consists of four staves of music. The lyrics are repeated in each staff: "Queen of the valley", "Queen of the valley", "Queen of the valley", and "Queen of the valley". The notes are primarily eighth and sixteenth notes, with some quarter notes. The music is written in a treble clef and includes a bass line.

### Example 4.12

Callcott, *Queen of the Valley*, bar 84-end

scene. What is extraordinary about this glee is the extolment of bricks and mortar, given hymnic treatment reserved more customarily for the 'pride of the valley' (the village nymph) or - as was becoming more common at this picturesque moment - the valley itself. But the recognition both of the picturesque beauty of the house itself, its contribution to the picturesque 'composition' of the scene and the symbolic importance of a grand dwelling within a rural surround, betokens the picturesque sensibility more tellingly than perhaps any other Georgian glee in the repertory.

If, on the other hand, Callcott's audience, and his dedicatee, John Heaviside, knew Southey's poem well (and there has to be some doubt of that as it had only just been written at the time of the glee's composition) then, given the composer's removal of all references to the protagonists, this glee would constitute something of a coded message to an inner circle. Hearing the words, 'Queen of the Valley', in this interpretation, the glee club members, John Heaviside and perhaps the singers, would all nod knowingly: 'Ah, brave Hoamans and noble Welsh missionaries'. So why then did Callcott leave out mentions of Aztlan?

The answer must surely be that this is an exoticism both inimical to the glee style and to Callcott's purposes. It is the picturesque fruits of Southey's language that Callcott wants to garner. It is Southey's loving description of vales, lakes and groves that sparkle in the sunlight that are grasped for their elegiac quality.<sup>71</sup> But the 'Queen of the Valley' is the glee's main focus. The piece goes beyond traditional pastoral tropes to embrace more contemporary aesthetic concerns. We are not to know whether the composer has a particular house, or scene, in mind. But since the glee's text, as it stands, appears to form some kind of a prayer for the house's preservation, it could be that it fits into the established category of a 'request'.

Callcott's only well-known contemporary by the name of John Heaviside was a surgeon, indeed 'surgeon-extraordinaire' to George III. Since Horsley tells us that

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<sup>71</sup> There are manifold examples of songs whose literary borrowings are taken, as it were, 'out of context'. I have discussed this with David Owen Norris, who feels that Brahms's *Magelonelieder* is a particularly good example, its texts, in his words, 'ripped bleeding' from Ludwig Tieck's *Phantasus*. He also cites Schumann's 'picking and choosing' from Heine's verse in *Dichterliebe* as creating a 'quasi-story'. Schubert's Ossian settings could also be seen as borrowing for the sake of creating atmosphere, as opposed to conveying faithfully the storytelling of Macpherson.

Callcott had ambitions to be a surgeon (before embarrassingly fainting on observing an operation, summarily scuppering his ambitions),<sup>72</sup> so it likely that this Heaviside is the dedicatee. Was John Heaviside the owner of 'Queen of the Valley'?

*Sublime frisson: rocks, torrents and the night*

In the four-part glee *Queen of the Silver Bow* by John Hindle, a similar delight is taken in the careful recording of the details of the landscape and the effect of natural light (moonlight in this case) upon it. Solitude, and the relish of a nocturnal landscape, is crucial to the sentiment of this glee.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, evening and night walks became something of a fashion. Several works of literature, such as Lady Winchelsea's *A Nocturnal Reverie*, William Collins's *Ode to Evening* and Edward Young's *Night Thoughts* bear this out,<sup>73</sup> as does a remarkable passage in Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*: in a speech made in the early stages of her courtship with Edmund Bertram, Fanny Price explains how a still, moonlit night can uplift, inspire and, indeed, morally improve:

"Here's harmony! said she, "Here's repose! Here's what may leave all Painting, and all Music behind, and what Poetry only can attempt to describe. Here's what may tranquillize every care, and lift the heart to rapture! When I look out on such a night as this, I feel as if there could be neither wickedness nor sorrow in the world; and there certainly would be less of both if the sublimity of Nature were more attended to, and people were carried more out of themselves by contemplating such a scene".<sup>74</sup>

Fanny may have believed that the aesthetics of a particular nocturnal scene transcend art but the sentiments of her eulogy were shared by many late eighteenth-century

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<sup>72</sup> See *Memoir of Dr. Callcott*, 2.

<sup>73</sup> Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 14. See also Suzy Halimi, ed., *La Nuit dans l'Angleterre des Lumières* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne Nouvelle, 2008).

<sup>74</sup> Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park*, edited with an introduction and notes by Kathryn Sutherland (London: Penguin Classics, 1996), 95.

artists; any debate about the unsuitability of art to fully capture the ‘sublimity’ of such a scene did not stop them trying to overcome it.

In *Queen of the Silver Bow*, the speaker does not gaze from a window, as Fanny does, but wanders alone through a moonscape, dominated by a stream. The speaker ‘strays’, ‘watches’, ‘marks’ and ‘gazes’ at the various vistas and is soothed by the ‘placid light’ as it ‘sheds a calm upon my troubled breast’. S/he is also moved in this setting to contemplate his/her existence and ruminate on their mortality. This takes the form of a dialogue with the moon’s beams and as the speaker states that ‘oft I think fair planet of the night, in thy orb the wretched may have rest’. To be wandering alone in the country at night, without a pre-determined journey in mind, suggests the wanderer is troubled and seeks comfort and solace in the night. There is more than a suggestion of the sublime in this nocturne as the unknown sphere of the after-life becomes the subject of reflection. The composer deals with these emotional progressions in a move typical of late eighteenth-century glees by dividing the verse into discrete sections (four in this case) marked by differences of tempo, tonality and metre. For instance, the stanza beginning with ‘The sufferers of the earth’ is set in common-time G minor whereas the final pay-off, ‘O that I soon may reach the world serene’ is couched in a triple time B flat major at a reduced tempo (Largo). Hindle also treats visual images of shadows with musical metaphor, in the manner of Webbe the elder in *Swiftly from the Mountain’s Brow*. The shadows in this case, however, are treated with overlapping imitation rather than echoes.

Reginald Spofforth’s Ossian setting, *It is Night and I am Alone*, occupies similar emotional territory and also revels in the poetic potential of a moonlight scene.<sup>75</sup> To this is added a further touch of the sublime in the reference to a ‘torrent pouring down rock’, manifestly not a gently rolling, grassy landscape but the type to which James Macpherson (going under the pseudonym, Ossian) was often drawn. Sublime, rockbound seascapes, common in late eighteenth-century poetry, do not feature that often, for whatever reason, in the glee repertory. But in Callcott’s miniature glee, *The Cliff*, we encounter vividly painted pictures of a dramatically precipitous coastline vista

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<sup>75</sup> Samuel Howard’s *O Give Me That Social Delight*, discussed above, is a relatively early example of this kind of picturesque nocturne, containing the lines, ‘when Luna bedecks ye still night...When to the fair meadows we go’.

undergoing an assault by storm. Yet the storm in the picture has not completely enveloped some residual sunshine. After the first phrase, Callcott introduces a rising sequence with crescendo for the words, 'Swell from the vale, And midway leaves the storm', an image that suggests that the cliff's peak is untouched (example 4.13).

This is confirmed by the following pair of lines: 'Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread', (painted by Callcott's sequential broken thirds and rumbling bass scales) 'Eternal sunshine settles round its head'. Indeed, the peak is illuminated by the sun's glow, a detail that Callcott interprets as a small triumph by inserting a fermata and introducing a new, rather march-like affect (example 4.14.).

The verse is by Oliver Goldsmith, often painted into an anti-pastoralist corner, but even in his *A Deserted Village*, an elegy for the downtrodden rural poor later echoed in George Crabbe's *The Village*, this does not rule out picturesque responses. But the words of Goldsmith that Callcott chose to set are, in the context of *The Deserted Village*, metaphorical imagery, not a picturesque scene. The torso of the cliff, enshrouded by cloud and the shining dome of the cliff's top, is Goldsmith's image to represent the piety of the village rector, a character that he introduces near the outset of the poem: 'His ready smile a parent's warmth exprest, / Their welfare pleased him, and their cares distrest; / To them his heart, his love, his griefs were given, / But all his serious thoughts had rest in Heaven'.<sup>76</sup> It is at this point that Goldsmith pursues the analogy of the cliff; earthly cares and concerns are the reverend's preoccupations (the 'rolling clouds spread' around the 'midway') but he has unbending faith and, for him, the eternal light shines in heaven ('Eternal sunshine settles round its head').<sup>77</sup> As with *The Queen of the Valley*, Callcott has latched onto picturesque imagery and loosened it from its moorings. And, in his musical setting he has completely transformed it so that it functions, self-sufficiently, as a picturesque vignette.

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<sup>76</sup> Oliver Goldsmith, *The Deserted Village* (London: W. Griffin, 1770), 11.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 11.

2

# THE CLIFF.

*From D. Goldsmith's Deserted Village.*

*Set to Music by*

*J. W. CALLCOTT, Mus: Bac: Oxon.*

*Price 1<sup>5</sup>6<sup>2</sup>*

The musical score consists of five staves of music in common time, with a key signature of two sharps. The lyrics are written in a cursive hand below the staves. The music begins with a melodic line that rises and falls, reflecting the imagery of the cliff. The lyrics describe a tall cliff that lifts its awful form, and a storm that leaves the vale. The music features dynamic markings like 'Dolce.' and 'Cres.' (crescendo), and includes a repeat sign and a double bar line with repeat dots at the end of the section.

View the tall cliff that lifts its aw<sub>ful</sub> form - - that

lifts its awful form, that lifts its awful aw<sub>ful</sub> form,

View the tall cliff

Dolce. Cres.

Swells from the vale, from the vale - - from the vale, from the vale, And

midway leaves the storm, and midway leaves the storm - - and

and midway leaves the storm, and midway leaves the

midway leaves the storm - - the storm - - the storm, and midway leaves the storm.

Example 4.13 Callcott, *The Cliff* (1795?), bars 1-26. Published separately by the composer, London, 1795.  
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3

Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread,  
Though round its breast the rolling clouds are spread, the clouds are spread,  
the rolling clouds, the rolling clouds are spread, the rolling  
clouds are spread, the rolling clouds are spread, E - ter - - nal  
sunshine settles round its head, E - ter - - nal fun - shine  
settles round its head, E - ter - - nal fun - shine settles round its  
head, E - ter - - nal fun - shine settles round its head.

Example 4.14 Callcott, *The Cliff*, bars 27-end

## **5 From Lake Windermere to the Bay of Naples: picturesque scenery, subjects and situations in English musical theatre**

English musical entertainments of the late eighteenth century nurtured, perpetuated and met a taste for sentimental tales of ordinary folk, familiar national settings and patriotic derring-do. Comedies of errors and misunderstanding were commonplace and - as in *opera buffa* elsewhere in Europe - themes of stratified class and the comedic possibilities of upper-class comeuppance were standard fare. It was in these rural dramas where the practices and characteristics of the picturesque were often seen to be at work.

In all of these various types of stage-work the setting was frequently that of the countryside, and, even when unspecified, the intention was usually that this was an English rural setting. The characters in these arenas showed awareness and appreciation of their natural surround and seemed content with their pastoral lot. The countryside was set up by the writers as a site of bonding, courtship and fruitful love, particularly in spring, drawing on time-honoured notions of fecundity and renewal at that time of year. And the pastoral location underscored the intention to stress timeless truisms about human love and virtue. In the latter part of the century these kinds of topics were a suitable fit for the age as they engendered escapism from anxieties about the Industrial and Agricultural Revolutions and invasion from abroad.<sup>1</sup>

Whilst the celebrations of nature could stress both the joy of rural ease (peace, tranquility) and the idea of the countryside as the backdrop for rites of adult passage, the 'countryside' was very often just that – an unspecified plot of green. Although the characters roamed an English landscape rather than an imagined, ideal arcadia this betokens a general pastoral sensibility rather than a specific picturesque one. This type of engagement with the landscape suggested that the countryside was a place where certain actions occur (courtship) and a place where one has cause and time to

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<sup>1</sup> See *The Penguin Book of Pastoral Verse*, eds. Barrell and Bull, 5.

reflect on life's bounteousness. But English landscapes in national opera were not always appraised this neutrally.

Many English stage-works, from the late eighteenth century in particular, exhibited picturesque preoccupations. When characters' descriptions of their affection for the countryside stressed details of flora, fauna, colour and light, these painterly observations placed a value on particular 'scenes', some described in terms of Claudian structure and the 'feeling through seeing' that marks out the picturesque as a distinctive aesthetic response. Some operas made the most of a precise sense of location, exploiting the fashion for reading about, and collecting prints of, favoured picturesque spots – the Derbyshire Peak and the Lake District among them. And then in the late 1800s the renewed interest in the Gothic was reflected in a number of stage-works set in locations with ruins, haunted towers and castles, rugged mountain scenes and rocky coasts. As we have seen, as the picturesque took on a more commercial aspect, tour guides covered areas previously considered off-limits; Salvatorian scenes of sublime natural wonder were written about, painted and sought out. Ruins were considered to augment the picturesque quality of a scene, not least because they satisfied the technical requirements of a rough irregularity and contrast outlined by the picturesque theorists. And the valorizing of ruins demonstrated a sentimental yearning for the morbid and the frightening. In English opera the ruggedness and sublimity of national locations were increasingly underlined. More exotic locations – Alpine Italy, Spain and the Americas – also satisfied this taste for more arresting scenery.

Late eighteenth-century musical theatre in the English language has, throughout its history, been talked of as a backwater. Cut off from its Purcellian roots by the patronage granted to Italian opera, it was seen as a poor cousin at home and was granted little prestige abroad. Its modern-day reception has fared little better. Hobbled by the scarcity of complete orchestral scores, and hamstrung by the inescapable slur of the 'land without music', it is often either ignored or talked down. Even its champions - Roger Fiske and Eric Walter White among them - adopted, from time to time, an apologetic tone, wringing their hands at the absence of an English *Figaro*. But Fiske, in particular, knew that such laments are both unhelpful and

unmerited.<sup>2</sup> The productions staged at Drury Lane, The Little Theatre in Haymarket and Covent Garden by such figures as Thomas Arne, Samuel Arnold, the Linleys, William Shield, Charles Dibdin and Stephen Storace, performed a specific purpose, fulfilled a particular need, and, as a consequence, flourished. Although, as we saw in chapter 2, English composers found opportunities for employment reduced by foreign imports preferred by aristocratic patrons (and suffered from a shortage of recognition in the critical arena) the glee club, pleasure garden and theatre provided a, sometimes profitable, niche. Linda Colley points out that, 'one did not need to please the Royal Family to be a cultural success in London'.<sup>3</sup> First and foremost they catered for an audience disenfranchised by the court-sponsored Italian opera at the King's Theatre. And in the press, critics were perfectly willing to take up the cudgels on behalf of English opera as does this writer in the *Public Advertiser*:

The Italian Opera has always been a considerable loss to all who have been concerned in its direction – but English Operas, and Theatrical Entertainments, thanks to the good sense of this country, which will bear down at length the impositions of folly and fashion! have had the greatest success; - whether it be owing to the abolition of the Recitative, so tiresome and so irksome to the ear, or to their uniting sound with sense in the national language...<sup>4</sup>

William Jackson, writing in the same decade (the 1790s), was also willing to cast English opera as a superior theatrical medium that eschewed empty virtuosity and favoured the clear delivery of the text through simply constructed melody:

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<sup>2</sup> The principal literature on late eighteenth-century English musical theatre includes: Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (passim); John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, vol. 2 (passim); Eric Walter White, *The Rise of English Opera* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1972); L. V. Troost, 'The Rise of English Comic Opera, 1762-1800' (PhD. Diss., Pennsylvania, 1985). Recent work by, for example, Michael Burden and Suzanne Aspden has given the repertory some greater exposure of late. See Michael Burden, 'Opera in Eighteenth-Century England: English Opera, Masques, Ballad Operas' in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*, eds. Anthony R. DelDonna and Pierpaolo Polzonetti (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 202-13; Suzanne Aspden, 'Opera and Nationalism in Mid-Eighteenth-Century Britain' (PhD. Diss., Oxford, 1999). Nonetheless, in the work of both, music from the first half of the eighteenth century has predominated, for Julian Rushton, a weakness of Burden's chapter in *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Opera*. See *Music and Letters* 92/1 (2011), 124.

<sup>3</sup> *Britons*, 200.

<sup>4</sup> *The Public Advertiser*, 14 April 1790.

In the ENGLISH OPERA the composers very widely adapt some of the Songs to Tunes which were composed when Melody really existed: and it is curious to observe how glad the Audience are to find a little that is congenial to their feelings, after they have been gaping to take in some meaning from the wretched imitations of Italian *bravura*.<sup>5</sup>

A taxonomy of English musical theatre in the eighteenth century is complicated by the inconsistent application of genre definitions made at the time but essentially this repertory can be divided into pieces that were the 'main event' and those that were for 'after' the event. The main bills were described variously as 'opera', 'farce', 'burletta' or 'pasticcio', the latter reflecting the common English practice across the board of borrowing pre-existing numbers by other composers. 'Ballad opera' is a term adopted by historians to define and categorize those entertainments that were, in the wake of *The Beggar's Opera*'s success, dominated by popular strophic tunes in either choruses or arias. From the 1770s onwards these entertainments increasingly featured traditional folk tunes but increasingly these were interspersed with more elaborate, Italianate numbers, a type often badged as 'comedy pasticcio' by later archivists.<sup>6</sup> Pieces after the main event were often entitled 'afterpiece' or 'pantomime'. Music might only play an incidental role here, especially if the main item had been a predominantly spoken play. This was often the case at Drury Lane during Richard Brinsley Sheridan's successful tenure.

Although operatic numbers such as aria, ensemble, and chorus were employed conventionally (recitative tended to be shunned in favour of spoken sections), inter-genre and inter-textual devices were common, notably in the use of glees. Glee were seen not only as suitable vehicles for the conveyance of a particular collective and national sentiment but also as a useful 'borrowing' whereby the glee repertoire was plundered for off-the-peg topics, often including nature celebration.

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<sup>5</sup> *The Harmonicum* 4 (1826), 46.

<sup>6</sup> Caldwell, *Oxford History*, vol. 2, 98; Burden, 'Opera in Eighteenth-Century England', 204.

### Love of the landscape: feeling through the eyes

Thomas Arne's 1762 pasticcio *Love in a Village*, based on Charles Johnson's *The Village Opera* of 1729, seems to have established a template for several succeeding English 'country' operas. Following in the footsteps of Niccolo Piccinni's *La buona figliuola* (an adaption of Richardson's *Pamela*), this work successfully and sympathetically projected rural characters onto a series of bucolic tableaux, and fashioned a happy love story of reconciliation whereby the heroes were drawn from the rustic lower orders – chambermaid and gardener. There is little evaluative reflection or vivid description of the landscape in *Love in a Village*, however. The rural setting is allowed to speak for itself, its symbolism suggestive rather than spelt out.<sup>7</sup> Several subsequent English country operas, though, draw attention to the natural surround, at once forming a commentary of superlatives as well as signposting the significance of the chosen scene.

William Shield, originally from Newcastle, was a prolific composer of operas and afterpieces for the London stage, principally Covent Garden. Evidently mindful of the popularity of comedies set in the English countryside, Shield tapped this vein throughout the last thirty years of the eighteenth century by adopting several libretti with a rural setting, mixing judiciously ballad and folk styles with *coloratura* arias for the principle female characters. The afterpiece, *Rosina*, from 1782, set 'in a village in the north' is one such example. Several sections of Frances Brooke's libretto are given over to the description of the surrounding landscape. Indeed the whole tone of the entertainment exemplifies Robert Hoskyns's summary of the characterization found in Shield's operatic output, which sees 'characters moulded by a simple delight in blue skies, budding flowers and other benign manifestations of the outdoor world'.<sup>8</sup> Brooke, 'an able, cross-eyed woman of sixty', in Robert Fiske's words,<sup>9</sup> adapted elements of *Pamela* and a biblical story, found in the book of Ruth, to form a plot about the seduction of a village lass, and her subsequent rescue (a tale found also in the 1768

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<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the critic in *The Middlesex Journal* (November 24-27 1770, Issue 258) chose to criticize the piece in terms of picturesque metaphor: 'This piece is like a garden overstocked with fruits and flowers [...] so numerous and superabundant that they pall the appetite and disgust the eye [...] a skillful gardener, by judiciously lessening the number, would render the spot, agreeable, salutary, and pleasing'.

<sup>8</sup> 'Theatre Music II', in *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, 295.

<sup>9</sup> *English Theatre Music*, 456. Fiske discusses *Rosina* in some detail. See 456-8.

singspiel, *Die Liebe auf dem Lande* by Johann Adam Hiller and also woven into Haydn and Gottfried van Swieten's *The Seasons*)<sup>10</sup>. In the opening trio, for instance, Rosina's simple ballad (reprised immediately as a trio when Rosina is joined by her sister, Phoebe and the farm-hand, William) speaks in glowing terms of the beauty of the morning scene: 'When the rosy morn appearing Paints with gold the verdant lawn, Bees, on banks of thyme disporting Sip the sweets and hail the dawn'. In the Finale to Act 1, the dastardly Captain Belville, who seeks to seduce and abduct Rosina, is also shown to have a sensitivity and eye for detail as he sings in jaunty dotted rhythms:

By this Fountain's flow'ry side, drest in Nature's blooming Pride;  
when the Poplar trembles high, and the Bees in clusters fly;  
while the Herdsman on the Hill, listens to the falling Rill;  
Pride and cruel Scorn away, let us share the festive day.

There is also a marked consciousness of the passing of the seasons which transcends traditional platitudes about temperature and perennial cycles and instead adopts a Thomsonian interest in the changing appearance of the landscape through the seasons. Rosina's lilting 6/8 song of summer: 'Taste our Pleasures ye who may, this is Nature's holiday' is subsequently taken up as a chorus line. Later, she makes references to Autumn ('Of Autumn's rich store I bring home my part') and finally Winter in the closing trio: 'And O! when Summer's joys are o'er, and Autumn yields its Fruits, no more new blessings be there, yet in store for Winter's sober hours to glean'.

Pride in the beauty of native landscape is a theme that appears most strikingly in another of Shield's entertainments, *The Poor Soldier*. Leixlip (in present-day County Kildare) is personified in one aria as being proud of its 'close, shady bowers, its clear falling waters and murmur'ring cascades, its groves of fine myrtle, its beds of sweet flowers'. The previous number, dealing with the soldier's exile and imprisonment, mines that well-worn eighteenth-century seam of the pastoral lament, found in many pleasure garden songs and canzonets of the period that we encountered in the

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<sup>10</sup> See Thomas Keymer and Peter Sabor, *Pamela in the Marketplace: Literary Controversy and Print Culture in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 130; Joseph Haydn *Die Jahreszeiten*, Urtext Edition (Bärenreiter, 2008), preface, iv, trans. Steve Taylor.

previous chapter: 'Farewell ye groves and crystal fountains, The glad-some plains and silent dell: Ye humble vales and lofty mountains, And welcome now a lonely cell'.

Shield's *The Woodman* (1791), a topical story of a group of female archers, recreates a lively and harmonious rural community who work the land contentedly for mutual benefit.<sup>11</sup> A group of hop-pickers evince this sense of happy toil with a strongly articulated pride in their surround and contentment with their work. In the jaunty compound time duet, 'Together let us range the fields' the several lengthy melismas and imitative passages convey the exuberant joy of the workers: Bate Dudley's words communicate that the task is a pleasurable one and the workplace a picturesque one, making work a kind of play: 'Together let us range the fields, Impearled with the morning Dew; Or view the Fruits the vineyard yields, Or the Apples clustering Bough, There in close embower'd Shades, Impervious to the Noontide Ray, By tinkling Rills, we'll love the sultry Hours away'. These references to 'shades', 'boughs' and 'rills' are all customary parts of the picturesque vocabulary and picturesque images such as 'the streamlet that flow'd round her cot' are typical too. Pride in the local landscape - an important element of the English picturesque - is reinforced by the knowledge that these fields yield the English national beverage, beer. This is articulated in a later chorus: 'Hail to the Vine of Britain's vale! Whose stores refine her nut Brown ale'.

The connections between *The Woodman* and the contemporary artists, Gainsborough, Cowper and Haydn, serve to further strengthen its picturesque credibility. Thomas Tolley has pointed out that Gainsborough had produced a painting called *The Woodman* which had been inspired by a page from Book V from Cowper's *The Task* (figure 5.1). Tolley claims that this painting must have influenced Shield and further speculates that Haydn had been to see *The Woodman* out of curiosity as he had acquired a painting by Thomas Barker that took a woodman as its subject.<sup>12</sup> To

<sup>11</sup> See Martin Johnes, 'Archery, Romance and Elite Culture in England and Wales, c. 1780-1840' *History* 89 (2004), 193-208. See also Christopher Smart's poem, *The Hop-Garden* (1742-3). Smart's references to the practice of hop-picking is discussed in Chris Mounsey, *Christopher Smart: Clown of God* (Lewisburg, Pa: Bucknell University Press; London: Associated University Presses, 2001), 79.

<sup>12</sup> Tolley even suggests that this may have influenced the characterization of Simon in *The Seasons*. See *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 247-8. Haydn records seeing *The Woodman* at Covent Garden on 10 December 1791. Mrs. Billington, according to Haydn, 'sang rather timidly'. See *Collected Correspondence*, 273.



Figure 5.1 Thomas Gainsborough, *The Woodman* (c. 1790)

complete this panoply of artistic exchanges, the painter Richard Westall produced a scene portraying hop-pickers a year after Shield's opera opened.

The poetry of Thomson and Cowper delighted in placing workers within the portrayed landscape. The human presence enlivened the scene. And by injecting motion into their description they strengthened the temporal dimensions of the verse. Although the moral virtue of the Georgic mode, especially valued by Thomson, is invoked in these kinds of references, it is important to stress how strongly the picturesque is figured by Gainsborough's painting, Cowper's poetry and Shield's opera. Gilpin had explained how the inclusion of living creatures enhanced the picturesque appeal of a vista and, although he was fussy about what could and shouldn't be allowed, he avowed that the movement of human figures through the landscape made

for a picturesque scene.<sup>13</sup> As I pointed out in chapter 3, this was an approach found more readily in Dutch landscape paintings than Italian. Uvedale Price and Richard Payne Knight were no fans of Gilpin but they were vocal advocates of the Dutch/Flemish style and agreed with Gilpin on this point, Price feeling that such 'visual irritation' was an essential picturesque requirement.<sup>14</sup>

### Dibdin and the picturesque folk

Charles Dibdin was a central figure in the world of English music theatre. He was a prolific writer for the London stage but he eventually alienated the most influential personalities in London, and his later career was taken up with writing and touring his one-man entertainments. His travelling and writing were combined in a comprehensive two-volume travelogue entitled *Observations on a Tour through Almost the Whole of England, and a Considerable Part of Scotland*. This engaging tome combines somewhat slavish but warm records of his journeys through the British Isles. The descriptions are interspersed with reflective essays on topics prompted by his observations. One particularly colourful and trenchant essay, 'Nature versus Art', revisits ideas he had rehearsed elsewhere in his writing and betrays his faith in the importance and dramatic effectiveness of traditional folk song. Dibdin hated musical flummery, compositional showing-off and virtuosic display. He was suspicious of excessive 'learning' and was keen to make the point, with strong overtones of Aristotle and particularly Rousseau (whom he may have met), that art is at its most effective when it learns from and imitates the lessons of nature. The corollary to this was that the simplicity of the traditional folk music, which could trace its lineage back to the earliest times, and even the very origins of language, was music's purest expression:

I cannot but deplore that [learning] is in general so dispensed, that in the study of imperious art, modest nature is constrained to retire...Nature is full of careless beauty, always impressive, always interesting. Art is composed of squared and measured proportion, always regular, and always tedious [...] the sublimity of art knows nothing

<sup>13</sup> Gilpin, *Essays on Picturesque Beauty*, 13-17. But see Peter Garside, 'Picturesque Figure and Landscape: Meg Merrilies and the Gypsies' in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, 146. Garside points out that Gilpin saw figures who were *not* associated with work as more picturesque.

<sup>14</sup> See Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 59.

of simplicity and the sublimity of nature is precisely derived from simplicity; one is a creation of fancy, the other a manifestation of truth; one is wrought into form, the other is possessed of animation, one is all body, the other all mind. The very awkwardness [sic] of nature is graceful, while the best symmetry of art will never be divested of awkwardness. The whole of this argument therefore, resolves itself into a single observation. Let art no further prune, regulate and remove exuberances, that the nature may be protected and matured.<sup>15</sup>

Dibdin's curiosity about his native land beyond his home and workplace, and his awareness of certain fashionable beauty spots, show up in much of his theatre music. In *Tom Wilkins* (1799) there is song set at Lake Windermere in the Lake District in which the site is confirmed as a well-known jewel of the Lakes and is also set up as a location which possesses a kind of magic – there is something 'in the water' that gilds young love. In verse 1 of this jaunty jig we learn of Miss Pat, who 'Slipt from her mother's apron string [...] For love and Gretna green took wing, And pass'd the lakes of Windermere'. It is, we learn later in the song, 'd'lightful to come here [...], Oh charming lakes of Windermere!' but Miss Pat's parents put up some resistance as 'Dad takes the qualms'. But soon, 'Captain' (presumably of a boat on the lake) 'and all, get glorious cheer; And enjoy, while Nunki pays for all, The pleasures of gay Windermere'. The glories of the sainted landscape trump all disagreements and any reservations are put aside.

In 'The Joys of the Country' from *The Wags* (1790), a 'one-man' entertainment with words by Dibdin himself, the song manifests a, by this time, well-worn trope of the town cast in opposition to the country. The speaker praises the benefits of fresh air, walking in all weathers ('Where we walk o'er the mountains with health our cheeks glowing as warm as a toast honey') and activities such as fishing. Also the delight of varied scenery, its details of flowers, mountains and valleys and birdsong, all add up to a complete picture. But for all the vividness of Dibdin's country scene, this song satirizes the 'plastic' countryside visitors who, motivated only by what is fashionable,

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<sup>15</sup> Charles Dibdin, *Observations on a Tour through Almost the Whole of England, and a Considerable Part of Scotland, in a Series of Letters, Addressed to a Large Number of Intelligent and Respectable Friends* (London: G. Goulding, 1802), Book 2, Letter XIV, September 25, 1801. John Gregory's idea from the 1760s that culture nurtures the seeds of nature to produce pleasurable art and becomes decadent when nature is not consulted is a useful adjunct to Dibdin's thoughts. See Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, 41.

yearn to be *seen* at play in the rural outdoors, even if this means getting wet ('we are caught in the rain as we're all out a walking, While the muslins and gauzes cling round each fair she') or freezing to the spot ("There we pop at the wild ducks, and frighten the crows, While so lovely the Icicles hang to our cloaths'). Dibdin, a chronicler of the English countryside as assiduous and demonstrative as many of his contemporaries with more literary pretensions, is undermining a very specific group here, people whose encounters with the countryside are, for him, unthinking and skin-deep. *The Joys of the Country* is a send-up not of picturesque theory and practice in the round, but of those who misappropriate it and miss its true purpose.

For Dibdin, the picturesque is something primordial. The pleasure taken in scenes of natural beauty is present in all of us, but forgotten, lost and suppressed in many of us. Dibdin's faith in the power of folk song to move the senses, his belief in unaffected and uncontrived practices in art, and his love for the natural landscape of his birth are all indissoluble aspects of the same human response. For Dibdin, expressions of nature's beauty are made in their purest form *in song*, the unaffected sound of the folk idiom.

### **Loutherbourg, precise locale, scenery and scene-setting**

Dibdin's knowing allusion to Windermere signalled not only the newly dignified status of this setting as an agreed picturesque beauty spot, but also the extent to which it had become fashionable once published guides to the Lakes begun circulating widely. Whilst painterly observation and evaluation of 'scenes' indicated a type of picturesque articulation in *Rosina* and *The Woodman*, entertainments that placed the drama within these locations, invested care in their portrayal through the use of painted backdrops and made them part of the dramatic action. This clearly contributed to the picturesque discourse in the same manner as did Gilpin, Price or Repton. And opera scripts of this era increasingly came with indications such as 'A Landscape', or 'A Landscape and Cottage'.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Act 2 scene 2 of Shield's opera, *The Poor Soldier*, is set in a 'Landscape and outside Dermot's cottage'. Mary Hunter has divided eighteenth-century Italian opera setting and scenery into

By the end of the eighteenth century, scene painters were almost as likely to be mentioned in press reviews as the librettists and composers.<sup>17</sup> As set designs were increasingly expected to be elaborate and adaptable to different scenes, so it seemed that certain subjects were being more frequently chosen as vehicles for the talents of designers. William Shield's *The Travellers in Switzerland* promises a story about picturesque tourists exploring Alpine scenery; indeed one trio describes how the travellers are also enthusiasts for botany as 'they stoop to gather its pleasantest flowers, Then gaily trip on with the light footed hours'. But their tourism and purpose for visiting is ultimately peripheral to the conventional *commedia dell'arte* plot of a suitor seeking matrimony, employing disguise and attempting abduction. *The Public Advertiser's* review of the show appeared to acknowledge that the setting was a contrivance to provide a picturesque theatrical spectacle: 'The dialogue is neat, and has several happy turns in it, but the chief object of the Author has been to afford himself an opportunity of a rich display of music and scenery'. The reviewer was keen also to acknowledge the debt the show owed to the designer: 'The Performers did every thing they could; and amongst other things, the Scene Painter is not to be passed by. A number of the Scenes were very beautiful indeed'. A long run was predicted, as much a credit to the quality of the set painting as the music: '...[it] promises, from the splendour of the scenery, and the excellence and variety of the music, to be a powerful rival of the most popular performances of a similar kind in representation'.<sup>18</sup>

The idea that both composer and scene painter were to be given their head, as equal partners, is reiterated in the preface to the play with music, *The Lakers* by the Reverend James Plumptre.<sup>19</sup> Plumptre's aims were 'to produce a laughable piece, and give the musical composer and scene painter an opportunity of displaying their talents [...] rather than create an attempt at regular drama'.<sup>20</sup> But *The Lakers*, unlike *The*

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categories of 'landscape', 'gothic' and 'the garden'. Whereas for Hunter the gothic setting isolates the individual and the garden places everything on a human scale, the wider landscape accommodates the whole of society. See 'Landscape Gardens and Gothic Settings in the *Opera Buffa* of Mozart and his Italian Contemporaries', *Current Musicology* 51 (Fall 1991), 94-104.

<sup>17</sup> The garden theorist Thomas Whately used the example of theatrical scene painters when advising landscape gardeners. See Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 25.

<sup>18</sup> *Public Advertiser*, 24 February, 1794.

<sup>19</sup> *The Lakers* was never performed in public.

<sup>20</sup> *The Lakers, a Comic Opera in Three acts [and in Prose with Songs]* (London: 1798), preface, viii.

*Travellers in Switzerland*, did have the fashion for the picturesque as its principal subject:

...while he [the author] attempted to amuse, he wished to expose and lend his feeble aid to correct some of the follies of the age...It only remains to say a few words upon the objects of ridicule. The Author assures himself he is not singular in thinking the study of Botany not altogether a proper amusement for the more polished sex; and the false taste of a licentious age, which is gaining ground, and corrupting the soft and elegant manners of the otherwise loveliest part of the creation, requires every discouragement which can be given.<sup>21</sup>

Plumptre wished to exploit the fashion for the picturesque, to draw audiences in with a topical subject and voguishly pictorial sets, but he also sought to lampoon it. The object of his satire was similar to later titles such as *Dr. Syntax* by William Combe and Thomas Rowlandson and *Headlong Hall* by Thomas Love, to expose the fact that picturesque tourism and its vocabulary had become something of a pose, a mechanical rather than instinctive response. But his target was rather more specific – and more curious than that. Plumptre felt that the interest in spotting flowers and memorizing Linnaeus's Latin appellations was conduct unbecoming of a lady and he ridicules his principal character, Veronica, by making her speak as though she has committed Gilpin's *Essays on the Picturesque* to memory. As Ann Bermingham puts it, in a reading that rescues Veronica from her perceived irrationality, she 'is incapable of seeing picturesque nature in a detached aesthetic way because as a creature of enthusiasm, imagination and instability she is Picturesque nature'.<sup>22</sup>

Despite this, Plumptre was an enthusiast for the scenery of the Lakes and what he considers to be proper picturesque viewing is exemplified by the more detached and unemotional character, Sir Charles Portinscale. Plumptre's love of the setting shines through both his prefatory comments and much of the dialogue. Plumptre recommends acquaintance with Thomas West's *Guide to the Lakes* and suggests that it should be produced if 'this Drama fall into any one's hands who is neither acquainted

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<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, ix-x.

<sup>22</sup> 'The Picturesque and Ready-to-Wear Femininity', 92.

with *the Lakes*, nor a *picturesque Traveller*, nor a *Botanist*.<sup>23</sup> The Prologue praises scenery thus: 'Thither, attracted from their peaceful home, / the Poet and the Painter love to roam, / Feed fancy full, 'till fraught with fire divine, / Their beauties on the page and canvas shine'. Act 1 scene 3 is set at one of West's stations in Borrowdale and begins with a lavish and heartfelt description of the landscape viewable from it. After demonstrating her Claude glass, Veronica asks Sir Charles to make up a glee with Speedwell and Lydia, the other two characters present. 'It will', says Lydia, 'give picturesqueness to my description'. In verse reminiscent of Hindle's *Queen of the Silver Bow* and Callcott's *The Cliff*, the gathered company sing of 'the silver moon' which 'from forth her interlunar cave [...] has tipp'd the wave'. Sadly, Plumptre's failure to secure a public stage for *The Lakers* prevents us from discussing the music of this glee. But the very fact that he felt the subject and the sentiment required music at this moment in the drama, again demonstrates the kinship between English song and picturesque expression.

Phillipe de Loutherbourg, a Frenchman who worked in London theatres from 1772 to 1785 developed a reputation as a set-builder without equal in England.<sup>24</sup> Loutherbourg became well-known for paintings of rustic, rural scenes. He was especially interested in the power of the sublime in nature, and avalanches and cascades became signatures of his work. In his landscape painting, Loutherbourg sought out English scenes marked by rocky outcrops, falls and fast-flowing streams, the kind of views recommended by Gilpin in his books on picturesque tours, particularly those covering the Wye Valley. Later in his career, Loutherbourg took to heart Gilpin's appeal to represent the encroachment of industrial workings on the natural landscape, and his tours in the 1780s were inspired by the journeys undertaken by Gilpin (see figure 5.2).<sup>25</sup>

After designing the sets for Arne's *Alfred* (probably a setting of a masque by Thomson) Loutherbourg was recruited by David Garrick and Sheridan to work on the

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., x.

<sup>24</sup> See Christopher Baugh, 'Technology-Driven Entertainment and Spectacle in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Huntingdon Library Quarterly* 70/2 (June 2007), 251-268.

<sup>25</sup> Baugh, *Garrick and Loutherbourg* (Cambridge: Chadwyke-Healey in association with the Consortium for Drama and Media in Higher Education, 1990), 45.



Figure 5.2 Phillippe de Loutherbourg, *Coalbrookdale By Night* (1801)

sets at the Drury Lane Theatre. Loutherbourg provided the scenery for several stage shows with music at Drury Lane. He clearly believed in the ability of music to augment and boost nature's power to move the senses. For Amy Sargeant, this shows the influence of his countrymen, Jean le Rond D'Alembert and Denis Diderot, who believed in exploring the interconnectedness of things and thus breaking down barriers between the arts.<sup>26</sup> Showings of his celebrated Eidophusikon (a mechanical exhibit that used special lighting and sound effects to dramatize a series of rotated paintings) would occasionally be accompanied by music. An eyewitness of one of the Eidophusikon exhibits, Ephraim Hardcastle, wrote some fifty years later of his astonishment at Loutherbourg's visionary skills: 'Loutherbourg's genius was as prolific in imitations of nature to astonish the ear, as to charm the sight. He introduced a new art - *the picturesque of sound*'.<sup>27</sup> In *Aurora*, a view of London as seen from Greenwich from dawn to dusk ending with a storm, 'appropriate' music was played and there were also *interludes* of music and reading.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>26</sup> See Amy Sargeant, 'From the Wonders of Derbyshire to Wookey Hole', *Early Popular Visual Culture* 4/2 (2006), 103-11.

<sup>27</sup> Ephraim Hardcastle, *Wine and Walnuts; or After Dinner Chit-Chat*, vol. 1 (London: Longman et al., 1823), 296. See also Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 295-7. Tolley is confident that Haydn must have seen the Eidophusikon and speculates that it may have influenced some of his more controversial attempts at musical imitations of nature sounds in the two oratorios.

<sup>28</sup> See Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 294. Both Michael Arne, son of Thomas, and Charles Burney performed interludes at showings of the Eidophusikon. See Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 241.

The pantomime, *An Account of The Wonders of Derbyshire, A Musical Entertainment* (1779) was manifestly a vehicle for Loutherbourg's talents. The intention of this comic afterpiece with music was to give each of the Peak District's 'wonders' a 'scene', with a descriptive commentary and a dramatic vignette. It was almost certainly a project conceived as a spectacle first, with the drama as an afterthought. A copy of the text, held in the British Library, includes a 'commentary' on each wonder entitled 'Advertisement'. It states:

Many People who have been at the PANTOMIME ENTERTAINMENT, called The WONDERS OF DERBYSHIRE, performed at DRURY-LANE THEATRE, having expressed a Desire to have a short Account of those celebrated Views to refer to during the Representation, it is presumed that (as the Scenes are mostly actual Portraits) the following Description of them will not be unacceptable from, *A Derbyshire Man*.

The accounts 'taken from the most approved Writers on the Subject' take the form of programme notes and combine factual information with more subjective commentary, as this extract from the notes to Act 1 scene 8 show: 'They [the Matlock lead mines] are famous, not only for their romantic situation, and the riches they produce, but likewise for those petrefactions, and mineral substances from which are made the beautiful vases etc. we so often see and admire'.

That the main attraction was the spectacular scenery, brilliantly realized by Loutherbourg, is evident from this review in *The London Magazine*: 'The subject was judiciously chosen for the display of Mr. Loutherbourg's abilities but he should have been accompanied into Derbyshire by a man of some dramatic genius, or at least of talents for the invention of a pantomime'.<sup>29</sup> Similar sentiments were expressed in *The Westminster Magazine*'s review: 'As an exhibition of scenes, this surpasses anything we have ever seen: as a Pantomime we think it absolutely the most contemptible'.<sup>30</sup> Both these reviewers clearly had a set of expectations of a pantomime that had not been met, a view contradicted in this more generous and detailed assessment from *The London Packet* that same week: 'Considered as a vehicle for elegant scenery,

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<sup>29</sup> *The London Magazine*, 8 January 1779.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted in Baugh, *Garrick and Loutherbourg*, 38.

machinery, and music (the only light in which a pantomime deserves to be considered), the piece exhibited last night deserves the highest praise'.<sup>31</sup>

This testimony is clearly accepting of the slim dramatic pickings attacked elsewhere in the press. For this correspondent, a pantomime was to please the eye rather than tax the intellect, or even raise a laugh. Notably, this review elevates the role of music above that of spoken drama in such entertainments. But there is no comment to be found about the music in this or any other review. Advertisements in the press, prior to and during the run, emphasize that the show is 'A Musical Entertainment' but the composer, arranger or musical director is not mentioned by name. It is fair to assume that house composer, Thomas Linley senior, either composed the airs and choruses himself, adapted and arranged pre-existing numbers from the Italian or English opera repertory, or applied a mixture of the two approaches.

As we have seen from accounts of Loutherbourg's Eidophusikon, he believed it was not inappropriate for music to form an accompaniment to his landscapes. Whether incidental music featured in *The Wonders of Derbyshire* is a matter for speculation. What we do know is that the text, taken from the seventeenth-century poetry of Charles Cotton<sup>32</sup>, increasingly popular in the late eighteenth century, was both spoken and also sung in the form of airs and choruses.

Although this theatre-piece makes the scenery both the setting and subject, the dramatic conceit is that such an elevated place of picturesque beauty must have a mystical dimension. These 'wonders', invested with an aura of magic, are overseen by Salamandore, the 'genius' or the 'Harlequin' of the Peak. Salamandore, we are told, 'assisted the Miners and endowed many of them with supernatural gifts; as that of the

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<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, 38.

<sup>32</sup> Cotton's *The Wonders of the Peake* of 1681, particularly popular in the late eighteenth century, talks of the Nine Wonders, which include Castleton, Dove-Dale (at Moonlight) Mam Tor, Chatsworth and Buxton. Cotton (also a keen horticulturalist) was the first to write descriptively about the Derbyshire Peak in this way after the Elizabethan historian, William Camden. See *The Genius of the Place; The English Landscape Garden 1620-1820*, eds. John Dixon Hunt and Peter Willis (London: Elek, 1975), 93. William Defoe, in his *Tour through the Whole of Great Britain* disagreed with Cotton's verdicts except for those on Eldon Hole and Chatsworth. See *A Tour Throughout the Whole Island of Great Britain*, abridged version with an introduction by Pat Rogers (Exeter: Webb and Bower, 1989), 170.



Figure 5.3 Phillippe de Loutherbourg, *Peak's Hole* (c. 1780)

Hazel-rod, by which Mines were supposed to be discovered and his attendant fairies or genii'.<sup>33</sup>

It is these fairies who form a musical chorus. In the final scene, set at the 'Ideal Palace of Salamandore, and the Protecting Genii', there is a Fairy chorus with a solo from Salamandore: 'We'll sing the song, The Choral Song, We'll sing the choral song; To you who arm, Our strongest charm, Our grateful strains resound; And may with each returning day, Encreasing bliss be found'. For Loutherbourg and the directors at Drury Lane the sublime, other-worldliness of the Peak District called for an elevated level of utterance. Peake's awed hymns of praise replaced prose description, Loutherbourg's provocative trickery and gift for visceral shock replaced static two-dimensional scenery, and the landscape had to be enlivened with creatures of legend. And these creatures had to make music.

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<sup>33</sup> Legends regarding mythical creatures sighted at mountain pools (such as The Fairy Pools on The Isle of Skye) abound in British folklore. See, for instance, The Rev. Walter Gregor, 'Stories of Fairies in Scotland', *The Folk-Lore Journal* 1/2 (February 1883), 55-8.

Loutherbourg worked also on the scenery for full-scale operas: *The Camp* by Linley, William Jackson's *The Lord of the Manor* and William Shield's *Omai*. For *The Camp*, Sheridan's story of a military encampment set at Coxheath, Loutherbourg based his backdrops on sketches he made at the location, as Stephen Storace would later do in Naples for his opera, *The Pirates*. *Omai* was a particularly ambitious project for Loutherbourg as the story was about a round-the-world trip in the manner of Captain Cook. But arguably his specialty, dramatic picturesque scenery in England, went unexploited in Thomas Attwood's Drury Lane afterpiece, *The Adopted Child*, which is set in a village by the River Derwent, very probably the Derwent that lies in the Peak District and flows past several of Peake's 'wonders', including Chatsworth House (see figure 5.4).<sup>34</sup>

*The Adopted Child* or *Milford Castle* (another English score acquired by Haydn) is dedicated to The Princess of Wales<sup>35</sup> and was first performed at Drury Lane in 1795. Described as a 'Musical Drama' on the frontispiece (but relegated by Nicholas Temperley to 'Musical Farce' in *The New Grove Dictionary*), the story, written by James Cobb, concerns a battle for the custody of an orphaned boy. The rural setting is in one sense no more than pastoral backdrop in *The Adopted Child*, but Cobb spends a lot of energy on its description: the rushing Derwent, secluded bowers, evening streams, the still lake at eventide. The strophic second number of Act 1 describes a treacherous journey by boat over a waterfall to 'the Derwent's gentler course' (example 5.1). Verse 2 merely reiterates the force (and danger) of the torrent contrasted with the 'safer tide' of the river. Though there is a feeling of progression, of the journey from peril to safety, there is a vivid sense of a painted landscape in this

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<sup>34</sup> Roger Fiske speculates that the setting could be the Lake District. See Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 532n. Here, there is another River Derwent, part of which flows between Derwent Water and Bassenthwaite Lake, near Keswick. But since *The Adopted Child* features an abbey by a lake I am tempted to rule this out as there appears not to have been an abbey on these sites. There was one on the Derbyshire Derwent, though, namely the Augustinian priory, Darley Abbey. To add to the confusion there is also an abbey in North Yorkshire called Kirkham Abbey, which lies on a River Derwent. As this was a less well-known tourist spot at the time I am certain that *The Adopted Child* was set in the Derbyshire Peak District.

<sup>35</sup> Attwood is now most well-known as a composer of church music and for having studied in Vienna with Mozart between 1785 and 1787. He had been appointed as a 'page' to the Prince of Wales who arranged for the trip abroad. See Nicholas Temperley, 'Thomas Attwood' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., vol. 2, 150-152.



Figure 5.4 Phillippe de Loutherbourg, *A View Near Matlock* (1785)

aria, not least because scenes of energetic waterfalls flowing into serene watercourses was a signature of English landscape painters of the day.<sup>36</sup> Attwood makes the division between the two plain: references to the 'plunging waters' are couched in scalic sixteenth notes, *moto perpetuo* (save for the two crotchets that open the phrases) with occasional hemi-demisemiquaver roulades. At the reference to the gentle river, Attwood introduces the dominant with a prevailing currency of calmer quavers.

The aria, *At Evening when my Work is Done* describes another journey by boat, this time across a still lake to 'the Abbey': 'All is dark and all is mute save the Moon and Lovers Lute'. Again the scene is redolent of an English landscape painting with the moonlit lake lent perspective by the Abbey.<sup>37</sup> Joseph Wright of Derby's *Lake with a Castle on a Hill* (figure 5.5) would be an eminently suitable backdrop for this scene in the aria. Wright was a member of the 'Lunar Men', a group of philosophers and scientists, among them Josiah Wedgwood and Erasmus Darwin. The men combined a fascination with the science of astronomy with a more artistic and aesthetic attitude to

<sup>36</sup> See Griffith J. Fellows, *The Waterfalls of England: A Practical Guide for Visitors and Walkers* (Wilmslow: Sigma Leisure, 2003), 16.

<sup>37</sup> A striking musical parallel to this aria is William Carnaby's song, *Invocation to a Spirit* (1802), which describes a scene of a chapel on a shore at evening time. The chants from the chapel are heard drifting across the water.

8 Sung by Mr. Sedgwick

Voce Cembalo

All' Maestoso Dim:

Down the rug - ged Mountain's steep Hark! the

plung - ing Wa - ters leap, rush - ing with re - fist - lefs force to the

Derwent's gentler course to the Derwent's gentler course soon its

Example 5.1 Thomas Attwood, *The Adopted Child* (1795) – Down the Ragged Mountain's Steep'. Published by Longman and Broderip, London, 1795. By permission The National Széchényi Library, Budapest. 41.616



Figure 5.5 Joseph Wright of Derby, *Lake With a Castle on a Hill* (1787)

matters lunar (see figure 5.6).<sup>38</sup> Wright's painting, then, is typical of late picturesque enthusiasms not only for upland scenery but the effects of such scenes set off by castles and towers and lit by moonlight. This aria from *The Adopted Child* could not be a better example of English musical theatre espousal of the picturesque's later tendency to effortlessly modulate into the sublime.

In Attwood's aria (example 5.2), the details of colour and light so expertly exploited by Wright, are replaced by attention to aural details such as the noise of the oars ('Ting Tang') and the distant choral hymn from the abbey. Attwood gives individual treatment to the incidental details: the oars' 'Ting Tang' set to a three-note leaping figure and, in verse 2, the 'Organ's lengthened Note [...] in distant Woods to Float' accompanied by a rapid six-note flourish.

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<sup>38</sup> See David Fraser, 'Joseph Wright of Derby and the Lunar Society: An Essay on the Artist's Connections with Science and Industry' in Egerton, *Wright of Derby*, 15-24.



Figure 5.6 John Russell, *The Moon* (c. 1780)

Nevertheless, Attwood seems as intent on heightening the poetic and painterly as he is on portraying sounds and sentiments in these arias. His chosen text is strikingly picturesque but he responds with particular relish and enthusiasm to these very aspects. In this light, it is hard to disagree with Robert Hoskyns, who explains the popularity of English 'country' opera in the late eighteenth century by noting that 'nature was [...] praised for its picturesqueness rather than as a vast organic whole'<sup>39</sup> (a reference perhaps to the pre-Wordsworthian tendency for 'the eye to master the heart').<sup>40</sup> And here Attwood's approach clearly runs counter to the entreaties of Jackson to avoid such indulgences, to strive for 'excessive attention to the vocabulary of painting'.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> 'Theatre Music II', in *Blackwell History*, vol. 4, 295.

<sup>40</sup> Line 171 of Book XI, *The Prelude*, quoted in Brennan, *Wordsworth, Turner and Romantic Landscape*, 35.

<sup>41</sup> Quoted in Asfour and Williamson, *William Jackson of Exeter: New Documents*, 47.

14 Sung by Master Welsh

Voce  
Cembalo  
Allegretto

Dolce

At Evening when my Work is done and the Breeze at setting Sun feare-ly breathes up on the tide then a lone love to glide un-heard un-seen my silent Oar steals a long the shaded shores

(Adagio) a Tempo Prima

Shore: All is dark and all is mute save the Moon and Lovers Lute, Tang Ting Tang it seems to fay Lovers dread re-turn of day Tang Ting Tang it seems to fay Lovers dread re-turn of day Lovers dread re-turn of day Lovers dread re-turn of day

(2)

Then towards the Alphey Wall I steer,  
There the Choral HYMN I hear—  
While the Organ's lengthen'd Note  
Seems in distant Woods to float;  
Returning then my silent Oar  
Steals along the shaded Shore—  
All is dark and all is mute—  
Save the Moon and Lovers Lute;  
Tang Ting Tang it seems to fay  
Lovers dread re-turn of Day.

Example 5.2 Attwood, *The Adopted Child*, 'At Evening'.

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## The Gothic

*The Adopted Child* is in some ways a product of its time. The use of a ruined castle, one of the chief locations, and a lakeside night scene overlooked by an abbey, would have been strongly recognizable visual symbols, identified with the fashion for the Gothic at this time. The burgeoning interest in the architecture of the pre-classical showed itself in the re-emergence of gothic stylings in new English country houses. A cursory glance through magazines of the time reveals an increasing number of sketches showing new houses adorned with buttresses, tracery, corbels and vaulting. Additionally, the new English taste for touring led the public to seek out surviving gothic structures, some of them ruined, in some cases the victim of the skirmishes during the Civil War. At Rievaulx Abbey in the North Yorkshire Moors, a path was even constructed to maximize the most advantageous (and picturesque) prospects from which to view the abbey.<sup>42</sup> This, coupled with a sentimental yen for ruins *per se*, particularly if their position in the landscape was 'picturesquely' pleasing, added up to something of a movement, reinforced by several paintings of ruins within landscapes such as Michael Angelo Rooker's *Interior of Ruins, Buildwas Abbey, Shropshire* of 1785 (see figure 5.7) and novels like Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* and Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Horace Walpole's 'fantasy' home at Strawberry Hill is practically a monument to this gothicization in English culture.<sup>43</sup>

William Gilpin's thoughts on ruins in his *Essays on Picturesque Beauty* both explicate the picturesque essence of such ruins and also betray the fact that the late eighteenth-century 'eye' had learnt to appreciate such structures in the landscape:

...among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture, the ruined tower, the Gothic arch, the remains of

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<sup>42</sup> See Charlesworth, 'The Ruined Abbey', 62-80.

<sup>43</sup> Rooker was a set designer for two operas of Samuel Arnold's staged at The Little Theatre, *The Battle of Hexham* and *The Enraged Musician*. For concise discussions of the Gothic in late eighteenth-century English culture, see Andrews, *The Search for the Picturesque*, 41-2 and Black, *Culture in Eighteenth-Century England*, 187-9. Not all commentators found views that combined buildings with natural landscapes picturesque. Lord Lyttelton, a Brownian, felt that in a landscape park buildings were particularly to be discouraged, calling them 'clutter'. See 'Letter the Twentieth' in *Letters of the Late Lord Lyttelton*, 3rd edn., vol. 1 (Dublin: Sheppard, Moncrieffe et al., 1785), 81-3.



Fig 5.7 Michael Angelo Rooker, *Interior of Ruins, Buildwas Abbey, Shropshire* (c. 1785)

castles and abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time, and almost observe the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself.<sup>44</sup>

English theatre composers, sensitive to changing fashions since English opera began to really flourish from the 1760s onwards, embraced the Gothic, especially its elements of drama, horror and spectacle. Gothic settings featured mountains (Arnold's *The Mountaineers*, set in Granada), castles (*The Enchanted Castle* by Shield), towers (*The Mountaineers* and *The Haunted Tower* by Storace) and increasingly distant locations peopled by their exotic inhabitants (for example, *The Cherokee*, Storace again).

William Shield's *Netley Abbey*, a comic pasticcio with numbers by 'Baumgarten, Paisiello. Parke and Howard', is a mariner's tale that makes heroes of British sailors and sworn enemies of the (nameless) foes who might consider invading our 'wooden

<sup>44</sup> *Three Essays*, 46.

walls'. The coastal setting clearly added realism but Netley Abbey itself (a gothic ruin on the shores of Southampton Water) has no significant role in the plot and the opera takes its name from the abbey merely to add fashionable cachet. The site had become a well-known gothic attraction due in no small part to the poets Thomas Gray and George Keate. In the final part of his life, when he spent more time travelling and writing diaries than composing poetry, Gray visited and wrote about Netley Abbey and his reflections contributed a great deal to Netley's prestige as a picturesque monument.<sup>45</sup> Travel writing by men of letters in the second half of the century was lapped up by a public newly thirsty for suggestions for new visits. But if a figure such as Gray, a literary hero almost solely on the back of *An Elegy in a Country Churchyard*, felt that the location was worth writing about, then this was a most valued seal of approval. The concentration on naval themes in the opera perhaps shows an influence of the eponymous poem by Keate which invests much contextual description of the coast that surrounds the abbey's setting. As with Keate's poem, the use of Netley as a setting instead offers picturesque colour and that sentimental frisson that ruins seemed to impart to the Georgian middle class. The set designer, Inigo Richards, came in for particular praise from the librettist, William Pearce, who felt that Richards's set for the last act was 'the most picturesque Portrait of a gothic Ruin that the hand of Science ever produced'.<sup>46</sup>

Gothic operas provided welcome opportunities for scene designers. Emboldened by the reforms of Garrick and the innovations of Loutherbourg, these artists felt able to spread their creative wings and explore their imagination. In Charles Dibdin's *The Wild Man*, a Quixote story set in a volcanic landscape, the final scene, set in a 'Palace Garden and Lake of real water', called for *Jets d'Eau* (a water feature).<sup>47</sup> This spectacle would perhaps have compensated for the inability of the designers to recreate realistic representations of the volcano's eruption.

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<sup>45</sup> Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 55. Gray's letter to Dr John Brown on Netley Abbey appears in *Correspondence of Thomas Gray II, 1756-1765*, eds. P. Toynbee and L. W. Nibley (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1935), 843.

<sup>46</sup> Quoted in Fiske, *English Theatre Music*, 554.

<sup>47</sup> For Horace Walpole, *Jets D'Eau* were a French contrivance. See *The History of the Modern Taste in Gardening*, 35.

Stephen Storace's operas at the Drury Lane Theatre can be said to have embraced the Gothic wholeheartedly. The locations of his operas provided imaginative set designers with myriad possibilities, a challenge the Drury Lane incumbents clearly exploited. The internationally renowned singer, Michael Kelly, wrote in his *Reminiscences* of how striking were the sets for Storace's operas, *The Pirates* (1792) and *Lodoïska* (1794): for *The Pirates* he felt 'the scenery [by the designer, Thomas Greenwood] was picturesque and beautiful, from designs taken on the spot by Stephen Storace at Naples'. And in a similar vein for *Lodoïska*, 'the scenery was picturesquely grand and beautiful'.<sup>48</sup> Christopher Hussey has since dubbed the Bay of Naples (sketched as part of the frontispiece to the vocal score) 'the parent of all ideal Landscape. The amphitheatrical form is there seen at its most obviously impressive, in that the view immediately proclaims itself a unity, perfectly composed and balanced'.<sup>49</sup> A critic in *The Times*, echoing the sentiments of reviewers of *The Travellers in Switzerland* and *The Lakers*, wrote that 'The author has not much depended on plot or interest. The chief merit is in the Scenery and Music'.<sup>50</sup>

On occasions, Storace's music augments the picturesqueness of *The Pirates*, with colourfully portrayed storm sequences in Act 1's quintet and finale, as well as the seascape, 'There, the silver'd waters roam'.<sup>51</sup> Storace's storm music showed not only a gift and a relish for tone-painting but also a sensitivity to current English tastes for sublime shock and horror and for visualizing images through prompts in the music, as we saw with the reception of Haydn's 'London' symphonies in chapter 1. Storms were thought to be particularly relished by English audiences. Haydn's madrigal, *The Storm*, first performed in February 1792, was felt by one reviewer to be an 'exquisite specimen of imitative harmony, adapted to English words; the horrors of a tempest, contrasted with the gradual serenity of a calm were finely represented'.<sup>52</sup> Whether

<sup>48</sup> Michael Kelly, *Reminiscences*, ed. Roger Fiske (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), 195, 209.

<sup>49</sup> *The Picturesque*, 85.

<sup>50</sup> Quoted in Girdham, *English Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London*, 153.

<sup>51</sup> Storace also composed a memorable storm sequence at the start of his opera, *The Haunted Tower*, which is set on the Cornish coast.

<sup>52</sup> *Diary Or Woodfall's Register*, Saturday, 25 February 1792 (from a review of a subscription concert at The Hanover Square Rooms, February 1792). Thomas Tolley has suggested that Haydn, ever conscious of his audience and market, had written *The Storm* in the confident belief that English audiences would be receptive to such a piece as they liked to 'see through music'. See *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 246. David Wyn Jones calls *The Storm* a 'mark [of] his

sublime effects had anything to do with the picturesque was a question that the three main theorists on the picturesque were perfectly willing to consider. Once Price and Gilpin had admitted the picturesque into the aesthetic categorical hierarchy, it might be assumed that the three classes of pleasure possessed their own territory and that their definitions allowed for no overlap. But Gilpin mixed the terms with abandon and saw no contradiction in stating that *sublime* effects were capable of enhancing *picturesque* types of *beauty*.<sup>53</sup> Gilpin felt that a fine landscape viewed in a storm *enhanced* the picturesqueness of the scene: 'a burst of resplendency to throw, at intervals, a vivid ray on the landscape – to brighten the mountain top, or the swelling sail of the skiff. Nothing is more picturesque, than a storm thus enlightened'.<sup>54</sup> For Uvedale Price, storms not only indexed the sublime through the fear that they engender and the sense that one is confronted by a force unknowable, but also because they *obscured* the sense of the picturesque: 'the picturesque requires greater variety, and does not shew itself till the dreadful thunder has rent the region, has tossed the clouds into a thousand towering forms, and opened, as it were, the recesses of the sky'.<sup>55</sup> His friend Richard Payne Knight, however, sided with Gilpin on this matter, averring that storms *were* picturesque. Knight, who owned two pictures by Richard Westall of peasants in storm scenes, said of *Storm in Harvest*, 'the pathos is much improved, without the picturesque effect being at all injured by the characters and dresses being taken from common familiar life'.<sup>56</sup>

Stormy weather is never far away in *The Pirates*.<sup>57</sup> 'Action' finales in both Act 1 and 2 are storm scenes, and in both cases Storace leans heavily on an array of tone-painting devices such as dotted ostinati in rhythmic unison, numerous tumbling scales from high notes, and stepwise bass triplets accompanying chorale-like melodies. In the finale to Act 2, the metaphorical linkage between the impending storm and the gloom of the dramatic situation (the heroine, Aurora's imprisonment) is dropped as the

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introduction to the English strain of pastoral imagery that was to figure in *The Creation* and *The Seasons*. *The Life of Haydn* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 156.

<sup>53</sup> Italics mine.

<sup>54</sup> *Observations, Relative Chiefly to Picturesque Beauty*, 176.

<sup>55</sup> *Essays on the Picturesque*, vol. 1, 101.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in Garside, 'Picturesque Figure and Landscape', 153.

<sup>57</sup> Roger Fiske believes that Storace was largely responsible for the plot, although James Cobb (who Fiske feels provided Storace with some 'terrible librettos') may have had a hand in the wording of the libretto. See *English Theatre Music*, 451, 514.

company sing: 'See the clouds that whirling sweep, the surface of the deep, the angry winds their fury pour, and howl along the distant shore' (example 5.3). The Act ends in this fashion, the drama put on hold as the characters gaze in amazement at the spectacular natural wonder. In Act 2's aria, 'There, the silver'd waters roam' the drama is also stalled as an observer (sung by Mr. Sedgwick, the score tells us) paints a scene of coastal beauty that takes in the sea (the waves 'spangling' the land with their 'starry foam'), the coastline ('the tow'ring clift that guards the land'), the nesting seabird (who 'dips in the wave his dusky form' and 'on a rocky turret sits Th' exulting Daemon of the storm'), and shipwrecks ('many a seaman's shipwreck'd ghost listens to the distant knell').

Thomas Tolley has pointed out that Storace was one composer, with artistic ability, who used his combined talents to control both the musical and visual experience of his work simultaneously: 'Why he felt the need to do this for the first time late in 1792, when he had been composing operas since 1785, and had made the drawings in the mid-1770s, is unclear. Possibly he was responding to recent developments in the concert hall'.<sup>58</sup> From what we can gather from Kelly's testimony, the backdrop to these storm scenes and seascapes were properly painted with great attention to detail. Storace himself surely had a say about their content and composition.

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Visits to see English musical theatre in the last forty years of the eighteenth century were occasions on which theatre-goers were highly likely to experience the picturesque. What marked English musical entertainment was its acute sensitivity to prevailing customs of the day. Although the neighbouring Italian opera had moved with the times in embracing comedy, English theatre composers and librettists kept their ears even closer to the ground, monitoring carefully changes in taste and fashion. Although it is perfectly valid to account for the rise in 'picturesque' entertainment by positing romantically a notion of communally shared, collectively awakened sensitivity

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<sup>58</sup> *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 247.



FAB.

howl a - long the dif - tant shore. See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep, - See the Clouds that  
 howl a - lon - the dif - tant shore. See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep, See the Clouds that whirling whirling  
 howl a - long - the dif - tant shore. See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep, - See the Clouds that whirling whirling  
 howl a - lon - - the dif - tant shore. See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep, - See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep,

66

whirling whirling sweep, the surface of the troubled deep  
 sweep that whirling sweep, the surface of the troubled deep, the an - - gry  
 Clouds that whirling sweep, the surface of the troubled deep, the surface of the troubled deep, the an - - gry winds - - their  
 the an - - gry winds - - their fu - - ry

FAB.

the an - - gry winds their fu - - ry pour See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep, - See the Clouds that  
 winds their fu - - ry pour their fu - - ry pour See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep See the Clouds that  
 fu - - ry pour their fu - - ry pour See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep See the Clouds that  
 pour the an - - gry winds their fu - - ry pour See the Clouds that whirling whirling sweep

Example 5.3 Stephen Storace, *The Pirates* (1792), published by J. Dale, London, 1793 – from Act 2 Finale.  
 © The British Library Board. D. 289.(5.)

to fine landscape, a more hard-headed view - that the picturesque supply met picturesque demand - should also be factored in.

Various guises of, and interactions with, the picturesque can be observed in English opera. In sentimental stories of the rural ordinary, the countryside would periodically shift from peripheral backdrop to the subject of appraisal. When delight was taken in its painterly quality and its details, the landscape became less a background for a *way of life* and more an aspect of the *quality of life*. The painterly fondness for picturesque details threw up recurring standards of picturesque beauty. But the specificity of place was an increasingly important element of these dramas; in selecting certain agreed locations, a catalogue of 'wonders' was reinforced, where the picturesque spirit operated at its zenith. These favoured situations were ripe for dramatic treatment. In these beauty spots, characters were moved to sing, either rapturously, animatedly, or, in Dibdin's voice, in the natural folk idiom. And, although comedy found a happy home as much in rural tranquillity as in scenes of sublime awe, drama was capable of being heightened to fever pitch in locations of extremity, spectacle and gothic theatricality.

## 6 The picturesque oratorio: Haydn's art in nature's clothing

Haydn's *The Seasons* as sequel is an inescapable concept. *The Creation* in a sense may feel like his *opus summarum*. Where can one go but 'down' after pronouncing on such an 'elevated' - *the elevated* - topic? What is there to say except something more superficial? But Haydn, who achieved lasting fame with *The Creation*, evidently wanted to cement his reputation further before he could, as he told Ernst Ludwig Gerber, 'rest his nerves and enjoy his retirement'.<sup>1</sup> The venerable composer saw nothing odd in sealing his status with a musical statement about the natural world.

For me, this oratorio is the best place to observe the picturesque in music by a non-Englishman. There are a number of compelling reasons for this: first, in this oratorio the natural world *is* the subject, an undertaking attempted by no other composer on this scale up to this point. Second, *The Seasons* is based on a text considered to be a virtual handbook for the picturesque – James Thomson's epic poem of the same name. And thirdly, I would argue that by the time he came to write the work (between 1799 and 1801) Haydn was well-schooled in the picturesque, allowing an already lively and curious interest in the aesthetics of the natural world to be encouraged by an immersion in English culture during his stays there.

Haydn's collection of English landscape prints formed a significant part of his affects acquired during his visits. Although these acquisitions must have been considered by Haydn as, in one sense, ordinary souvenirs, the first-hand encounters with the English landscape recorded in the London notebooks must surely have further piqued his interest in English landscape painting. These encounters included visits to the country park of Oatlands near Walton-on-Thames and Waverley Abbey near Guildford. Haydn also records a visit to Bath and, in an uncanny pre-echo of Catherine Morland's breathless pronouncement in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey*, describes viewing a panoramic view of the city from a high rise.<sup>2</sup> Oatlands, which he visited on

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<sup>1</sup> Letter of 23th September, 1799, trans. in H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 4, 'The Years of *The Creation*, 1796-1800' (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 487.

<sup>2</sup> *The Collected Correspondence*, 295. See Jane Austen, *Northanger Abbey*, ed. R. W. Chapman (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 111 for the relevant passage in the novel.

the 24<sup>th</sup> of November, 1791 at the invitation of the Prince of Wales, clearly enchanted him. His notebook entry carefully records details of the grounds, showing a keen appreciation for the picturesque variety on show:

The little castle, 18 miles from London, lies on a slope and commands the most glorious view. Among its many beauties is a most remarkable grotto...It is very large and contains many diversions, *inter alia* actual water which flows in from various sides, a beautiful English garden, various entrances and exits, besides a most charming bath.<sup>3</sup>

His visit to Waverley on the 26<sup>th</sup> August, 1794 brought him into contact with a Gothic ruin within a 'beautiful wilderness'. Although Haydn's emotional response to the Gothic picturesque was understandably somewhat different to the way most English tourists would encounter it ('my heart was oppressed at the thought that all this belonged to my religion') he nonetheless was moved by the 'beautiful wilderness' within which the abbey stood.<sup>4</sup>

Haydn's extra-curricular activities in England, and his diary entries that recorded them, confirm how keen an interest he took in the aesthetics of the countryside and how willing he was to develop this taste in a country so highly attuned to these aesthetics.<sup>5</sup> Haydn would also have been aware of how this affected the reception of art-works since, as we saw in chapter 1, the language of the picturesque frequently spilled over into reviews and discussions of music heard in concert. Together with his exposure to picturesque glees all of this would have swiftly dispelled any doubts he might have had about the potential for music to both sharpen the focus of a visual setting and promote the ability of audiences to 'see in sound'.

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 272.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 304.

<sup>5</sup> Annette Richards argues that, rather than 'learning' the picturesque in England, Haydn refined an already developing taste for it through his experience of the emerging Austro-German interest in English garden art. *The Free Fantasia*, 144.

### **An elevated treatment of a low subject?**

As we have seen, picturesque subjects, and their mode of appraisal, were as likely to be encountered in late eighteenth-century English song and theatre music as in gardening, poetry and painting. These musical media were considered to be 'low' forms, in the same way that Joshua Reynolds and his disciples judged landscape painting to lie at the bottom of the visual arts hierarchy. A search for the picturesque in examples of supposedly 'higher' music, (predominantly, it was thought, by non-English composers) is fraught with difficulty, however. In instrumental music this is complicated by the difficulty in formulating a rubric for wordless genres. Moreover, those 'characteristic' symphonies and concertos that advertised their mimetic, pastoral intentions in subtitles to movements and programme commentaries - beyond understated appellations such as 'pastorella' - were the exceptions. These examples were novelties, and even fewer could be considered to be genuinely concerned with the appraisal of the beauty of landscape.<sup>6</sup> In Italian, French and German opera the picturesque was too underdeveloped a category in the literature of those languages to figure prominently. Moreover, it would have no place in the heroic and moral stories of *opera seria*; and in *opera buffa* the garden, the countryside and the gothic setting were certainly backdrops of symbolic potency, as Mary Hunter has shown, but rarely part of the principal discourse.<sup>7</sup>

Was Haydn's lasting achievement one that, for the first time, presented the picturesque as the guiding aesthetic of an oratorio?<sup>8</sup> As we shall see, the reception of the work seems to suggest that he had – his fiercest critics suggested that this subject

<sup>6</sup> A notable exception, however is Justin Henri Knecht's 1784 symphony, *Le portrait musical de la nature*, often cited as an precursor to Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. Knecht's symphony is discussed alongside Beethoven's, both in David Wyn Jones, *Beethoven: 'Pastoral' Symphony*, Cambridge Music Handbooks (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 18-19 and Will, *The Characteristic Symphony*, 175-6. Descriptions of the symphony's programme, given on the title page, include such phrases as 'A beautiful landscape where the sun shines, the gentle breezes blow, the brook flows through the valley' and 'Black clouds accumulate, winds whistle, the distant thunder rumbles and the storm slowly approaches'. Wyn Jones believes that parallels between Knecht's *portrait* and Beethoven's *Pastoral* should be played down as 'Beethoven was responding to a pastoral tradition that was both wider and more challenging than is represented by this single work'.

<sup>7</sup> Hunter, 'Landscape Gardens and Gothic Settings' (passim).

<sup>8</sup> See A. Peter Brown, 'The Creation and The Seasons: Some Allusions, Quotations, and Models from Handel to Mendelssohn' in *Current Musicology* 51 (Fall 1991), 26. Brown avers that *The Seasons* (and *The Creation*) had 'no topical predecessors'.

did not belong in an oratorio. But I maintain that for Haydn the distinction between high and low meant little to him. The inclusion in the late oratorios of pastoral topics, folk idioms and (much more extensively) unashamed nature tone-painting - amongst more 'serious' musical voices and topics - was a lapse of taste and unruly incursion for some. But to mix high and low styles was both an established part of his method and the most suitable and honest musical response to the subject matter. Inasmuch as Haydn did recognize that the oratorio was an elevated form - in its grandeur, breadth and large forces - his attitude suggested that nature topics *were* worthy of such considered treatment. James Webster has a particularly good explanation for this:

In subsuming the natural cycle of the world into the divine order of eternity, *The Seasons*, like so many pastorals, transcends its ostensibly 'lower' subject. It is one of the final glories of a tradition that is more than high enough.<sup>9</sup>

Although Thomson's poem was considered to have a wide compass that took in all of the major philosophical questions, the reception of Haydn's *The Seasons* soon began to compare it unfavourably with its predecessor, critiquing its 'lower' subject-matter and the crudity of its peasant characters and commentators. This is, in one sense, inevitable once his librettist, Gottfried van Swieten and Haydn chose to eschew a biblical text. Yet this reception also signifies the drastic reformulation of Swieten who, necessarily in many ways, took a hatchet to Thomson's verse, simplifying its message, draining it of its poetic elegance, and extracting - and in the process, bastardizing - some of the central themes that he wished to explore. Swieten's achievement was in his judicious selection of themes, scenes and conceits, a selection that demonstrated a particular sensitivity to Haydn's genius, and, in Webster's words, 'inspired [him] to his best efforts'.<sup>10</sup>

At this point it is worth remarking on the troubled reception of *The Seasons*. The kind of musical illustration to which Webster refers split critical opinion into two camps with few commentators equivocating on the matter. There were those that felt

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<sup>9</sup> James Webster, 'The Sublime and the Pastoral in *The Creation* and *The Seasons*' in *The Cambridge Companion to Haydn*, ed. Caryl Clark (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 163.

<sup>10</sup> Webster, 'Haydn' in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd edn., vol. 11, 196.

Haydn's gift for imitating and representing visual and aural elements in the libretto was the most awe-inspiring aspect of his genius. Others felt offended by the tone-painting, arguing that music should not stray into this territory.

Johann Friedrich Herbart felt that Haydn's descriptions were so vivid and uncanny that Haydn's 'music needs no text; it is mere curiosity that impels us to know what he has tried to illuminate'.<sup>11</sup> Carl Friederich Zelter's reaction to the work, published in the *Allgemeine musikalische Zeitung* of May 1804, was one of astonishment and also respect for Haydn's originality, albeit one that recognized Haydn's acceptance of conventional boundaries:

One is astounded about this fantastically grand picture of furious nature, which is preceded by a long row of colourful, small and attractively designed pictures of the smallest and most varied objects of nature: these roll off playfully and finish in such a triumph of art. - Everything about this piece is free and natural; nothing is daring or affected, nothing violates the old rules.<sup>12</sup>

The theorists Heinrich Christoph Koch and Johann Georg Sulzer stood squarely in opposition to these views. Sulzer, writing in the AMZ, said that 'such painting violates the true spirit of music, which is to express the sentiments of feeling not to convey images...'<sup>13</sup> Koch writing in general about *symphonies à programme* complained that 'music betrays its nature when it takes over such descriptions, since its only object is to depict the feelings of the heart, and not the picture of inanimate things'.<sup>14</sup>

The anonymous reviewer in *Musikalisches Taschenbuch* of 1805 objected more to the libretto as being 'unworthy of a great artist'. It was 'a vulgar imitation of nature

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<sup>11</sup> Trans. in Botstein, 'The Consequences of Presumed Innocence', 10.

<sup>12</sup> Trans. in Landon, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 'Haydn: the Late Years, 1801-1809' (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), 93. For more on Zelter's related remarks on *The Creation*, see Deidre Loughridge, 'Haydn's *Creation* as an Optical Entertainment' *Journal of Musicology* 27/1 (2010), 11-13. Loughridge's essay provides a very useful reading that takes up Zelter's and Johann Karl Friedrich Triest's use of the metaphors of magic lantern and shadow play to discuss Haydn's tone-painting in *The Creation*. Loughridge's argument could just as usefully be adopted for *The Seasons*.

<sup>13</sup> Trans. in Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 272.

<sup>14</sup> Trans. in Ratner, *Classic Music*, 25.

in detail [...] and for this reason it is no complete entity – on the contrary, it is easily tiresome and cannot produce a pure and single artistic effect'.<sup>15</sup> As H. C. Robbins Landon pointed out, it was the variety of affect deployed in conveying an appreciation of varied landscape that this reviewer could not stomach. The story of Haydn's reaction to criticism regarding his imitation of croaking frogs is well-known and is consistent with other comments he made after the work's completion in which he played down his regard for it.<sup>16</sup> Nonetheless, his assertion that he was forced by Swieten to write such 'Frenchified rubbish', strikes me as somewhat disingenuous, a defensive response by a weary composer too weak to mount a defence for it. The depiction of the frogs is entirely consistent with his approach elsewhere in the score. Its crudity is somehow necessary and inevitable, nature 'warts and all'.

In England, it was William Crotch who, unsurprisingly perhaps, criticized these musical colourings in one of his Oxford lectures. Although Haydn is not mentioned by name here, it is clear that Crotch has him in his sights, and when he is referring to *The Seasons*:

... when composers [...] represent [...] frogs hopping, arrows flying, a rainbow, a lamp in a high tower, the depth of the sea, the flight of an eagle, great whales, crawling worms, tigers bounding, the paces of the stag and horse, flakes of snow, forked lightning, a dog running over the fields, the report of the gun, and the fall of the wounded bird, we surely must acknowledge that they have exceeded the true limits of musical expression.<sup>17</sup>

Crotch's echoing of those negative opinions voiced in Germany seems to have had some hold over those who would be deputed to direct, stage and organize performances of the work in England. Despite the continuing popularity of Thomson's poem, and Haydn's illustrative style which, as we have seen, appealed to English audiences, *The Seasons* was hardly performed there. The general decline in concert activity in the early years of the nineteenth century may partly explain the lack of performances but, as Robbins Landon observed, the main reason appears to have been

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<sup>15</sup> Trans. in Landon, *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 195.

<sup>16</sup> Particularly in comparison with *The Creation*. See Wyn Jones, *The Life of Haydn*, 217.

<sup>17</sup> *Substance*, 58.

a fierce backlash against Haydn's music soon after he left in 1795. Crotch was very much part of this reaction as was Sheridan's publicly stated disgust at the proposal for Haydn to be inducted into the Institut National des Sciences et des Arts.<sup>18</sup>

I am very much in agreement with Roger Barnett Larsson, who argues that the oratorios demonstrate an 'obvious enough link with English traditions.'<sup>19</sup> In the case of *The Seasons* this link connects with the Handelian model for oratorio, the association with Thomson and the picturesque sentiments contained in the subject matter. Marie-Louise Spieckermann's view that the English were put off by the elements of *Volkstheater* and *Singspiel* in the work are unconvincing, not least because Handel's influence is just as evident in *The Seasons* as are its similarities with its more popular predecessor.<sup>20</sup> In the final analysis, it may just be that both the backlash against the picturesque and the fall from English favour of Haydn's music, was *already* being felt in the early years of the century. No other large-scale work of the period manifests the picturesque more convincingly than *The Seasons*. Perhaps Haydn and Swieten were a few years too late for English tastes?

English indifference to the work, then, does not cancel out its huge debt to, and glorious exhibition of, picturesque practice. I intend to show that, whilst many of the oratorio's themes can undoubtedly be labelled 'pictorial', they, and Haydn's musical treatment of them, are typically picturesque. First I will identify the themes that Swieten and Haydn found in Thomson and show how they adapted them and incorporated them into the body of the oratorio. This will demonstrate the extent to which Swieten cherry-picked picturesque notions and images, ripe for Haydn's particular musical gifts of portrayal and illustration. Then I will consider the ways in which the oratorio adumbrates the picturesque, testing the chosen themes against contemporaneous theories. I will also examine closely Haydn's methods, showing how his writing illuminates and enhances the picturesque elements in the text and how the music itself might be described as picturesque in character. In this process, it will

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<sup>18</sup> For a fuller discussion of this controversy, see Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 77-8.

<sup>19</sup> 'The Beautiful, the Sublime and the Picturesque in Eighteenth-century Musical Thought in Britain', 222-3.

<sup>20</sup> Marie-Louise Spieckermann, 'Transformed into *Die Jahreszeiten*: Thomson's Poem and Gottfried van Swieten's Libretto' in *The Perennial Satirist: Essays in Honour of Bernfried Nugel*, eds. Hermann J. Real and Peter A. Firchow (Munster: Die Deutsche Bibliothek, 2005), 89.

become clear how Haydn's writing in *The Seasons* represents a progression from *The Creation* by adapting and refining its pictorialisms to speak with a more overt and colourful sense of nature that resonates strongly with the English picturesque vocabulary.

### **An English epic fit for an Austro-Hungarian genius**

On canvas, in verse and prose - as well as in the artful cultivation of parks and gardens - the topic of landscape description in general, and the evaluation of individual scenes in particular, dominated English artistic and aesthetic discourse from the publication of Thomson's epic poem, *The Seasons*, to the century's close. As we saw in chapter 3, Thomson was an early figurehead for the picturesque movement. The enthusiasm for landscape gardening in particular was, to use Robert Aubin's words once more, 'nourished by Thomson's *Seasons*' but his detailed, heartfelt and elegiac descriptions of rural scenes also stimulated landscape painters including the much later artists, Turner and Constable, who professed that Thomson was their favourite poet.<sup>21</sup> The poetry in *The Seasons* was, despite its erudition and delight in language, constantly considered to be visually conceived, as the several illustrated editions of the poem published after his death testify.<sup>22</sup> As early as 1756, the poet, Joseph Warton, was confidently asserting that Thomson's work had been key in encouraging the English in developing their taste for evaluating landscapes:

Thomson was blessed with a strong and copious fancy; he hath enriched poetry with a variety of new and original Images, which he painted from nature itself, and from his own actual observations: his descriptions have therefore a distinctness and truth, which are utterly wanting to those, of poets who have only copied from each other, and have never looked abroad on the objects themselves. Thomson was accustomed to wander away into the country for days and for weeks, attentive to, "each rural sight, each rural sound;" while many a poet who has dwelt for years in the Strand, has attempted to describe fields and rivers, and generally succeeded accordingly. Hence that nauseous repetition of the same circumstances; hence that disgusting impropriety

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<sup>21</sup> Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 30.

<sup>22</sup> See Sando Jung, 'Print Culture, High-Cultural Consumption, and Thomson's *The Seasons*, 1780-1797', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 44/4 (2011), 495-514.

of introducing what may be called a set of hereditary images, without proper regard to the age, or climate, or occasion, in which they were formerly used.<sup>23</sup>

Thomson's verse is not always a dominant element in contemporary scholarship on the picturesque. The gardeners, Brown and Repton, and the theorists Gilpin, Price and Knight, tend to dominate picturesque histories. The landscape painters, Wilson, Gainsborough and Wright, however, are given supporting roles. Their seventeenth century precursor, Claude Lorrain, looms large, though, cited as the prime influence not only on the nascent English school of landscape painters but also on gardeners and, crucially, commissioning landowners who coveted a slice of Claude's Italianate vistas in their corner of the shires. Viewing English poetry of the period as a participant in the picturesque is not a controversial notion (especially for later poets than Thomson such as Gray, Collins, Shenstone and Akenside) but neither is it promulgated with much force or regularity.<sup>24</sup> As I mentioned in chapter 3, John Barrell's innovative reading of Thomson's poetic construction in terms of Claudian structural planes, for instance, does not lead him to admit Thomson to the picturesque brotherhood.<sup>25</sup>

For me, Thomson's picturesque credentials cannot be circumscribed. His close associations with Lord Lyttelton, whose seat at Hagley contained a landscape garden, and with William Shenstone, whose garden at The Leasowes he particularly enjoyed, demonstrate that *The Seasons* was the work of a passionate advocate rather than a dilettante. The walk through Stowe Gardens in 'Autumn' lends further credence to this. Furthermore, in old age he is said to have become an expert in landscape painting.<sup>26</sup> After his death his popularity was enshrined in various odes, the most celebrated being by the poet, William Collins, a memorial at Westminster Abbey and the monument on Ednam Hill commissioned by David Stewart, the Earl of Buchan. One of his favourite views was commemorated by the 'Thomson seat', much inhabited by Thomas Gray and

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<sup>23</sup> Joseph Warton, *An Essay on the Writings and Genius of Pope*, vol. 1 (London: M. Cooper, 1756), 42.

<sup>24</sup> Among scholars that have are J. R. Watson, Robert Aubin, Charles Peake, Jean Hagstrum and Sandro Jung.

<sup>25</sup> See *The Idea of Landscape*, 7-34.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

praised by Gilpin and Joseph Heely, and, as I pointed out in chapter 3, paintings were issued with extracts from his poetry attached.<sup>27</sup>

Undoubtedly, *The Seasons'* broad sweep contains political, moral and spiritual preoccupations that are no more than on the fringe of what we might call the full flowering of the picturesque. This can be dated approximately to the last forty or so years of the century when the movement hardened into a greater cultural solidity (a time, incidentally, when Thomson's popularity grew). This was marked by dissemination of picturesque ideas and themes in the public sphere with theoretical discussion in print, a tourist industry encouraged by publication of 'walking guides' and a market established around the buying and selling of prints and poetry books. The late eighteenth-century picturesque was of course in no way devoid of political resonances or ramifications, neither did the picturesque artist deliberately underplay the moral, and particularly the spiritual, dimension of landscape appreciation.<sup>28</sup> The scope of *The Seasons*, however, allowed for Whiggish politicking, musings about empire, deistic philosophizing and Newtonian theorizing, a political broadening of the aesthetic of landscapes that were seldom the central concern of picturesque painting and poetry. Indeed Dr Johnson, felt that there was just too much going on in *The Seasons*, 'filling the ear more than the mind'.<sup>29</sup>

These learned representations notwithstanding, it is the character of the British landscape that is of principal importance in Thomson's epic.<sup>30</sup> The descriptions

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<sup>27</sup> See Douglas Grant, *James Thomson, the Poet of 'The Seasons'* (London: P. Cresset, 1951), 270-80, for an account of the various commemorations to Thomson from his death to the end of the century. J. R. Watson argues that Thomson's 'feeling for colour' made him a favourite of Turner and Constable hence Constable's use of words from 'Summer' in the painting of Salisbury. See *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 30.

<sup>28</sup> This is very much at the forefront of work on the picturesque by scholars such as Ann Bermingham, Tim Fulford and Kim Ian Michasiw, and provides the framework for the collection of essays in *The Politics of the Picturesque*, edited by Stephen Copley and Peter Garside (passim). John Brewer points out that Gilpin still clung to the idea of the rural poor having a picturesque quality in a scene, despite appreciating the moral dubiousness of such a position. *The Pleasures of the Imagination*, 650.

<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Kevis Goodman, *Georgic Modernity and British Romanticism: Poetry and the Mediation of History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 62.

<sup>30</sup> But, as James Whale has pointed out, the pure enjoyment of the countryside was perceived to have 'moralizing potential' as an antidote to the pursuit of luxury, the merits of which were debated vigorously at this time. See Whale, 'Romantics, Explorers and Picturesque Travellers', 178. Also Berg and Egar, 'The Rise and Fall of the Luxury Debates'.

of the landscape avoid the systematic and pedestrian and instead stress the beauty of expressive images rather than encoded emblems.<sup>31</sup> Thomson's poetic tone strives for a particularly visual immediacy, as this extract from 'Summer' demonstrates:

Rich is thy soil and merciful thy clime;  
Thy streams unfailing in the Summer's drought;  
Unmatched thy guardian-oaks; thy valleys float  
With golden waves; and on thy mountains flocks  
Bleat numberless; while, roving round their sides,  
Bellow the blackening herds in lusty droves.<sup>32</sup>

That Thomson's poem should have inspired Haydn to write some of his most original music in his oratorio of the same name should not surprise us. As we have seen, Haydn was stimulated by the subject of nature and the countryside throughout his career.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, his time in London had given him first-hand experience of a country in which the picturesque movement had grown from a cult into a virtual obsession, and in which one of that movement's heroes, Thomson, was still highly valued. Robbins Landon, in the introduction to his survey of Haydn's *The Seasons*, presents a neat summation of this from a modern edition of *Country Life* magazine. The essayist, writing in 1970, calls the poem a 'strange patchwork of direct observation and landscape painting, moralising, sententious anecdotes and pseudo-scientific gossip'. Crucially, though, it avers that it was the first poem to take nature as its principal subject and that the real observation of the countryside that it contains is a new idea.<sup>34</sup>

Thomson's choice of words both displays the pleasure he experiences and his striving to describe and quantify that pleasure. This pleasure uplifts and stimulates the mind as well as educating and refining the soul, calling to mind Shaftesbury's idea,

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<sup>31</sup> Hussey, *The Picturesque*, 105.

<sup>32</sup> Lines 1446-51 from 'Summer', in *The Seasons* revised version (1746), ed. James Sambrook (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 26. Hereafter, page numbers for quotes from *The Seasons* refer to this edition.

<sup>33</sup> See H. C. Robbins Landon and David Wyn Jones, *Haydn: His Life and his Music* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), 318. Thomas Tolley speculates that the naturalist, Joseph Banks, may have persuaded Haydn to 'consider the realm of nature a fitting subject for musical expression'. See *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, 288.

<sup>34</sup> Hans Hammelmann, *Country Life Annual* (London: 1970), 52, quoted in *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 93.

expressed in his *Miscellaneous Reflections*, of linking the goodness of man with his seeking of a connection with the natural world.<sup>35</sup> Mere observation, and the reporting of its moral benefit, is, in Thomson's opinion, not the only role of the responsible poet. It is a requirement to move from those observations to reflect and draw conclusions that ponder on civilization and man's place in the world. The landscape is not a vehicle for these reflections – it is a worthy subject itself, a view echoed by Rousseau, who advocated a kind of new religion of the natural world, free from the dogma of established creeds.<sup>36</sup> For Thomson, the viewing of the landscape is a stimulus to these wider reflections: we are surrounded by natural beauty; 'to consider the meanings and significance we infer from this', is his *raison d'être*. A stirring example of this comes towards the end of 'Spring' when Thomson turns his head and eyes heavenward:

What is this mighty breath, ye curious, say,  
That in a powerful language, felt, not heard,  
Instructs the fowls of heaven, and through their breast  
These arts of love diffuses? What, but God?  
Inspiring God! Who, boundless spirit all  
And unremitting energy, pervades,  
Adjusts, sustains, and agitates the whole.<sup>37</sup>

Though there is a world of difference between the questioning, occasionally sceptical deism in Thomson and the trusting piety of Swieten's libretto, it is surely passages such as this that convinced Haydn's collaborator to frame the whole work as a hymn to the deity as well as to nature.

#### **From Thomson to Haydn via Gottfried van Swieten:**

In many respects the choice of James Thomson's *The Seasons* as a basis for the oratorio was a logical one; as in *The Creation*, *The Seasons* constitutes a contemplation of the

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<sup>35</sup> See Robert Inglefield, 'Thomson and Shaftesbury' in *Essays for the Tercentenary*, ed. Richard Terry (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), 89 and Hunt, *The Figure in the Landscape*, 55.

<sup>36</sup> Sweetman, 'Nature and Art in Enlightened Culture', 289.

<sup>37</sup> Lines 849-55 from 'Spring'.

universe, of God's work. And it picks up and develops many of the topics of the natural world ventured in *The Creation* (which keeps the identity and form of human life in the background). But whereas *The Creation* wrestles with metaphysical questions, its successor, for the most part, deals empirically with an observable reality, its richness lying in the multifarious and perspicacious observations, despite the attempts at moral underpinning.<sup>38</sup>

In Robbins Landon's survey of *The Seasons* in volume 5 of *Chronicle and Works* the kinship between the two oratorios is made plain to see but equally Landon makes an excellent case for *The Seasons* as an authoritative statement in its own right and implicit within his analysis is the notion that it deserves to emerge more fully from *The Creation's* shadow.<sup>39</sup> It contains an extensive and painstaking analytical comparison of the libretto and the poem, and reveals where Thomson's words are lifted wholesale; where they are paraphrased; where they are pruned, edited or butchered; where only the spirit of the verse is adopted and where an entirely new tone or idea is interposed. Landon's measured conclusions opine that Swieten's adaption is no more than workmanlike, anodyne in parts, and ill-suited in places to a grand oratorio.<sup>40</sup> But for Landon, Swieten's major achievement is the skilful reworking of the - in his words - 'nature-poetical' aspects of Thomson and the retention of the best of its interactions between 'inanimate nature' and human life. Landon did not show, however, that the libretto, despite missing Thomson's 'felicitous diction' and 'wash of linguistic colour' is remarkably *faithful* to a wide range of essential 'nature topics' affirmed in *The Seasons* and embedded in eighteenth-century English landscape verse and painting.<sup>41</sup> Several of these figure the picturesque in their critical assessment of aesthetic worth, the delight in the stirring of the visual sense, and in their pictorial richness and variety.

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<sup>38</sup> Haydn and Gottfried van Swieten must also have been aware of the English precedents for setting extracts of *The Seasons* to music, notably the 'episodes' set by Thomas Billington.

<sup>39</sup> *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 93-199. This is not to overlook Daniel Heartz's thorough analytical study of the music in *Mozart, Haydn and Early Beethoven, 1781-1802* (New York; London: W.W. Norton, 2009), 628-51.

<sup>40</sup> See *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 94-5. Landon explains that the libretto is a curious mixture of Thomson, Swieten and B. H. Brockes who had produced an edition of the Thomson with a line-by-line German translation. Swieten did rely on the Brockes text but provided many of his own translations for the libretto. In Haydn's collection there is a copy of a passion by Handel which sets a text written by Brockes (the so-called 'Brockes' Passion).

<sup>41</sup> *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 114.

Table 1 shows the nature topics as they are encountered chronologically in the oratorio and in which numbers they feature. Some are season-specific, others can apply at any time in the cycle, some derive their drama from human agency, in others nature's progress and workings is dramatized. Mostly the action is in the present ('Winter's tale of the lord and young maiden, borrowed from Hiller's *Die Liebe auf dem Lande* and Shield's *Rosina*, is the notable exception). This action is leavened by the reflective commentary of the peasants and chorus, some of which adopts a moral and/or religious tone. It is here where the picturesque is most obviously obscured. But overall the spirit of curiosity in the season's progress and passing, and the delight in observing its effects, is unquestionably picturesque.

All of these topics are central to Thomson's *Seasons*. There is unmistakable 'agreement' between the poem and the oratorio as to the centrality of these themes in such a story and that the scenes described are, and should be, subjects of wonderment and glory. As Landon has shown, the distinctive form of utterance of Thomson - a weighty, occasionally portentous verbosity, which irked Dr Johnson - is jettisoned for reasons of exigency. Thomson's attempts to focus on various contingencies of this nature celebration, the connectedness of issues of citizenship, patriotism, patronage and empire are quite understandably surplus to Haydn and Swieten's requirements. More cosmological considerations such as the meanings, purpose and personification of nature are represented by Swieten in a rather too conspicuous veneer of piety, notably in the Finale where the peasant speakers reassure and counsel the chorus in response to their eschatological anxieties. Such an approach was also surely not only expected of Haydn and Swieten in a work of this kind but also betrayed a desire to reprise the kind of moral message and devotional respectability that had made *The Creation* so revered.

More convincingly it is Thomson's sensitivity to the *power* and *force* of nature and its capacity to move the soul that is carried over into the oratorio. Swieten's and Haydn's countryside is a Georgic site of happy and virtuous work, a place where love springs forth and flourishes, and a setting for leisure, rest and retirement. Yet the *visual* delight that the rural landscape provides, as well as the happiness that results

Table 1

| PICTURESQUE THEMES                            | No. in Urtext edition      | MAIN SOURCE IN POEM<br>(especially where words have been paraphrased) <sup>42</sup> |
|---|----------------------------|---|
| Spring: The progression from Winter to Spring | No. 1                      | Lines 11-25 of 'Spring'   |
| Spring's bounty and optimism                  | Nos. 1 [Recitativo] and 5a | Lines 1-4; 48-52 186-9 of 'Spring'  |
| The farmer ploughs the field                  | Nos. 3b and 4a             | Lines 34-47 of 'Spring'   |
| Walking in springtime fields                  | No. 5a                     | Lines 556-9; 1379-88 of 'Summer'  |
| Summer: Sunrise/Sun worship                   | Nos. 6a and 7              | Lines 46-51 and 81-96 of 'Summer'   |
| Storm   | Nos. 10a and 10b           | Lines 1103-1168 of 'Summer'   |
| Autumn: The virtue of industry (the Georgic)  | No. 12                     | Lines 43-117 of 'Autumn'  |
| Love  | No. 13b                    | Lines 177-310 of 'Autumn' (tale of Lavinia)   |
| The Hunt                                      | Nos. 14a, 14b, 15a and 15c | Lines 360-457 of 'Autumn'   |
| Celebrating the harvest                       | Nos. 16a and 16b           | Lines 530-682 of 'Autumn'   |
| Winter: Winter fog                            | No. 17                     | Lines 707-712; 1082-1114 of 'Autumn'  |
| The Traveller lost in the countryside         | 18b and 19a                | Lines 277-321 of 'Winter'   |
| A pastoral tale                               | No. 20b                    | No model in the poem  |
| The decline during winter                     | No. 21b                    | Lines 1-16; 1024-1041 of 'Winter'   |

<sup>42</sup> Revised version of *The Seasons*, ed. Sambrook.

from dwelling there, both evince human contentment. It is this contentment, and its visual causes, that Haydn's music so brilliantly paints.

### **Pictures and painting**

Both of Haydn's late oratorios are often said to feature 'picturesque' writing. Take this example from the liner notes, translated from the German, of a recent recording of *The Creation*:

...the first two parts portray the creation of the world in a variety of tableaux characterised by a picturesque depiction of nature. These offer Haydn manifold opportunities for a musical *imitation naturae*, a pictorial, easily understandable transposition of the text in terms of 'tone-painting'.<sup>43</sup>

The translator's use of the term 'picturesque' (*pittoresker* in the original article), applied here as uncritically as it often was in eighteenth-century reception (unless we count Boyé's polemic against *pittoresque* writing)<sup>44</sup>, refers to the tone-painting of the instrumental writing, for instance in the descriptive overtures and interludes, and the local colouring of the libretto of the arias and ensembles in particular. In present day uses of the term 'picturesque', as the example above exemplifies, it is seldom contextualized as a manifestation of Enlightenment-period style or as belonging to the picturesque aesthetic category à la Price or Crotch. Even allowing for the slippage between German original and English translation, in this instance the picturesque and pictorial (*bildlichen* in the original) are interchangeable. I would argue that in these instances the term *pictorial* is a more suitable fit, particularly for those moments in *The Creation*'s musical representations of galloping hooves, the flexible tiger, great whales and reviving showers of rain. The arias by Raphael and Gabriel in Part 1 ('Rolling in foaming billows' and 'With verdure clad') and the Adam and Eve duets in Part 3 ('By thee with bliss' and 'The dew-dropping morn') are more suitably labelled picturesque, however. Moreover, it is worth bearing in mind that all of these descriptive passages

<sup>43</sup> Andreas Friesenhagen, 'Es werde Licht!' in liner notes to recording of *Die Schöpfung* by the Friburger Barockorchester and Rias Kammerchor, conducted by René Jacobs (Harmonia Mundi HMC 992039.40). Translation by Charles Johnston.

<sup>44</sup> Ellis, *Music Criticism in Nineteenth-Century France*, 4 (passim).

in *The Creation* have their origins in the writing of Milton who, as I noted in chapter 1, used vivid and detailed language in his portrayals of nature that so inspired Thomson and his English successors.

Given the historiography of the picturesque as a distinctively eighteenth-century emotional response to nature and as a theorized universal of aesthetic pleasure, 'picturesque' is too loaded a term for it to be at its most effective in these instances. The way in which Haydn invokes the picturesque, and writes 'picturesquely', is a more nuanced and complex reflex than is writing music to reconcile and compensate for the absence of stage scenery. As I shall show, Haydn's method divides into techniques concerned with the **composition of the pictures** (bringing out the best of the text; formal organization, heightening words, good melodic setting – all techniques adopted by glee composers), and his **painting**, the colouring of directly representing abstract ideas (Spring's struggle to assert itself), imitating sound (for instance, thunder) and imitating vision (for instance, lightning). And it is small wonder that some of the contemporaneous reception of the piece contained comparisons between Haydn and painters, in the case of the biographers, Giuseppe Carpani and Marie-Henri Stendhal, it was Claude who was offered as a comparison.<sup>45</sup>

Haydn undoubtedly called upon the language of pastoral topics as Raymond Monelle has shown.<sup>46</sup> But to rely solely on the pastoral catalogue would severely limit Haydn's expression, as Monelle appears to suggest:

There is an aesthetic change in the musical pastoral that crystallizes in these works of Haydn. Together with the cultural movement away from the classical Golden Age towards the philosophic elevation of nature and the idealization of contemporary peasants rather than Arcadian shepherds, derived from writers like Thomson and Sturm, they signal a personalization of the pastoral style, a movement towards a songlike intimacy and individualized melody, often with lilting or rippling accompaniment figures. These musical features do not have a literary origin.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>45</sup> Botstein, 'The Consequences of Presumed Innocence', 9.

<sup>46</sup> See *The Musical Topic*, 35-110 (on hunts), 185-271 (on pastoral topics), 237-43 (on Haydn oratorios).

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 243.

What Monelle appears to be proposing (though his thesis perhaps does not allow its unequivocal statement) is that the pastoral index is too clinical and too limiting for Haydn's needs. Monelle identifies a broader, more individual use of lyrical melody that impinges on folksong, without acknowledging the other reason for the marginalization of the pastoral mode – namely that the oratorio's pictures, and Haydn's palette, are too sophisticated for the generalized, broad-brush effects of the pastoral.

Carpani's and Zelter's view that *The Seasons* can be apprehended as a series of paintings is an especially helpful interpretation when considering the picturesque character of this piece. Zelter remarked in AMZ 6 (1804) that

The total impression of *The Seasons* is like a gallery, a suite of paintings, where the various pictures of physical objects are exposed to a simultaneous inner reflection. The words do not wish to say more than – 'that might be it!'; 'you might at first think it was so!' 'here it comes!' – The whole intention is therefore sensuous, is supposed to act sensuously and to disappear from the senses even as it appeared; it is a higher play for the ear and may be compared to a shadow-play and with fireworks, without taking objection to it as long as one does not cross the magic circle which poet and composer have clearly drawn, or ask for something they did not intend'.<sup>48</sup>

There is, throughout the oratorio, a rich selection of scenes suitable to be placed on canvas within frames, fitting both in their pleasing appeal to the eye and in their fitness to be viewed in one gaze. So Haydn's landscape **pictures** are one clear aspect of the picturesque. His compositional techniques, his **painting**, are another in the sense that the music conveys the *detail* of those scenes, comparable to the subjective impressions of the painter's brushstrokes.

Although Zelter's remark perhaps overlooks the unity and structural integrity of Swieten's and Haydn's vision, it is quite true that the narrative of the oratorio proceeds between relatively static situations, dealt with one at a time. These situations can be imagined within the frames of a picture and it is rare that the actions and events

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<sup>48</sup> Quoted in *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 189.

in the work lie beyond the scope of a painter.<sup>49</sup> One notable exception is the tale of the maiden and her triumph over the lascivious nobleman. This is a vignette from an *opera buffa* that can only be conveyed through storytelling or acting out and the chorus's 'Ha-has' also betray operatic conception at work here. But the tale of the traveller, also in 'Winter', contains only three real 'events' – he becomes lost, he arrives at a warm cottage where he is welcomed in, and he sits by the fire as the maid works the spinning wheel. Each of these events is treated methodically as scenes in the music and it is not stretching a point to suggest that this little story could comfortably be accommodated in a triptych of paintings.<sup>50</sup> Even the farmer's ploughing of the field has a circularity, repetitiveness and timelessness that can be represented as a painted scene.

But although music unfolds through time and lends 'the picture' a motion that a painting cannot, the skilful landscape painter is always conscious of conveying a sense of time on canvas. In one sense, the painting is a snapshot, a frozen moment, yet time can be suggested both by portraying motion and appealing to the viewer's imagination to 'fill in' a temporal sense of progression.<sup>51</sup> So polarized views that see *The Seasons* as an art gallery on the one hand, or a goal-oriented story on the other, do Haydn and Swieten a disservice; the pictorial and temporal are each in play, both in the sense that Haydn's and Swieten's pictures dramatize time and in the work's emphasis on nature's sense of unfolding and movement.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> This aspect of shifting between landscape views without transition has been picked up in the reception of Thomson's poem as well. See Ralph Cohen, *The Unfolding of 'The Seasons'* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 6. See also Michael Spitzer, 'Haydn's *Creation* as Late Style: Parataxis, Pastoral and the Retreat from Humanism', *Journal of Musicological Research* 28/2-3 (2009), 224-7. Spitzer sees *The Creation* and *The Seasons* as parataxical in their 'additive, list-like constructions', for instance in the use of consecutive beautiful images that *resist* narrative. James Webster takes a different tack in his essay on the two late oratorios. Preferring to emphasize the cyclical and teleological aspects of *The Seasons*, he feels able to refute Zelter's idea of it being a series of paintings. 'The Sublime and the Pastoral in *The Creation* and *The Seasons*', 158.

<sup>50</sup> In 'The Creation and The Seasons', Peter Brown picks up on Zelter's remark about *The Seasons* viewed as a series of paintings by positing that the beginning of 'Summer' is a series of 'connected panels', a triptych of daybreak, sunrise and a song of praise. See 31.

<sup>51</sup> For a discussion of the contrasting temporal aspects of poetry and painting, see Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, *Laocoön; Or the Limits of Poetry and Painting*, trans. William Ross (London: J. Ridgway & Sons, 1836), 150-4.

<sup>52</sup> A subject I return to later in the essay when discussing the idea of the 'force of nature' in the oratorio.

This is felt particularly in pictures where the weather is a principal subject – Haydn's musical contribution to the genre weather painting of Rosa, and later, Turner, amongst others. Time can be harnessed most effectively in paintings of storms, whereby the storm can be seen to be approaching or in retreat, or in sunrises and sunsets where there is a promise of daytime or night time. Haydn's weather representations appear in the overtures to 'Spring' (marked 'Expressing the passage from Winter to Spring') and Winter (marked 'Expressing the thick fogs at the approach of Winter') and the storm sequence in 'Summer'. As I argued in chapter 3, music and the picturesque intersect most fruitfully when the verbal is in play, either through the setting of picturesque texts, or instrumental music where language indicates the thing or things imitated. Haydn's titles convey much more information than, say, the title of 'Pastoral' symphony might, and the prompts are both explanatory and helpful as a guide to listening, in much the same fashion as Beethoven's subtitles in the *Pastoral* Symphony.<sup>53</sup> But, as David Wyn Jones has shown, Beethoven's legends leave more room to the listener's imagination, both because the subtitles tend to the allusive and because the music is conceived symphonically.<sup>54</sup>

The term 'passage' (übergang), used in the subtitle to 'Spring's overture, indicates an elapsing of time, in this case, time that is drastically compressed. But Haydn, as well as expressing the 'idea' of these climatological events, 'sees' these events through painted sound, leaving 'silhouettes' for the imaginative listener who

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<sup>53</sup> Richard Will's work is particularly germane here. He makes clear distinctions between those 'characteristic' works with indicative titles or nicknames, and those that assign headings to separate movements or passages. Will includes John Marsh's *La Chasse* symphony of 1790 in a chart cataloguing symphonies with 'Run-on and Compound structures' (see 197-200), in other words those whose programme diverts the symphonic discourse away from the established discrete four-movement designs with conventional formal models. Marsh's symphony is a very useful parallel to *The Seasons* in two ways. First, his detailed portrayal of a hunt is echoed by Haydn's extensive hunt section in the oratorio. Secondly, Marsh's several detailed subtitles to movements ('The hunter's call in the morning'; gradually assembling together; Setting out from home; trotting and occasionally cantering'; 'Chasse') and sections within the movements ('the fox discover'd) operate in the same way as in Haydn's instrumental interludes; both composers nail their mimetic colours to the mast. As Richard Will puts it in his discussion of Beethoven's *Pastoral* (an analysis just as apt for Marsh's symphony with its use of acoustical mimesis as well as musical sign) '[it] sits halfway between a symphony with independent and formally closed movements, and a characteristic symphony of the type representing series of scenes or emotions, where the penchant is for continuity and formal freedom in moments of action'. *The Characteristic Symphony*, 157.

<sup>54</sup> Beethoven: 'Pastoral Symphony', 37-8.

fills in the details.<sup>55</sup> In the passage from winter to spring, though, the visual listener response is at its most abstract. The metaphor at work is one of struggle, the *Sturm und Drang* utterances representing spring's battle to assert itself, the shooting of new growth in the midst of lingering cold and damp. Here Haydn's music operates in a manner very much akin to the 'Representation of Chaos' in *The Creation*; spring's stealthy emergence is really a *concept* that cannot be visualized, just as chaos is an idea that takes no visual form – when there is light we 'see the light' and the concept of chaos is then fully grasped.<sup>56</sup>

However in the storm music and the introduction to 'Winter' where the fog is represented, Haydn is more clearly representing something he can 'see' in his mind's eye. We can hear the rain and the thunder in the storm but we can visually sense the approaching clouds and the sunshine when it is over, just as we can the swirling mists in 'Winter'. Again, there is a metaphorical use of musical 'confusion' here, an uncertain way forward, but the music just as readily conjures visions of that obscured way forward.

### **Manifestations of the picturesque in *The Seasons***

#### *Attractive scenes: 'ut pictura poesis'*

Horace's dictum, as we have seen, works in two ways. It justifies the choosing of an attractive scene from nature as a subject of poetry and also sets an artistic standard for a suitable picture – that is, if it can move one to poetry. In other words, the natural world is a worthy subject for art. The picturesque movement of the eighteenth century was nurtured by these classical roots (and those of the Elizabethan masque) but in relying less on the devices of allegory and historical allusion - and, in the case of poetry, the strictures of classical verse - picturesque artists felt able to revel in the

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<sup>55</sup> See Will, *The Characteristic Symphony*, 145-8, for a discussion of Zelter's AMZ review.

<sup>56</sup> As I pointed out in chapter 1, the 'Representation of Chaos' is a fruitful site for Lawrence Kramer, Richard Kramer and James Webster to pursue notions of absolute music in *The Creation*. R. Kramer, *Unfinished Music*, chapter 2: 'Haydn's Chaos, Herder's Logos'; L. Kramer, 'Recalling the Sublime: The Logic of Creation in Haydn's *Creation*'; Webster, 'The *Creation*, Haydn's Late Vocal Music, and the Musical Sublime' (passim).

beauty of nature for its own sake, delighting in discovering fine views and debating on relative values and 'rules' of nature's art.<sup>57</sup> Although Thomson believed that a poem on the vast scale of *The Seasons* could not justify a series of word pictures without moral reflections and conclusions, it is an inescapable fact that *The Seasons* is propped up by and, at times, burdened by its observational and topographical approaches. Thomson chooses worthy scenes that contain essential elements and invites his reader to share, to imagine, and sometimes to 'see' as he does in this passage from 'Spring':

See where the winding vale its lavish stores  
Irriguous spreads. See how the lily drinks  
The latent rill, scarce oozing through the grass  
Of growth luxuriant, or the humid bank  
In fair profusion decks.<sup>58</sup>

The relish of springtime's promise and optimism is often associated in eighteenth-century vocal music with the renewal or birth of love. Love, however, is a theme explored in 'Autumn' of *The Seasons*. In Haydn's 'Spring' the sheer joy of dwelling in the countryside is accompanied by an appeal to rediscover its benefits. Spring, then, is celebrated by roaming the fields, wandering 'mid the sweets of May', and the pointing out of topographical features along the way.<sup>59</sup> The duet and chorus 'Spring, her lovely charms unfolding' (No. 5b) opens with an joint appeal from Jane and Lucas for the village folk to join them on a walk, to explore the countryside in all its springtime finery. This sentiment echoes a passage in Thomson's 'Summer' about the refining and improving influence of country walking and the enjoyment to be had in advertising it and sharing in it:

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<sup>57</sup> Aubin, *Topographical Poetry*, 16. Watson, *Picturesque Landscape and English Romantic Landscape*, 11.

<sup>58</sup> Lines 494-8 from 'Spring'.

<sup>59</sup> In my discussion, I have preferred to adopt the 1854 (revised, 1891) translation found in the old Novello edition (as opposed to the new version by Michael Pilkington) because, for all its shortcomings as vocal underlay, it is closer to Thomson's style and deviates little from the meaning that Haydn would have had in front of him when setting Swieten's German. This translation, based on a version of the libretto made by Edward Taylor in 1840, is also better English than Swieten's re-translation back to English, used in the Bärenreiter *Urtext* edition. See Neil Jenkins, *Haydn 'The Seasons': Programme Notes and Prefaces*, King's music edition at [www.neiljenkins.info](http://www.neiljenkins.info) (accessed 28/11/11). However, for musical extracts, in the interests of musical authenticity, it is the *Urtext* edition that I use. Where Swieten's words in the extracts diverge markedly from the Novello, I point this out.

...Now the soft hour  
Of walking comes for him who lonely loves  
To seek the distant hills, and there converse  
With nature, there to harmonize his heart,  
And in pathetic song to breathe around  
The harmony to others. Social friends,  
Attuned to happy unison of soul –  
To whose exalting eye a fairer world,  
Of which the vulgar never had a glimpse,  
Displays its charms.<sup>60</sup>

In the oratorio, Swieten's peasants announce that to roam the fields is an impulse, an urge and a virtue: 'Spring, her lovely charms unfolding, Calls us to the fields. Let us wander O'er the fragrant scene'. The chorus, occasionally divided into girls and boys, or into groups of youngsters, sing their agreement with the same scalic semiquaver affect. When Jane and Lucas direct their eyes to picturesque details ('see the valleys, see the meadows, Where the lilies sip the streamlet...Mark the mountains, see the waters! View the lucid sky!') their tone is more declamatory. These commands are really imperatives, betokening the keen sensibility of sharing in this experience, Thomson's 'breathing around the harmony to others'. Haydn's micro-compositional techniques (as opposed to the macro, mood level of stable diatonicism and euphonious thirds and sixths) ensure that the listener, deprived of first-hand experience, can share in it nonetheless. At the mention of each detail of the landscape, of flora or of fauna, there is a change of texture and an orchestral interjection (Table 2).

Some of these details are easier to convey than others, and Haydn's success at musical imitation is more convincing in some cases than others (can we *really* see the valleys and the streamlet more vividly in bars 75 and 77?). But the real importance of Haydn's 'painting' here is that the detail that is savoured by the characters is also savoured by his music. A compose-by-numbers *Pastorale* may well have fitted the bill but Haydn, as if saying 'we are setting this to music, so let us set it *all* to music', adopts

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<sup>60</sup> Lines 1379-88 from 'Summer'. For a fuller discussion of Thomson on country walking, see Inglefield, 'Thomson and Shaftesbury', 89-90.

Table 2

| <b>Description</b>  | <b>Location in score<br/>(bar nos.)</b> | <b>Musical illustration</b>   |
|---------------------|---|---|
| Valleys             | 71-73                                   | E maj, demisemiquaver turns and arpeggios                               |
| Meadows             | 75                                      | E maj, Two demisemiquaver arpeggios                                     |
| Streamlet           | 77                                      | G maj, G/F# oscillations  |
| Waters              | 102-103                                 | D min – B7: semiquaver broken chords with B/A# oscillation in bass      |
| Lucid Sky           | 104-105                                 | Semiquaver broken chords,<br>E min- B maj                               |
| Playful<br>lambkins | 110-111                                 | B minor: demisemiquaver legato broken triads<br>(rising and falling)    |
| Fish in sport       | 114-116                                 | B min: broken staccato triads and legato<br>demisemiquaver oscillations |
| Bees                | 118-120                                 | B min, low strings demisemiquaver mordants<br>with broken triads        |
| Tuneful birds       | 121-123                                 | D maj, triplet triads against demisemiquaver<br>triads                  |

the role of the landscape painter and makes the scene visually animated for the listener.

In 'Summer' we encounter a similarly contemplative attitude to the landscape but one where the human behaviour is sedentary. Jane's recitative, 'Lo! now aslant the dew-bright earth' (No. 6b, [Recitativo]) tells of the shepherd admiring the scene around him as it gradually gains clarity with the emerging sun (example 6.1). In the previous aria we were told of his stopping work to look east in anticipation of the sunrise. Now he pauses again and gazes over the scene, 'Resplendent glowing, spread[ing] ethereal gold'. This view, probably attained by

*The picturesque oratorio*

66 Hanne

Die Mor-gen - rö - te bricht her- vor;  
*With ro - sy steps young daypours in,*  
*L'au-ro - re é - ta-le ses ru - bis*

wie Rauch ver - flie - get  
*to va - pours melt*  
*en dis - si - pant*

70

das leich-te Ge - wölk;  
*the les - sen-ing clouds;*  
*les nua-ges lé - gers;*

der Him-mel pran - get  
*in a - zur gar - ment*  
*le ciel est teint*

75

in hel - lem A - zur,  
*the hea - vens are clad,*  
*d'un a - zur é - cla - tant,*

der Ber - ge Gip-fel in feu - ri - gem Gold.  
*the moun - tain tipt with ae - the-real gold.*  
*et 'l'or re - luit sur la ci - mé des monts.*

Example 6.1 J.Haydn, *Die Jahreszeiten - The Seasons* (No. 6b - Recitativo).

Vocal score by August Eberhard Müller/Andreas Köhs

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gaining height, is akin to the ‘prospect views’ common in Thomson’s poem (see figure 6.1).<sup>61</sup> Here height assures the viewer a panorama of breadth and distance, and a composition of varied and pleasingly blended features. As in ‘Spring, her lovely charms unfolding’, Haydn’s orchestra intersperses the speaker’s reports with spasms of sound that are as much the orchestral language of agreement, encouragement and affirmation as imitative portrayal.

In the recitative ‘O welcome now’ (No. 9a), a setting of the scene of an easeful summer afternoon, the orchestra is given a more developed role, imitating the sound of the ‘purling brook’, the ‘sportive insects’ and the ‘shepherd’s tuneful lay’. Once again Haydn’s colourful imitative impulse turns ‘coloured sound’ into visual colour for the listener; the blending of verse and music paint a visual picture as much as a soundscape. These musical details are, and always have been, the talking points on which commentators wish to focus. But what is invariably overlooked, in this number, and other numbers with similarly pictorial treatment, are the picturesque aesthetics that are framed in this recitative. In this case, it is the aesthetics of the favoured situation that lends peace of mind and restful gratification. Haydn first establishes a mood of serenity through the establishment of florid, legato melodic lines and slow-moving diatonic harmony. Then, through his chosen phrase structure and the use of antiphony, Haydn is able to delineate each different detail of information. As a result we are able to contemplate each at a leisurely pace and envisage each one afresh. Thus the listener can more readily picture the groves, bowers, pines and oaks that both proffer shade and constitute the verdant nature of the scene. *This* is the chosen ‘spot’, the location that pleases in its composition of artfully arranged greenery (example 6.2).

The scene is not complete, however, without the components that stimulate the sense of hearing and smell. Once the scene is ‘set’, Haydn’s music changes tack to convey these components: the brook (‘its liquid silver rolls’), the insects (their ‘soothing hum’), the fragrant herbs (‘their balmy scent’) and the shepherd’s tune

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<sup>61</sup> See Barrell, *The Idea of Landscape*, 24. Barrell suggests that Thomson enjoyed gaining height to view a scene as it gave him the sensation that he could command a mastery of the description and that this mastery was a vestige of his idea that man should try and ‘master’ nature. See also Book I of *The Task* by George Cowper: ‘Now roves the eye; / And posted on this speculative height, / Exults in its command’, quoted in Barrell, 25.



Figure 6.1 Thomas Gainsborough, *Mountain Landscape with Shepherd* (1783)

('born on the wind', on 'zephyr's wing').<sup>62</sup> To be sure, these sounds are coloured in by Haydn but it is the destabilizing of tonality, the broadening of dynamic range and the broadening of orchestral palette – as much as the change from single to multifarious affect - that at this point shift our attention from the scene's landscaped frame to the foreground of sounds and fragrances. The listener is able not only to sense these 'other' sensations but also to visualize their sources. As so often in this oratorio, the imperative for recitative to report and impart information at the pace of conversation - as opposed to the suspended, reflective approach of aria – enables visual evidence to be conveyed at almost cinematic pace.

When Haydn brings about this shift in emphasis (example 6.3) the contrast between the singer's music and the orchestra's becomes more apparent. As the orchestra catalogue the varied sensory experiences encountered by the observer, a

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<sup>62</sup> Swieten, rather than using the word 'insects', opts for a sort of euphemism here (die bunte Sonnen-brut – the colourful offspring of summer), much less effective than the Novello version as the listener has to interpret Swieten's confection.

**Poco adagio**

Hanne

*mezza voce*

5

9

Will - kom - men jetzt,  
*O* wel - come now,  
Je te sa - lue,

o dunk - ler Hain,  
ye sha - dy groves,  
o som - bre bois,

14

wo der be - jahr - ten  
*where* loft - y roofs of  
ou du vieux chê - ne

19

18

Ei - che Dach den küh - len-den Schirm ge währt,  
a - ged oak re - fri - ge-rant shel - ter yield,  
les ra-meaux pré - sen - tent un frais a - bri,  
und and et

22

wo der schlan-ken Ås - pe Laub  
tremb - ling leaves of a - shes tall  
en ses feuil - les ba - lan - cé

pp

Example 6.2 *The Seasons* (No. 9a), bars 1-25

sense of movement and activity is conveyed, activity which is feverish in the insects, relentless in the case of the river. But as the orchestra move through a palette of various representations, the speaker's static, fixed attitude is marked by the consistency and unchanging affect of Jane's utterances. Wedded to the spot which provides peace, contentment and a fine view, the speaker, through the conduit of Jane's music, provides a commentary on the scene's constituents. Here, as in the chorus, 'Spring, her lovely charms unfolding' (5b) and the hunt aria, 'Behold, along the dewy grass' (No. 14b), the experience (heard in sound by the audience) precedes the recognition and the verbal reflection. This way Haydn avoids the sense that the natural world can answer Jane's observer back.

*The picturesque oratorio*

26

mit lei - sem Ge - lis - pel rauscht.  
in whis - per -ing mur - mur sound!  
le sou - ple bou - leau fré - mit.

30

Am  
Thro'  
Un

33

wei - chen Moo-se rie - selt da  
daw - ny moss a ril - let clear  
claire ruis-seau mur - mur i - ci

in hel - ler Flut der  
his wa - vy sil - ver  
rou lant ses flots pres

37

Bach,  
rolls,  
sés,

pp

*The picturesque oratorio*

39

und frö - lich sum-mend irrt und  
and hum - ming swings and wheels a -  
et là bour - don - neen ses é -

42

wirrt  
bout  
bats

die bun - te Son - nen - brut.  
the pain - ted - sum - mer - breed.  
le peu - ple d'un ra - yon.

45

Der Kräu - ter rei - nen Bal - sam - duft  
The bal - my scent of fra - grant herbs  
L'ha - lei - ne du Zé - phir ré - pand

50

ver - brei - tet Ze - phys Hauch,  
on Ze - phirs wing is spread,  
des plan - tes le par - fum,

Example 6.3 No. 9a, bars 26-end

*The force of nature*

Eighteenth-century landscape art marvelled at the beauty of the countryside, the way its variety both constantly excited the mind through the medium of the eye and the manner in which supposedly inanimate objects participated in artful 'play' to create compositions of aesthetic pleasure. This was aesthetic appreciation of a natural world, conceived whole and completed, in a biblical sense, in six days. But the picturesque artist found inspiration not only in an unchanging landscape that rewarded each time it was revisited but one in which nature was seen to have a 'force', a power that could be observed in the cascading of waterfalls, the tumbling of mountain rocks, the changing of tides, or the migration and territorial singing of birds. This force was seen as being capable of causing *change*, to affect the appearance of the environment. Painted scenes or observational poetry that took these ideas as their subject often highlighted extremes, appealing to the visceral thrill that was categorized as sublime

pleasure/terror (see figure 6.2). This sense of astonishment at nature's power can be observed in this passage from Thomson's 'Summer':

'Tis listening fear and dumb amazement all.  
When to the startled eye the sudden glance  
Appears far south, eruptive through the cloud,  
And, following slower, in explosion vast  
The thunder raises his tremendous voice.  
At first, heard solemn o'er the verge of heaven,  
The tempest growls; but as it nearer comes,  
And rolls its awful burden on the wind,  
The lightnings flash a larger curve, and more,  
The noise astounds, till overhead a sheet  
Of livid flame discloses wide, then shuts  
And opens wider, shuts and opens still  
Expansive, wrapping ether in a blaze.<sup>63</sup>

Furthermore, the sense that nature harnesses motion and progression is evinced most compellingly in Thomson's poem where the speaker emphasizes that nature is both cyclical and possesses a trajectory, a rising and falling from spring to winter. Haydn and Swieten's *The Seasons* most dramatic moments are arguably those that present this force of nature. The sections of the oratorio that deal with the intense heat of summer, sunrise, the storm, the fogs and desolate impotence of freezing winter are the ones where nature's power is most clearly felt. And it is small wonder that Haydn's sunrise, his storm and his fogs have attracted so much comment, and, it must be said, no little praise.

The trio and chorus, 'Behold on high he mounts' in 'Summer' (No. 7), forms a description of both the progress of the sun as it fills the sky, but also the awe at the visual majesty of it. The Largo tempo, the sublime gestures and portentous tone also attempt to symbolize and aggrandize this event as a significant, life-giving, life-affirming one. That Haydn is forced to raise the sun in an unrealistic forty or so seconds is not really problematic. As in drama, and all dramatic vocal music we leave

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<sup>63</sup> Lines 1128-40 from 'Summer'.



Figure 6.2 Phillippe de Loutherbourg, *Avalanche in the Alps* (1803)

our sense of disbelief 'at the door'<sup>64</sup>. The temporal unreality is overcome by the brilliance of the conceit. It is the *idea* of the sunrise, and its visual theatre that Haydn dramatizes rather than its real unfolding in time.

Similarly, the Storm chorus in 'Summer' (No. 10b) problematizes the idea of storm as conflict through the extroversive musical metaphors of sudden dynamic changes, *sforzandi*, unstable tonality (with an emphasis on the minor mode) and rapid alternations of affect (examples 6.4-6). The sound of the storm, the hammering rain (staccato string triplets) and the thunder (timpani and brass outbursts) is all too present. Its visual intensity once again derives from the uncanny accuracy of the sonic imitation - the sight is filled in by the listener - but lightening can be *seen* in woodwind flourishes, particularly the opening broken diminished seventh triplets (see bar 1, example 6.4).

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<sup>64</sup> This recalls Charles Batteaux's idea that the musician or dancer, if feeling what they are expressing in their performance, has done so only by accident. Confusing art and life, for Batteaux, is not tasteful. Charles Batteaux, 'Les Beaux-arts reduits à un même principe', in *Music Aesthetics: A Historical Reader*, vol. 1, ed. Lippman, 264.

**Allegro assai**

Hanne

Lukas

Simon

Soprano

Alto

Tenore

Basso

**Allegro assai**

Ach!  
Oh!  
Ah!

das  
the  
l'o -

**f**

**ff**

**ff**

Example 6.4 *The Seasons* (No. 10b), bars 1-3

*The picturesque oratorio*

13

wie  
how  
quels

der Don - ner\_\_\_\_ rollt!  
the thun - der\_\_\_\_ rolls!  
é - clats! quel\_\_\_\_ bruit!

O,  
O  
Les

wie  
how  
quels

der Don - ner\_\_\_\_ rollt!  
the thun - der\_\_\_\_ rolls!  
é - clats! quel\_\_\_\_ bruit!

O,  
O  
Les

wie  
how  
quels

der Don - ner\_\_\_\_ rollt!  
the thun - der\_\_\_\_ rolls!  
é - clats! quel\_\_\_\_ bruit!

O,  
O  
Les

wie  
how  
quels

der Don - ner\_\_\_\_ rollt!  
the thun - der\_\_\_\_ rolls!  
é - clats! quel\_\_\_\_ bruit!

O,  
O  
Les

*fz*      *fz*      *p*      *fz*      *p*

Example 6.5   No. 10b, bars 13-5

26

flich'n  
let  
ciel,

wir hin,  
us fly!  
où fuir,

wo - hin!  
us fly!  
où fuir!

Luft;  
airs;  
se

den za - cki - gen Kei - len ber - stet die  
and from the burst - ing clouds - a  
dé - chi - re, et pré - ci - pi - tant ses

Luft;  
airs;  
se

den za - cki - gen Kei - len ber - stet die  
and from the burst - ing clouds - a  
dé - chi - re, et pré - ci - pi - tant ses

den za - cki - gen Kei - len ber - stet die  
and from the burst - ing clouds - a  
dé - chi - re, et pré - ci - pi - tant ses

*fz*      *fz*      *fz*      *fz*

Example 6.6   No. 10b, bars 26-9

It is the preceding recitative that deals more directly with visual information as many recitatives in this oratorio tend to do (example 6.7). ‘Behold! slow settling o’er the lurid grove’ tells of ‘awful gloom’ descending, the ‘low rolling clouds’ and the first sightings of ‘vivid’ lightning. Haydn’s skill here is in separating, as before, discrete ideas into phrases, shifting chords at the mention of key visual components of the scene (‘fog’, ‘sky’, ‘storm’, ‘plains’) and building a succession of unsettling, curiously dysfunctional chords sequences. The efficacy of this picture in the recitative, the successful setting of the visual elements and parameters, helps to render the more conceptual chorus that follows a visual experience too.

It is in this recitative that the writers of the Novello English libretto call on some of the images from Thomson’s poem removed by Swieten. Shrewdly reinstating the picture of the cattle, who stand ‘with rueful gaze’, the English writers restore to the oratorio one of Gilpin’s standards about the picturesque contribution of animals, particularly cows in his *Observations on the Mountains and Lakes of Cumberland and Westmoreland* (see figure 6.3, Gainsborough’s *Watering Place* where cattle drink at a screened opening in a wood).<sup>65</sup> The English translation produced for the notes to the Decca recording of 1977 resists going this far, but at least refers obliquely to Thomson’s cattle in the line, ‘Nor man, nor beast, nor leaf that stirs’.<sup>66</sup> In the Novello text, birds (‘the aerial tribe descend’) cross the sky, unsettled by the sudden change in conditions. A brilliant image, that of the forest shaking as the thunder sounds and the rain starts to fall in heavy drops, completes the picture. It is a pity that Haydn was deprived access to the references to animals in his libretto, but he, nonetheless, ‘painted in’ the initial heavy raindrops of the storm (absent from Swieten’s text) with demisemiquaver oscillations and quaver block chords at Bar 20. It is either a happy accident, or, perhaps, insight on the part of the English writers, that Haydn’s raindrops are hinted at in this translation.

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<sup>65</sup> Cited in Watkin, *The English Vision*, vii. Other references to cattle in the oratorio are discussed in the next section.

<sup>66</sup> Italics mine. This translation appears in *The Creation and the Seasons: The Complete Authentic Sources for the Word-Books*, foreword by H. C. Robbins Landon (Cardiff: University of Cardiff Press, 1985), 125-35.

*The picturesque oratorio*

Hanne

Lukas

Simon

O seht! Es stei - get in der schwü - len Luft  
Be - hold! on yon - der edge of moun - tains high  
Voy - ez vers le cou - chant un va - gue a - mas  
am ho - hen Sau - me des Ge - birgs,  
in sul - try, stag - nant air as - cends  
d'ex - ha - lai - sons flot - ter en lair,

5 Simon

von Dampf un Dunst  
with va - pours charg'd  
et sur les monts  
ein fah - ler Ne - bel auf.  
a fal low dus - ky fog.  
fu - meuxse ré - u - nir!  
Em - por ge - drängt  
Con - dens'd at first  
Dé - jà le ciel  
dehnt er sich aus, und  
now wide it grows, in -  
se rem - bru - nit, et

9 Lukas

Hört, wie vom  
O heark! the  
En - ten - dez -

hül - let bald den Himmels - raum  
volv - ing soon th'ex - pand - ed sky  
sur les vas - tes champs d'a - zur  
in schwar - zes Dun - kel ein.  
in dark - ness all a - round.  
un voi - le noir s'é - tend.

13

Tal' ein dumpf Ge - brüll  
vales al - rea - dy tell  
vous gron - der au loin  
den wil - den Sturm  
th'im - pend - ing hea - vy storm!  
l'o - range en ces  
ver - künd'! val - lons?  
Seht, wie von Un - heil schwer die  
See how yon bale - ful cloud in  
Voy - ez, l'é - pais - se nue,  
Voy - ez, l'é - pais - se nue,

*The picturesque oratorio*

17 **Adagio**

finst' - re Wol - ke lang - sam zieht, und dro - hend auf die Eb' - ne sinkt.  
 aw - ful mo - tion slow draws near; and threat' ning sinks - up - on the plains!  
 nir en me - na - çant vers nous et sur la plai - ne s'a - bais - ser!

21 **Poco Adagio**

Hanne

In ban - ger Ahn - dung stockt das  
 'Tis list' - ning ter - ror all, a  
 Un cal - me plein d'hor - reur at -

26 **p**

Le - ben der Na - tur. Kein Tier, kein  
 bod - ing si - lence reigns: no sound is  
 tris - te la na - ture, La crain - te y

30

Blatt be - we - get sich, und To - des - stil - le herrscht um - her.  
 heard, no leaf is stirr'd and na - ture seems a world of death.  
 rè - gne a - vec l'ef-froi dans le si - len - cc dc la mort.s

Example 6.7 *The Seasons* (No. 10a)



Figure 6.3 Thomas Gainsborough, *The Watering Place* (c.1777)

The instrumental introduction to 'Winter' is, like the opening to 'Spring', a tone picture with a title, in this case, 'Expressing the thick fogs at the approach of Winter' (example 6.8). Whereas in 'Spring' the music represented abstract ideas of struggle and renewal, this number attempts to paint in sound a visual manifestation of the 'declining year' (a notion introduced in the following recitative). Swieten and Haydn overlooked the fact that Thomson had discussed fogs in 'Autumn' (anticipating Keats's 'season of mists and mellow fruitfulness') but this vision nonetheless provides a convincing image of the withdrawal of nature at this time of year, as if a veil is drawn over the landscape. This vision is one of *obscured* vision, conveyed *metaphorically* by Haydn's meandering and unpredictable melodic lines and asymmetric phrase lengths. The sight of the fog, creeping stealthily across the expanse of the landscape and into its nooks and crannies, is perhaps represented by the slow-moving, legato chromaticisms in the melody and the chain of inverted triads at bars 24-26. More definite painting of the fog, however, comes in the following recitative: at Simon's mention of the 'thick mists pour[ing] down the mountain side', Haydn introduces a slithering group of descending chromatic appoggiaturas. A picture of 'exhausted' and trembling 'nature' is sounded with real immediacy in this often subdued and restless recitative. It is not a pleasing picture that is painted, and its symbolism portends gloom ahead, but it still

**Adagio ma non troppo**

The musical score consists of five staves of piano music. The first staff (treble clef) starts with a dynamic *p*. The second staff (bass clef) starts with a dynamic *p*. The third staff (treble clef) starts with a dynamic *f*. The fourth staff (bass clef) starts with a dynamic *fz*. The fifth staff (treble clef) starts with a dynamic *p*. Measure numbers 13, 16, 19, and 23 are indicated on the left side of the score. The music features various dynamics, including *p*, *f*, and *fz*, and includes measures with sixteenth-note patterns and sustained notes.



Example 6.8 *The Seasons* (No. 17), bars 1-31

excites thrilled awe, a sublime immediacy, very much a participant in the picturesque's communication.

*Animate figures in the landscape*

Landon's assertion that the 'subtle range of encounter between inanimate nature and human life' in Haydn's *The Seasons* has been 'largely overlooked' betrays the fact that much of the reception of the work has centred on the merits and demerits of Haydn's mimetic strain of writing.<sup>67</sup> Mention of the human elements in the oratorio have tended to focus on the fact that it is the comments of earthy peasant characters that mark the story in contrast to the angelic utterances of *The Creation's* speakers.<sup>68</sup>

As we have seen it is only in the springtime walk that Simon, and his fellow peasants, do anything other than report, comment and give thanks. Human action is otherwise reserved for the husbandman (farmer) in 'Spring', the shepherd in 'Summer', the huntsmen and the villagers at harvest time in 'Autumn' and the 'traveller' in 'Winter'. Each of these characters is a recognizable pastoral archetype but

<sup>67</sup> *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 114.

<sup>68</sup> In fact, Albert Christoph Dies's biography of Haydn records a conversation between Haydn and the Emperor Franz in which Haydn responds to the question of which of his two late oratorios he preferred by replying that he favoured *The Creation*; whereas angels speak in the latter 'only Simon speaks' in *The Seasons*. This and other remarks by Haydn on this topic are covered in *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 183.

in such a visually conceived and pictorial work as this, they constitute essential picturesque figures that enhance the aesthetic appeal of the scenes portrayed.<sup>69</sup>

### THE PLOUGHMAN

The farmer who sows the crop and ploughs the harrow in Spring's 'With joy the impatient husbandman' (No. 3b) is one such figure. Haydn's music, with the almost ever-present currency of semiquavers, may render a sense of the relentlessness of the task and the regular reprising of lines from Swieten's text convey its repetitiveness. But this work is not drudgery. This man of the soil is contented in his task; we hear him whistling a spirited tune (the principal melody from the 'Surprise' symphony's slow movement) and thus he is the *picture* of a man happy, joyful even, in the landscape in which he finds himself.<sup>70</sup> In this context, it is the land and the landscape that are the principal characters. The farmer's work is secondary but its interaction with the landscape enlivens the scene, provokes the eye, and promotes contemplation of the bounty the landscape provides to the assiduous human worker.

This is very much one of Thomson's key messages: the natural landscape provides pleasure in times of reflection and leisure but it gives another kind of pleasure, one whereby it rewards honest toil. This point was not lost on Swieten but he preferred to 'labour' the point in a stand-alone chorus at the beginning of 'Autumn', one of his most controversial artistic decisions.<sup>71</sup> The point is made readily enough in this aria. However in the oratorio the farmer is a character untouched by the political

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<sup>69</sup> In addition to Gilpin's thoughts on the subject, cited in the previous chapter, see also Price, *A Dialogue on the Distinct Characters of the Picturesque and the Beautiful*, 104, for a discussion of the picturesque quality in a scene peopled by gypsies. Also Gelbart for discussion of contemporaneous ideas about Scottish characters as rough, uncouth 'others'. *The Invention of "Folk Music" and "Art Music"*, 44.

<sup>70</sup> The ploughman at his work was a regular subject of Gainsborough's paintings. Michael Rosenthal speculates that this was a sentimental response, in sympathy with the disturbance wrought on many of their lives after enclosure. See Michael Rosenthal, 'The Rough and the Smooth: Rural Subjects in Later Eighteenth-Century Art' in *Prospects for the Nation: Recent Essays in British Landscape, 1750-1880*, eds. Michael Rosenthal, Christiana Payne and Scott Wilcox (New Haven; London, Yale University Press, 1997), 37.

<sup>71</sup> This had also troubled Haydn. His remark that he had always striven to be industrious but had never thought of portraying industry in music, is recorded by the biographer, Georg August Griesinger. See G. A. Griesinger, *Joseph Haydn: Eighteenth-Century Gentleman and Genius*, a translation with introduction and notes by Vernon Gotwals (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1963), 40.

overtones in Thomson's poem, whose discourse on the relationship between farming and the nation's wealth prevents the reader from seeing him as a noble innocent untouched by the *Realpolitik* of the day.<sup>72</sup> In the picture painted in this aria he graces the scene with the neutrality and integrated-ness of one of Claude's or Gainsborough's benign agrarians.

## THE HUNT

Another form of husbandry, but one that is also a form of leisure, is hunting. The hunt is a pastoral trope that reaches its musical zenith in the Viennese music of Haydn, Mozart and early Beethoven. Hunt music was clearly a medium that Haydn relished working with. Landon makes the point that this may have something to do with the enthusiasm with which hunting was practised by his countrymen, particularly the type who might be patrons of Haydn's music. In other words, musical references to the hunt were extra-musical ones that they recognized and enjoyed.<sup>73</sup> Haydn and Swieten's use of the hunt topic is another example in the work, of the countryside both as the provider of bounty and sustenance but also of pleasure, leisure and, in this case, sport. It is in this instance that the writers of the oratorio most clearly diverge from the poem. Thomson's description of the hunt is colourful and striking but it is weighed down by horror and revulsion. He launches into a diatribe against the barbaric hunters and shows touching sympathy to the ensnared animals:

...with the thoughtless insolence of power  
Inflamed beyond the most infuriate wrath  
Of the worst monster that e'er roamed the waste,  
For sport alone pursues the cruel chase  
Amid the beamings of the gentle days.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>72</sup> For a discussion on the political overtones of Thomson's dissertation on farming, see Cohen, *The Unfolding of 'The Seasons'*, 14.

<sup>73</sup> Landon's brilliant exposé of the various traditional Austro-German hunt calls adapted by Haydn in *The Seasons* can be found in *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 168-170. See also Daniel Heartz, 'The Hunting Chorus in Haydn's *Jahreszeiten* and the "Airs de Chasse"', *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 9/4 (1976), 523-39.

<sup>74</sup> Lines 391-5 from 'Winter'.

Thomson's picture of the hunt is a vehicle for a polemic against the whole nasty business and his message is that these are the actions of people who are not lovers of the countryside. Thomson's picture of the hunt, although one that foregrounds emotion, is not a picturesque one; this vision is touched by tragedy and anger. Haydn and Swieten's hunt, conversely, has the positive connotations of being, as Isaak Walton argued, a kind of 'fieldwork' for the enthusiastic nature lover.<sup>75</sup> The oratorio's hunt, then, is a picturesque one both as behaviour (learning about nature 'in the field') and as spectacle (colourful and animated animal actions that interface with the landscape).<sup>76</sup>

The attention that Haydn and Swieten lavish on the hunt in *The Seasons*, demonstrates, unlike Thomson, an affectionate response, one that revels in the display, tension and drama. Both Simon's aria, 'Behold, along the dewy grass' (No. 14b) and the chorus, 'Hark! the mountains resound' (No. 15b) are really running commentaries that contain a sequence of sharp, almost cinematic visual images enhanced by the music; the hound following the scent and the 'eager' horses and dogs pursuing the stag are typical animate interactions with the landscape found in picturesque paintings.<sup>77</sup> As is customary in this work, though, it is a recitative, 'Ere the orient sun' (No. 15a), that brings any action to a standstill and compiles a picturesque composition of Claudian depth, with the figures in the landscape ('typical' huntsmen and hounds) placed within a mountain landscape over which the 'orient sun...peers'.<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> Walton's *The Compleat Angler*, a kind of compendium for the English 'man of the soil', was completed in 1676 and remained popular throughout the eighteenth century. See Landry, *The Invention of the Countryside*, 23.

<sup>76</sup> Donna Landry's excellent examination of English attitudes to the countryside in the long eighteenth-century gives an extremely thorough survey and analysis of the evolution and decline of the hunt through that period. In some senses, her work constitutes something of a postmodern *apologia* for the hunt in the wake of the relatively recent hunting ban in England.

<sup>77</sup> See Tolley, *Painting the Cannon's Roar*, for a fuller discussion on the whole hunt sequence, 304.

<sup>78</sup> Daniel Heartz recognizes parallels between this sequence in the oratorio and Austro-German genre paintings, such as those by Johann Elias Ridinger, who painted a series of 'hunt' pictures. See Mozart, *Haydn and early Beethoven*, 640-2.

## GILPINIAN CATTLE

The vivid movement of the animals across the landscape, the stag fleeing and the hounds chasing, contrasts sharply with two appearances of the cattle in ‘Summer’: first in docile repose as they are forced to rest in the heat, and later, contented and well-fed as they return to the fold at evening. As we have seen, cattle were considered to possess picturesque potential when placed within beautiful rural scenes, particularly for Gainsborough, who often ‘painted in’ cattle to his landscapes and Gilpin who developed a picturesque theory of cows’ visual qualities. In Lucas’s Cavatina (8c) they are contributors to a desultory scene of flora and fauna wilting in the heat. Flowers droop, fountains are stilled and these beasts of the field lie low. At Lucas’s mention of the cattle, Haydn draws further attention to them with a special texture reserved for their portrayal, the funerally moving bass-line lowered in pitch, hinting at their prone position and passivity.

Our awareness of their reappearance in the Allegretto of ‘Summer’’s Finale (10b), however, is of a different form. This instance provides another example of Haydn prompting visualization through a reference to extra-musical *sound* rather than vision. This small section that bridges the storm chorus with the closing nocturne (nocturne in spirit, if not in tone) continues the libretto’s concentration on evocative sounds in this part of the work. Here, Haydn contrives a quartet of animal noises, the cows leading the way with their ‘mooing’ at bars 195-198 before the quail, the cricket, and the frogs intone. The introduction of the church bell completes a resonant picture, one redolent rather more of Thomas Gray’s *Elegy* than Thomson’s epic. Indeed, at this point of the oratorio, it is hard to resist recalling Gray’s words on setting the picturesque evening scene: ‘the curfew tolls the knell of parting day, / The lowing herd wind slowly o’er the lea’.

## THE TRAVELLER

As I explained in chapter 4, heartfelt panegyrics to the countryside, particularly in the English eighteenth-century tradition, are often freighted with emotional enhancements. These comprise: love for fellow human beings (sometimes with

sentimental reflections on the *loss of love*); the satisfaction of rural retirement; the national pride that a chosen landscape can enfold in the idea of travelling through the landscape; and resting at an especially beguiling spot, or gaining relaxation, perhaps, by finding respite at a pretty and welcoming cottage (known or unknown to the traveller). The archetype of the traveller is a customary character in eighteenth-century picturesque poetry, painting, and especially song where the countryside is either enjoyed *in* travelling or is savoured in repose as a staging post or destination on a tiring journey, as this passage from William Mason's *The English Garden* shows:

...the plodding hind  
That homeward hies, kens not the clearing site  
Of his calm cabbin, which a moment past,  
Stream'd from its roof an azure curl of smoke,  
Beneath the sheltering coppice, and gave sign  
Of warm domestic welcome from his toil.<sup>79</sup>

As Swieten progresses through Thomson's epic he becomes less and less reliant on Thomson's language, themes and sentiments but the poem's theme of the traveller in 'Winter' is well-chosen and takes up an air, a recitative and a chorus. The notion of the traveller lost is important as it raises the triumph and sense of reward when sanctuary is reached. Although the cot as refuge after a long journey - or as respite from inclement weather - is repeatedly referenced in eighteenth-century poetry and song, Thomson prefers to keep it at a distance, emphasizing the dashed hope of the traveller when the cottage turns out to be a mirage:

What black despair, what horror fills his heart!  
When, for the dusky spot, which fancy feigned,  
His tufted cottage rising through the snow,  
He meets the roughness of the middle waste,  
Far from the track and blest abode of man;<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> William Mason, *The English Garden, a Poem in Four Books*, a new edition, corrected. To which are added a commentary and notes by W. Burgh (York: A. Ward, 1783), Book II, lines 400-5.

<sup>80</sup> Lines 289-93 from 'Winter'.

In the aria, 'The trav'ler stands perplex'd', Haydn relies on the same extroversive metaphors for confusion, uncertainty and lack of a clear path forward as he did at the start of 'Winter' (example 6.9). The use of meandering, chromatic phrases to depict the uncertain progress and befuddled mind of the traveller, feature also in his song 'The Wanderer', a setting of an Anne Hunter poem from his second set of *Original Canzonettas*. Both examples deal with a solitary figure, moving through the landscape in a state of limbo. In *The Seasons*, Swieten's words portray a traveller anxious and frustrated, eager for the journey to be terminated, hence Haydn's brisk tempo. In the song, however, the 'Poco adagio' speed and legato articulation (as opposed to the staccato in Lucas's aria) reflect the more brooding and existential tone of Hunter's verse.

'As he draws nigh' (No. 19a), the recitative following Lucas's aria, Lucas, Jane and Simon announce the discovery of a warm and welcoming cottage in clear syllabic phrases before the entrance of the chorus in 'Let the wheel move gaily', a happy picture of a cosy cottage, welcoming cottagers and domestic bliss. Apart from the traveller arriving at the cottage, neither the perplexing and tiring journey, nor the mundane but comforting scene inside the cottage of this section of 'Winter', is typically picturesque to my mind. But for a few moments we encounter both a player (the traveller) and a symbol (the rude cot as rural refuge and retreat) that repeatedly feature in picturesque compositions (see figure 6.4). These occur on canvas, in topographical poetry, in songs and glees that place picturesque value on the landscape, and in discourses and theories that decide on the ingredients and mixtures that produce pleasing compositions for the eye.

*The picturesque oratorio*

Lukas

8

Ge - fes - selt steht der brei - te See,  
By frost ce - ment-ed stands the lake  
Ce vas - te lac est en - chaî - né

ge - hemmt in sei - nem Lau - fe der  
ar - rest - ed is the stream in his  
et dans sons cours le fleuve ar - ré -

3

Strom. Im Stur - ze vom tür - men-den Fel - se hangt  
course, and in his pre - ci - pi - tous fall o'er the cliff  
té De ce roc es - car - pé la cas - cade en tom - bant

ge - stockt und stumm der Was - ser - fall.  
there stopt and dumb the tor - rent hangs.  
a sus - pen - du ses eaux et leur bruit.

6

Im dür - ren Hai - ne tönt kein Laut; die Fel - der deckt,  
No more the leaf - less woods re sound; the fields are hid,  
Rien ne se meut,tout est mu - et. Les champs de nei

die Tä - ler füllt ein' un - ge - heu - re Flo cken - last.  
the val - lies fill'd by heaps im - mense ofdrift - ed snow.  
- ge sont cou -verts, et les val - lons ensont com - blés.

10 **Adagio**

Der Er - de Bild  
The face of earth  
La ter - re en - tière

ist nun ein Grab  
ap - pears a grave,  
est le tom - beau

wo Kraft und Reiz er -  
where na - ture's splen - dour  
de la na - ture en

13

stor-ben liegt,  
bu-ried lies,  
se - ve - lie

wo Lei-chen-far - be trau - rig herrscht  
One dead - ly hue o'er all is spread  
son devil est l'u - ni - for - mi - té,

und wo dem Bli cke  
and ev'-ry where a  
qui ne pré-sente au -

17

weit um - her  
bleak ex - panse,  
cun ob - jet

nur ö - de Wü - ste - nei sich zeigt.  
a daz-zling waste af-flicts the sight.  
qu'af-freux dé - serts de tous cô - tés.

Example 6.9 *The Seasons* (No. 18a)



Figure 6.4 Thomas Gainsborough *The Cottage Door* (c.1778)

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Haydn and Swieten's countryside in *The Seasons* is seldom empty of human action and interaction. Although it is surveyed with reverence and awe it is, nonetheless, never treated as a museum or a church. In farming, sport and travelling, people are seen both to inhabit this landscape, to benefit from it, to revel in it and to explore it. This landscape is not merely surveyed – it is experienced. Even when the human presence is more passive in *The Seasons*, when nature's raw power is observed, and the artful arrangement of beautiful scenes of landscape is appreciated and evaluated, people are urged to *engage* with the countryside. To live a life that allows the natural world to fully stimulate the senses, to enhance one's daily life, is beneficial. Haydn's critics may have blanched at seeing the role of the angels in *The Creation* inhabited by the peasant spokespeople. But Haydn's gloriously elevated iterations of humble praises to the natural world, and his brilliantly enlivening visualizations of scenes from that world, provide us a message as profound and as relevant as any found in *The Creation* – namely, 'from those that know, "get back to nature"'.

## Epilogue

What became of picturesque music in England after 1800? The answers to a connected question, 'what became of the picturesque' ought be of some assistance, since I have argued that the development of the English's 'feeling through the eyes' showed itself in a broad range of cultural arenas, including music. But perhaps we should start with a different question: 'what became of English music after 1800?' Examination of the contemporaneous critical literature and reception of the period 1800-1820 fails to arrive at a definitive answer. There is no unified discourse that assesses the whole of the English output in these twenty years and its progress or otherwise, only a group of disparate voices who either observe dispassionately, emote patriotically or fulminate critically.

If we consider this question historiographically, however, a different picture emerges: English music *declined*, it withered on the vine, it definitively fulfilled the prophecy to come of 'the land without music'. English music from 1750 gets a bad enough press. But when sympathetic chroniclers speak so solemnly of this barren landscape, English music's history really does suggest we should look away when considering the early nineteenth-century. Ann Beedell's book on English music and musicians in the long eighteenth century even has the word 'decline' in the title. John Caldwell describes how the final departure of Haydn in 1795 left English music with a kind of hangover, preventing London concert life from recapturing the vibrancy and excitement of the halcyon days of the 1780s and 1790s, a situation addressed in slow, painful steps by the inauguration of The Philharmonic Society in 1813.<sup>81</sup> Simon McVeigh prefers to cite 1793 as a turning point, a time when the 'economic restraints' caused by Britain's increasingly costly involvement in European wars, affected concert funding.<sup>82</sup> Perceptions of nineteenth-century English music from abroad tend to pay lip service to the 'land without music' slogan, typified by this bleak assessment of Carl Dahlhaus in *Nineteenth-Century Music*: 'English romanticism was represented in music solely by John Field – in other words poorly...' <sup>83</sup>

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<sup>81</sup> *Oxford History*, vol. 2, 124.

<sup>82</sup> *Concert Life*, 68. McVeigh's analysis is endorsed by Deborah Rohr in *The Careers of British Musicians*, 52.

<sup>83</sup> *Nineteenth-Century Music*, 18.

If we turn to the specific English musics of opera, song and glee (genres where the picturesque response shone vividly) we read again of a downturn. Chapter 15 of Roger Fiske's monumental study of English opera of the long eighteenth century is entitled, 'Decline: 1788-1800'. For Fiske the decline was not only 'in the water' in the last few years of the eighteenth century, it came early. Brian Robins talks of glee and catch clubs doing rather well in the early years of the nineteenth century but a decline was not far away; in fact Robins brings the curtain down on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May 1816 on the death of the elder Samuel Webbe.<sup>84</sup> Concerts in the pleasure gardens (and therefore the supply of new music composed for them) also appeared to suffer a falling off with the closure of Ranelagh Gardens in 1804 (Marylebone had closed even earlier) although Vauxhall continued to hold events until the 1850s. There have been few challenges to this discourse, despite the now burgeoning scholarly interest in English music before the twentieth-century renaissance. Ian Taylor's recent book, *Music in London and the Myth of Decline: From Haydn to the Philharmonic* confirms the existence of this historiographical furrow. For Taylor, the decline is a myth established enough to merit a book that challenges it. Taylor challenges the myth-making promulgated in early nineteenth-century journals, uncovering, in the process, evidence of a lively concert scene for instrumental music in the years between 1795 and 1813. As this study has been concerned with vocal music, Taylor's story - which has little to say about the opera and the glee - cannot help in answering my first question.

I am inclined to accept that English opera, song and glee fell away in the latter part of the long eighteenth century. I am not about to gainsay scholars such as Roger Fiske and Brian Robins whose research has been underpinned by painstaking toil at the coalface, scouring the repertory and its materials tirelessly. And my research for this thesis has led me to give their theory credence. Although the notion of an English musical decline in these genres fails to fit into a perfect historically-periodized box - its fading occurring in messy, unsynchronized lurches - it really does seem that a heyday of particularly rich array of songs and theatrical entertainments lasts roughly from 1760 until about 1800. This period, for many scholars, is one when the picturesque reached its maturity in England. The argument that I have pursued in this thesis shows that

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<sup>84</sup> *Catch and Glee Culture*, 150.

there is no coincidence here. Picturesque thought, theory, art and behaviour nourished English music and manifested itself in English music.

And what of the answer to my second question, 'what became of the picturesque'? Since the answer is that there is a perception of decline from around 1800, it logically assumes a connection with English vocal music's decline too. What does it mean to say the picturesque declined? The abstract nature of that statement requires some unpacking. Historians of English romanticism, particularly of romantic poetry, are inclined to view the picturesque movement as a rather irrelevant fad, dwarfed by the psychological and self-expressive complexities of Wordsworth's landscape poetry. This view damns the picturesque as rather mechanical and underdeveloped; Wordsworth was critical of the 'cold rules' of painting<sup>85</sup> (classified, incidentally, by some as one of the 'mechanical' arts) and this opinion is supported by his realization that his old debt to the picturesque had been thrown off, expressed here in Book XI of *The Prelude*:

Was never much my habit giving way  
To a comparison of scene with scene,  
Bent overmuch on superficial things,  
Pampering myself with meagre novelties  
Of colour and proportion...<sup>86</sup>

In his preface to the 1800 edition of the *Lyrical Ballads* he explained how fine scenes from nature now affected his muse:

I have said that poetry is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings: it takes its origin from emotion recollected in tranquillity: the emotion is contemplated till, by a species of reaction the tranquillity gradually disappears, and on emotion, similar to

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<sup>85</sup> Footnote to *Descriptive Sketches*, edited by Eric Birdsall, with the assistance of Paul M. Zall (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1984), 72.

<sup>86</sup> Lines 156-61, quoted in Brennan, *Wordsworth, Turner and Romantic Landscape*, 35. Perhaps it is fair to say that Uvedale Price's close friendship with Wordsworth shows that the elder man moved with the aesthetic times.

that which was before the subject of contemplation is gradually produced, and does itself actually exist in the mind.<sup>87</sup>

Wordsworth's contemporary, William Hazlitt, was ultimately damning of the picturesque in an essay on 'natural', 'ideal' and 'picturesque' art, opining that the 'picturesque can be considered as something of an excrescence on the face of nature. It runs imperceptibly into the fantastical and grotesque'.<sup>88</sup> And both Wordsworth's and Hazlitt's views are supported by the evidence of an emerging satirical voice from about 1800, found in the lampooning of Gilpin in *Dr. Syntax*, of Price and Knight in *Headlong Hall*, and in the fun had at the expense of Catherine Morland in Jane Austen's *Northanger Abbey* and Veronica in *The Lakers*.

But a more charitable analysis that has taken shape in the last hundred years or so, has seen the picturesque as an interregnum between the Neo-Classical and the Romantic, a stepping-stone or rehearsal for the intertwining of landscape and the self's inner world that Wordsworth describes above. Christopher Hussey puts this view particularly well:

The picturesque phase through which each art passed [...] was in each case a prelude to romanticism. It occurred at the point when an art shifted its appeal from the reason to the imagination. An art that addresses the reason, even though it does so through the eye, does not stress the visual qualities. The reason wants to *know*, not to experience sensations...Thus the picturesque interregnum between classic and romantic art was necessary in order to enable the imagination to form the habit of feeling through the eyes. Pictures were in each case taken as the guide for how to see, because painting is the art of seeing, and in landscape painting the visual qualities of nature are accentuated. As soon as the imagination had absorbed what it had to teach it, it could feel for itself...<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>87</sup> In *Wordsworth and Coleridge: Lyrical Ballads*, edited with introductory notes and appendices by R. C. Brett and A. R. Jones with a new introduction by Nicholas Roe (London; New York: Routledge, 2005), 307.

<sup>88</sup> William Hazlitt, 'On the Picturesque and Ideal' in *Table Talk; or, Original Essays on Men and Manners*, vol. 2 (London: Henry Colburn, 1824), 371.

<sup>89</sup> *The Picturesque*, 4.

And what of the composer of the picturesque oratorio, *The Seasons*? Does this work, and attitudes to Haydn's approach in it, fall out of favour in time with the loss of enthusiasm for the picturesque? English attitudes to *The Seasons* (and *The Creation*) did turn against the two late oratorios (and Haydn's music in general) after an initial burst of performances. As Howard Irving has shown, some nineteenth-century English critics saw Haydn's music as too playful, too effeminate. Indeed Irving, citing the derogatory comments of Crotch, partly attributes the fall in favour to the fact that, 'the popular fashion for the picturesque had run its course by perhaps 1840, and any effects it might have had on Haydn's reception would have been felt before mid-century'.<sup>90</sup>

The immediate reception for *The Seasons* in Germany, whilst mixed, saw several critics enthusing both over the work's subject and Haydn's gift for tone-painting nature scenes, none more fulsomely than Zelter who maintained that it was an improvement on *The Creation* and would assuredly stand the test of time.<sup>91</sup> The reviewer of the first performance in 1801, writing in the AMZ, felt that Haydn's music reached out to all types of listeners, schooled in music or not, through his sympathetic portrayal of a subject that reaches people from all walks of life:

The effect of the work on a large, mixed audience *must* be very lively, if only because of the inexhaustible richness and exceptional variety in the content and its treatment, which in itself reaches the extremes, and through which *every* listener, however educated (in music) he may or may not be, receives something dear to him.<sup>92</sup>

The positive reaction at home to the work's subject matter perhaps betrays the still developing awareness to the possibilities of nature representations in art, and to the spread of English ideas on gardening and landscaping in particular. Haydn, on returning to Esterházy in 1795, found that Prince Paul had commissioned an extension of the palace gardens with much importation of foreign shrubs and plants, stimulated by the English garden style and prompted by Count Carl von Zinzendorf's thorough

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<sup>90</sup> See Howard Irving, 'Haydn and the Consequences of Presumed Effeminacy' in *Masculinity and Western Musical Practice*, eds. Ian Biddle and Kirsten Gibson (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), 111-2.

<sup>91</sup> See Landon's translation, *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5 (passim).

<sup>92</sup> Trans. in Landon, *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 184.

research on the subject.<sup>93</sup> References to English gardening styles and natural landscapes were increasingly made. The critic A. G. Spazier made one such reference in his 1801 of *The Seasons* in the *Zeitung für die Elegant Welt*. And as if to recognize the great debt it owed to the English picturesque, Spazier said this:

One need not produce that unpleasant critical sense that, like a bookkeeper, is forever asking why and wherefore, and would measure the play of fancy as if it were a fortress. Much less should one lend an ear to the artistic pedant who up to the point of self-nausea would confine the boundaries of music – an art that most of all reaches the world of the spirits – and prefers conventional barracks of music-buildings to an *English garden of notes*.<sup>94</sup>

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The nuances of this post-history, the paths that the English picturesque and English vocal music took after 1800, and the destinations of those paths is beyond the scope of this thesis. As I have outlined, a falling-off in musical productivity, in interest in picturesque subjects in music, and the outmodedness of the picturesque expressive vocabulary are all convincing enough tropes. As to the links between the music I have studied and English music in the immediate period thereafter, and the trajectory of native music's engagement with the nature topic, it will take further scholarship to explain. The *telos* of the English musical picturesque, then, is for future researchers to preside over. As far as this study is concerned, I have aimed, not for teleology, but instead, to both capture a moment and to draw a circle. By closing with a study of Haydn's *The Seasons* I have travelled from Haydn's 'fantastic' symphonies to his picturesque oratorio. And in the process I have sought to challenge the notion that Haydn learnt the picturesque through an Austro-German sympathy with the writings of Laurence Sterne. The marriage of Thomson's epic, Haydn's understanding of English aesthetic tastes and his visionary response to them, are the versions of cultural exchange to which I would prefer to cling. And as for English opera, song and glee, it is

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<sup>93</sup> Hunt, *The Picturesque Garden in Europe*, 176. See also Richards, *The Free Fantasia*, 101-3.

<sup>94</sup> Trans. In Landon, *Chronicle and Works*, vol. 5, 186.

undoubtedly in this music where the sound of the English picturesque finds its most natural voice.

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