

**THE LETTERS OF SAMUEL WESLEY:  
SOCIAL AND PROFESSIONAL CORRESPONDENCE,  
1797-1837**

**Vol. 1**

**Edited by**

**Philip John Olleson, MA**



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## ABSTRACT

The life of the composer and organist Samuel Wesley (1766-1837) encompassed momentous changes in British society. Born in the early years of the reign of George III, Wesley died in the first months of the reign of Victoria. He saw equally momentous changes in music. As a child he was taught by musicians who remembered and in some cases had played for Handel; in adult life, he witnessed the introduction of the music of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven into England, and late in his career saw the visits to London of Liszt, Weber, and Mendelssohn.

Wesley's life on both a personal and professional level was highly unconventional. Born into the first family of Methodism - his father was the hymn-writer Charles Wesley (1708-88), his uncle was John Wesley (1703-91) - he converted in his teens to Roman Catholicism and spent most of his life alienated from his family and from his Methodist upbringing. His marriage to Charlotte Louisa Martin in 1793 followed years of family opposition and a period when the couple lived together unmarried. In 1810 he left her for his teenage housekeeper, with whom he lived until his death. His professional career was brilliant but uneven, bedevilled by periods of mental illness which left him incapacitated for long periods.

Wesley was a prolific correspondent: over 600 letters out of a far larger number of letters that he is known to have written are extant. The letters fall into two fairly distinct categories: those to members of his family, and those to correspondents outside the family. This division is paralleled to

a large degree in the subject matter of the letters. In general, Wesley kept his family and his professional and social life well apart. He only rarely discusses family matters rarely in his social and professional letters; conversely, although there are many mentions of his social and professional life in the family correspondence, they do not form a very large proportion of it as a whole. The two sequences of letters are thus largely self-contained.

The bulk of Wesley's discussions of music are contained in the social and professional letters, and these form the largest and most important collection of letters by an English musician of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. This edition brings together all such letters from 1797 until Wesley's death in 1837. It also includes a few family letters where the subject matter is wholly or largely music: further details are given in the Textual Introduction. It can therefore be seen as the first part of a complete edition of Wesley's letters. The second part, containing the family letters, will, I hope, follow in due course.



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tolerance the ups and downs of a project which at times has seemed never-ending.

## **ABBREVIATIONS AND CUE TITLES**

### **Manuscript collections**

<b>Argory</b>	<b>The Argory, near Moy, Co. Armagh.</b>
<b>Austin</b>	<b>Harry Ransom Humanities Research Centre, The University of Texas at Austin.</b>
<b>BL</b>	<b>British Library, London.</b>
<b>Drew</b>	<b>Methodist Collection, Drew University Library, Madison, New Jersey.</b>
<b>Duke</b>	<b>Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.</b>
<b>Emory</b>	<b>John Wesley Collection, Special Collections Department, Robert W. Woodruff Library, Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia.</b>
<b>Fitzwilliam</b>	<b>Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.</b>
<b>Foundling Hospital</b>	<b>Foundling Hospital Archives, London Metropolitan Archives.</b>
<b>Gloucester</b>	<b>Gloucester Public Library.</b>
<b>Harvard</b>	<b>Shaw Theatre Collection, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass.</b>
<b>Kassler</b>	<b>Private collection of Jamie and Michael Kassler, Northbridge, NSW, Australia.</b>
<b>LC</b>	<b>Library of Congress, Washington, DC.</b>



London	Senate House Library, University of London.
NRO	Norfolk Record Office, Norwich, Norfolk.
NYPL (Berg)	The Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection, New York Public Library.
NYPL (Music)	Music Division, New York Public Library
RCM	Royal College of Music, London.
RSCM	Royal School of Church Music, London.
Rylands	Methodist Archives and Research Centre, John Rylands University Library of Manchester.
SMU	Southern Methodist University, Dallas, Texas.
UCSB	University of California at Santa Barbara, California.
<b>Other manuscript sources</b>	
Loan 48	Royal Philharmonic Papers, BL Loan 48.
MADSOC	BL, Madrigal Society papers.
<u>Reminiscences</u>	Wesley's manuscript Reminiscences (1836) (BL, Add. MS 27593).
RSM	Royal Society of Musicians Records.

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- BCP Book of Common Prayer (1662).
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- Actresses, Musicians, Dancers,  
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Boyle's New Fashionable Court and County Guide and Town Visiting Directory, published annually.

CPM

The Catalogue of Printed Music in the British Museum until 1980, 62 vols., 1987.

Dawe

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DEB

A Dictionary of Evangelical Biography, ed. Donald M. Lewis, 2 vols., Oxford, 1995.

DNB

Dictionary of National Biography.

Doane

John Doane, A Musical Directory for the Year 1794, 1794.

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Ehrlich, First Philharmonic

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<u>EM</u>	<u>The European Magazine and London Review</u> , 1782-1826.
<u>Encyclopaedia of London</u>	<u>An Encyclopaedia of London</u> , ed. William Kent, 1937.
Farmer	D. H. Farmer, <u>The Oxford Dictionary of Saints</u> , Oxford, 3rd edn., 1992.
Fenner	Theodore Fenner, <u>Opera in London: Views of the Press, 1785-1830</u> , Carbondale and Edwardsville, Ill., 1994.
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Foster, <u>Philharmonic</u>	Myles Birkett Foster, <u>The History of the Philharmonic Society of London, 1813-1912</u> , 1912.
<u>GM</u>	<u>The Gentleman's Magazine</u> , 1731-



1880. References are to the year and part.

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Matthews	Betty Matthews, <u>The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain: List of Members 1738-1984</u> , 1985.
Mercer	Charles Burney, <u>A General History of Music</u> , ed. Frank Mercer, 2 vols., 1935, repr. New York, 1957.
<u>ML</u>	<u>Music and Letters</u> , 1920-.
<u>MM</u>	<u>The Monthly Magazine and British</u>

	<u>Register</u> , 1790-1826.
<u>MQ</u>	<u>The Musical Quarterly</u> , 1915-.
<u>MR</u>	<u>The Music Review</u> , 1940-84.
<u>MT</u>	<u>Musical Times</u> , 1844-.
Munby	A. N. L. Munby, <u>The Cult of the Autograph Letter in England</u> , 1962.
<u>MW</u>	<u>The Musical World. A Weekly Record of Musical Science, Literature and Intelligence</u> , 1836-91.
<u>MW</u> Obituary	'Professional Memoranda of the Late Mr. Samuel Wesley's Life', <u>MW</u> , 7 (1837), 81-93, 113-118.
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<u>New Bach Reader</u>	<u>The New Bach Reader: A Life of Johann Sebastian Bach in Letters and Documents</u> , ed. Hans T. David and Arthur Mendel, rev. and enlarged by Christoph Wolff, New York and London, 1998.
Nichols and Wray	R. H. Nichols and F. A. Wray, <u>The History of the Foundling Hospital</u> ,

	1935.
<u>NMMR</u>	<u>The New Musical Magazine, Review, and Register of Valuable Musical Publications, Ancient and Modern, 1809-10.</u>
<u>OCEL</u>	<u>The Oxford Companion to English Literature</u> , ed. Margaret Drabble, 5th edn., Oxford, 1985.
<u>OED</u>	<u>Oxford English Dictionary.</u>
Olleson	Philip Olleson, 'Samuel Wesley and the <u>European Magazine</u> ', <u>Notes</u> , 52 (1996), 1097-111.
Oxford	Arnold Whitaker Oxford, <u>No 4: An Introduction to the History of the Royal Somerset House and Inverness Lodge</u> , 1928.
Plantinga	Leon Plantinga, <u>Muzio Clementi: His Life and Music</u> , 1977.
Plumley	Nicholas M. Plumley, <u>The Organs of the City of London</u> , Oxford, 1996.
<u>QMMR</u>	<u>Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review</u> , 1818-29.
Rees	<u>The Cyclopaedia; or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences and</u>



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and Gary Taylor (Oxford, 1988).

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## CHRONOLOGY

- 1766 Samuel Wesley (SW) born in Bristol, 24 Feb., the son of Charles and Sarah Gwynne Wesley.
- 1769 First musical activities: a child prodigy.
- 1771 Charles Wesley takes lease on house in Marylebone.
- 1773 First keyboard lessons from David Williams, a Bristol organist.
- 1773 Composes an oratorio, Ruth, to words by the Revd. Thomas Haweis.
- 1774 Family visited by Boyce, who proclaims SW 'a second Mozart'. SW plays a psalm at a service at St James's church, Bristol.
- 1776 SW moves permanently to Marylebone. Visits Russell family in Guildford, summer.
- 1778 Beginning of involvement with Roman Catholicism.
- 1779-87 Family concerts, involving SW and his brother Charles. Many compositions.
- 1780 First Latin church music compositions, Nov.
- 1780-4 Many further Latin church music compositions.
- 1782 Beginning of relationship with Charlotte Louisa Martin, Oct.
- 1783 Death of SW's friend James Price, who leaves him £1,000 and a house at Guildford, Aug.
- 1784 Converts to Roman Catholicism. Composes Missa de Spiritu

- Sancto, May; sends a revised version to Pope Pius VI, Sept.
- 1784 Starts to teach at Mrs Barnes's girls' school, Marylebone.
- 1788 Death of Charles Wesley, 29 Mar.
- 1788 Becomes a Freemason: admitted to the Lodge of Antiquity, 17 Dec.
- 1792 Moves to Ridge, Hertfordshire, and sets up house with Charlotte, Oct.
- 1793 Marries Charlotte, 5 Apr. Son Charles born, 25 Sept.
- 1794 Completes Ode to St Cecilia, 21 Oct.
- 1798 Applies unsuccessfully for the post of organist at the Foundling Hospital, Mar.
- 1799 Renews his acquaintance with Charles Burney, Jan. Ode to St Cecilia performed at Covent Garden, 22 Feb. Son John William born, probably June. Completes Confitebor tibi, Domine, 14 Aug.
- 1800 Performs an organ concerto at a performance of Haydn's Creation, 21 Apr.
- 1802 Unsuccessful concert series at Tottenham Street Rooms, Jan.-May.
- 1802-5 Period of depression and inactivity.
- 1805 Rapprochement with Charlotte, spring.
- 1805-6 Lent a copy of J. S. Bach's '48' by Pinto, before 23 Mar. 1806.
- 1806 Daughter Emma Frances born, Jan. or Feb.

- 1807 Completes manuscript copy of '48', by 21 May. Writes to Burney about his enthusiasm for Bach, late summer or early autumn.
- 1808 Starts to promote the music of J. S. Bach. Gives recital at Surrey Chapel, 15 Mar. Benefit concert at Hanover Square Rooms, 11 June. Visits Cambridge and performs Bach there, June-July. Beginning of correspondence with Benjamin Jacob, Aug. Te Deum and Jubilate performed at St Paul's Cathedral, 30 Oct.
- 1809 Visits Bath, Jan.-Feb. Lectures on music at the Royal Institution of Great Britain, Mar.-May. Benefit concert at Hanover Square Rooms, 3 June. Created a Master Mason at Somerset house Lodge, 27 June. Directs music festival at Tamworth, 21-22 Sept. Performs in a concert in Birmingham, 23 Sept. With C. F. Horn, publishes an edition of Bach organ trio-sonatas. Lectures at Surrey Institution, Nov.-Dec. Gives recital of Bach's music at Surrey Chapel with Jacob and J. P. Salomon, 29 Nov.
- 1810 Marriage breakdown, probably Jan. Sets up house with Sarah Suter. Benefit concert at Hanover Square Rooms, 19 May. Son Samuel Sebastian born, 14 Aug.
- 1810-13 With C. F. Horn, publishes an edition of Bach's '48' in four parts.
- 1811 Visits Christopher Jeaffreson in Tunstall, Suffolk, Jan.



- Lectures at Surrey Institution, Feb.-Mar. Benefit concert at Hanover Square Rooms, 27 Apr. First extant letter to Vincent Novello, May. Directs Birmingham Music Festival, 2-4 Oct.
- 1812 Appointed masonic Grand Organist, May. Benefit concert at Hanover Square Rooms, 5 June. Visits Ramsgate and Margate and gives concerts with Samuel Webbe II, Sept.-Oct.
- 1813 Becomes organist at Covent Garden Lenten oratorio concerts, Mar. Benefit concert at Argyll Street Rooms, 4 May. Visits Ipswich and performs at the festival, June-July. Becomes an associate member of the Philharmonic Society, autumn. Applies unsuccessfully for Foundling Hospital organist's appointment, Nov. Plays at union of the two masonic Grand Lodges of England, 27 Dec.
- 1814 . Begins to write reviews of music for European Magazine, Feb. Daughter Rosalind born?. Visits and performs in Norwich, Oct.
- 1815 Benefit concert at Covent Garden, 13 May (with C. J. Ashley). Visits and performs in Great Yarmouth and Norwich, July. Becomes a full member of the Philharmonic Society, 1 June, and a Director, 22 Nov.
- 1816 Motet 'Father of Light' performed at Philharmonic Society concert, 29 Apr. Benefit concert at Covent Garden, 1 June

- (with Ashley). Collapses while travelling to Norwich following the death of a child, early Aug. Recovers temporarily, but health declines.
- 1817 Continuing decline in health culminating in serious breakdown, early May. Benefit concert at Covent Garden held in his absence, 24 May. Confined in Blacklands House, Chelsea, a private lunatic asylum, June?.
- 1818 Discharged from Blacklands House, late June.
- 1818-23 Period of depression and slow recuperation.
- 1819 Resumes position as organist at Covent Garden oratorio concerts, Feb. Daughter Eliza born, 6 May.
- 1821 Applies unsuccessfully for organist's position at St Pancras New Church, Feb. Son Matthias Erasmus born, 19 Apr.
- 1822 Accepts invitation to become an honorary member of the Royal Academy of Music, Sept. Arranges music for the barrels of the organ being built for Walter McGeough by James Bishop, Oct.-Nov. Composes Anglican Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis, thus completing his Service, Nov. Mother dies, 28 Dec.
- 1823 Applies unsuccessfully for organist's position at St Lawrence, Jewry, Jan. Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis from Service performed at St Paul's Cathedral, 25 Dec.
- 1824 Applies unsuccessfully for organist's position at St George's, Hanover Square, February. Proposals for publication of

Service issued, Feb. Service performed in full at St Paul's, 3 and 25 Apr. Appointed organist at Camden Chapel, May. Publication of Sainsbury's Dictionary of Music, containing article stating that SW had died 'around 1815', Oct. Service published, late Oct.

- 1825 Service reviewed in Harmonicon, Jan., and in QMMR, Apr. Arrested and imprisoned for debt following financial crisis, 4 May. Released, 8 May. Son John born, late June or early July. Visits Cambridge for a week in June and two weeks in July and Aug. Performs Confitebor with Vincent Novello on the organ of Trinity College chapel to an invited audience.
- 1826 Granted permission by University of Cambridge to transcribe and publish music in the Fitzwilliam collection, 1 Mar. Visits Cambridge, Mar.-Apr., and issues proposals for an edition of Byrd antiphons from a Fitzwilliam Museum manuscript. Lectures at Royal Institution, Apr.-May. Confitebor performed at the Argyll Street Rooms, 4 May. Visits Cambridge again and discovers a manuscript of hymn tunes by Handel to words by his father, Sept. Publishes an edition of the hymns, Nov.
- 1827 Publishes a second edition of the Handel hymns, Mar. Lectures at Royal Institution, Mar.-May. Attends Breakfast for the Children of the Methodist Preachers at City Road Chapel, 3 May.



- 1828 Lectures at London Institution, Jan., and Royal Institution, Mar.-Apr. Publishes Original Hymn Tunes Adapted to Every Metre in the Collection by the Rev. John Wesley, Aug. Gives the inaugural organ recital at Brunswick Methodist Chapel, Leeds, 12 Sept. Sister Sarah dies, 19 Sept. Daughter Thomasine born.
- 1829 Visits Bristol and gives organ recitals at St Mary Redcliffe and other Bristol churches, Sept.-Oct.
- 1830 Lectures at Bristol Institution, Jan. Further breakdown in health, followed by virtual retirement from public life, summer. Son Robert Glenn born, 21 Nov.
- 1834 Brother Charles dies, 23 May. Composes funeral anthem 'All go unto one place', which he directs at a Sacred Harmonic Society concert, August.
- 1836 Contributes historical article to the first issue of The Musical World, 18 March. Writes his manuscript Reminiscences, Apr.
- 1837 Copies out score of Ode to St Cecilia from memory, July. Meets and plays to Mendelssohn at Christ Church, Newgate Street, 12 Sept. Dies, 11 Oct.



## BIOGRAPHICAL INTRODUCTION

Samuel Wesley was born in Bristol on 24 February 1766 into a family of extraordinary achievements and high-mindedness. Charles Wesley, his father, was the principal poet and hymn-writer of Methodism; his uncle John was the movement's founder. Samuel was to be the youngest child, joining Charles, eight years his senior, and Sarah, almost seven years older. The family was a musical one: Samuel's father had played the flute in his youth, his mother sang, and his brother Charles, eight years his senior, was a child prodigy whose musical abilities had brought a steady stream of visitors to the family home since his earliest childhood.

It was not long before Samuel was showing unmistakeable signs of musicality himself. His father later recorded Samuel's delight at a very early age at hearing music, and his insistence on attending Charles's harpsichord lessons and accompanying him 'on the chair'.<sup>1</sup> According to the same account, he played his first tune at just under three, taught himself to read from a copy of Handel's Samson at four, and by the age of five 'had all the recitatives, and choruses of Samson and the Messiah: both words and notes by heart'. At the age of six he had some keyboard lessons from David Williams, a Bristol organist, although according to his father 'it was hard to say which was the master and which the scholar'. He also had violin and organ lessons, and at seven played a psalm at a service at St James's church. His first compositions apparently predated his learning to write music: according to his father he frequently improvised scenes from oratorio texts at the keyboard, and the

family noticed that when he came to repeat them, the music was always the same. Before he was six he had composed the airs for an entire oratorio, Ruth, which he then held in his memory until he was able to write them down, over two years later.

These exploits predictably attracted attention. In 1774, shortly after Samuel had written down the music of Ruth, William Boyce visited the family, announcing that he had heard that there was 'an English Mozart' in the house. The comparison would readily have come to mind: the young Mozart, ten years Samuel's senior, had spent fifteen months in London in 1764-5, exhibiting much the same near-miraculous precocity. Boyce's comment after looking over the score of Ruth was: 'these airs are some of the prettiest I have seen; this boy writes by nature as true a bass as I can by rule and study'. His remark went to the heart of the matter: like Mozart, his brother, and other musical child prodigies before and since, Samuel possessed from his earliest years musical accomplishments that normally took years of concentrated work to acquire.

The education of Charles and Samuel caused obvious problems. It would have been unthinkable for one in Charles Wesley senior's position to have exhibited them in public for financial gain; in fact he appears to have kept them as much as possible out of the public gaze, and to have strictly rationed their appearances at public concerts. At the same time, he would have realized that if they were to develop their full potential they would need to learn from the best teachers and to be exposed to as many musical experiences as possible. Such considerations were no doubt uppermost in his mind when

he decided to move the family from Bristol to London. In 1771 he was given the use of a house in Marylebone - at the time a village on the outskirts of London - by a wealthy well-wisher. For some time the family kept on their Bristol house and divided their time between Bristol and London, but in 1776 Samuel moved permanently to Marylebone, and two years later the family moved entirely from Bristol.

Perhaps inevitably, Samuel spent much of his childhood in the company of adults. For some of the time he was entrusted to the care of his godfather, the evangelical clergyman and amateur musician Martin Madan. Madan would later achieve notoriety for his controversial Thelyphthora; or a Treatise on Female Ruin (1780). At this time, however, he was chiefly known as a charismatic preacher and as the chaplain of the Lock Hospital, an asylum for women with venereal diseases, where the chapel had achieved renown because of the excellence of its music. Madan took Samuel on visits to his friends and acquaintances, where his musical abilities inevitably made him the object of much attention. Another child might have enjoyed the experience, but Samuel stated later that he had felt humiliated by it, and had resented his father's behaviour in allowing Madan to carry him around 'like a raree show':

This soured my temper toward him at an early age. I contracted a dislike of my father's conduct, which grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength.<sup>2</sup>

But Samuel's visits to Madan's friends were not entirely taken up with music: family letters from the summer of 1776 include descriptions of an extended stay with the Russell family in Guildford which included games of



cricket, experiments with home-made explosives, and firework displays. John Russell senior (1711-1804), the head of the family, was a printer and several times mayor of Guildford; John Russell, RA (1745-1806), his elder son, was a portrait painter who during this visit painted the well-known portrait of Samuel as a boy which now hangs at the Royal Academy of Music. Also among the Guildford circle was the experimental scientist James Price, sometimes described as the last of the alchemists, who committed suicide in 1783 after being unable to substantiate claims that he was able to transmute lead into gold, and who left Samuel a house and £1,000 in his will.

Some of the problems faced by Charles Wesley senior in deciding how best to manage the upbringing of Charles and Samuel were those which have always confronted the parents of exceptionally gifted children.<sup>3</sup> But these were compounded by Charles's prominent position within Methodism and by other, class-related, factors. As a music-lover himself, and as a Christian father mindful of the parable of the talents, he would have considered it his duty to ensure that Charles and Samuel were given every opportunity to develop their abilities to their fullest extent. On the other hand, many Methodists, including Charles's brother John, looked with considerable suspicion on the sensual appeal of music and its use in any other context than that of worship. Public concerts, with their close associations with the theatre, were a cause of particular disapproval, and even religious music was suspect if it was at all elaborate. Charles was already criticized in some Methodist circles for the worldliness of his social circle. John Fletcher voiced what was presumably a widely felt concern when he wrote to Charles in 1771:



You have your enemies, as well as your brother, they complain of your love for musick, company, fine people, great folks, and of the want of your former zeal and frugality. I need not put you in mind to cut off sinful appearances.

Charles Wesley tended to react robustly to criticisms of his children's musical activities, replying on one occasion to a correspondent who had criticized him for allowing Charles to play in public that he had intended him for the Church, but that nature had intended otherwise, and that the only way he could have prevented him from being a musician would have been by cutting off his fingers.

It is apparent, however, that for all his love of music and his desire to see his children receive the best possible musical education, Charles Wesley senior had considerable misgivings about music as a suitable profession for them. His unease, although it may have been magnified by the particular circumstances of his position, did not arise specifically from his Methodist background, but would have been shared by most parents of his time and class. Irrespective of the value one might individually place on music, one would not welcome the prospect of one's children entering a profession with such a low status and high degree of insecurity.<sup>4</sup>

For the moment, however, Charles Wesley's first priority was to advance his sons' musical education, and allowing them to organize concerts at the family home must have appeared to him as an ideal way of achieving this aim. He set out his motives in a document headed 'reasons for letting my sons have a concert at home' dated 14 January 1779, which reveals much of

the ambivalence of his attitudes:

- (1) To keep them out of harm's way: the way (I mean) of bad music and bad musicians who by a free communication with them might corrupt both their taste and their morals.
- (2) That my sons may have a safe and honourable opportunity of availing themselves of their musical abilities, which have cost me several hundred pounds.
- (3) That they may enjoy their full right of private judgment, and likewise their independency; both of which must be given up if they swim with the stream and follow the multitude.
- (4) To improve their play and their skill in composing: as they must themselves furnish the principal music of every concert, although they do not call their musical entertainment a concert. It is too great a word. They do not presume to rival the present great masters who excel in the variety of their accompaniments. All they aim at in their concert music is exactness.<sup>5</sup>

The family concerts, which ran for nine seasons from 1779 to 1787, included examples of music in both the 'ancient' and newer styles, performed by a small professional ensemble which included both Charles and Samuel, to audiences which on occasion numbered over fifty. In addition to giving both sons experience of performing, the concerts were also ideal opportunities for them to try out their compositions, and all of Samuel's instrumental music of the period - including five symphonies, and a number of organ and violin concertos - can be assumed to have been written for them. Recent recordings

and performances have shown them to be highly competent and attractive works, if sometimes understandably derivative in style.

Although the family concerts did much to fulfil Charles Wesley senior's aim of furthering his sons' musical education while keeping them 'out of harm's way', it is not clear how they fitted into any longer-term plans he may have had for their future. If, on the one hand, the concerts reflected his reluctant acceptance that they would probably eventually become professional musicians despite all his misgivings, he may have looked on them as a sheltered apprenticeship, in which they could gain necessary experience without being exposed too early to the potentially corrupting professional music world. But both sons would sooner or later need to make the transition, and the family concerts only delayed the moment when this would need to happen. In fact, by the time of the final series of concerts in 1787, both boys were of an age when their less privileged contemporaries would long have been earning a living in music. If, on the other hand, he envisaged that his sons would eventually earn their living in other fields, he would have seen the concerts as a way of allowing them for the moment to practise music at the highest level with professionals, while still remaining gentlemen amateurs. But if this was what he had in mind, it too was unsatisfactory, in that the concerts effectively provided a full professional training which led nowhere.

Sheltered though he was from the world of professional music-making during the late 1770s and early 1780s, Samuel was nonetheless searching out new musical experiences wherever he could find them. He would no doubt have attended services at St Paul's Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, and other



Anglican establishments. Rather more surprising, however, was his discovery of Roman Catholic worship, and a very different set of religious and musical traditions. From remarks in two letters from Charles Wesley to his wife, the date can be established as the late summer of 1778. Samuel's involvement must have been with one or more of the embassy chapels, which were at this time the main centres of worship for London Roman Catholics. The three largest chapels were those of the Bavarian, Sardinian, and Portuguese embassies, where the Mass and the Offices were celebrated with considerable splendour of liturgy and ritual. At an early stage Samuel would have met Samuel Webbe I (1740-1814), the organist of the Sardinian and Portuguese chapels, and the most important figure in Roman Catholic church music in London at this time. Webbe would have welcomed Samuel and would have given him the opportunity to sing in the choir, play the organ, and in time to compose for the services.

Charles Wesley's reaction to Samuel's continuing involvement with Roman Catholicism is not recorded, but can readily be imagined: intense disapproval, coupled with anxiety for Samuel's spiritual welfare, and above all a fear that he might convert. At the same time, it would have been inconsistent with his views on freedom of conscience for him to have considered forbidding Samuel's continued attendance. He was also no doubt sufficiently realistic to realize that any attempt to do so would be counter-productive, as by this time Samuel was by this time exhibiting a rebellious streak and becoming increasingly resistant to any form of parental discipline. His worries may have been to some extent assuaged by the thought of the



musical benefits that Samuel was deriving from his attendance, and the assurances that Samuel may well have given that his reasons for continuing to attend were exclusively musical.

In fact, Samuel did convert in early 1784: a course of action which dismayed and sorrowed Charles Wesley and further contributed to the already deteriorating relationship between father and son. To mark the event, in May Samuel composed a large-scale setting of the Mass which he later fair-copied and had bound and sent off to Pope Pius VI. The Missa de spiritu sancto, scored for soloists, chorus, and orchestra and lasting for around 90 minutes in performance, was Wesley's longest and most ambitious work to date, written on a scale matched by few other Mass settings of the period either in England or on the continent, and suitable for liturgical use on only the grandest of occasions. It seems unlikely that Samuel expected that it would be performed in Rome, and there were certainly no opportunities for it to be used in the London embassy chapels. He probably regarded it as a presentation piece, written to demonstrate at the same time his seriousness of commitment and his technical prowess.

Samuel's period of whole-hearted commitment to Roman Catholicism appears to have lasted for some years, although as time went on there were increasing tensions between his own convictions and the teachings of the Church. Some correspondence of early 1792 shows him unprepared to accept the Church's authority on certain points of doctrine. Uncertain whether or not his views were to be regarded as heretical, he stated that until the matter was resolved he no longer intended to attend services at 'public chapels'. This

disagreement may in fact have marked the end of his active spiritual involvement with Roman Catholicism, and when he returned to the Church some years later, it was for purely musical reasons. In later life he regarded the episode of his conversion with embarrassment and tried to pretend that it had never happened, claiming that 'although the Gregorian music had seduced him to their chapels, the tenets of the Romanists never obtained any influence over his mind'.<sup>6</sup> His subsequent attitude to the Roman Catholic church was highly ambivalent, consisting of a fascination with its liturgy and music combined with a deep distaste for its teaching and doctrines, summed up in his remark that 'if the Roman Doctrines were like the Roman Music we should have Heaven upon Earth'.<sup>7</sup>

Samuel's conversion to Roman Catholicism was only one of a number of factors adversely affecting his relations with his family at this time. Another was his passionate relationship with Charlotte Louisa Martin, whom he first met in October 1782 and was to marry in April 1793. The daughter of a Captain Martin, presumably a former soldier, and variously described as a demonstrator of anatomy and a surgeon at St Thomas's hospital, she was four or five years older than Samuel, and may have been a teacher at one of the schools at which Samuel gave music lessons. The family disapproved of her and her background from the start, claiming that she was vain and extravagant, and pointing to a history of financial imprudence in her family. At some stage Charles Wesley appears to have attempted to insist that Samuel should break off the relationship and have nothing more to do with her. The result was predictable: Samuel refused, the relationship between him and his

father - already under strain because of Samuel's involvement with Roman Catholicism - further deteriorated, and the bond between him and Charlotte was further strengthened.

Inextricably entangled with Samuel's family problems during his adolescence were the beginnings of the mental illness which so markedly affected his later career. His tendency to depression, leading on occasion to periods of prolonged incapacity, has always been recognized by his biographers. It is clear, however, that this was only one aspect of his illness, and that a more accurate diagnosis is of manic depression, in which periods of depression alternate with periods of hypomania. Such periods are typically characterized by a wide range of uninhibited behaviour, and in the case of creative artists often by great creativity. The irregular pattern of Samuel's compositional output in the 1780s, varying between great productivity and almost complete inactivity, is consistent with such a diagnosis. So is his behaviour at the same time, as reported in family letters: it included incidents of drunkenness, staying out all night, and the physical abuse of servants, all of which suggest something more than the normal mood-swings of adolescence. A low point must have been reached in the summer of 1785, when his father felt it necessary to take the extraordinary and humiliating step of begging Bishop Talbot, the Roman Catholic Vicar Apostolic of the London district, to assert his spiritual authority to keep Samuel under control, as he was no longer able to do so himself.

Wesley attained his majority in February 1787. Now that he was no longer either a child prodigy or a precocious adolescent, he needed to find a



role in the adult world. He seems to have regarded a future as a musician with scant enthusiasm. As subsequent remarks scattered through the correspondence reveal, he deeply resented the quirk of fate which had given him such outstanding musical abilities, and which he considered had at the same time disqualified him from following any other profession. Much of this resentment was directed at his father, for encouraging his musical education and 'suffering' him to be a musician. By the time he entered adult life, the unglamorous reality of much of the musician's life must have become ever more apparent to him: the low status of the professional musician, the large amount of teaching that all but the most eminent performers needed to undertake in order to earn a basic living, the frequent physical discomforts of concert life, and the lack of any career progression.

In fact, Wesley appears for the moment to have turned away from music: there are no records of him performing in public and he seems to have stopped composing. His sole musical activity was his teaching, both in schools and privately. This was undemanding work for one of his abilities, and had little to recommend it beyond the money it brought in. Otherwise, little is known about his activities at this period, and his life appears to have been one of aimlessness and lack of direction, very probably punctuated by shorter or longer periods of depression.

In 1787, according to his obituary notice in The Times, Wesley suffered a serious head injury which he subsequently blamed for his mental health problems. But there is no mention of such an incident in family letters or papers, and the first signs of Wesley's condition had manifested themselves



at least three years earlier. As the account of the head injury apparently came from Wesley himself, it should not be dismissed as a fiction, but there must be doubt about the precise date at which it occurred, to say nothing of its effects.

In December 1788 Wesley became a Freemason. Little is known about this event; it should be stressed, however, that it is not (as has sometimes been supposed) of any relevance to the question of his continued commitment to Roman Catholicism, as there was no ideological incompatibility at this time in England between Roman Catholicism and Freemasonry, and many English Catholics were also Freemasons.

Throughout the 1780s, Wesley and Charlotte remained as committed to each other as ever, their relationship no doubt gaining in strength with each additional instance of family opposition. After the death of Charles Wesley in March 1788, it might have been expected that they would consider marriage: by this time they had known each other for over five years, and their commitment had been tested by constant family opposition, at least on Wesley's side. In addition, Wesley had on his majority probably come into money left to him in various bequests, including the substantial one from James Price. As he and Charlotte intended to spend the rest of their lives together and were openly conducting a passionately physical relationship, there were no compelling reasons, apart from family disapproval, why they should not marry, and several reasons why they should.

In fact, the question of marriage does not seem for the moment to have been considered, and when the subject came up again some time later, the

grounds of the family's concern had shifted. By now, they recognized the strength and apparent permanence of Wesley's commitment to Charlotte, and had abandoned their former attempts to persuade him to give her up. Instead, they now attempted to persuade him to regularize the situation by marrying her. Part of their concern undoubtedly stemmed from worries about Charlotte becoming pregnant, and the stigma of illegitimacy which would attend any resulting children. Indeed, it appears from a reference in a family letter of 1791 that Charlotte had by this time had a child by Samuel;<sup>8</sup> nothing further is known of this child and its fate, however, and it seems most likely that it was either stillborn or died in early infancy, or possibly that it was given away for adoption.

It is at this point that the story takes a totally unexpected turn. Wesley's response to family suggestions that he and Charlotte should marry was a flat refusal, on the surprising grounds that he considered them to be married already by virtue of their sexual intimacy, and that going through a religious ceremony would do nothing to alter matters. This stance, which he set out in detail in a remarkable series of letters to his sister Sarah in the summer of 1791, derived from arguments which his godfather Martin Madan had elaborated, but for very different purposes, in Thelyphthora. In an attempt to force men to take responsibility for their sexual behaviour, Madan had argued that the essence of marriage lay not in a legal ceremony but in sexual intercourse. If this could be established and enshrined into law, a man who had sexual intercourse with a woman could be held responsible for her maintenance and that of any resulting child or children. Madan claimed that

this well-intentioned but eccentric position was supported by scriptural authority, arguing that there was nothing in the Bible to suggest that a religious ceremony was an essential component of marriage. One very obvious problem with this position was posed by men who had sexual intercourse with more than one woman. To cope with this, Madan was obliged to argue for polygamy, once more citing the Bible. Not surprisingly, it was this aspect of his argument that attracted the most attention and opposition - often from those who had not troubled to familiarize themselves with the entirety of his argument - and which led first to his public notoriety and ultimately to his disgrace.

In Wesley's hands, Madan's arguments were given a new and personal application. If the essence of marriage was indeed in sexual intercourse, then he and Charlotte were already married, and there could be no reason for them also to go through a church ceremony. It is difficult to think of a position which could have caused more offence and hurt to his family. In his refusal to marry, Samuel was claiming to be adopting not a libertarian stance, but a position of principle, backed by the full weight of biblical authority. At the same time he paraded his physical intimacy with Charlotte in front of his family, expressed his contempt for the marriage ceremony, and impugned the integrity of all those who celebrated it. It was an extraordinary position to take, and one which - Madan and Thelyphthora apart - finds no resonance in any thinking of the time.

Although Madan's arguments gave Samuel's position intellectual backing of a sort, he had more down-to-earth reasons for his refusal to marry,

which on occasion he was prepared to acknowledge. One was financial; the other purely a matter of his refusal to conform to expected norms of behaviour. As he explained to Sarah in June 1791:

I have but two objections to marrying. The first is I am not rich enough: the second that to tie my person wd be to lose my heart: and she who valued it would hardly consent to that. It is impossible for me to explain to another the reason of some irresistible antipathies, and I can only declare this truth, that my aversion to constraint is invincible.<sup>9</sup>

For all the vehemence of Wesley's arguments and his repeated protestations of his commitment to Charlotte, it was not until the autumn of 1792 that they decided to set up house together and live together as man and wife. Samuel described this move in an important letter to his mother which more than any other document conveys his own feelings for Charlotte, his family's opposition, and his views on marriage:

I think I need not be told that every grand Step in Life ought to be well weighed, & thoroughly considered before it be taken:-- It is certain that I have taken one of these grand Steps within this Month past, & I hope, not without having previously & seriously reflected on the Consequences of it.

An Acquaintance of ten Years duration has confirmed me in the Resolution of passing "Life's Sea" with that "Mate", whose every Action has given the Lye to her Accusers.-- It is true that her Enemies have been found only among the Base &



Unworthy, yet as their cruel & unfounded Aspersions have unfortunately sunk too deep in the Minds of those who deserve to be undeceived, I shall not believe it Time lost, to animadvert upon a few of their Charges.

Charlotte Louisa Martin has been represented as a fickle & unsteady Character. Whether this be true or false, let the following Fact decide.-- It was in October 1782 that I first became acquainted with her; soon after which time, she acknowledged that she loved me: since then she has to my Knowledge had repeated & eligible Offers not of a dishonourable Connexion but of an honourable Alliance; not of Concubinage but of Marriage, from Men qualified to support her in a Style similar to that in which she was originally educated: but to these she has preferred Me in my wooden Cottage, with my splendid Fortune of 150 Pounds a Year!

Again, she has been held forth as of a careless, prodigal Disposition, & as closely resembling an extravagant Father & a vain Mother, whose Iniquities she has (indeed most unjustly) borne.-- But how does this Charge agree with another Fact? (which let him deny who can): M<sup>r</sup> King, (a Bristol Merchant who has the Management of the desperate Affairs of the Family) has allowed her, for several Years past, 30 Pounds per Annum, on which she has hitherto lived, decently, & out of debt. That she was ever assisted by me in pecuniary Matters,

I can safely & solemnly declare to be untrue.-- from me she never received or would accept aught but mere Trifles, although amongst the other diabolical Slanders it was affirmed (by him who is gone to his own Place) that I had engaged to liquidate her Debts & administer to her Luxuries, as soon as I should become of Age.

She has been called a Coquette, nay more; a wanton.-- On these Accusations, as false as God is true, I can reflect with no Patience: they were engendered in the Heart of Envy, & vomited from the Mouth of Malice.-- Suffice it to say that I have had personal Proofs that till she was mine, she was pure & untouched: proofs which it would not be delicate to adduce.-  
- If she was seduced, I alone was her Seducer.

It may easily be believed that the Woman whom I so well love I would ever wish to render respected by all those whose good Opinion may be valuable: & if I were to consider Her as anything else than my Wife, I should confess that I was adding Insult to Injury. But she is truly & properly my Wife by all the Laws of God & Nature. She never can be made more so, by the mercenary Tricks of divine Jugglers; but yet, if a Million of Ceremonies, repeated Myriads of Times, by as many Successors & Imitators of Simon Magus, can serve to make her more happy, or more honourable, I am ready to pay them for their Hocus Pocus, for I am told that in this

Evangelical Age, "the Gift of God is" not "to be purchased" without Money.<sup>10</sup>

The house described here as 'a wooden cottage' was in Ridge, a small village in Hertfordshire near St Albans, some 13 miles outside London, and Wesley and Charlotte were to live there for the next four years. The decision to move here was on the face of it a bizarre one. It was probably prompted in the first place by Wesley's disenchantment with London, coupled with a desire to live out a rural idyll with Charlotte, far from the intrusive and censorious attentions of family and acquaintances. Another factor was no doubt his 'splendid Fortune of 150 Pounds a Year', which was - notwithstanding his dismissive comment - in fact quite sufficient to free him from the necessity of full-time work and hence the obligation to live in London.

If worries about the prospect of illegitimate children were the main factor in the family's attempts to persuade Wesley and Charlotte to marry, these must have increased after the move to Ridge. The issue soon became pressing, for early in 1793 Charlotte became pregnant. The impending birth of a child was evidently successful in inducing a change of attitude where repeated arguments and pleas from the family had failed: Wesley and Charlotte rapidly abandoned their previously cherished principles and married in early April. Not surprisingly, given the circumstances and the vehemence with which they had held their former position, the ceremony was quiet, not to say secretive: it was by special licence, thus obviating the need to call the banns, and not at Ridge but at Hammersmith, where presumably neither

Wesley nor Charlotte was known. None of Wesley's family was present, and they were not informed that the marriage had taken place until much later. Incredibly, in letters to Sarah of late August Wesley was still arguing his old position on the redundancy of the marriage ceremony and making no mention of the fact that he and Charlotte were now married.<sup>11</sup> It was not until the following January that Sarah could record that she had had their marriage 'confirmed' and had met Charlotte for the first time as her brother's wife.<sup>12</sup>

In this way Wesley and Charlotte embarked on married life. Their first child, Charles, was born on 25 September 1793. But the relationship which had thrived on ten concentrated years of family opposition before the marriage rapidly deteriorated after it. As early as October 1794, as Charlotte's confinement with a second child approached, Wesley was confessing to Sarah:

I love her, as you know, but the event has proved that she was never designed for my second self. I dwell on her virtues even now, and as little on her faults as she will let me. But where can esteem be for her or him who knows not to bridle the tongue?<sup>13</sup>

From this point, Wesley made no attempt to conceal his marital unhappiness from his family, and his letters to his mother and sister describe frequent quarrels, on occasion escalating into physical violence. Perhaps not surprisingly, his complaints about Charlotte's character and behaviour bore a great similarity to those expressed by his family before the marriage. By July 1795, he was considering separation as his only way of escaping a situation that he was finding increasingly intolerable, and predicting that Charlotte's



‘open violence’ would drive him ‘more speedily to comfort’ than he had previously expected.<sup>14</sup> Eighteen months later, he was confiding to his old friend James Kenton that life with Charlotte had adversely affecting his health: his memory was weakened, he was seldom calm, and he had aged a dozen years since the marriage. There was no arguing with Charlotte’s ‘diabolical, ungovernable, ferocious, ungrateful disposition’, and Samuel and Kenton were agreed that she was ‘incurable among lunaticks’.<sup>15</sup>

Despite repeated crises, resulting from time to time in periods of temporary separation, Wesley and Charlotte remained together until 1810. There may, of course, have been peaks of happiness to match the troughs of misery, and more settled and less uneventful times which went unrecorded in the family correspondence. For a while, at least, some of the strong attraction that had sustained their commitment through their ten-year courtship appears to have survived: in an undated letter from around this time, Charlotte confided to Sarah that Wesley had been ‘the love of her youth’, that she had loved him ‘better than mortal’, and that he had ‘taken too strong root’ for her ever to stop loving him, even though she considered that some aspects of his behaviour disgraced him.<sup>16</sup>

Musically, Wesley’s time at Ridge seems to have been almost entirely fallow. He continued with his teaching, but there is no evidence of him performing in public during the period, and apart from one major work (the Ode to St Cecilia) there were no further compositions of any significance.

By 1797, any attractions which Ridge may have once have possessed had evidently long since disappeared, and the Wesleys moved to Finchley:

now a suburb of London, but at the time still an outlying village. The move appears to have had a dramatic effect on Wesley's life. Participation in London musical life immediately became feasible, even if Wesley still needed on occasion to use the Marylebone house for overnight stays after evening engagements, as he had when he lived at Ridge. The change in Wesley's circumstances is apparent in a fresh crop of compositions. A number of glees, catches, and other small-scale vocal compositions points to his involvement with the world of the glee-clubs and other more informal private gatherings where professionals joined with amateurs for relaxed and convivial music-making.

After a long silence, Wesley was also once more composing Latin church music. His compositions of this period include such pieces as the ambitious eight-part settings of 'Deus Majestatis intonuit' and 'Dixit Dominus' and the five-part setting of 'Exultate Deo', all of them reflecting his by now considerable knowledge of English and continental Renaissance polyphonic styles. As with his earlier Latin church music, there is no evidence to link these works with any one location, but it is probable that they were written for the Portuguese embassy chapel, where the sixteen-year-old Vincent Novello had recently taken up the post of organist.

The rise in spirits that can be inferred from Wesley's sudden resumption of composition can also be seen in the earliest letters in this volume. Many are to Joseph Payne Street, a City businessman and a prominent member of the Madrigal Society, whom Wesley may have got to know through one or other of the glee clubs, or as a pupil. It was also at

around this time that Wesley renewed his acquaintance with the music historian Charles Burney, and laid the foundations of a friendship that would continue until Burney's death in 1814.

Wesley's one large-scale work of the period was his Confitebor tibi, Domine, an hour-long setting for soloists, chorus, and orchestra of Psalm 111, which he completed in August 1799. The Confitebor is the most successful of Wesley's large-scale choral works, combining choruses in the 'ancient' Handelian manner with florid solo sections in a more modern idiom in a manner which demonstrates Wesley's easy mastery of both styles. As with the earlier Ode to St Cecilia, we know nothing about the circumstances of its composition, and can only speculate on the plans that Wesley may have had for its performance. It seems most likely that he wrote it with performance at one of the Lenten oratorio concerts in mind. If so, he may have intended it for the 1800 Covent Garden season, following the belated first performance of his Ode to St Cecilia there in February 1799. What is less certain, however, is how acceptable a setting of a Latin sacred text would have been at an oratorio concert at this time, and it may have been for this reason that plans for its performance eventually foundered.

The abortive Confitebor project notwithstanding, it is clear that by 1799 Wesley was seeking to establish himself in London professional musical life. In the spring of 1798 he had applied unsuccessfully for the post of organist at the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, where the musical traditions inaugurated during the lifetime of Handel still continued. His failure to be elected on this occasion was one of many similar disappointments throughout

his life, and appears to have had nothing to do with his abilities or his fitness for the post: his reputation as an organist, and particularly as an extempore player, was by this time well established. In April 1800 he appeared at one of the earliest performances in England of Haydn's The Creation at Covent Garden, playing continuo and performing his own recently-composed D major organ concerto between the Acts. In addition, his most recent music was beginning to appear in print: a set of twelve sonatinas for piano was published in late 1798 or early 1799, followed around two years later by a further set of piano sonatas and duets.

A more determined effort to break into London musical life was the ill-starred series of subscription concerts at the Tottenham Street rooms that Wesley and his brother Charles arranged in early 1802. It was for performance at one of these that Wesley composed his Symphony in B flat, his only mature work in the genre, and a piece which, like the Confitebor, amply demonstrates Wesley's familiarity with the late music of Haydn. Contemporary information on the concert series is sparse, consisting only of a single press advertisement and a letter to Burney which gives details of the programme of one of the concerts and expresses Wesley's regret that they had not been able to engage the services of the soprano Elizabeth Billington.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, it is clear from subsequent correspondence that the series was an expensive and embarrassing failure which cost Wesley and Charles around £100 each.

Notwithstanding the performance of the Ode to St Cecilia, a few concert appearances, and the promotion of the Tottenham Street series, it



cannot be said that Wesley was a major figure in London's music at this time: the picture is one of isolated events rather than of sustained activity. A large part of the reason no doubt lay in his continuing mental health problems, the cyclical nature of which must have made any long-term career development difficult if not impossible. At the same time, his relationship with Charlotte continued to be stormy. Family letters, not always precisely datable, reveal a long catalogue of quarrels and unhappiness around the turn of the century, culminating in Wesley's love affair in or around 1799 with Ann Deane, a close friend of his sister Sarah. The result, in the autumn of 1801, was a separation from Charlotte and a serious rift with Sarah, followed by an extended period of depression which appears have been at its most severe in the summer of 1802 and to have rendered Wesley for a time incapable of any but the most routine activities. The house at Highgate, where he and Charlotte had moved from Finchley in 1799, was sold, and for a while nothing is known of Wesley's activities, either private or public.

Wesley and Charlotte appear to have had some sort of rapprochement in the spring of 1805, and it was probably at around this time that they moved into the house in Arlington Street, Camden Town that they were to occupy until the final breakdown of their marriage in 1810. Another child, Emma Frances, was born in February 1806, joining Charles, now 13, and John William, born in the summer of 1799 and now almost 6. But although differences had been patched up and accommodations reached for the moment, the relationship was evidently as highly charged as before, and as likely to turn to acrimony and violence. The Roman Catholic bluestocking Mary

Freeman Shepherd, who had known Wesley since his boyhood and had been his confidante at the time of his conversion in 1784, took a jaundiced view of the relationship. Learning in January 1806 of Charlotte's impending confinement, she remarked contemptuously in a letter to Wesley's sister Sarah: 'his wife I find is ready to lay in. By and by they will be quarrelling again, like cats that fight when they cease caterwauling.'<sup>18</sup>

With the move to Camden Town and the birth of Emma Frances, some degree of domestic normality appears to have returned, although Wesley's depression continued. He was dissatisfied with his lot as a musician, in particular the school teaching by which he was obliged to make his main living. He was also plagued with money worries - some of them no doubt the result of the domestic problems of the previous few years - and could no longer afford to maintain Charles at St Paul's School, where he had placed him only the previous year. For the moment he felt himself trapped by debt and a heavy load of family responsibilities, and his mood was one of grim resignation. In a letter of April 1806 to his mother he set out the grounds for his discontent:

It is absolutely impossible for me to maintain myself & four other People (not reckoning the infant) upon my present Income, especially when it is considered that the Person whose sole Care & Business ought to be to make the most of every Thing, is & ever will be, a thoughtless, not to say a determined Spendthrift. If another School, equal in Emolument to Mrs Barnes's were to offer (which is not very likely) even then the

Matter would not be mended, because the simple Fact is that my Head & Nerves will not bear the Drudgery of more Dunces assaulting my Ears for six Hours together. It is not that I am averse from Employment; no, not of the closest Kind, for those who know me best know that Application has been my Delight; but this contemptible, frivolous Work of hammering Sounds into blockheads, which at last they never rightly comprehend, is an Avocation, which I cannot increase, without driving myself either into Madness or Ideotism.<sup>19</sup>

This shows Wesley at his most despairing. Other letters of the period show him in a happier and more active frame of mind. By mid-January 1807, he was able to profess himself in a letter to his mother 'much more recovered' in bodily health than he ever expected to be.<sup>20</sup> Although elsewhere in the letter he expresses more gloomy thoughts, the tenor of the whole is cheerful enough, and his letter of the same date to his brother Charles (included in this volume) extends to eleven pages of lively news and gossip. The contrast with the despairing letters of the previous year could not be stronger. At around the same time as Wesley's reconciliation with Charlotte and the resumption of a more settled domestic life was an event which was both to transform his professional fortunes and to give him a cause into which to concentrate his considerable energies: his discovery of the music of J. S. Bach.

Although Wesley may have come across a few isolated examples of Bach's music earlier in publications by A. F. C. Kollmann, William Shield,

and Clementi which appeared between 1796 and 1800, they do not seem to have made very much of an impression on him. Nor does he appear to have encountered the three continental editions of the '48' published around 1801, copies of which presumably arrived in England shortly afterwards. In fact, according to his account in his Reminiscences, Wesley's first encounter with Bach's music was through a copy of the '48' lent to him by the violinist and composer George Frederick Pinto. The fact that the loan was from Pinto fixes the date with some precision: it was probably some time in 1805, and in any case cannot have been later than early 1806, as Pinto died at the early age of 20 on 23 March of that year. No doubt as a result, Wesley subsequently made his own manuscript copy from a copy lent to him by the flautist John George Graeff.<sup>21</sup> Thereafter, for the moment, his interest appears to have lain dormant.

The explosive awakening of Wesley's interest in Bach's music can be dated to the late summer or early autumn of 1807. It was around this time, as we know from a celebrated letter, that Wesley wrote to Burney to tell him about his enthusiasm for Bach, subsequently visiting him at Chelsea College to play examples from the '48' to him. As a result of Wesley's advocacy, Burney became an enthusiastic convert to the Bach cause, and Wesley came to rely on him for advice on how Bach's music could best be promoted. By April 1808 Wesley was asking Burney for his opinion on the likely demand for an English edition of the '48', to be published by subscription. As a result of Burney's advice that Bach's music might be 'played into fashion',<sup>22</sup> Wesley arranged an evidently successful concert of Bach's music at the Hanover



Square Rooms on 11 June. At the same time, Wesley consulted Burney on the advisability of lecturing on Bach, and in another letter recounted his success in playing Bach while on a visit to Cambridge.<sup>23</sup>

From August 1808 to the following December the main source of information on Wesley's activities in promoting Bach is contained in his letters to Benjamin Jacob, organist of the Surrey Chapel. First published in 1875 in an edition by Wesley's daughter Eliza as Letters of Samuel Wesley to Mr Jacobs, relating to the Introduction into this Country of the works of John Sebastian Bach, the Bach Letters are the most widely known of Wesley's letters. With their excitable tone, extravagant language, and all-pervading use of religious imagery, they convey Wesley's enthusiasm for Bach at its height. In addition, they are an invaluable source of information on the day-to-day progress of the English Bach movement at a crucial early stage.

In the earliest letter of the collection Wesley proposes the formation of a 'junto' of Bach enthusiasts and a programme of concerted action to counter the resistance to Bach's music that he was evidently encountering among more conservative musicians, including his brother Charles.<sup>24</sup> A month later he gives Jacob his celebrated account of the conversion of Burney to the Bach cause.<sup>25</sup> Subsequent letters contain a wealth of information on a number of Bach-related activities: the projected publication by Wesley and C. F. Horn of an English translation of Forkel's biography of Bach,<sup>26</sup> their edition of the organ trio sonatas,<sup>27</sup> and Wesley's insertion of an arrangement of a Bach fugue in a performance of one of his own organ concertos at a music festival at Tamworth.<sup>28</sup> Letters of late 1809 contain details of encouraging sales of the

organ trios, which Wesley and Horn had been issuing in individual numbers since the spring of that year, and in a letter which is probably addressed to C. F. Horn, a report of strong public demand for their proposed new edition of the '48'.<sup>29</sup> There is also discussion of plans for a large-scale recital of Bach's music at the Surrey Chapel, to include one or more of the Violin Sonatas in addition to Preludes and Fugues from the '48', and evidence of a strong pro-Bach lobby among the London banking community.<sup>30</sup> Other letters show Wesley taking care to keep Burney fully informed of the progress of his activities, and on occasion arranging private performances of Bach's music for him at his apartments in Chelsea. One such was in September 1809, when Wesley on the violin and Jacob on the piano performed one or more of the violin sonatas;<sup>31</sup> another was in July 1810, when Wesley and Novello performed the Goldberg Variations on two pianos, one of which had to be specially moved into Burney's apartments for the purpose.<sup>32</sup>

It was during this exceptionally busy period that the final breakdown of the Wesleys' marriage occurred. Although details are sparse, it is clear that the immediate cause was Wesley's liaison with his domestic servant or housekeeper Sarah Suter, at the time fifteen or at most sixteen years old. The final separation, no doubt precipitated by the discovery of Sarah's pregnancy, was in early 1810, whereupon Wesley and Sarah set up house together. They were to live together unmarried until Wesley's death. Samuel Sebastian, their first child, was born on 14 August 1810, followed by six further children over the next 20 years.

Wesley's abandonment of his wife and family for his teenage servant

was naturally a great scandal. Divorce was not a practical possibility at this time for any but the wealthy, and Wesley and Charlotte thus had no option but to remain married. As Charlotte outlived him, Wesley's relationship with Sarah Suter remained irregular until the end, and all their children were illegitimate. In 1812 a Deed of Separation was drawn up which put the separation on a formal basis and awarded Charlotte annual maintenance of £130, an amount which probably represented around a third of Wesley's income at the time.<sup>33</sup>

Little is known about Sarah Suter, and she remains a peculiarly shadowy figure. In accordance with Wesley's compartmentalization of his life, she is mentioned only rarely in the letters in this volume. Wesley's early biographers, anxious to maintain propriety, make no mention of her and the twenty-seven years that she and Wesley lived together, even though their relationship must have been common knowledge. Almost the only documentary evidence of her existence is a series of forty-two letters that Wesley wrote to her over a period of twenty years between 1810 and 1830 and which now forms part of the collection of family manuscripts, letters, and papers bequeathed to the British Museum by Eliza in 1895.<sup>34</sup> From these, it is apparent that Wesley enjoyed a measure of domestic stability and contentment with Sarah and their many children that had been lacking in his marriage to Charlotte.

The incident of the Goldberg Variations performance marks the entry of Vincent Novello into the correspondence and provides the first evidence of his friendship with Wesley. Wesley may in fact have known Novello since a

good deal earlier, but his absence from the letters until 1810 suggests that Wesley's closer association with him did not begin until around this time.

From May 1811, Wesley's letters to Novello dominate the correspondence. By this time, Wesley was acting as Novello's assistant at the Portuguese Embassy chapel, and in this capacity needed to be in frequent contact with him to discuss arrangements for the chapel's music, particularly on those occasions when Novello was absent and Wesley deputized for him. This appears to have been how the correspondence began, and many of the early letters are largely if not entirely concerned with one aspect or another of the music of the chapel.

But Portuguese Embassy chapel matters account for only part of the contents of the letters to Novello, which over the next five years contain a host of details of Wesley's increasingly crowded life as a performer, composer, concert organizer, reviewer for the European Magazine, and teacher. In addition, they chronicle the continuing story of Wesley's promotion of Bach, often now with Novello as his partner in duet performances of the organ music. Finally, they show Wesley's promotion of his own music, both at his annual benefit concerts and at the Covent Garden Lenten oratorio concerts, where he was organist from the beginning of the 1813 season.

This appointment immediately put Wesley at the heart of London's concert world and gave him a markedly higher public profile. The period from 1813 to 1816 marked the peak of Wesley's career, when for the first time, and in his mid-forties, he at last achieved a central position in London's



musical life. In addition he was busy making the social contacts, both within and outside the profession, which were vital if his career was to prosper. In May 1812 he had been appointed masonic Grand Organist, a position which involved him in regular contact with many in the highest reaches of London society. In June 1815 he was appointed to full membership of the recently founded Philharmonic Society and in November of the same year became a Director, subsequently playing a significant role in the affairs of the Society.

The letters of this period also show Wesley's involvement in music-making outside London. For Wesley, as for most of his fellow-musicians in the capital, London offered concert engagements for only part of the year. After the main winter season and the series of self-promoted or benefit concerts that followed it, the season petered out in June. But part of the off-season period could be filled by concert engagements out of London, principally on the provincial music festival circuit. Such festivals, in towns and cities such as Norwich, Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool, provided provincial audiences with their only opportunities to hear large-scale choral and orchestral music performed by professional forces, mostly drawn from London.

Wesley's first involvement with this world had been in 1809 in Tamworth, and he had subsequently been invited to direct the 1811 Birmingham festival. On both of these occasions he would have been engaged by a local committee for a set fee and possibly a share of box-office takings. But he also on occasion promoted his own concerts. A speculative visit in September 1812 with Samuel Webbe II to Ramsgate and Margate on this basis

narrowly escaped failure, largely because of a lack of local knowledge and poor forward planning.<sup>35</sup> Wesley had happier experiences in East Anglia, however, where a visit to the Ipswich festival in July 1813 at the invitation of his old friend Charles Hague was followed by successful visits to Norwich in 1814, and to Norwich and Great Yarmouth in 1815.

SW's long run of success came to an end in August 1816. Early in the month an infant child had died, just as he was preparing to go to Norwich for a third concert visit. This event appears to have set in train a rapid deterioration in his mental and physical health which eventually culminated in a serious breakdown the following May.

Although Wesley managed to set off for Norwich, he collapsed on the way and never arrived. The loss of the £100 that he was expecting from the trip plunged him into a financial crisis which no doubt compounded his mental problems. By early October, in an attempt to regain his health in the purer air of what was still a country area, he had moved out of the family home into lodgings in Hampstead. A few isolated letters from this time chart his decline and his increasing reliance on Novello to deputize for him in his teaching.

In spite of everything, however, Wesley was for the moment still continuing to work: he was able to fulfil his teaching commitments for most of the time, and was at his usual place at the organ for the Covent Garden Lenten oratorio concerts in February and March 1817. But his health was evidently continuing its downward spiral. The crisis came on 6 May, when, imagining himself to be pursued by creditors set on him by Charlotte, he flung himself from an upper-storey window. According to his sister Sarah's account,

written a few days later, the fall was '25 feet, upon stones', and his injuries were so severe that he was given only hours to live.<sup>36</sup>

Wesley's fall and subsequent incapacity turned what was already a serious financial situation into a desperate one. He was now completely out of action for the foreseeable future, and he and his family - by this time consisting of Sarah Suter, Samuel Sebastian and Rosalind, aged 2 or 3, - faced the prospect of immediate and total financial ruin.

It was at this point that William Linley and some of SW's other musical and masonic friends stepped in. Their immediate priority was to cope with the aftermath of the fall, but they soon also needed to consider how best to manage what was evidently going to be a protracted period of illness and convalescence. Eventually the decision was taken to place Wesley in Blacklands House, Chelsea, a private lunatic asylum. He remained there until late June 1818, when he was pronounced cured and discharged.<sup>37</sup>

Wesley wrote few letters during his illness, and the period from his breakdown until his recovery around 1823 is particularly poorly documented. Nonetheless, it is clear that by late 1818 he was attempting to pick up the threads of his career. In a letter to Novello he enquired about the appropriate level of payment for a copying job which William Hawes had asked him to undertake, no doubt out of kindness.<sup>38</sup> By the beginning of the 1819 season he was back in action at the Covent Garden oratorio concerts, his place during the previous season having been taken by Jacob. But he was for the moment only partly recovered, and for some time to come his spirits were low.

Wesley's breakdown had had a disastrous effect on his finances.

Arrangements painstakingly built up over a period of years were disrupted, some never to return. In his absence, other musicians no doubt gladly stepped into his shoes, and many of his pupils would have found other teachers. For the next few years, Wesley would need to take work wherever he could find it, however menial. Two affecting letters to Novello show him begging for copying work of any sort, literary or musical<sup>39</sup>, one of them eliciting the comment from Novello that he was placing it on record as

an eternal disgrace to the pretended Patrons of good music in England, who could have the contemptible bad taste to undervalue & neglect the masterly productions of such an extraordinary Musician as Sam Wesley, and who had the paltry meanness of spirit, to allow such a real Genius ... to sink into such poverty, decay and undeserved neglect, as to be under the necessity of seeking employment as a mere drudging Copyist to prevent himself from starvation!

Notwithstanding letters such as these, the picture was not entirely negative, and Wesley was gradually able to resume some of his former activities and to take on some new ones. In June 1819 he applied to R. M. Bacon, proprietor of the recently launched Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review, with an enquiry about work on the journal,<sup>40</sup> and in October 1821, amidst protestations of his lack of ability as a composer, he composed a Latin Magnificat setting for a projected publication of Novello's.<sup>41</sup> A different side to his activities is shown in letters of 1822 to the wealthy Irish landowner Walter McGeough concerning the arrangements of music that he was making



for the barrel organ that McGeough had commissioned for his new house in Co. Armagh.<sup>42</sup>

Perhaps the clearest sign of Wesley's return to health was his composition of his Anglican Magnificat and Nunc Dimittis in late 1822. These two settings were companion-pieces to the Te Deum and Jubilate that he had written as long ago as 1808, and completed a full Anglican morning and evening service. They were first performed at St Paul's on Christmas Day 1823, just as the Te Deum and Jubilate had been on the same day fifteen years earlier. No doubt as a result of favourable comments received on this occasion, Wesley decided early in 1824 to publish the full Service by subscription. Proposals were issued in February, the Service received two complete performances at St Paul's in April, and was published in October.

By the time of the publication of the Service, Wesley's recovery was complete and he was once more playing an active part in London's musical life. As before, he was making a living from a number of different activities, of which performing and teaching were the most important. Some of his former activities had disappeared, however, and the pattern of his employment was now rather different from before his illness.

One activity which did not survive Wesley's illness was his musical journalism. It is one of the greatest ironies of Wesley's career that his illness in 1817 had exactly coincided with the preparations for the launch, and the launch itself, of the Quarterly Musical Magazine and Review (QMMR), London's first long-run music journal. Had Wesley been in good health during this crucial period, his strong opinions, trenchant prose style, and existing

experience in musical journalism would no doubt have ensured him a role of some sort in the new journal. In the event, by the time Wesley had sufficiently recovered his health to be thinking about writing for QMMR, its organization was well established and a team of contributors headed by William Horsley was in place.

Another casualty of Wesley's illness was his involvement with the Philharmonic Society. As we have seen, for a short time in 1815 and 1816 Wesley had played a prominent part in the Society's affairs in a way which suggests that he had become firmly established as a member of the most influential group of musicians in London. His motet 'Father of Life' had been performed at one of the Society's concerts in April 1816, and he was no doubt looking forward both to further performances of his music and to his own continuing participation as a performer and, on occasion, as the director. He could also have been confident that the contacts with his fellow-directors would be fruitful in other ways not directly connected to the Society. All of this ceased with his breakdown. His membership appears to have lapsed at the time of his illness, and he never subsequently rejoined. He performed at no more of the Society's concerts, and no more of his music was included in its programmes.

In the absence of further information it is impossible to do more than speculate on the reasons for the severing of relations with the Philharmonic Society. In the years following his breakdown Wesley must have cut a sorry figure, and it is possible that his former fellow-directors, always concerned with respectability and the reputation of their fledgling organisation, would

have been unenthusiastic about reinstating his lapsed membership, let alone restoring him to his former position on the board. It is also possible that there was a quarrel or a more general cooling of relations with the Society or with some of its leading members.

Whatever the truth of the matter, Wesley's absence from the Philharmonic Society and its concerts is indicative of a more general change in his position in London's concert life. Before his illness he had been fully involved in all the activities of a busy freelance musician: a hectic schedule of oratorio and other concerts in London during the season, supplemented with appearances at provincial music festivals and other out-of-town concerts during the off-season. After his recovery, much of that involvement is missing. Although he continued to play at the Covent Garden oratorio concerts, he was now appearing increasingly as a solo recitalist rather than as a soloist in choral and orchestral concerts. Perhaps in consequence of a reluctance to undertake the necessary travelling, he was also undertaking fewer engagements out of London, and he seems entirely to have given up his involvement with the provincial music festival scene. Later in the decade, he would once more venture out of London for concert engagements: to Birmingham in May 1828, to Leeds in September of the same year, and finally to his native Bristol in September 1829, but for the moment he appears to have been content to remain close to home.

This change in direction may have been the result of a deliberate choice. Wesley was always ambivalent about the music profession and his own role in it and frequently scathing about his fellow-professionals. He may now

have felt wearied with large-scale concerts and have decided to concentrate as much as possible on solo recitals and lectures, where contact with other musicians could be kept to a minimum. But other factors may also have contributed. Wesley, always conservative by temperament, must have felt increasingly out of place in the transformed London concert world of the 1820s, which featured music by a new generation of composers and the extended visits of Rossini and Liszt in 1824 and of Weber in 1826. One looks in vain in the letters for anything but brief and derogatory comments on these composers and their music. It is clear that by the mid-1820s Wesley was no longer making any attempt to keep up with modern developments.

One area in which a conservative outlook was no disadvantage was Anglican church music, and it is not surprising to find Wesley turning his attention once again to church appointments. As early as 1821 he had been an unsuccessful candidate for the new parish church of St Pancras, and further unsuccessful applications to St Lawrence, Jewry in January 1823 and to St George's, Hanover Square in February 1824 followed. In May 1824, he was appointed organist at Camden Chapel, a new church in the St Pancras parish. This was by no means a prestigious appointment for one of Wesley's abilities, and the salary of £63 per annum was not princely, but it was no doubt a welcome addition to the family finances.

For the 1820s, as for earlier periods, Wesley's output of letters is a good indicator of his general health and level of activity. The trickle of letters of 1822 and 1823 increased dramatically in 1824, and by 1825 had reached a spate comparable to the high points of the period immediately before his



illness. As before, most were to Novello, and although the subject matter is varied, two topics occur again and again: Wesley's reactions to reviews of his Service, and the protracted negotiations with the University of Cambridge over the granting of permission to publish music from the Fitzwilliam collection. As Wesley's discussion of these matters occurs in a fragmentary fashion over a number of letters and a considerable period of time, it may be helpful to summarize the sequence of events here.

Wesley's Service was first reviewed in the January 1825 number of the Harmonicon, following its publication the previous October. The anonymous reviewer was on the whole respectful and deferential, acknowledging Wesley's learning and distinction as a church musician, and commending the overall high quality of the music. At the same time he permitted himself some criticisms of infelicities in the harmony, commenting on one progression that it included 'the chord of the 7th and 2nd in an extremely bare, crude, state, and to our ears very cacophonous, though Dr. Blow might have enjoyed it much.' Wesley was outraged by these criticisms and immediately planned a reply, to be published if possible in a future number of the Harmonicon, or, failing that, elsewhere. Perhaps surprisingly, he had no idea who had written the review, although he quickly discovered that Thomas Ayrton, Thomas Attwood, and William Crotch were considered to be the most likely authors.<sup>43</sup> By 27 January he had finished his reply and was ready to submit it to the Harmonicon, although with no great confidence that it would be printed. When in time the Harmonicon declined to publish it, Wesley discussed with Novello the possibility of placing his reply in a number of other journals,

including the Examiner, the Gentleman's Magazine, and, eventually, the News of Literature and Fashion. None of these negotiations came to anything.

Even as Wesley was still attempting to secure a reply to the Harmonicon review, the Service received its second review, in QMMR.<sup>44</sup> The new review was three times the length of the earlier one, and far more detailed in its comments. It was also, after its initial courtesies, decidedly more hostile, containing many detailed criticisms of specific points of harmony in a manner very close to that practised by Wesley himself in his European Magazine reviews. Although Wesley seems not to have known who had written it, his enquiries soon revealed that it was generally thought to be by Horsley, and Wesley accordingly wrote an 'inquisitorial line' to him on the subject in late April.<sup>45</sup> Unsurprisingly, Horsley denied any involvement, but Wesley by now had few doubts that he was the author, and Horsley's reply did nothing to persuade him otherwise.<sup>46</sup> In fact, given Horsley's position as Bacon's leading associate on QMMR and its chief reviewer of church music, his authorship of the review cannot ever have been seriously in doubt to anyone familiar with the journal's organization.

Even after the appearance of the QMMR review, Wesley still tried to find a publication which would be prepared to print his reply to the original Harmonicon review. Despite the growing staleness of the topic, he was eventually successful, and his article eventually appeared in the Literary Chronicle in June. It was presumably its polemical tone and panache rather than the precise details of its content that secured its appearance, for the Literary Chronicle did not generally include articles on music, and five

months on from the original review the matter must have lost any topical interest it ever have had for the journal's readership.

Meanwhile, Wesley was seeking to gain separate redress for the injustices done to his reputation in QMMR. As with the Harmonicon, his first attempt was to try to have a reply published in QMMR itself, and to this end he wrote to Bacon in August 1825.<sup>47</sup> Following Bacon's refusal to comply with his demands, Wesley turned to Novello's friend (and future son-in-law) Charles Cowden Clarke, claiming that Clarke was 'the only man to give my paper to the world' and hoping that Clarke's contacts in the world of periodical journalism would help to find it a home.<sup>48</sup> Clarke seems to have used his good offices on Wesley's behalf with Henry Southern, the editor of the London Magazine, and for a while Wesley was confident that his article would appear in the November number. All, however, came to nothing,<sup>49</sup> and it was at this point, almost eleven months after the appearance of the Harmonicon review, that Wesley tacitly admitted defeat and allowed the matter to drop.

Wesley was also involved in smaller and less complicated publishing ventures throughout the 1820s, much as he had been before his illness. Most of these publications, which included a number of organ voluntaries, involved the outright sale of the copyright to the publisher, thus avoiding the capital investment and risk involved with self-publication.

Perhaps emboldened by his experiences with the Service - or at any rate, aware of the healthy profits that could be made from such ventures - Wesley was soon considering plans for future publications. A further possible



opportunity almost immediately presented itself. In December 1824 the University of Cambridge had set up a syndicate to consider how parts of the important collection of music manuscripts bequeathed to the University in 1816 by Lord Fitzwilliam might be published. Following an invitation from the University to catalogue and examine the collection and recommend possible schemes of publication, Novello visited Cambridge in late December 1824 and early January 1825 and duly submitted his catalogue and report.<sup>50</sup> The Senate considered these on 18 March and immediately granted a Grace which gave Novello permission to publish any parts of the collection that he should think fit, but at his own expense and at his own risk. Novello made at least one further visit to Cambridge in the course of the year to work on the publication, and the first part of his five-volume selection, consisting entirely of sacred choral music by Italian composers of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, was published as The Fitzwilliam Music in December 1825 or January 1826.<sup>51</sup>

It must have quickly become apparent to Novello as he examined and catalogued the Fitzwilliam collection that it contained material for more than one selection, and it was not long before Wesley was enquiring whether the University would consider granting him permission to publish his own. Wesley's initial enquiries appear to have been made in late April or early May 1825 through the Hebrew scholar Daniel Guilford Wait, at this time in Cambridge cataloguing the oriental manuscripts in the University Library; how he and Wesley had come to know each other is not known. The matter needed careful handling in the light of Novello's continuing work on his own



selection, and Wesley was anxious to avoid any appearance of underhandedness. As can be seen in the letters of 1825, he consulted with Novello at every stage of the negotiations and kept him fully in touch with their progress. An early stage in the negotiations is marked by a letter of 11 May from Wait, in which he reported that he had discussed the matter with Thomas Le Blanc, the Vice Chancellor. Le Blanc had given his opinion that the Senate would be likely to grant Wesley the necessary permission, but not until Novello had completed his own selection;<sup>52</sup> he had also advised that Novello should provide Wesley with a letter of recommendation, making it clear that he was aware of and had no objections to Wesley's plans.

This was the background to Wesley's visit to Cambridge in June 1825. Although he had not as yet been granted formal permission to publish by the University, Wesley was confident that it would eventually be forthcoming, and was evidently already making a start on his transcriptions. It was important that his work did not duplicate that of Novello, and accordingly he wrote to Novello to ask for a list of all the pieces that Novello was intending to publish, and a confirmation that he was not proposing to include any music by Paradies or Scarlatti.<sup>53</sup> As is clear from a letter to his son Samuel Sebastian, Wesley was similarly occupied on a second visit to Cambridge in late July and early August, and was already anticipating a healthy financial return from his activities.<sup>54</sup>

Although Wesley's preoccupation with the critical reception of the Service in F and his negotiations with the Cambridge authorities over the publication of the Fitzwilliam music loom largest in the letters of 1825, these

were far from being the only matters concerning him. In terms of organ playing, he was as busy as he had ever been. In February and March he was involved once more as organist in the Covent Garden Lenten oratorio concerts, and he now also had a regular Sunday commitment at Camden Chapel. At the same time, as we know from a letter to Mary Ann Russell, he was making piano reductions for music published by the Royal Harmonic Institution, and thus too busy to have any part in performing the same task for her proposed edition of her late husband's oratorio Job.<sup>55</sup> Less than a month later, however, presumably after her failure to find others prepared to carry it out, he agreed to take on the arrangement single-handed.<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, Wesley's financial and personal problems continued. On 7 May Charlotte had him arrested and briefly imprisoned in a debtors' prison, doubtless for non-payment of maintenance. It is a mark of Wesley's recovered health that he seems to have viewed this evidently distressing experience as no more than a temporary nuisance.<sup>57</sup>

The Fitzwilliam project was not the only large-scale publishing venture that Wesley was pursuing during the summer of 1825: he was also thinking about the possibility of publishing the still unperformed Confitebor. He had already remarked to Novello that it was the 'least imperfect' of his compositions, and the one which might have a chance of success if published;<sup>58</sup> he was now proposing to take the matter further.

The lack of performance of the Confitebor was a major stumbling block to its successful publication, as few people would be prepared to subscribe for a piece they had not heard, no matter how glowingly it was

presented in the prospectus. Accordingly, during his Cambridge visit Wesley arranged a performance with Novello in a four-hands arrangement on the organ of Trinity College chapel before an invited audience. This was an experiment, designed to allow him to gauge public response without financial risk, and to help him make up his mind about the likely success of a subsequent full-scale performance in London, to be followed in due course by publication if there were sufficient demand. As Wesley was able to report to Samuel Sebastian, the response was encouraging, and several subscriptions appeared to be assured from among the audience.<sup>59</sup> On his return to London, he arranged to have a paragraph written by himself inserted in The Examiner describing the Cambridge performance and its enthusiastic reception, and announcing that the Confitebor would be performed in the following year's Lenten oratorio season.

Wesley's more immediate thoughts, however, were on his projected publication of selections from the Fitzwilliam collection. During the summer, as we have seen, he had been sufficiently confident that permission to publish would be forthcoming to make a start on his own transcriptions. In September, however, he received news from Wait of complications which threatened the granting of the Grace. In the absence of the relevant letter from Wait and other crucial parts of the correspondence it is impossible to establish the full details of what was evidently a complex situation. It appears, however, that some members of the Senate were concerned about the apparent clash of interest between Wesley and Novello, and were unhappy about granting Wesley permission to publish a selection which might appear to be

in competition with Novello's own. Faced with the threat of such a major upset to his plans and the prospect of the transcriptions he had already made going to waste, Wesley contemplated writing directly to the Vice Chancellor to put his case. It is not known if he did in fact do so, and if he did, what effect his letter had. In a later attempt to resolve the situation, Wesley wrote to ask Novello if he would be prepared to state that his intention was to publish music only from Italian composers, and that he was happy for others to publish selections from composers of other schools. Such a declaration would make it clear that Wesley's publication was not in any way in competition with Novello's. Whether this suggestion came from Wesley himself or from the University authorities, Novello acceded to it, and included a statement along the lines suggested by Wesley in his Preface to the Fitzwilliam Music.

Novello's declaration appears to have had the desired effect, and Wesley was duly granted his Grace by the Senate on 1 March 1826. But the agreement may not have represented what either Novello or Wesley had originally intended. Novello may originally have had long-term plans to publish music by English or German composers which he was now not able to carry out; in particular, he may have hoped to explore some of the riches of the collection's Handel manuscripts. Conversely, Wesley may have originally been intending to publish music by Italian composers. In the summer of 1825, as we have seen, he had music by Paradies and Scarlatti in his sights, and he may have spent time in the summer transcribing music by these and other Italian composers. If this was the case, all this work was now



rendered useless.

It has been plausibly suggested that the Fitzwilliam affair caused a rift between Wesley and Novello. It certainly marked the end of their correspondence, which ceases abruptly at the end of 1825. That such a rift may have occurred is suggested by a letter from a correspondent signing himself 'Jubal' in the June 1826 number of the Harmonicon. By this time, Wesley had issued proposals for his own Fitzwilliam Music, and 'Jubal' felt it incumbent on him to draw some aspects of the situation to the attention of the readers of the Harmonicon. He found it strange that Wesley should be intending to publish a selection of music from the Fitzwilliam collection so soon after Novello's own, and insinuated that this behaviour was a betrayal of Novello's friendship and generosity in introducing him to the Fitzwilliam collection in the first place. As can be seen from Wesley's letters of 1825, Jubal's grasp of the situation was imperfect and his accusations of treachery were unfounded and malicious; nonetheless, his letter would have been sufficiently plausible to have been believed by those disposed to think badly of Wesley, especially if it was known that there had been some sort of quarrel or cooling of relations as a result of the Fitzwilliam affair.

No copies of Wesley's proposals have survived, but it is clear that the intended first volume was to have been an edition of fifteen antiphons from Byrd's Gradualia, which Wesley had transcribed from an 18th-century score in the Fitzwilliam collection. The Byrd publication never appeared, for reasons explained by Wesley over four years later in a long and revealing letter to Joseph Payne Street: despite a lively interest in the publication and

a healthy subscription list of over two hundred names which would have guaranteed a profit on the venture, and the completion of nine of the plates, Wesley was unable to find sufficient money to pay his engraver for the remainder of the work.<sup>60</sup>

Wesley did not go into details in his letter to Street about the nature and cause of his financial problems. It is apparent from family letters, however, that in the summer of 1826 he was being particularly hard pressed by his creditors, while at the same time himself being owed money from a number of quarters. His first priority was to cast around for short-term loans to avert the threat of immediate imprisonment for debt. Under these circumstances, finding additional money to pay his engraver would have been out of the question, and the project was accordingly shelved.

Part of the reason for Wesley's financial problems may have been the expenses incurred in his Confitebor performance, which had finally taken place on 4 May, the projected performance as part of the Covent Garden Lenten oratorio season having failed to materialize. Despite the involvement of singers of the calibre of Mary Ann Paton and Henry Phillips, at presumably heavy expense, the Confitebor appears to have aroused little interest or subsequent comment in the press beyond a brief paragraph in the Harmonicon, and Wesley seems for the moment to have abandoned his plans to publish it.

In September 1826, with financial crises held for the moment at bay, Wesley was able to make a further visit to Cambridge to continue his examination of the Fitzwilliam manuscripts. He had now turned his attention to the extensive collection of Handel autographs, and was confident that

everything he was transcribing was unpublished and would 'therefore prove an entire novelty'.<sup>61</sup> His most profitable find on this visit was completely unexpected: a single sheet of Handel's autograph containing three tunes by Handel to well-known hymns by his father. This link between Charles Wesley and Handel was hitherto unknown, and Wesley correctly saw that the hymns would be of great interest, especially to Methodists. Moreover, as the hymns were already familiar to Methodist congregations, the newly discovered Handel tunes could be put to immediate use in Methodist chapels. Publication of the hymns could be done cheaply, quickly, and easily, and there was every likelihood of large sales.

Wesley was sufficiently confident of the commercial possibilities of the hymns to have the hymns engraved even before sounding out his few contacts in the Methodist community. His first approach was to Elizabeth Tooth, a close friend of his brother and sister and a member of a prominent Methodist family whose links with the Wesleys went back to previous generation. A week later, probably at Tooth's suggestion, he also wrote to the Revd Thomas Jackson, the Methodist Connexional Editor and editor of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. This letter, although apparently not intended by Wesley for publication, conveniently set out the background to the hymns and was included by Jackson in the December number of the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine. It must have done much to publicize Wesley's edition, which appeared by the end of November.

This was in fact the first of two editions by Wesley of the hymns. Containing only a title page and three pages of music, it would have cost little

to produce, and the high price of 1s. 6d would have ensured good profits. But the format, consisting only of the melody and bass and the words of the first verse of each hymn, was not as useful as it might have been. At the suggestion of friends Wesley prepared a second edition, this time containing a four-part harmonization of the tunes and the words of all the verses. This appeared in March 1827.

One consequence of Wesley's contact with Jackson over the Handel hymns was an opening up of relations with the Methodist congregation at City Road Chapel. For most of his adult life, Wesley had had no dealings with Methodism, and his links with Roman Catholicism and his irregular private life had for long made him an embarrassment in Methodist circles. With the publication of the Handel hymns, however, came friendly overtures from the Methodists, leading to an invitation to attend the annual breakfast for the children of the Methodist preachers there on 3 May.<sup>62</sup> It was probably through the same process that Wesley was invited to open the organ at Brunswick Chapel, Leeds, in September 1828.<sup>63</sup>

The success of the Handel hymns and the establishment of friendly relations with Jackson also prompted Wesley to turn his attention to other ways in which he could make the most of his name and family background. One obvious option was to compose tunes of his own for the hymns currently in use in Methodist congregations. As with the Handel Hymns, Wesley moved quickly: less than a month after a first exploratory letter to Jackson in late April 1828, he was writing again to announce that he had composed the tunes and to offer the copyright to the Book Room Committee.<sup>64</sup> As the Book Room



minutes reveal, this proposal was turned down, and Wesley proceeded to publish at his own expense: a more risky, but a potentially more profitable course of action. The Original Hymn Tunes, adapted to every Metre in the collection by the Rev. John Wesley were published by late August<sup>65</sup>, and received a glowing review in the Wesleyan Methodist Magazine in October, where the writer hoped that the publication would obtain a large share of the public attention, 'a distinction to which it is justly entitled'.<sup>66</sup>

After the cessation of the letters to Novello at the end of 1825, it becomes more difficult to chart Wesley's activities in any detail. As we have seen, some letters of 1825 and 1826 document his publishing ventures; others of the period concern arrangements for various lecture courses in early 1828. At the same time, family letters reveal a partial rapprochement with his brother and sister, occasioned perhaps by Sarah's declining health. After Sarah's death in September 1828, however, information from family letters largely disappears too. As his surviving letters show, Charles Wesley junior had little taste or aptitude for correspondence. Wesley's contacts with him had never been extensive, and after Sarah's death appear to have been almost non-existent.

The final events in Wesley's public career took him back to his native Bristol. In September and October 1829 he gave a number of organ recitals there, including three at St Mary Redcliffe, the parish church, when he was joined by Samuel Sebastian, now aged 19 and at the beginning of his own career. Wesley's powers were evidently still undiminished. The local organist Edward Hodges ecstatically described his playing as

the most wonderful I ever heard, more even than I had before been capable of conceiving; the flow of melody, the stream of harmony, was so complete, so unbroken, so easy, and yet so highly wrought and so superbly scientific, that I was altogether knocked off my stilts .... I walked home afterwards, but my head was full of naught but Samuel Wesley and his seraphic genius .... He is the Prince of Musicians and Emperor of organists.<sup>67</sup>

In the following January Wesley returned to give a course of lectures at the Bristol Institution. Both this and the earlier visit were probably arranged through Wait, who in addition to his Cambridge connections was curate of Blagdon, near Bristol. The second also involved Hodges, at whose house Wesley stayed during part of his visit.

In the summer of 1830 Wesley was incapacitated by another severe attack of depression. A subscription was arranged by a group of his musical and masonic friends led by John Capel, MP, Linley, and Novello,<sup>68</sup> which no doubt helped to alleviate the inevitable financial hardship for Wesley and his family. By now, Samuel Sebastian was approaching 20 and had probably left home, but there were still five children to be supported: Rosalind, aged around 16, Eliza (11), Matthias Erasmus (9), John (5), and Thomasine (1); in addition, Sarah Suter was pregnant with another child.<sup>69</sup>

Although depression seems to have affected Wesley for some of the time during his final years, he appears to have continued to teach, to compose, and to publish. There are even a few signs of him attempting to

return to public performance. In March 1834 he wrote to suggest himself as a director of one of the concerts of the Handel Commemoration, to be held at Westminster Abbey in the June of that year. Whether or not this was a proposal that he expected to be taken seriously, he was not appointed. His last public appearance was in August 1834 at a Sacred Harmonic Society concert, when he accompanied a performance of his anthem 'All go unto one Place', written for the memorial service for Charles, who had died earlier in the year.

Little is known of how Wesley and his family managed financially during his final years: with extreme difficulty, on the evidence of the letters to Thomas Jackson which are among the last in this volume. Wesley had renewed his contacts with Jackson following the death of his brother, when the annuity granted to his mother by the Methodist Book Room in respect of the copyright of his father's hymns descended to him as the last surviving member of the family. As the Secretary of the Book Room, it was Jackson's responsibility to make the small weekly payments.

By 1836, perhaps at the suggestion or with the encouragement of Sarah Suter and their children, Wesley wrote his manuscript Reminiscences, in which he recorded on scraps of paper all he could remember of his life in music. Although containing much of interest, the Reminiscences are anodyne in style and completely lack the outspokenness and sardonic wit of the letters, while the laboriousness of the handwriting and the frequent repetitions show all too clearly how much Wesley's physical and mental powers had declined. The same manuscript also contains passages of historical writing, clearly written with publication in mind and relating to Wesley's last piece of

published work, an article entitled 'A Sketch of the State of Music in England, from the year 1778 up to the Present Time', which appeared in the first number of The Musical World on 18 March 1836. In fact the article only covered the period up to around 1800, and was intended to be continued in a subsequent number. The second instalment never appeared, however, possibly because of factual errors and other inadequacies in the first, or because of Wesley's inability to provide a satisfactory sequel.<sup>70</sup>

Wesley appears to have had a remarkable recovery of health shortly before his death. In July 1837 he wrote out from memory the full score of his Ode on St Cecilia's Day of 1794, which he believed to have been lost. On 12 September he was taken by Eliza and Rosalind to Mendelssohn's recital at Christ Church, Newgate Street. Afterwards, as Mendelssohn recorded:

Old Wesley, trembling and bent, shook hands with me and at my request sat down at the organ bench to play, a thing he had not done for many years. The frail old man improvised with great artistry and splendid facility, so that I could not but admire. His daughter [Eliza] was so moved by the sight of it all that she fainted and could not stop crying and sobbing. She believed she would certainly never hear him play like that again; and alas, shortly after my return to Germany I learned of his death.<sup>71</sup>

This was the last time that Wesley left his house. He died on 11 October after a short illness and was buried on 17 October at Marylebone parish church, where his father, mother, and brother were also interred. The



service was attended by many of the leading figures in the London church music and organ world, including a large body of singers who sang the music of the burial service to settings by Purcell and Croft, concluding with 'His body is buried in peace, but his name liveth for evermore' the words adapted from Handel's Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline. Directing the proceedings was James Turle, organist of Westminster Abbey and a former chorister at the Portuguese Embassy chapel under Wesley and Novello.<sup>72</sup>

1. Charles Wesley senior's account of the musical talents of his two sons, as given to Daines Barrington, was included in Barrington's Miscellanies (London, 1781), 291-310, and forms the basis for much of the following paragraphs.
2. Rylands, DDCW 6/93Q.
3. See Philip Olleson, 'The Wesleys at Home: Charles Wesley and his Children', Methodist History, 36 (1998), 139-52.
4. See Simon McVeigh, Concert Life in London from Mozart to Haydn (Cambridge, 1993), 199-201; Deborah Rohr, 'A Profession of Artisans: The Careers and Social Status of British Musicians, 1750-1850', Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1983.
5. Rylands, DDWES 14/65, quoted in Lightwood, 51-52.
6. Obituary in The Times, 12 Oct. 1837.
7. SW to Jacob, 5 Nov. [1809].
8. Sarah Wesley to SW, 27 May 1791 (Emory).
9. SW to Sarah Wesley, 5 June [1791] (Fitzwilliam).
10. SW to Sarah Gwynne Wesley, 7 Nov. 1792 (Rylands, DDWF 15/5).
11. SW to [Sarah Wesley], [22 Aug. 1793] (Rylands, DDWF 15/6), selectively quoted in Lightwood, 84.
12. Sarah Wesley, 'Mercies of the Year 1794', entry for 18 Jan. 1794 (Emory).

13. SW to Sarah Wesley, 26 Oct. 1794 (Emory).
14. SW to Sarah Wesley, [8] July 1795 (Fitzwilliam).
15. SW to Kenton, 18 Jan. 1797, typescript copy (private collection); location of original unknown.
16. Charlotte Wesley to Sarah Wesley, undated [1795-7?] (Drew).
17. SW to Burney, [Feb.-May 1802].
18. Mary Freeman Shepherd to Sarah Wesley, 15 Jan. 1806 (Rylands).
19. SW to Sarah Gwynne Wesley, 21 Apr. [1806] (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 11).
20. SW to Sarah Gwynne Wesley, 15 Jan. 1807 (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 15).
21. SW to Graeff, 21 May [1806?].
22. Quoted in SW to Burney, 23 June [1808].
23. SW to Burney, 7 July 1808.
24. SW to [Jacob], 13 Aug. [1808].
25. SW to Jacob, 17 Sept. 1808.
26. SW to Jacob, 17 Oct. 1808.
27. SW to Jacob, 3 March 1809.
28. SW to Jacob, 25 September 1809.
29. SW to [C. F. Horn?], c. 30 Sept. 1809.
30. SW to Jacob, [24 November 1809].
31. SW to Jacob, 4 Sept. [1809] and [30 Sept. 1809?].
32. SW to Burney, 17 July 1810.
33. Rylands, DDCW 6/88. For private separation at this time, see Lawrence Stone, Road to Divorce (Oxford, 1990), 149-82.
34. BL, Add. MS 35012.
35. SW to Novello, 1 Oct. [1812].
36. Sarah Wesley to William Wilberforce, [c. 12 May 1817] (Emory); see also Sarah's diary entry for 6 May 1817, quoted in Lightwood, 183.
37. Charles Wesley's pocket book, 25 June 1818 (Dorset Record Office): see Betty

- Matthews, 'Charles Wesley on Organs: 2', MT, 112 (1971), 1111-12.
38. SW to Novello, 17 Nov. [1818?].
  39. SW to Novello, 20 Nov. [1820], 27 Nov. 1821.
  40. SW to Bacon, 5 June 1819.
  41. SW to Novello, 2 Oct. [1821], 9 Oct. 1821.
  42. SW to McGeough, 12 Oct. 1822, 11 Nov. 1822.
  43. SW to Novello, 27 Jan. [1825].
  44. QMMR, 7 (1825), 95-101.
  45. SW to Novello, [27 Apr. 1825].
  46. Ibid.
  47. Not preserved, but see SW to Novello, [12 Aug. 1825] and [19 Aug. 1825].
  48. SW to Novello, 31 Aug. 1825.
  49. SW to Novello, 23 Nov. 1825.
  50. Novello to Thomas Le Blanc, 27 Jan. 1825 (Cambridge). The catalogue is not preserved.
  51. Preface dated Dec. 1825; reviewed Harmonicon, Feb. 1826. Subsequent parts appeared at intervals through 1826 and early 1827.
  52. Wait to SW, 11 May 1825 (BL, Add. MS 11729, f. 258): see SW to Novello, 15 May [1825], n. 2.
  53. SW to Novello, 21 June 1825.
  54. SW to Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1 Aug. 1825.
  55. SW to Mary Ann Russell, 16 April 1825.
  56. SW to Novello, 10 May [1825].
  57. Ibid.
  58. SW to Novello, 9 Oct. 1821.
  59. SW to Samuel Sebastian Wesley, 1 Aug. 1825.
  60. SW to Street, 25 May 1830.
  61. SW to Sarah Suter, [13 Sept. 1826] (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 61).

62. SW to Sarah Wesley, 29 Apr. 1827 (Fitzwilliam); SW to Charles Wesley jun., [4 May 1827] (Fitzwilliam).
63. SW to Sarah Suter, [10 Sept. 1828] and 13 Sept. [1828] (BL, Add. MS 35012, ff. 50 and 73).
64. SW to Jackson, 21 Apr. 1828 and 17 May 1828 (Rylands, DDWes 6/31 and 6/32).
65. SW to Upcott, 20 Aug. [1828].
66. Quoted in Lightwood, 211.
67. Quoted in Lightwood, 215.
68. For the text of the printed circular, see Lightwood, 219-20.
69. Robert Glenn Wesley, born 21 November 1830.
70. Olleson, 1111.
71. Diary entry for 11-12 Sept 1837: see Peter Ward Jones (trans. and ed.), The Mendelssohns on Honeymoon: The 1837 Diary of Felix and Cécile Mendelssohn Bartholdy together with Letters to their Families (Oxford, 1997), 103.
72. The Times, 18 Oct. 1837.



## **TEXTUAL INTRODUCTION**

### **The Manuscripts and their Provenance**

The survival of any corpus of letters depends on a combination of factors, amongst which are the fame of the writer, the presence of family members or others with strong preserving habits, and pure chance. In the case of Wesley's letters, an unusually large number of which has survived, we have principally to thank three individuals - Wesley's elder sister Sarah, his daughter Eliza, and his friend and colleague Vincent Novello. Also involved were the family connection with Methodism, the highly distinctive character of Wesley's handwriting, and his attractive literary style, all of which made his letters eminently collectable.

Wesley's sister Sarah was responsible for the amassing and preservation of an extremely large collection of letters of her father, mother, and other members of the family, including many family letters to and from Wesley himself. After her death the full collection was sold to the Book Room attached to the Methodist chapel in City Road, London, where it was over the years augmented by similar materials from other members of the family and from others. At a later stage some of the collection was dispersed. Today, its two largest portions are to be found in the Methodist Archives and Research Centre at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester (where it moved from City Road in 1977), and at Emory University, Atlanta, Georgia. Further letters by Wesley identifiable as having originally formed part of this collection can be found in a number of other libraries, including the

Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, and in private collections.

Eliza, Wesley's second daughter by Sarah Suter, did much after his death to keep his memory alive and promote his music. Like her aunt, but for rather different reasons, she was assiduous in preserving family letters and other memorabilia, and was responsible for the collection of letters to her mother and to other members of Wesley's second family which she bequeathed to the British Library along with large quantities of autograph manuscripts of her father's music.

As Wesley's closest professional colleague and friend over a long period, Vincent Novello was the recipient of a large number of letters from Wesley between 1811 and 1825. Many, particularly the most ephemeral, must have been discarded, but in 1840 he donated over 170 letters to the British Museum, describing them in his covering letter as all he could at that time find, and continuing:

As these curious specimens of Mr Samuel Wesley's singular talent for the more familiar and quaintly humorous style of letter-writing may probably be considered very acceptable and interesting to some future musical historian, Mr Novello is desirous of confiding them to the safe custody of the Museum to preserve them in such manner as to render them easily accessible to those of his brother Professors who may wish to consult them for the purpose of ascertaining what were the exact opinions of so superior a musical Genius, upon various subjects connected with English Composers, Performers and

Musicians in general, during the latter part of Mr S. Wesley's career. The only stipulation which Novello makes in presenting these original Mss to the British Museum is that nothing shall be published from them of a personal nature, during the Lifetime of any of the individuals relative to whom Mr S. Wesley has expressed any opinion in the course of the correspondence.<sup>1</sup>

Among other smaller collections of letters are those to Benjamin Jacob, largely on the subject of the introduction of J. S. Bach's music into England (the Bach Letters). Published in an edition by Eliza in 1875, they have long been familiar to students of the English Bach Movement; the originals are now at the Royal College of Music. Other small groups of letters in separate collections at the British Library are those to Joseph Payne Street and to Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower.

Very few letters to Wesley have survived, and it is clear that he made no attempt to preserve his routine social and professional correspondence. On the other hand, a considerable number of letters to him from his father, mother, brother, and sister are contained in the collection amassed by Sarah, and it appears that Wesley not only preserved this correspondence but later returned it to Sarah at her request.

### **Publication History**

Only a small proportion of Wesley's surviving letters has been published. A few, taken from the still complete collection at City Road, were

included in the first extended biographical account of Wesley, which appeared anonymously in four numbers of Wesley Banner and Revival Record for 1851.<sup>2</sup> Many of these subsequently appeared in the chapter on Wesley in Stevenson's Memorials of the Wesley Family (1876), the exceptionally close similarity with the Wesley Banner account suggesting that Stevenson had written this too. Meanwhile, in April 1875 the letters to Jacob had appeared at auction and had been acquired by Novello's. Little more than a month later, individual letters began to appear in Concordia, a short-lived weekly Novello publication edited by Joseph Bennett (1831-1911). At the same time, Eliza was losing no time in preparing her edition, which appeared later in the year, probably at some time in the summer.<sup>3</sup>

The publication of the Bach Letters appears to have triggered a renewal of interest in Wesley and his music, much of it instigated by Eliza; other later advocates were F. G. Edwards (1853-1909), editor of the Musical Times, and W. Barclay Squire (1855-1927), librarian of the printed music collections of the British Museum. A further landmark came in 1894 with James Higgs's paper to the Musical Association.<sup>4</sup> Written with the assistance of Eliza, who was present at the meeting, it drew its material not only from previously published accounts and the letters to Novello, but also from Wesley's manuscript lectures and from his letters and his Reminiscences, which Eliza had made available to him.

Another important stage in Wesley biography, if not in the actual publication of the letters, was marked by the appearance in 1899 of Edwards's contribution on Wesley in DNB. By this time, Eliza had died and had



bequeathed all the manuscripts relating to her father to the British Museum. Included were the family letters to her mother and other members of Wesley's second family. For wholly understandable reasons of tact and propriety, Sarah Suter's role as Wesley's partner over a period of twenty-seven years and the mother of seven children who had survived to adulthood had been omitted from all biographical accounts, apart from a very oblique mention in Memorials of the Wesley Family.<sup>5</sup> By now, however, Wesley's letters to Sarah were publicly available, and Squire felt himself able to include the bare statement that Wesley had formed a relationship with her 'around 1809', and that he had several children by her, including Samuel Sebastian and Eliza.

Subsequent interest in Wesley's letters has been small. In 1917 Squire published a small selection of Wesley's letters to Novello and others in Musical Quarterly article,<sup>6</sup> but no attempt was made to publish a larger selection of these or any other of Wesley's letters, lying readily available and in great abundance in the British Museum and at the Methodist archives in City Road. James T. Lightwood drew upon some of hitherto unpublished letters, including some of those to Sarah Suter, in his Samuel Wesley, Musician (1937), thus providing for the first time in print a full acknowledgement of her position in Wesley's life. Since then, some further letters have been quoted in studies of various aspects of Wesley's music.

## **Editorial Method**

### **(a) The basis of selection**

Within its terms of reference, this edition aims at completeness: that is, it includes all known letters by Wesley to correspondents outside his immediate family, from 1799 to 1837, irrespective of their subject matter. A letter is understood as a communication written to a private recipient or recipients; accordingly, letters written for publication, whether as letters to the press and journals, or as epistles dedicatory, are not included.

Wherever possible, the original text or a photocopy or microfilm has been consulted. Printed sources have been used where the present location of the original is not known or where it was not available for consultation. Letters known only from their descriptions in sale catalogues are also included, with a summary of their contents.

Some letters to family members are also included where the subject matter is entirely or predominantly music. One such is Wesley's long letter to his brother Charles of 15 January 1807, in which Wesley addresses Charles as much as a fellow-professional as a brother. To omit this letter (the longest in this volume) on the grounds that it is to a family member would be perverse. Other letters not included in this edition but containing important references to music are cited, and where appropriate, selectively quoted, in the annotations.

The concentration on the non-family letters, and thus broadly speaking on Wesley's professional and social life, has inevitably led to the exclusion of

most of Wesley's most intimate and revealing correspondence. The letters in this volume offer comparatively few insights into his relationships and dealings with his mother, brother, and sister, his wife Charlotte, with Sarah Suter, and his children by both Charlotte and Sarah. This side of Wesley's life will, I hope, be revealed in time by a second, parallel edition of family letters, forming the second part of his complete correspondence. In the meantime, I have attempted in the Biographical Introduction to set the letters of the present volume in the total context of Wesley's life.

#### **(b) Editorial Conventions**

Each letter is headed by the name of the recipient, the place of writing, and the date. Names of recipients, dates, and places supplied by the editor are enclosed in square brackets. This is followed by a description of the letter: ALS (autograph letter, signed); AL (autograph letter, not signed); ANS (autograph note, signed); AN (autograph note, not signed); L (neither autograph nor signed); followed by its number of pages and its location. Manuscript and folio numbers have been included where this aids identification. Where appropriate, a note gives the condition of the letter: whether incomplete, damaged, or mounted. There then follows a transcription of the address panel (if any), together with any postmarks, docketings, and endorsements. Where the identity of the recipient is not specifically stated in the letter or its address portion, a note gives the reason for the identification. For undated or incompletely dated letters, a note gives the dating reason, as derived from the addresses of Wesley and/or the recipient, any postmarks or

watermarks, and the content of the letter. Letters which have proved impossible to date with confidence have been placed in an Appendix in approximately chronological order, with the range of their possible dates noted.

Wesley's spelling, use of capital letters, and punctuation have been retained. No attempt has been made to reproduce either the varying lengths of long dash with which Wesley frequently ends a sentence or the placing on the page of his complimentary closes, and these have been standardized. Editorially supplied material is placed in square brackets. Editorial conjectures of passages missing in the text are placed within angle brackets (< >); missing passages are indicated by an ellipsis within angle brackets, a note giving the extent of the omission.

Dates of birth and death in annotations sometimes take the form '1758/9'. This form indicates a date derived from statements in obituaries or other sources of age at death.

### **(c) The Wesley Sourcebook**

The edition has been based on an examination of all Wesley's known correspondence and personal papers. In its later stages it has proceeded side by side with the preparation, with Michael Kassler, of A Wesley Source Book (Ashgate, forthcoming), part of which consists of a calendar, with detailed summaries, of all Wesley's correspondence, including letters to him and concerning him. Work on this project has enabled the letters in the edition to be dated and interpreted with far greater accuracy than would have been the



case if they had been considered in isolation. Readers will be able to find in the Sourcebook summaries and locations for all letters not included here.

#### **(d) The annotation**

Because of the circumstances in which they were written - in many cases to colleagues with whom Wesley was in regular, often daily, contact, and fulfilling the function of a present-day telephone conversation or email message - the letters are often highly allusive and compressed, and on occasion pose considerable problems of interpretation. My aim has been to explain as many of Wesley's references and allusions as possible, in sufficient detail to allow comprehensibility. Some annotations are inevitably extensive. In Wesley's letter to Vincent Novello of 27 January 1825, for instance, his throwaway comment that the theatre manager Robert Elliston 'would have extorted £2000 from poor Kean if he had not risked his, & 5000 more Peoples' Lives on Monday Night' required a particularly long note to explain the background, and why it was feared that Edmund Kean's appearance at Drury Lane on this occasion might have occasioned a riot.

In the case of individuals, two factors have guided the amount of annotation: their importance in the letters, and the extent of their fame. Those who have only walk-on parts in the letters receive less annotation than those who play an important role, and those well known from other contexts receive less attention than the more obscure. More generally, the principle that I have adopted is a familiar one: in the words of Alvaro Ribeiro, 'to explain obscurities adequately and to hold a decent silence with regard to the

obvious'.<sup>7</sup> But - and as Ribeiro goes on to say - it is often difficult to say what the obvious is: this is dependent on the presumed interests and knowledge of the reader, so that a level of annotation appropriate for one reader may be too little for a second, and too much for a third. As Samuel Johnson put it in the Preface to his edition of Shakespeare:

It is impossible for an expositor not to write too little for some, and too much for others. He can only judge what is necessary by his own experience; and how long soever he may deliberate, will at last explain many lines which the learned will think impossible to be mistaken, and omit many for which the ignorant will want his help. These are censures merely relative, and must be quietly endured.<sup>8</sup>

1. Copy at BL, Add. MS 11729, f. 1.
2. 'Memoir of Samuel Wesley, the Musician', Wesley Banner and Revival Record, 3 (1851), 321-8, 361-70, 401-11, 441-53.
3. Eliza's Preface is dated 11 May 1875.
4. J. Higgs, 'Samuel Wesley: his Life, Times and Influence on Music', Proceedings of the Musical Association, 20 (1893-4), 125-47.
5. Stevenson makes no mention of Sarah Suter in the text of his chapter on SW, but she is included in the pull-out genealogy of the Wesley family at the front of the volume.
6. W. B. Squire, 'Some Novello Correspondence', MQ, 3 (1917), 206-42.
7. Burney, Letters I, xxxiv.
8. Quoted in Burney, Letters I, xxxiv.

To Joseph Payne Street<sup>1</sup>

[Ridge]<sup>2</sup>, 21 February 1797

ALS, 1 p. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street | N. 17 | Mark Lane | Tuesday. paid.

Pmk: 21 FE 97

Endorsed by Street: S. Wesley | Feby 21 1797

Dear Sir

I have received a Letter from our Friend Vincent,<sup>3</sup> stating that he is at present sustaining an Attack of the Rheumatism, nevertheless he hopes to be able to join our Party on Friday,<sup>4</sup> if there be possibility of venturing so far as Paddington.-- I hear that young Danby<sup>5</sup> will be among us, so that we shall not be left quite desolate, in case of a Disappointment in the first Instance.

The principal Motive of this Letter is to acquaint you that I am desirous of singing over a Miserere which I have composed, several Years ago, for two Voices, and I think you and I could manage it very well.<sup>6</sup>-- Perhaps you would like to con it a little previously; therefore if you will favour me with a Line, by Thursday next, informing me where it may be left for your Perusal on Friday Morning, you may depend upon my conveying it to you for that purpose.

We expect to assemble in the Evening by 7 at the latest, when I hope we shall all meet, free from Coughs, Hoarseness, or any other vocal Obstacles to Perfection.

Believe me

truly yours

S Wesley

Tuesday 21. Feb<sup>y</sup> 1797

1. Joseph Payne Street (c.1770-post 1848), an amateur musician friend of SW. On the evidence of remarks in this and later letters, he was a businessman in the City: probably the J. Street who appears as a stockbroker in London directories of this time. He and his family were for at least three generations prominent members of the Madrigal Society: he was elected to membership on 13 Oct. 1795 and was until 1848 the society's librarian; his son Joseph Edward and grandson Oscar were also secretary in their turn. He was a member of the social circle of R. J. S. Stevens, and is frequently mentioned in Stevens's Recollections. This letter is the first of eleven to him from SW, donated to the BL by Mrs Hilda L. Whittaker, his great-granddaughter, in 1971. Some manuscripts in his hand containing music by SW and others are also at the BL (Grove!; under 'Madrigal Society'; Argent).
2. SW had been living at Ridge, a small village near St Albans, Hertfordshire, some 13 miles from London, since Oct. 1792. He moved to Finchley, probably in order to be closer to London, some time in the summer of 1797.
3. Either J. Vincent or Zelophead Wyeth Vincent, both of whom are listed as male altos in Doane.
4. On Friday. 24 Feb. 1797; the party was to be held at the home of Mrs Deane at the Manor House, Paddington (see next letter).
5. Probably Eustace Danby (1781-1824), the nephew of the Roman Catholic composer and organist John Danby (c.1757-1798).
6. 'Miserere mei, Deus', for alto, bass, and organ. SW's autograph, dated 7 Apr. 1792, is at BL, Add. MS 14342; an undated copy in the hand of Street is at BL, Egerton MS 2571.



**To George Polgreen Bridgetower<sup>1</sup>**

**Chesterfield Street<sup>2</sup>, 23 February 1797**

AL, third person, 1 p. (BL, Add. MS 56411, f. 7)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower | N. 20 | Eaton Street | Pimlico

M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Wesley presents his best Compliments to M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower, requesting the Favour of his Company, if he should not be better engaged, to a little musical Party among a few Friends To-morrow Evening, which will meet at M<sup>rs</sup> Deane's,<sup>3</sup> near the Church, Paddington. M<sup>r</sup> Wesley is conscious of presuming upon M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower's Indulgence, in consequence of so slight an Acquaintance, and can only say in excuse of the Liberty he takes, that M<sup>r</sup> B. may freely command S.W's Services upon a similar Occasion.

If M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower should oblige S. W. and his Friend so far as to acquiesce in their Request, and will have the Goodness to return a Line by the Bearer, informing at what hour M<sup>r</sup> B could suffer his violin to be brought, a proper & careful Porter shall attend for that purpose.

Chesterfield Street Marybone. Thursday Feb. 23<sup>d</sup> 1797.

M<sup>rs</sup> Deane | Manor House | Paddington | near the Church.<sup>4</sup>

1. The violinist George Polgreen Bridgetower (?1779-1860), the son of an African father and a European mother, was first heard in England in 1790, when he came under the patronage of the Prince of Wales (later the Prince Regent and George IV), who arranged for him to be taught the violin by Barthélemon and Jarnovick, and composition by Attwood. He is best remembered as the violinist for whom Beethoven

wrote his Sonata in A, Op. 47 (later dedicated to the French violinist Rodolphe Kreutzer and known as the 'Kreutzer Sonata'), which he and Beethoven first performed in Vienna in May 1803 (F. G. Edwards, 'George P. Bridgetower and the Kreutzer Sonata', MT, 49 (1908), 302-8; Betty Matthews, 'George Polgreen Bridgetower', MR, 29 (1968), 22-6).

2. During his time at Ridge, and later when he was living at Finchley and Highgate, SW used the family home at 1 Chesterfield Street (now Wesley Street), Marylebone, as a convenient London base, staying overnight there as necessary.
3. A family friend. SW's love affair with her daughter Anne, a particular friend of his sister Sarah, around 1799 gave rise to much family ill-will and an estrangement with Sarah.
4. The Manor House, north of the churchyard, was purchased by the parish in 1810 and demolished in 1824 to allow the enlargement of the churchyard (J. S. Cockburn, H. P. F. King, and K. G. T. McDonnell (eds.), A History of the County of Middlesex, 9 vols. (Oxford, 1911-95), ix. 187)

To Thomas Merryweather<sup>1</sup>

[Chesterfield Street]<sup>2</sup>, 6 March 1798

ALS, 1 p. (Foundling Hospital, A/FH/A06/001/051/21/1)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Merryweather | Secretary's Office | Foundling Hospital

Pmk: 6 MR 98 Penny Post Pd 1d Marybone

Sir

It being my Intention to offer myself as a Candidate for the Vacancy of Organist at the Foundling Chapel,<sup>3</sup> I shall esteem myself much obliged by a Line of Information concerning the Nature of the Duty &c directed either to N. 1 Great Chesterfield Street, Marybone, or to Church End, Finchley;<sup>4</sup> remaining, with Respect

Sir

your very obed<sup>t</sup> humble Servant

S. Wesley

P.S. Had I not been under the Necessity of going out of Town early To-morrow, I would have waited upon you in Person.

Tuesday. March 6. 1798

1. Thomas Merryweather (d. 1799), Secretary to the Foundling Hospital from 1790 to his death (Nichols and Wray, 412).
2. It is evident from the postmark, which bears the Marylebone stamp, that SW wrote this letter from his mother's house.
3. The Foundling Hospital (now the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children) was founded in 1742 by Thomas Coram, a retired sea-captain, for the benefit of children

abandoned by their parents. Its chapel had a long and distinguished musical history. In its early days Handel was a generous benefactor: he gave annual performances of his music in the chapel from 1749, donated an organ in 1750, and left the autograph score of Messiah to the hospital in his will (Nichols and Wray; Ruth K. McClure, Coram's Children: The London Foundling Hospital in the Eighteenth Century (New Haven and London, 1981)). The vacancy had been created by the resignation of the blind organist Tom Grenville.

4. SW had moved from Ridge to Church End, Finchley, in or around July 1797. He lived there until some time before the end of January 1799, when he moved to Highgate.



To [William Seward]<sup>1</sup>

[Finchley, 16 June 1798]

ALS, 3 pp. (Sotheby's, 6 July 1977, Lot 389; present whereabouts unknown)

SW transmits the text of an advertisement he has had published, thanking those who voted for him in the recent election for the post of organist at the Foundling Hospital. He states that he 'doubts not that their kind & liberal Exertions would have been attended with good Success had the Election been fairly conducted'.<sup>2</sup> He emphasises that he fears no vote of censure that the Governors might choose to put on it, and while regretting that he has expended so much time and trouble on an object of no importance, he trusts that Seward will think him no 'Coxcomb for thinking that my Rejection has been rather the Charity's Loss than mine'. He includes the text of a satirical ballad entitled 'The Organ Laid Open' in which he comments on the affair, and which he says 'has lately appeared printed by Wornum, at the Music Shop in Wigmore Street, Cavendish Square'.<sup>3</sup>

1. The name of the addressee of this letter is given as 'Sewart' in Sotheby's sale catalogue, but it is evident from its contents that it is in fact to William Seward (1747-99). In his Reminiscences, SW commented: 'many years ago, when I was a candidate for the place of organist to the Foundling Chapel, William Seward, Esq., the biographer and intimate friend of the great Dr Johnson, interested himself very warmly in my favour, invited me to his apartments at Richmond, and there gave me the kindest reception possible. He also introduced me there to all his numerous and brilliant acquaintances, to the late Duke of Queensbury, and a large circle of the most

eminent and celebrated characters then in being.' A poem entitled 'Lines addressed to Mr Samuel Wesley on his visiting Mr. S-- at Richmond, a second time, in the Summer of 1798', unsigned but evidently by Seward, appeared in the 'Helicon Bag' section of the Whitehall Evening Post, 21-2 Aug. 1798; it was reprinted the following month in the 'Drossiana' section of EM together with a short paragraph describing SW's prowess as an extempore player (EM, 34 (1798), 161-2).

2. After a long appointment process, during which the eight candidates were required to play the services on successive Sundays, there was an election and John Immyns was appointed on 9 May. SW suspected, probably correctly, that Immyns's appointment came about largely through the patronage of Joah Bates, one of the Governors (Nichols and Wray; Foundling Hospital Minute Books (Foundling Hospital)).
3. 'The Organ laid open, or, The True Stop Discovered, a New Song', beginning 'Come all my brave boys who want organists' places'. The text, which comments scurrilously on the part in the affair played by 'Jo Bates', is given in Lightwood; the autograph is at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. SW and Immyns were friends, and SW did not bear Immyns any personal ill-will for having been appointed instead of him. According to Lightwood, Immyns composed an equally scurrilous rejoinder to SW's ballad, which Lightwood declines to quote as being 'not suitable for reproduction'; he does not give its location, and it has not been discovered (Lightwood, 92-3).

To [Christian Ignatius Latrobe]<sup>1</sup>      [Highgate, post 22 February 1799]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (Rylands)

Dear Sir

I have known enough of Printers to be but little surprised at the Delay of your Work:<sup>3</sup> but a Pleasure delayed is not therefore lost: nay, rather often enhanced thereby, when we obtain it.

Good comes out of Evil. Though 40 Names are fewer by some Fifties than I wish added to your List of Subscribers, yet perhaps, had not this typographic Disappointment happened, your Desire of ending a troublesome Job might have induced you to bring the Publication forward with so much less of Advantage to yourself.<sup>4</sup>

I am grieved more than Words can declare in being obliged to beg you to withdraw one Name from those I gave You; a Name which, till very lately, I thought I had every Cause to respect, & whose Person & various good Qualities I still do & always shall love. Poor M<sup>r</sup> Bazley<sup>5</sup> is the unfortunate Man whom you have seen announced in the Papers as having committed a Fraud upon Hamet & Esdaile in Lombard Street, in whose House he had been for upwards of 16 Years. If there be a Man for whose Integrity & strict Principle of Justice I would have answered sooner than for most others, it was Bazley.-- The little we can know of our Neighbour's Perseverance in Right, should make us tremble at the Danger of Error to which we are hourly exposed.-- Thomas à Kempis<sup>6</sup> well says, "He rideth easily enough, whom the

Grace of God carrieth." Without the kind, restraining Hand of an almighty Parent, what poor Wretches we all are!

I thank you for D<sup>r</sup> Burney's<sup>7</sup> very handsome Note,<sup>8</sup> which shall be safely returned, & most willingly if you could make up your Mind to come hither & fetch it. I know your Pressure of Engagements, and therefore do not add my Pressure of Invitation; but nevertheless, as I sometimes make Time to see a Friend, I am not without Hopes that you will resolve upon some such Feat before long.-- I am a very accessible Personage on most Wednesdays & Saturdays, & on the first of these that may happen to suit you, I shall be very ready to grant you an Audience, even without a Fee to the Porter.

I was introduced to D<sup>r</sup> Jowett<sup>9</sup> many Years ago, at Cambridge, where I remained a Week;<sup>10</sup> but probably he may have forgotten me long ere now. I remember also M<sup>r</sup> Jowett (his Brother, I think),<sup>11</sup> a very musical Man, with whom I sang Glees & Catches: they were both great Lovers of Harmony.<sup>12</sup>

I have no present Appetite for a Doctorship,<sup>13</sup> & altho' Cambridge, as an antient Seat of Learning & true Worth must be ever an interesting & beloved place of one, whose Ancestors were distinguished by both,<sup>14</sup> yet I doubt whether the Station of musical Professor would not prove nearly as laborious as that at which I am now posted.-- How much Fatigue may be lightened by a Weight of Honour, may perhaps be a Question worthy to be proposed at the next public Disputation. I have an old fashioned Prejudice about Honour, namely that I cannot help thinking it consists not in what a Man is called, but what he is.

I have another odd Whim about Professorships, & Successorships. I



hate the thought of waiting for dead Men's Shoes.-- I had almost as soon die  
in my own.--

Believe me,

yours, dear Sir, with great Esteem & Regard,

S Wesley

P.S. When you next pass Birchall's Shop,<sup>15</sup> pray tell him to hand you over a  
copy of my newly published Sonatinas;<sup>16</sup> they are very trifles, sed Datorem  
non Datum considerabis.<sup>17</sup>

1. The identity of the addressee of this letter as the prominent Moravian minister, composer, and editor of music Christian Ignatius Latrobe (1758-1836) is established by the reference to Burney's 'handsome note' (see n. 8). After initial education and a subsequent period of teaching at the Moravian college at Niesky, Upper Lusatia, Latrobe returned to England in 1784 and was ordained. He was appointed secretary to the Society for the Furtherance of the Gospel in 1787, and in 1795 succeeded James Hutton as Secretary to the Unity of the Brethren in England. Although never a professional musician and apparently self-taught, his significance as a composer and editor was considerable. In addition to composing and editing several volumes of church music for Moravian use, he was the editor of the six-volume Selection of Sacred Music (1806-1820), which introduced church music by such composers as Graun, Hasse, Pergolesi, Haydn, and Mozart for the first time to British audiences, and anticipated the publications of Vincent Novello (DNB; Grove6). Latrobe's letter to SW to which this is a reply has not been traced.
2. The date is established by the reference to the trial of Joseph Bazley (see n. 5). SW moved from Finchley to Highgate some time before the end of Jan. 1799 (Charlotte Louisa Wesley to Sarah, 23 Jan. 1799 (Drew)).
3. Latrobe's Dies Irae & c, an Ancient Hymn on the Last Judgment, translated ... by

... the Earl of Roscommon ... Adapted for the Piano Forte, and Four Voices (R. Birchall, for the author, London, 1799).

4. Latrobe had earlier requested SW to solicit subscriptions for the Dies Irae. He had also approached Burney, with whom he was in frequent correspondence, with the same request (see Burney to Latrobe, c.5 Feb. 1799 (Osborn); Latrobe to Burney, 7 Feb. 1799 (Osborn)). Latrobe had complained: 'to have to do with engravers & printers is fit to make a parson swear - such lying & deceiving & promise-breaking wretches cannot surely exist in any other profession. My work is not yet printed off, tho' promised before the 1<sup>st</sup> of January. When I went to Cambridge about 3 weeks ago I was promised by the Printer, that all the Copies bespoke should be sent home before my return, but on my return, not a stroke had been done.' Latrobe's letter to SW had presumably contained a similar complaint. There were in the end 185 subscribers, who between them purchased 212 copies. One of the two copies bought by Burney is now at the RCM.
5. The Times, 23 Feb. 1799, reported the trial at the Old Bailey of Joseph Bazley, who was found guilty of stealing a £100 bank-note from his employers, the bankers Sir James Esdaile, Esdaile, Hammett, Esdaile, & Hammett.
6. Thomas à Kempis (1380-1471), Augustinian monk and author of Christian mystical works. The quotation is from De imitatione Christi, his best known work and a favourite devotional text of SW's father and uncle.
7. Dr Charles Burney (1726-1814), historian of music, author of The Present State of Music in France and Italy, 2 vols. (1771 and 1773), The Present State of Music in Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Provinces, 2 vols. (1773 and 1775), and A General History of Music, 4 vols. (1776-89) (DNB; Grove<sup>6</sup>; Lonsdale).
8. Burney to Latrobe, c.5 Feb. 1799 (Osborn), in which he had written: 'I had the pleasure to meet Sam Westley [sic], of whom I had lost sight almost since his childhood, if ever he was a child. In Music now, he is somewhat more than Man. He pleased me very much, both by his performance & compositions; & I think him

a credit to our country, w<sup>ch</sup> certainly does not abound in native composers of the first class.' This encounter was the beginning of a friendship between the two men which was to last until Burney's death

9. Dr Joseph Jowett (1752-1813), matric. Trinity College, Cambridge (1769), migrated to Trinity Hall (1773), LL B (1775), LL D (1780), Fellow of Trinity Hall (1773-95), Regius Professor of Civil Law (1782-1813). He was a keen amateur musician and a long-standing friend of Latrobe, who frequently visited him in Cambridge (Venn; DNB).
10. SW had first visited Cambridge in or around 1788 (see SW to Burney, 7 July [1808]).
11. Henry Jowett (b. 1756/7), matric. Magdalene College, Cambridge (1774), BA (1778), MA (1781) (Venn).
12. For a description of the musical talents of the Jowett family and Latrobe's friendship with them, see Latrobe's Letters to my Children (1851), 5-12. Latrobe describes how he first met Henry Jowett and a third brother, John, in 1790 at the house of the Revd James Edward Gambier, Rector of Langley, Kent. He later visited John Jowett on a number of occasions at his house in Newington Butts and there met the remainder of the family, including Joseph. Following one of these visits Joseph Jowett invited the whole party to stay with him for several days at Trinity Hall, where, as Latrobe records, they 'spent several days in the enjoyment of every thing that could afford rational and intellectual delight, under the direction of the most cheerful, sweet-tempered, hospitable man existing; whose chief pleasure it was, to please his friends, and to do good to all mankind'. Latrobe's friendship with Joseph Jowett continued until Jowett's death. See also the Preface to vol. 3 of Latrobe's Selection of Sacred Music, published shortly after the death of Joseph Jowett, which contains a further tribute to the family.
13. Latrobe had presumably enquired if SW was interested in taking a Cambridge music degree and in pursuing an academic career. His enquiry may have been prompted by

the illness of the Professor of Music, John Randall (1717-99), who died shortly afterwards and was succeeded by SW's friend Charles Hague.

14. i.e. by both Cambridge and Oxford: SW's grandfather Samuel Wesley (1662-1735) matric. Exeter College, Oxford (1684), BA (1688), MA Corpus Christi College, Cambridge (1694); SW's father Charles Wesley (1707-88) matric. Christ Church, Oxford (1726), BA (1730), MA (1733); SW's uncle John Wesley (1703-91) matric. Christ Church (1720), BA (1724), MA (1727), Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford (1725) (Foster).
15. The premises of Robert Birchall (c.1760-1819), music seller, instrument dealer, and publisher, at 133 New Bond Street. Birchall also published many of SW's later works (Humphries and Smith).
16. SW's Twelve Sonatinas for the Piano-Forte or Harpsichord, Op. 4, published by Birchall for SW.
17. 'You will consider the giver, not the gift'.



To [Joseph Payne Street]

[Highgate], 1 May 1799

ALS, 1 p. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Dear Sir

As I happened to pick up the most correct of perfect Editions of M<sup>r</sup> Chillingworth's Works which is extant, I hope you will favour me by accepting it.<sup>1</sup>-- A Folio I own is a frightful Thing, but yet such a Folio as M<sup>r</sup> Locke<sup>2</sup> declares to be capable of making Men reason always justly, is not to be met with from every Pen.<sup>3</sup>--

The other ugly old Book (which I believe is in some Places scarcely legible) you can leave out for the Carrier when he shall call next on you in Mark Lane.-- It belongs to my Brother,<sup>4</sup> who whenever he is disposed to study Chillingworth (an Event rather to be wished than expected) I shall advise to read him from a better Print.

Yours sincerely

S Wesley

Wednesday May 1. 1799.

1. William Chillingworth (1602-44), Scholar and Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, and one of the literary circle that gathered round Lucius Cary Falkland (1610-43) at Great Tew, Oxfordshire. He converted to Roman Catholicism in 1630, but rejected it in 1634; the controversial The Religion of the Protestants a safe Way to Salvation (1637) was his most celebrated work. There were many editions of his works; the one referred to here was possibly the one including his life by Birch, published in

1742 (DNB; OCEL).

2. John Locke (1632-1704), English philosopher .
3. Locke had commented in his Some Thoughts concerning Reading and Study for a Gentleman, first published in A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke, Never before Printed, or Not Extant in his Works (1720): 'Besides perspicuity, there must be also right reasoning; without which perspicuity serves but to expose the speaker. And for the attaining of this I should propose the constant reading of Chillingworth, who by his example will teach both perspicuity and the way of right reasoning, better than any book that I know; and therefore will deserve to be read on that account over and over again; not to say anything of his argument.'
4. Charles Wesley jun., (1757-1834), SW's elder brother. Like SW, he had been a musical child prodigy, and his precocity as a performer and composer had astounded all who heard him. He did not fulfil his youthful promise, however, and his later musical career was one of relative obscurity. He was a noted harpsichordist and organist, held various church appointments, and was organist to the Prince of Wales (later the Prince Regent and George IV), but took no major part in London's professional musical life. His few later compositions are conservative in style. As SW's subsequent comment suggests, he was not a great reader.

To Joseph Payne Street

[Highgate]<sup>1</sup> 6 October 1799

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street | N.17. | Mark Lane| Paid

Pmk: 7 OC 99

Dear Sir

I have appointed to be at M<sup>r</sup> Ball's<sup>2</sup> Piano Forte Manufactory on Friday next<sup>3</sup> exactly at one o'Clock p.m. whither I shall bring the Confitebor<sup>4</sup> in order to run it over upon an Organ which he has there at present.-- I know that the Middle of the Day is somewhat inconvenient for you to leave the City, but as this is the first Opportunity which has yet presented upon the Subject, & as you seemed desirous that M<sup>r</sup> Carter<sup>5</sup> should get an early Sight of the Work, I resolved to lose no Time in fixing a Place for that Purpose.-- In case you may be able to favour us with your Company, I will thank you to signify to M<sup>r</sup> C. that the above Arrangement is made, when if he can manage to join us, & will part with his Coals for a Song on that Day, it will be a great Acquisition, especially if he can prevail on that Busby-wigged Parson<sup>6</sup> whom we saw at his House, to come & assist in the Bass.

As the Psalm is one of those sung in the Roman Vespers on a Sunday, perhaps his filial Piety towards holy Mother Church may influence him to sacrifice Lucre to Devotion.--

All this, of course, entre nous.

Yours sincerely

S Wesley

Sunday 6 Oct. 1799.

Please to direct to Marybone.

Turn over if you please.

I will thank you to look into the Answer to the 4<sup>th</sup> Chapter in Chillingworth.<sup>7</sup>-- Sect. 4. as I think there must be a false Print in mine Edition -- it occurs, about 16 Lines from the Beginning; thus:

"The Necessity of believing them being inforced upon us by a Necessity of believing this essential & Fundamental Article of Faith, That all Divine Revelations are true, which to disbelieve, or not to disbelieve, is, for any Christians, not only impious, but impossible"--

Surely the latter disbelieve, ought to be printed, believe; the other plainly enforcing a Contradiction.<sup>8</sup>-- I trust that your Edition has no such Blunder.-- I took up the Book the other Night, by Way of Relaxation after hard Work, & imagined the Difficulty to arise out of my Stupidity, & so kept stirring my Brains about till they boiled over like Cream in a Saucepan & I knew not whether 2 & 2 made 4, or a 100, but was yet certain, that Chillingworth must be right, (& true enough:) but little suspecting the Fallibility of the Compositor; otherwise I might have spared myself much absurd Labour.

1. In June or July 1799 SW had moved to an address variously described as '5th Mile Stone' or '5 Mile Stone', Highgate (Sarah Gwynne Wesley (SW's mother) to Sarah, 12 June [1799] (Emory)). He lived there until late spring 1803.
2. James Ball (fl. c.1780-1832), piano maker, music seller, publisher, and printer. His



premises were at 27 Duke Street, Grosvenor Square, Mayfair (Humphries and Smith; Brown and Stratton).

3. 11 Oct.
4. SW's recently completed large-scale setting for soloists, choir, and orchestra of the Vesper psalm 'Confitebor tibi, Domine' (Ps. 111), the autograph of which (BL, Add. MS 35002) is dated 14 Aug. 1799.
5. Probably the Irish composer and alto singer Thomas Carter (ii) (1769-1800). As SW's remark later in this letter implies, he was also a coal merchant (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Doane; Holden's Triennial Directory, 1799). The autograph of SW's setting of 'Near Thame's Fam'd Banks' (BL, Add. MS 56411) is annotated as having been 'composed expressly for the performance of M<sup>r</sup> Carter and for the use of the ad Libitum Society, Dec<sup>r</sup> 22 1799.' He was also a friend of R. J. S. Stevens (Argent, passim).
6. Not certainly identified, but possibly one of the two brothers mentioned in the following letter: in his letter to his brother of 15 Jan. 1807, SW refers to a 'Parson Barry of Dulwich' who was the host of a music party that SW attended there. A busby was a large bushy wig (OED). The party also included Wright (see next letter).
7. Query about Chillingworth. i.e. The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation.
8. SW was correct in his conjecture. The corrupt edition has not been identified.

To Joseph Payne Street

Highgate, 18 October 1799

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street | N. 17 | Mark Lane | London

Pmk: OC 19 99

Dear Sir

We were much disappointed in not having the Pleasure of your Company on Wednesday last,<sup>1</sup> although your Words to me were not sufficiently strong to make me rely on seeing you with as much Confidence as I could have wished.-- Our little Party was a remarkably pleasant one, consisting only of M<sup>r</sup> Barry & his Brother<sup>2</sup> (besides M<sup>rs</sup> W,<sup>3</sup> & myself) who were extremely agreeable, & seemed mightily to enjoy themselves.-- I happened to draw two or three Corks, the Liquid belonging to which met most extraordinary Approbation, & really we had nothing to regret but your Absence: the Gents talked of returning to Town about 9 in the Evening (altho' I offered them Lodging here which they said an early matutinal Engagement w<sup>d</sup> prevent their accepting) but behold! it became past the Hour of One on the Thursday Morning before they resolved to depart, & it was absolutely then, with Reluctance.-- I discover that Barry (my Scholar) is a Man of much quick Sentiment, & Kindness of Heart: a thorough Lover, (& no indifferent Judge) of real good Musick: a perfect Gentleman in his Manners, & an exceedingly good Companion.-- All these Qualifications engage me not to slight his Society, & I am therefore determined to shew him any obliging Attentions in

my Power. He much wishes to make up a little Glee Concert among ourselves, to which he means to invite M' Wright<sup>4</sup> (who stood on the left of the Book at Ball's on Friday 11<sup>th</sup>)<sup>5</sup> whom he represents to me as a very profound Connoisseur in Harmony, & a good Sight's Man, of which Propositions we shall be able to form a good Opinion, when we come to the Test of singing with him: Barry is anxious to form a Party for some Evening when I can remain in Town, & desired me to say that he will be particularly glad of your Company with that of any other Friend to re-inforce our musical Corps.

If you can prevail on M' Drummer<sup>6</sup> to accompany us, I know nothing to prevent my going to Barry's on Friday next<sup>\*7</sup> in the Evening:-- I shall thank you for an immediate Answer to this, directed hither, which I shall obtain by Sunday, or at latest, on Monday Morning.-- His Address is 37 Queen Square Bloomsbury.

I am

Dear Sir

sincerely yours

S Wesley

5 Mile Stone. | Highgate. | Friday 18 Oct<sup>r</sup>. 1799

\* I had written Tuesday at first, but upon Recollection, I cannot go on that Evening.

1. 16 Oct.
2. Neither brother has been certainly identified; one was a pupil of SW who lived at 37 Queen's Square, Bloomsbury; the other may have been 'Mr Parson Barry of Dulwich' mentioned in SW to CW jun., 15 Jan. 1807.
3. SW's wife Charlotte Louisa, née Martin (1761-1845).
4. Not certainly identified; possibly the banker of this name mentioned in SW to Jacob, [24 Nov. 1809].
5. The play-through of the Confitebor mentioned in the previous letter.
6. Either John or William Drummer, two brothers who were amateur musician friends of SW and Street, and who feature in SW's letters over a period of thirty years. John Drummer was probably the coal merchant of this name listed in Holden's Triennial Directory for 1799.
7. 25 Oct.



To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

Highgate, 5 November [1799?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1192)

5<sup>th</sup> Mile Stone

Highgate

Nov. 5.

My dear Sir

I address you at a Venture of speedy Success; but whenever you shall have returned from the Country,<sup>3</sup> I trust that you will favour me by your wonted Permission to attend you on some Morning which may happen to suit your Convenience, for allowing me the Instruction & Comfort of your Conversation, & the Happiness of re-assuring you that I remain always most respectfully & most cordially

Your obliged & devoted Friend

S. Wesley

1. Although lacking an address portion, the deferential tone, content, and present location of this letter in the Osborn Collection leave little doubt that it is to Burney.
2. The year of this letter is conjectural, but can only be between 1799 and 1802, as SW moved to this address in Highgate in the summer of 1799 and left in late spring 1803. SW's reference to Burney's forthcoming return from the country (see n. 3) may be to the visit mentioned in SW to Burney, 28 Nov. 1799, and suggests that 1799 is the most probable year.
3. No details are known of this visit.

To Joseph Payne Street

Highgate, 9 November [1799]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street. | N. 17 | Mark Lane

Pmk: NO 9 99

5 Mile Stone

Highgate

Saturday Nov 9.

"Combe for ever" !<sup>2</sup>

Dear Sir

M<sup>r</sup> and M<sup>rs</sup> Kingston<sup>3</sup> hope for the Pleasure of your Company together with M<sup>r</sup> Drummer's on Tuesday next,<sup>4</sup> as near 6 in the Evening as you can manage to meet us.-- I mean to bring with me a new Chorus for a double Choir,<sup>5</sup> (as well as the Confitebor) of which I played you the Subject when we met last at M<sup>r</sup> Drummer's, & which I was unable to finish in fair Copy till within this last Week.

Your Intelligence concerning the Discovery in the News-paper surprized me a little. I called to Day upon Ball, (from whom I had obtained M<sup>r</sup> Howard's Invitation) to have an explanation of the Business.-- I know not whether I remarked to you that he wished me to oblige him on Sunday next, (the 10<sup>th</sup> Inst) which was impossible, on Account of an Engagement at Watford;<sup>6</sup> I therefore informed him that if he could defer the Charity Sermon

until the 17<sup>th</sup>, I would then attend him: but it appears that the Preacher (whoever he is) is determined upon mounting Timber on the very next immediate, consecutive, & proximate Lord's Day, so that M<sup>r</sup> Howard must thumb the Musicks himself, all alone, & no-body with him.<sup>7</sup>

By the Way, it would have been full as civil in the aforesaid Organist to have signified to me the State of the Circumstance, before he had inserted his Advertisement, stating the Reasons that made it necessary to decline mine Assistance.-- However we know that *Politesse* is no *sine quâ non* in the Composition of a Crotchet-Monger, & by this same Omission of his, I am fully liberated from the Necessity of attending him in future.

I have been reading, in the Monthly Magazine for Dec<sup>r</sup> 1799. a very pretty Account of Mozart, written by M<sup>r</sup> Busby:<sup>8</sup> If you have not seen it (the contrary to which is most likely) I would advise you to give it a Perusal: You will find the Style very respectable, & the whole, interesting.

If the Biographer write ex Corde, he is superior to that mean Jealousy which pervades, (I may say 9 tenths) of us professional Vagabonds.

I hope Carter will come on Tuesday: I said nothing of him to the Kingstons, that it may be an agreeable Surprise.

Y<sup>rs</sup> dear Sir

Very sincerely

S Wesley

1. The year is given by 9 Nov. falling on a Saturday and SW's Highgate address.
2. The significance of this remark is not known.

3. Clearly another amateur musician friend of SW and his wife. He can probably be identified as William B. Kingston, who appears intermittently in the letters and who was a close friend of SW. For his involvement with the care of SW during his serious illness of 1817-18, see SW to Glenn, 23 Mar. 1818, n. 3.
4. 12 Nov.
5. Probably the setting of 'Deus majestatis intonuit' for double SATB chorus with orchestra and organ, the two autographs of which (LC, ML 96.W49; BL, Add. MS 71107) are dated 26 Sept. 1799.
6. Not traced.
7. It appears from this paragraph that SW had been approached by Howard with an invitation to play at a charity sermon at Howard's church. SW was unable to play on 10 Sept., the date originally suggested, as he was already had an engagement in Watford on that day; accordingly, he had suggested the following Sunday, 17 Sept. The 'discovery in the newspaper' (untraced) was presumably an advertisement announcing SW's appearance on the date originally suggested. Howard was probably Thomas Howard, who in 1802 entered into an agreement to erect an organ and supply organists at St Mary le Bow (Dawe, 111-12).
8. The 'Life of Mozart' by the composer and writer on music Thomas Busby (1755-1838) had in fact appeared in MM for Dec. 1798, pp. 445-50.



To Charles Burney

Highgate, 28 November 1799

ALS, 4 pp. (Rylands, DDWF 15/8; address portion Osborn, MSS 3, Box 5, Folder 319)<sup>1</sup>.

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Burney | Chelsea College.

Endorsed by Burney: M<sup>r</sup> S. Wesley 1799

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕<sup>2</sup>

Pmk: 4 O'Clock 28 NO 99 EVEN

Dear Sir,

Your last obliging Letter<sup>3</sup> having exprest the Probability of your Return from the Country about this Time, it is with much Satisfaction that I embrace the first Opportunity of assuring you of the Happiness I promise myself in attending you at Chelsea<sup>4</sup> one morning, e'er long.

My present professional Engagements occupy so much time (& consequently deprive me of those Hours which I long to devote to Study) that I am convinced of the Truth of the Proverb -- "We may buy Gold too dear." Nevertheless I have lately stolen an Hour in every Day, for the worthy Purpose of perusing attentively your invaluable History of Musick,<sup>5</sup> which, although I had seen several Years ago, yet I was then unable to study with much Profit, being "A man of but little Latin, & less Greek":<sup>6</sup> however, having since acquired a slight Smattering of these two Languages, I am better qualified for applying to your excellent Work with Advantage, sincerely

regretting the Neglect of earlier Cultivation, which would have discovered to me hidden Treasures: -- I might then have borrowed some of them, but now I can only peep at them.

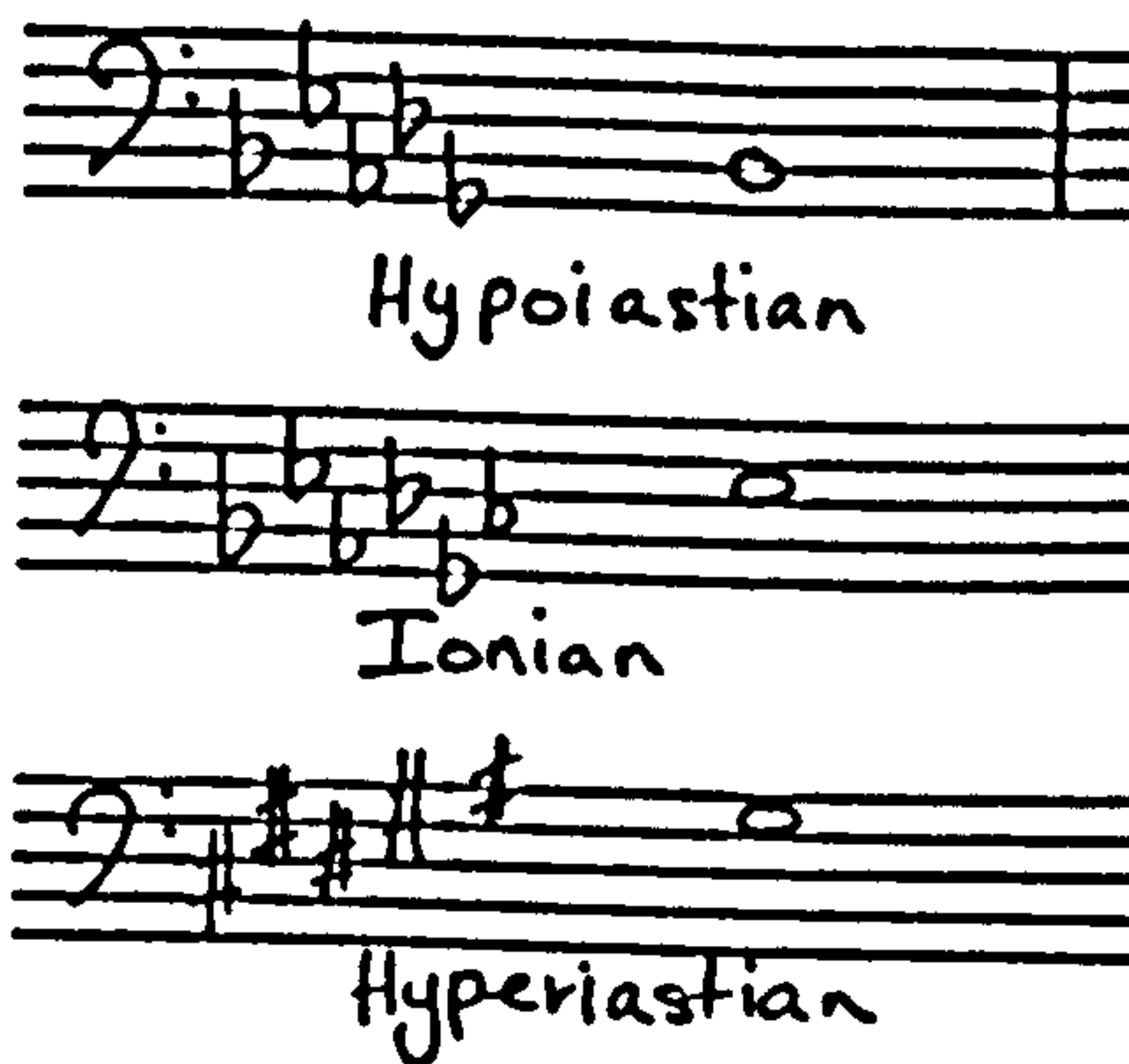
I presume on your indulgent Permission to ask you Questions for Information upon musical Matters, especially since you have so kindly assisted me by your Advice in several Points concerning the Composition you condescended to revise.<sup>7</sup>

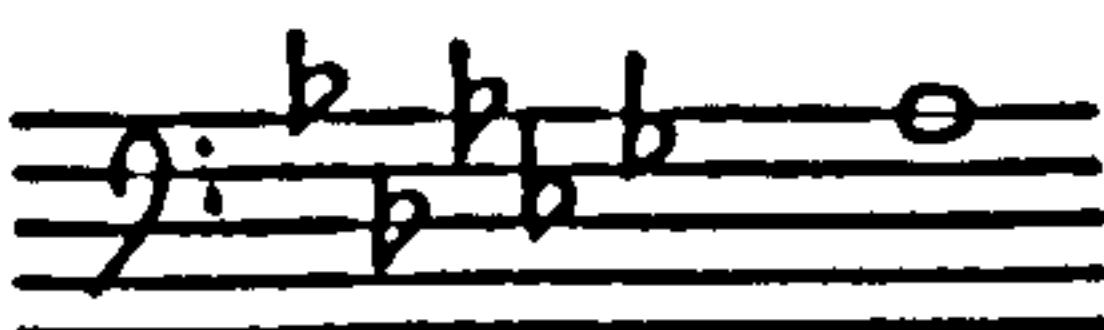
In the course of reading To-day, I studied the Table of the Greek Modes in your 1<sup>st</sup> Vol p. 48.<sup>8</sup>

In p. 49<sup>9</sup> you observe:-- "There is a passage in Aristides Quintilianus,<sup>10</sup> which seems to point out something like Connection & Relation between the five original Modes, & those above & below them. He says, after having enumerated the 15 Modes, "By this means, each Mode has βαρυτητα και μεσοτητα και ὀξύτητα-- its Bottom, its Middle, & its Top, or its grave, mean, & acute."

"This seems to imply that the three Modes of DORIAN, Hypodorian, & Hyperdorian, for instance, were considered, in a Manner, as one: & as if the two Modes belonging to each of the five middle ones, a fourth above, & a fourth below, were regarded as necessary Adjuncts, without which they were not complete."

A Doubt has occurred to me, respecting the Manner in which the Ionian, Hypoionian, & Hyperionian Modes have been printed in the 48<sup>th</sup> Page, which is the Subject of my present Enquiry.



It appeared to me that the lower Note ought to have been placed upon the 5<sup>th</sup> Line, with five Flats, thus:  for otherwise, as there is a Diesis between G# & Ab the Ratio seems to be broken between the  $\nu\pi\omicron$  & the  $\nu\pi\epsilon\rho$  Modes. And this Conjecture of mine you support in page 50, where in enumerating the 5 principal Modes with their Collaterals, you observe that they answer to the following Keys in present Use,

Hypo:

Dorian

Hyperdo:

A

D

G

Bb

Eb

Ab

Hypoiast:

Iastian

Hyperastian

I searched the Table of Errata, in which I found no Notice taken of any Mistake relative to the Sharps; I therefore wish to know whether you might have marked 5# # instead of 5b b for a better Reason than I am able to give;

& yet this seems to be not perfectly consistent with the Account given of the Relation of the Modes to each other in the 50<sup>th</sup> Page, where the A $\flat$  is marked instead of G $\sharp$  & according to my present Notion of the Truth.

Whether I am more nice than wise upon this Occasion, or not, (the former of which is very probable) an illuminating Line from your Pen, at any future Moment of your Leisure, will be received as one more among the many kind Attentions already shewn to

Dear Sir

Your most obliged Friend

& devoted Servant

S Wesley

5 Mile Stone | Highgate | Thursday. Nov. 28. 1799.

1. The address portion contains Burney's draft reply to this letter.
2. This editorial symbol was added by Burney's daughter Frances (Mme d'Arblay) as part of her classification of her father's letters into various categories of interest for inclusion in her projected edition of the correspondence. For her activities as editor, see Joyce Hemlow with Curtis D. Cecil and Althea Douglas (eds.), The Journals and Letters of Fanny Burney (Madame d'Arblay) (Oxford, 1972), vol. 1, xxxvi-xliv; Burney, Letters I, xxxii. This symbol is interpreted by Hemlow and Ribeiro as denoting a letter 'in a second category of interest'.
3. Not preserved.
4. Burney had been appointed organist at Chelsea College in Dec. 1783. The post included rent-free accommodation at the college. (Lonsdale, 295-6).
5. Burney's A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period, 4 vols. (1776-89).



6. cf. Ben Jonson, To the Memory of Shakespeare (1623): 'Thou hadst small Latin, and less Greek'.
7. SW's Confitebor. In his Reminiscences, SW wrote: 'In the Year 1799 I composed a Confitebor .... I sent the score of this work to the late worthy Doctor Charles Burney for his Revision and opinion. He examined each movement critically with the nicest observations on them. He concluded by saying "Upon the whole it is an admirable composition in florid Counterpoint and in the best style of Church Music".'
8. Mercer, i. 53.
9. Mercer, i. 54.
10. Aristides Quintilianus (fl. c.200 AD), a Greek music theorist, author of an influential treatise Peri mousikes ('On music'), described in Grove<sup>6</sup> as 'heavily derivative, with nothing by way of content or organization that can safely be attributed to Aristides himself'. It was included in Marcus Meibomius's Antiquae musicae auctores septem, Graece et Latine, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1652), a copy of which Burney owned (Burney, History, i. 11, 441; Mercer, i. 30-1, 349; Burney, Letters I, 55, n. 8).

To Charles Burney

[Highgate], [30 Nov 1799]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (UCSB)

Endorsed by Burney: 30 Nov<sup>r</sup> 1799

My Dear Sir

This is really pestering you with my Letters, but it were more than "a venial sin" to delay for a moment offering you my Thanks for your signal Attention & satisfactory Answer to the Question I took the Liberty of proposing,<sup>2</sup> which I hope & trust you will believe was asked merely for the Sake of Information without the least Affectation of Sagacity.

You have clearly shewn that I understood myself only by Halves, & that by placing the Hyperionian mode in A $\flat$  Major I had forgotten "the Beam in mine own Eye."<sup>3</sup>

If I at last understand the matter, the Table ought to be arranged thus:



I have just finished the 8<sup>th</sup> section of the Dissertation,<sup>4</sup> in which appears to me, that the "Question concerning Counterpoint among the Antients, is so demonstratively decided, no man in his Wits, or whose Prejudices did not suffocate them (which perhaps may be -- could offer a Word in arrest of

Judgement.

Mr. Locke's mixed Modes<sup>5</sup> are by far more intelligible than those which M. Burette<sup>6</sup> contends to have been used in Greek Musick: surely it is impossible that any Ears could have borne an Air even in the Lydian & Dorian mode either sung or played together.-- Your confirmation of the Argument by the experiment of the Diapason, Principal, 12<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> & Tierce in an Organ<sup>7</sup> is an invincible Proof that no Euphony could possibly be produced "were not the small harmonic Pipes governed by the greater."

Indeed every fresh Page of this Dissertation carries with it such irresistible Evidence, that no musical enquiries need say *δος που στω*<sup>8</sup> respecting the Subject of Greek Counterpoint: & among the many who must acknowledge their obligations for your illuminating Researches, believe me there is no one who feels them more forcibly nor more gratefully than

Dear Sir

Your much indebted

& obedient Servant

S Wesley

1. The date is given by Burney's endorsement.
2. In his draft reply to SW's previous letter, Burney had stated: 'with respect to your remark on the mistake in the Notation of the Hypoiastian Mode, without look[ing] into my Hist' I am certain prima facie that your suggestion is right; the Tetrachord to E♭ minor must be A♭. As every one knows that has dipt into harmonics that G♯ & A♭ though produced on keyed Instrum<sup>ts</sup> is w<sup>th</sup> the voice, & violin a different sound; nor can any of the sounds of the 2 scales be the same .... How this blunder

escaped me I cannot imagine: for the moment I saw your transcript of the passage from my Dissertation, I was struck with its inaccuracy.'

3. Matt. 7: 3; Luke 6: 41.
4. 'Whether the Ancients had Counterpoint or Music in Parts', Part 8 of the lengthy Dissertation on the Music of the Ancients which opens Burney's History.
5. A reference to the classification of abstract concepts in Locke's An Essay concerning Human Understanding, II. xxii. Locke states: 'mixed modes [are] the complex ideas we mark by the names obligation, drunkenness, a lie, etc.; which consisting of several combinations of simple ideas of different kinds, I have called mixed modes, to distinguish them from the more simple modes, which consist only of simple ideas of the same kind. These mixed modes, being also such combinations of simple ideas as are not looked upon to be characteristical marks of any real beings that have a steady existence, but scattered and independent ideas put together by the mind, are thereby distinguished from the complex ideas of substances.'
6. Pierre-Jean Burette (1665-1747), a French musician and scholar who wrote extensively on aspects of ancient Greek music (Grove<sup>6</sup>). His works were published as Mémoires de littérature ... de l'Académie des inscriptions et belles lettres, 17 vols. (Paris, 1717-48), and his views remained standard for many years. He is frequently cited by Burney in his History of Music.
7. i.e. the playing together of various organ stops sounding at the unison and at the intervals of an octave, a twelfth, two octaves, and two octaves and a major third higher. The intervals specified are those of successive overtones in the harmonic series. Burney's discussion of this point is not included in his draft reply.
8. 'Give me somewhere to stand'.



To unidentified lawyers<sup>1</sup>

Highgate, 5 January 1800

ALS, 3 pp. (Rylands, DDWF 15/10)

Gentlemen

Having been in Town almost all last Week, I did not obtain your Letter till Yesterday Evening.-- I should otherwise have given you an immediate answer.-- It seems plain that M<sup>r</sup> Sibthorpe<sup>2</sup> is determined upon being as litigious, & proving as troublesome & irrational as he can: I have no other vouchers for my legal Claim to the Estate at Guildford, than what D<sup>r</sup> Price's Will, & the Title Deeds have given;<sup>3</sup>-- Why these are considered insufficient I am at a Loss to account, nor is it possible for me to bring forward a State of Facts which happened long before I had an Acquaintance with the Testator.-- Nothing can be more evident to me than that all these Delays have been contrived by M<sup>r</sup> S on purpose to revenge the Pique he felt in my not entrusting the Papers unreservedly into his Possession.-- You must be better Judges than I, whether herein I did wisely or not.-- I acted upon the Advice of M<sup>r</sup> Foster,<sup>4</sup> who thought it highly imprudent to trust them entirely to the Mercy of the Purchaser's Attorney, therefore if I have done wrong in this Respect, M<sup>r</sup> Foster is the Author, who I think would not have intentionally given me improper Counsel.

It is very vexatious to find this Business so shamefully (& I believe) wantonly procrastinated.-- M<sup>r</sup> Sibthorpe had as well go about to deny my Right to the Estate at once, as to confound & perplex Matters concerning my

Poser of disposing of it; & in that Case, D<sup>r</sup> Broxham<sup>5</sup> will be found to have made no legal Purchase, and the Property will be Nobody's.--

This must be clear to you, & therefore I have only to add, that if the Vouchers & Instruments already produced, be not available to enable me to receive the Purchase Money, D<sup>r</sup> Broxham must adopt some other Plan than any I know of for the Purpose of making his claim legal & indisputable.

If I had had any other explanatory Papers upon the Subject, you may be assured that I should have readily produced them, in order to expedite & conclude an Affair which has caused me so much Trouble, & which will bring me (after all) an Advantage by far inadequate to the real Value of the Premises.

I remain

Gentlemen

Y<sup>r</sup> obedient Servant

S Wesley

P.S. If an Answer to me be necessary, please to direct to Chesterfield Street Marybone -- M<sup>r</sup> S. Wesley.

Highgate. 5 Jan<sup>y</sup> 1800.

1. This letter, evidently addressed to a firm of lawyers, concerns SW's right of title to a house and land in Guildford left to him in the will of James Price (see n. 3).
2. From SW's later remarks, evidently the attorney acting for Mr Broxham, who was attempting to purchase the property from SW.
3. Dr James Price (1752-83), English experimental scientist, sometimes described as 'the last of the alchemists'. He was one of the circle of friends at Guildford visited

by SW and other members of his family during SW's boyhood. He committed suicide on 3 or 8 Aug. 1783, having failed to replicate in public the experiments carried out at his house at Stoke, near Guildford, in 1782, in which he claimed to have turned mercury into silver and gold. In his will he left SW £1,000 and the house at Guildford discussed in this letter. A letter from him to SW of 28 July 1783 is printed in Lightwood; in it he relates his latest experiments with heating alloys in a wind furnace (DNB; Lightwood, 57-9).

4. Not identified: evidently a lawyer acting for SW.
5. The purchaser: not otherwise identified.

To Joseph Reid<sup>1</sup>

Chesterfield Street, 7 January 1800

ALS, 1 p. (Duke, Frank Baker collection (photocopy); location of original unknown)

Addressed: To | Joseph Reid Esq<sup>re</sup> | Staples Inn<sup>2</sup> | Holborn

Sir

I am really at a Loss how to apologize for a Neglect which no Apology can sufficiently excuse, by which I mean my shameful Delay in not having rendered you very long ago my best Thanks for the Volume which you were so good as to bestow upon me, viz; the life of Chillingworth,<sup>3</sup> which I obtained from our late & good Friend, M<sup>r</sup> Seward.<sup>4</sup>

So valuable a Present will ever be remembered with Gratitude towards the Donor, but I fear that the Acknowledgement of it will scarcely convince you that I am, with much Respect,

Sir

Your truly obliged,

& grateful Servant

S Wesley

Chesterfield Street. Marybone | Tuesday. Jan. 7. 1800

1. Unidentified. From his address (see n. 2) he was evidently a lawyer; he may have been involved with the matters discussed in the previous letter.
2. In fact, Staple Inn, one of the Inns of Chancery, affiliated to Gray's Inn and occupied by firms of attorneys and solicitors. The building still stands, and is occupied by the



Institute of Actuaries (London Encyclopedia, under 'Inns of Chancery').

3. Pierre des Maizeaux, An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Writings of Wm Chillingworth (London, 1725).
4. Seward had died on 24 Apr. 1799.

To Joseph Payne Street

[Highgate], [3 May 1800]<sup>1</sup>

AL, 3 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228); damaged and incomplete

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street. | N.17. | Mark Lane

Pmk: 3 MY 1800

Dear Sir

M<sup>r</sup> Drummer has made a Promise of coming over hither in about a Fortnight or three Weeks hence, & I shall reckon upon the Pleasure of your accompanying him: I also think of requesting his Brother's Company together; if the Day appointed should happen to suit him.-- I dined with M<sup>r</sup> T Attwood<sup>2</sup> on Friday last,<sup>3</sup> who has also given his Word to give me a Day at Highgate before long.-- If we can but manage to match all Parties on the same Day, I shall be very much gratified, & intend to contrive in my best Manner to bring it about.-- You know that the Diminutiveness of my Palace admits the round Sort of Party which I should be more happy to make, but which, for the sake of their Comfort, I must be at present compelled to forego: especially as I have not more than one spare Bed.-- However, let me inform you, that I can secure two Beds in the Neighbourhood, so that your Distance from Town here must not be an Obstacle to your indulging us, as we will take Care you shall not be at a Loss for a safe & comfortable Lodging.--

You will oblige me by referring [to] Chillingworth's V<sup>th</sup> Chapter. Sect.59 -- Title,--"Separation of Protestants from the Church of Rome, not guilty of Schism."<sup>4</sup>-- I am inclined to think that there must be some

considerable Error in the Print of the following Passage-- "Or would you have him believe those Things true, which together with him you have supposed to be Errors? This is such an one, as is assured or persuaded of that, which your here suppose, that your Church doth err, (& such only, we say, are obliged to forsake your Communion) is as Schoolmen speak, *Implicatio in Terminis*, a Contradiction so plain, that one Word destroyeth another; as if one should say, living dead Man.

The verb *is*, immediately after the Parenthesis, I cannot connect grammatically with any one Word which preceded; I have tried several Ways, but none successfully, & therefore would gladly know how the Sentence runs in your Edition, which as I am informed, is in all Respects the most correct that has hitherto appeared.<sup>5</sup>

It little matters what Blunders Compositors may make in a Novel, or any other modern Nonsense called sentimental; but in Works of moral & metaphysical Truth, Carelessness is the most inexcusable Dishonesty.-- Although Chillingworth's is never a tangled Chain,<sup>6</sup> yet as it is wrought exquisitely fine, great Danger there is of Confusion, unless every Word & Point be rendered with the utmost Accuracy; & it is with profound Reasoners on abstract moral Truth, as with Mathematicians upon Lines & Quantities: one Link of their Series being either lost or impaired, the whole Symmetry is destroyed, & the whole Order of the Reasoning is disturbed & disjointed; all of which may easily happen by one typographical Mistake.

I find that Salomon<sup>7</sup> intends to repeat the Oratorio of Haydn<sup>8</sup> on Thursday 15<sup>th</sup> inst.-- He has of course made it necessary for me to lend a

helping Hand.-- Barthelemon<sup>9</sup> has pleaded hard, (but in vain) for a Copy of the "Dixit Dominus", <sup>10</sup> & (as some People will never lose for Want of asking) he requested me to play at his Jerusalem Chamber<sup>11</sup> (to boot) on Thursday 22<sup>d</sup> of this Month.-- But this too has been answered in the Negative.-- My real Friends have a just Claim on my musical Services, which I think you know I am always ready to render them, but with the Trade, I will deal sharply, well knowing that it is merely from Necessity, & never from Good Will that they apply to me for Assistance.

M<sup>rs</sup> W. joins < .... > hoping that y<ou ...><sup>12</sup>

P.S. Since I wrote the under Part<sup>12</sup> I think I have guessed how the Blunder is in Chillingworth's Text.-- Instead of "This is such an one," if we read "this in such an one as is assured &c -- & if this be right (as I suspect it is, the sense being then logical & compleat) the IS after the Parenthesis is right, as you will find upon a Moment's Examination.--

1. The date is given by the postmark.
2. Thomas Attwood (1765-1838) had begun his musical career as a chorister in the Chapel Royal, where he came to the attention of the Prince of Wales, who paid for him to continue his musical education abroad. He was in Italy from 1783 to 1785 and was a pupil of Mozart in Vienna from 1785 to 1787. He was music-teacher to the Duke of York (from 1791), to the Princess of Wales (from 1795), and composer to the Chapel Royal (from 1796). He was appointed organist of St Paul's Cathedral in 1796, a position he held until his death.
3. 25 Apr.



4. In The Religion of Protestants a safe Way to Salvation.
5. SW was right in his suspicion of a misprint. As he correctly conjectured in his postscript, the text should read 'this in such a one' (editor's italics).
6. Theseus's description of the Prologue's speech in the mechanicals' play in A Midsummer Night's Dream, V. i. 124.
7. Johann Peter Salomon (1745-1815), German violinist, impresario, and composer. His first position was at the age of 13 as a violinist at the Bonn court. By 1764 he was music director to Prince Heinrich of Prussia at Rheinsberg. Through him he met Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-88) and became familiar with the music of J. S. Bach. He later moved via Paris to London, where he made his first public appearance in 1781. He soon turned his attention to directing and promoting concerts, and arranged subscription concerts in London from 1783. He was responsible for the visits of Haydn to London in 1791-2 and 1794-5.
8. Salomon had promoted one of the first performances in England of Haydn's The Creation at the King's Theatre on 21 Apr., at which SW had played the organ and performed one of his own organ concertos between the acts. The performance under discussion here did not take place. For the first London performances of The Creation, see H. C. Robbins Landon, Haydn: Chronicle and Works. The Years of 'The Creation' 1796-1800 (London, 1977), 572-7.
9. François-Hippolyte Barthélemon (1741-1808), French violinist and composer. He moved to London in about 1761, where he enjoyed a long career as a performer on the violin and a composer, mostly of theatre music. He was one of the leading violinists of his age, much admired by Burney, who commented on his 'powerful hand and truly vocal adagio'. He was a friend of Haydn's during his two visits to London, and is said to have suggested the subject of The Creation to him.
10. The 'Dixit Dominus' a 8, the two autographs of which (RCM, MS 639; BL, Add. MS 71107, f. 35) are dated 13 Jan. 1800.
11. i.e. the Swedenborgian New Jerusalem Church, where Barthélemon worshipped and

directed the music. SW's allusion is to the chapter room at Westminster Abbey, so called because of the tapestries depicting scenes of Jerusalem on its walls. For Barthélemon's involvement with Swedenborgianism, see Charles Higham, 'Francis Barthélemon', New-Church Magazine, 15 (1896), 1-13.

12. The bottom of the leaf, consisting of the right-hand part of two lines and SW's close and signature, is missing.
13. SW's postscript is at the top of the final page.

To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

[Highgate], 12 May 1800

ALS, 2 pp. (UCSB)

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay:

Marybone.

Monday 12<sup>th</sup> of May.

1800.

I trust, my dear Sir, that no bad Omen threatens me for Friday next,<sup>2</sup> when I fully purpose attending you at Ten o'Clock.-- I know not any probable Obstacle, excepting M<sup>r</sup> Salomon's Repetition of the Oratorio,<sup>3</sup> which if it should happen, will render it necessary for me to transfer my usual Business on Thursday to Friday instead, & in that Case, I should be again disappointed: but, by what I have just now heard, I conjecture that we shall not be able to ensure a second Performance, M<sup>r</sup> Salomon being baulked of his Singers, who indeed gave him Abundance of Trouble in the former Instance; & I am sorry to add that a most malevolent Party Spirit appears to have raged against the whole Undertaking, so that little Probability remains of any handsome Encouragement during the Remainder of this Season.

The musical Publick seem at present to be oddly divided into three Classes: they who allow nothing good but Handel, Corelli, and what are absurdly called the old Masters -- (for how lately was it when even these were Moderns!) -- others, who will hear no other Musick than of Mozart, Haydn,

and the few excellent of our own Day: and the third august Society of *επιστοταμενοι*<sup>4</sup> consists chiefly of those Admirers of Simplicity who relish no other Strains than what proceeds from Mess<sup>r</sup> K<elly><sup>5</sup> & R<auzzini><sup>6</sup>, together with such Waltzes as can assist του ταμβουριζειν<sup>7</sup>:

At least I guess you will thus far agree with me, that a very very few constitute that little flock who "prove all things, and hold fast that which is good."<sup>8</sup>

I am always,

my dear Sir

your obliged Friend

& faithful Servant

S Wesley

1. Burney is identified as the addressee of this letter by his daughter's characteristic docketing (see SW to Burney, 28 Nov. 1799, n. 2).
2. 16 May.
3. Salomon made a number of unsuccessful attempts to mount this performance: it was also announced for 5 May and 9 June.
4. 'Experts'.
5. All except the first letter has been heavily scored through, but 'Kelly' is just decipherable. For Michael Kelly (1762-1826), see SW to Charles Wesley jun., 15 Jan. 1807, n. 29.
6. All except the first letter has been heavily scored through; 'Rauzzini' is conjectural. For Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810), see SW to Charles Wesley jun., 15 Jan. 1807, n. 30.
7. 'Dancing': not in Classical Greek, and apparently a coinage of SW's own.



8. 1 Thess 5: 21.

To Joseph Payne Street

Chesterfield Street, 18 August 1801

ALS, 3 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street | N. 17. | Mark Lane. | Tuesday Morning

Pmk: 18 AU 1801

Marybone.

Tuesday 18 Aug<sup>r</sup> 1801

My dear Sir

I believe that Saturday Week<sup>1</sup> will be the first Day in my Power to appoint for meeting M<sup>r</sup> Bell's Party at Palmer's Green,<sup>2</sup> & at present I know of nothing very likely to prevent my Acceptance of his Invitation: I conclude by your Letter that he wishes the Appointment of be made without Loss of Time, therefore perhaps you will now speedily communicate to him this Intelligence.

With respect to your late "Delirium" (for I am to suppose it now over, for which I am sorry, as it appears to have been so agreeable to you) I can only say that I fully understand the Situation you describe, & although I have not experienced it in consequence of our last Sunday's Recreation, yet I know it to be a most pleasant occasional Effect of the Fillip to Nature which D<sup>r</sup> Cadogan<sup>3</sup> talks about, but which (by the Way) will become less elastic & forcible, & consequently less effective, if too frequently repeated.-- However, it did not seem to me as if you had secured to yourself any Right to become

so enlightened, enlivened, & metaphysicized by my Wine, for really we took but a very moderate Dose of it, &, (if I am any Judge of my own State on Sunday) I thought that we were all perfectly steady at the Hour of Parting. I am truly vexed that W. D.<sup>4</sup> should have excoriated any one of his precious Limbs in returning from my Roof; but this you know being La Fortune de la Guerre, it is in vain to fret about it.

I will be with you on Saturday next<sup>5</sup> by half past 2, as I suspect that Business is to be done before Dinner-- I wish you to take me rightly about the Sponsorship-- I could have no possible Objection to the Favour you design me from any other Consideration than that of answering for Impossibilities.-- I really look upon the Duty of a Godfather (admitting that it could be performed) as one of the most solemn & obligatory in the whole theological system but when I reflect on what I believe is (after all) the Truth, that no one can be justly accountable for all the Sins and Imperfections of another, (he having generally enow to answer for on his own Score) the Affair of Sponsor becomes rather a Thing of complimentary Ceremony than of probable Damnation: so having endeavoured to quiet my Conscience (which is seldom difficult to do when Gratification follows its Repose) "I promise & vow to renounce" my Fear of Hell & to suffer my future Godson to take his own Path, either thither or to the other Place, which however, I confess I should rather wish him to prefer, in which I suspect that you will second my Inclination.<sup>6</sup>

The Ladies are all sound, Wind & Limb, Miss R.<sup>7</sup> & my Mother arrived here yesterday about half an Hour before me, & I went through my

Monday's Drudgery with great Christian Forbearance & Resignation.

With best Wishes to your whole House, I am

Dear Sir

Ever yours truly

S Wesley

1. 29 Aug.
2. A village on the outskirts of London. Bell has not been identified.
3. William Cadogan, MD (1711-97), in his influential and frequently reprinted A Dissertation on the Gout and on all Chronic Diseases (London, 1771).
4. Presumably William Drummer.
5. 22 Aug.
6. Street's child, to whom SW was to be godfather, may have been Joseph Edward, subsequently mentioned in SW to Street, 30 May 1806.
7. Not certainly identified: perhaps the Miss Richardson who attended SW's music party on 10 Oct. 1801 (SW to his mother, 16 Oct. 1801 (Rylands, DDWes 6/49)), and sang in the concert series in 1802 discussed in SW to Burney, [Feb.-May 1802].



To Charles Burney

Highgate, 11 November [1801]

ANS, 1 p. (Private collection of John Comyn)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Burney, | Chelsea College. | Thursday Morning

Pmk: 7 o'Clock NO 12 1801

Highgate. Wednesday.

11<sup>th</sup> of Nov<sup>r</sup>

I trust, my dear Sir, to be with you on Tuesday next<sup>2</sup> at 10, & will arrange Matters so as to steal half a Holiday; for I have to ask your Opinion & Advice upon a Business of more Moment & Magnitude than Organ Voluntaries,<sup>3</sup> although it be intimately concerned with them -- sat verbum sapienti<sup>4</sup>-- en attendant,

Yours faithfully

SW

1. The year is given by the postmark.
2. 17 Nov.
3. Probably the series of subscription concerts which SW was promoting with his brother Charles in the coming season (see next letter).
4. 'A word is sufficient to the wise'.

To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

[February-May 1802]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (Osborn MSS 3, Box 12, Folder 867).

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: <sup>3</sup>

My dear Friend

Your kind Note<sup>4</sup> I would sooner have acknowledged had an earlier Moment from excessive Pressure of harassing Business been allowed me.-- "Nunc animo Opus, nunc Pectore firmo,"<sup>5</sup> is peculiarly applicable to my present Affairs: of Difficulties & Dangers there is not now Time to discourse; we shall have more Leisure in future perhaps than we wish, for proving how much better Things might have been.<sup>6</sup>

Billington<sup>7</sup> would have laid us the golden Eggs; & would have been a cheap Bargain at any Price:-- but this won't argufy now.<sup>8</sup>

I wrote a Duet for the Organs,<sup>9</sup> lately, which upon Trial, I find too complicated for any Chance of general Approbation:-- We therefore think to play one on Thursday next, adapted from the last Chorus in Esther,<sup>10</sup> (which you know is as easily understood as the Coronation Anthem,)<sup>11</sup> & which will be but little deserving of your particular Attention, having been so long remembered:-- It will happen near the Finale of the Job, of which accept the following Order,

1. Symphony. S.W.<sup>12</sup>

2. Glee. 3 Voices. C.W.<sup>13</sup>

3. Song. Miss Richardson.<sup>14</sup> (Cimarosa)<sup>15</sup>
4. Trio. Tenor,<sup>16</sup> Bassoon & Violoncello. Shield.<sup>17</sup> Holmes<sup>18</sup> & Lindley.<sup>19</sup>
5. Song. M<sup>rs</sup> Dussek<sup>20</sup> (with the Harp). Sarti.<sup>21</sup>
6. Organ Concerto. C.W.<sup>22</sup>

## 2<sup>d</sup> Part

1. Symphony. Mozart.<sup>23</sup>
2. Song. Morelli.<sup>24</sup>
3. Concerto. Piano Forte.

Master Peile.<sup>25</sup> (Dussek)<sup>26</sup>

4. Duetto. M<sup>rs</sup> Dussek & M<sup>rs</sup> Cimador.<sup>27</sup> ("Ah perdona,") Mozart.<sup>28</sup>
5. Duet. 2 Organs.<sup>29</sup>
6. Full Piece. Handel. (from the Ov. to Atalanta).<sup>30</sup>

Yours, my kind Friend,

Most faithfully

S. Wesley

1. Burney is identified as the addressee of this letter by his daughter's characteristic docketing (see SW to Burney, 28 Nov. 1799, n. 2, and n. 3 below).
2. The discussion of the concert series (see n. 6) establishes that this letter was written between February and May 1802; it is not clear, however, whether it was written before the series started or during its course. The address portion of a letter to Burney in SW's hand, dated 9 Mar. 1802 and postmarked 10 Mar. 1802 (NYPL (Berg)), may belong to this letter; if so, it establishes the date. If the symphony by

SW mentioned here is the Symphony in B flat, on the other hand (see n. 12), the programme can only be of the final concert of the series, and the letter can be dated to late Apr. or early May.

3. This symbol is interpreted by Ribeiro as denoting a letter 'of tertiary interest'.
4. Not preserved.
5. 'Now courage is required, now a stout heart is needed': an adaptation of the sybil's exhortation to Aeneas just before they enter the underworld in Virgil, Aeneid, vi. 621.
6. A series of six subscription concerts promoted by SW and CW at Hyde's Concert Rooms, Tottenham Street was advertised in The Times on 29 Jan. 1802; it was to begin on 4 Feb., with subsequent concerts on 25 Feb., 11 and 25 Mar., 22 Apr., and 6 May. No other contemporary evidence of this series has been found, but it is clear from references in subsequent correspondence that it was not a success and resulted in substantial financial loss for both SW and his brother. In a letter of 31 May 1811 to his brother Charles (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 117), SW remembered 'those concerts which failed at the Tottenham Street Rooms', and the refusal of many of the performers to 'relax in any part of their demands'.
7. The leading English soprano Elizabeth Billington, née Weichsell (?1765-8-1818) had initially established her reputation in London during the 1780s and early 1790s. In 1794 she went to Italy, where she had many successes in Naples and Milan. She returned to London in the summer of 1801 to great acclaim and resumed her career.
8. Mrs Billington, in her first full season in London since her return from Italy, would have been a star attraction, but SW and CW had either been unable or had decided not to secure her services. Long afterwards, SW's brother Charles remembered that 'the last and only Public Concert we had at the old Antient Music Room did not answer, because we neglected to engage the Late Mrs Billington, who was just arrived in England' (Charles Wesley jun. to John Langshaw jun., 11 Jan. 1827 (Emory); Wainwright, 86).



9. Not preserved: doubtless the duet included in the worklist appended to SW's obituary in MW, where it is described as 'unpublished; the composer preferred this to the other, and considered it his best composition for the organ'.
10. 'The Lord our Enemy has slain', from Handel's oratorio Esther (?1718, rev. 1732).
11. Handel's anthem 'Zadok the Priest', written for the coronation of George II in 1727.
12. Either one of the symphonies of 1784 written for the family concerts, or the Symphony in B flat, SW's only mature work in the genre, the autograph of which (BL, Add. MS 35011) is dated 27 Apr. 1802, and which was probably written for and performed at the final concert in this series.
13. By Charles Wesley jun.: not identified.
14. Not identified; presumably the Miss Richardson who attended SW's music party on 10 Oct. 1801 (SW to his mother, 16 Oct. 1801 (Rylands, DDWes 6/49)); conceivably one of the four daughters of the playwright and poet Joseph Richardson (1755-1803), one of the proprietors of Drury Lane Theatre, and MP for Newport, Cornwall.
15. Domenico Cimarosa (1749-1801), Italian opera composer.
16. i.e. viola.
17. Presumably by William Shield (1748-1829), who also played the viola ('tenor'); not identified. For Shield, see SW to Shield, ?13 Sept. 1815.
18. The bassoonist James Holmes (1755/6-1820) (Doane; Matthews; Sainsbury).
19. The cellist Robert Lindley (1776-1855), the leading player of his generation (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
20. Sophia Dussek, née Corri (1775-1847), daughter of the composer, music publisher, and teacher Domenico Corri (1746-1825), who had married Jan Ladislav Dussek (see n. 25) in 1792. She was also well known as a harpist and pianist.
21. Giuseppe Sarti (1729-1802), Italian opera composer.
22. Charles Wesley jun.: perhaps one of his six Concertos, Op. 2 (c.1781).
23. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-91); the symphony has not been identified.
24. The operatic bass Giovanni Morelli (fl.1787-1815) (BD).

25. The pianist Joseph Stageldoir Peile (1787-1840) (BD).
26. Jan Ladislav Dussek (1760-1812), pianist and composer. He had fled France at the time of the French Revolution, and had first appeared as a pianist in London in 1789.
27. Presumably the wife of the composer, singer, violinist, and music publisher Giambattista Cimador (1761-1805), who had settled in London in 1791. He had gone into partnership with Tebaldo Monzani around 1800 (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
28. A duet from Act I of Mozart's La clemenza di Tito (1791). Sophia Dussek was closely involved with the introduction of Mozart's music to London audiences: she included 'Ah perdona' in her benefit concert on 23 Apr. 1800, and sang in the first London performance of the Requiem in 1801. La clemenza di Tito was the first of Mozart's operas to be performed in full in London, on 27 Mar. 1806.
29. The arrangement of the final chorus from Handel's Esther, discussed above.
30. The Overture to Handel's opera Atalanta (1736).

To Charles Stokes<sup>1</sup>

[?London]<sup>2</sup>, 2 October 1804

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 31764, f. 18)

Addressed: M<sup>r</sup> Stokes.

Dear Charles<sup>3</sup>

I am unable to account for the Reason of y<sup>r</sup> never having either called, or written to me so long.-- You of Course know the Cause Yrself-- I must own that I believe if you had wished to have been in my Society (tho' it is none of the best in my State of Health & Circumstances) you w<sup>d</sup> surely have contrived Ways & Means long ere now of our meeting.-- You see I write as one hurt at the Slight of a Person for whom he has a Regard.-- had I not, I assure you I should not have thus remonstrated -- I am conscious of not having done the civil Thing by the Coopers,<sup>4</sup> who wrote me the kindest Invitation in the World.-- Illness & Distraction of Mind must, & I trust will excuse -- let them know I am truly sensible for their Goodness.--

You will I think give me some Answer upon this:-- had you been disengaged to-day I would have gone out with you on a ramble somewhere after 12 o'Clock.--

Should you return home by 1 o'Clock To-day & will leave a Note for me, stating when or whether we are soon to meet, I will call at a Venture, about 2.

Yrs truly

SW

**Tuesday. Oct' 2. 1804**

- 1. Charles Stokes (1784-1839), pianist, organist, and composer of anthems, glees, songs, and organ music. According to his own biographical sketch (BL, Add. MS 11730, ff. 204-6), he was admitted as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral in 1792 through his godfather Samuel Webbe I, leaving the choir in 1798. He was a pupil successively of Webbe, Charles Wesley jun., and SW. With SW and Vincent Novello he gave the first performance of SW's Trio for Three Pianofortes in 1811. He owned several manuscripts of SW's music.**
- 2. SW moved from his Highgate house in late spring 1803, probably as a result of financial crises following his separation from Charlotte in (probably) late 1801. There are few letters for the next two years or so. During much of this time SW appears to have suffered from severe depression, and his address or addresses during this period are not known.**
- 3. SW's use of the Christian name in the salutation of a letter to a recipient outside his immediate family is unparalleled, and suggests a particularly close relationship with Stokes at this time.**
- 4. Not certainly identified: possibly George Cooper (?1783-1843), Assistant Organist of St Paul's Cathedral.**



To John George Graeff<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 21 May [1806?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 60753, f. 120)

Addressed: To John George Graeff

Camden Town. 21 May.

My dear Friend,

At length I am enabled to announce to you the good News of my having compleated the Transcript of Seb. Bach's inimitable & immortal Preludes & Fugues,<sup>3</sup> for which Privilege I shall always consider myself inexpressibly obliged, & particularly for the great Patience with which you have excused my unavoidable Delay in returning your valuable Book.-- Had I been Master of my own Time, you would have received your Volume with many Thanks some Months ago, for if I could have devoted 4 Hours per Day to copying, I calculated that I could easily have transcribed from 6 to 8 Pages without Inconvenience; but as my Attention is by Necessity principally devoted to others, & their Improvement, instead of my own, I have been compelled to snatch whatever moments could be stolen out of the 24 Hours, & these were consequently irregular & uncertain.-- I was however so determinedly bent upon finishing the Job, in consequence of your very kind Indulgence of so long a Loan, that it would have extremely vexed me to have quitted it without Accomplishment, & I have now one Proof among many which we daily meet, of the Advantages resulting from steady Perseverance

in a rational Cause.--

As I wish that not a single Error may remain in my Manuscript, I shall request the additional Favour that you will permit me to keep the Book to the latter End of the next Week, during which Time I shall have sufficient Opportunities to revise & compare the Copy with the Original, Note by Note.-  
- You may depend on obtaining the latter before Saturday next.

I have likewise to trust that you will pardon my Deficiency in Punctuality respecting the Kindness you did me in the pecuniary Accommodation.-- The Sum would have been returned precisely at the Termination of the Month (as stated & fully intended) if a great Man,<sup>4</sup> who is now in Arrears £60 to me, & who gave me to expect it in the Month of February last, had not chosen to delay his Payment.-- The Money however is as safe as if it were in my Pocket at this Moment, but still there is nothing that teazes me more than the Necessity of the least Breach or Delay of an Engagement, especially with a Friend for whom I have so high & so just an Esteem as yourself.

With best Respects to M<sup>r</sup> Graeff & our young Friends,  
believe me,  
My dear Sir,  
Most cordially & faithfully yours  
S Wesley.

1. The flautist John George Graeff (c.1762-post 1824) came to London around 1784, where he became one of the most prominent flautists of his day and appeared

frequently as a concerto soloist. He was evidently a long-standing friend of SW, although on the evidence of his infrequent appearances in the letters he and SW may have met only occasionally. SW mentions him in a letter to his mother of 16 Oct. 1801 (Rylands, DDWes 6/49) as having been a member of a music party at SW's house in Highgate on 10 Oct. 1801 which also included Miss Richardson, Francis Cramer, Pinto, and Moralt, 'who formed the sweetest Harmony consisting principally of Mozart & Haydn's Musick, which of course they performed with the most exquisite Precision & Effect'.

2. The year of this letter is suggested by SW's Camden Town address and his discussion of making his own copy of the '48'. If this copy is the one mentioned in SW to Burney, 12 Apr. [1808], the year can only be 1806 or 1807. SW's discussion of his financial problems and money owed by a 'great man' (see n. 4), strongly points to 1806, although 1807 must still be regarded as a possibility.
3. The two books of Das wohltemperiertes Clavier, BWV 846-93 (the '48') by J. S. Bach (1685-1750). Each book consists of 24 preludes and fugues, one for each of the major and minor keys. In his Reminiscences, SW stated that he was first introduced to the '48' by George Frederick Pinto (1785-1806); this must have been some time before 23 Mar. 1806, the date of Pinto's early death. It is apparent from SW's remarks in later letters that Graeff's copy was of the edition of around 1801 by Nägeli of Zurich. SW's manuscript copy is at BL, Add. MS 14330.
4. Probably Justinian Casamajor (1746-1820), a wealthy businessman with property near Ridge, who is also mentioned in a number of family letters. In a letter to his mother of 1 Apr. 1806 (Fitzwilliam), SW discussed problems which had arisen from the non-payment of various amounts due to him, including £60 from Casamajor, which he had at this stage decided to write off.

To Joseph Payne Street

Camden Town,<sup>1</sup> 30 May 1806

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street. | N. 17 | Mark Lane | Friday Morn<sup>g</sup> | p.p. 2.<sup>d</sup>

Pmk: 30 MY <180>6

My dear Sir,

I have a little Scheme to propose, to which if you have any material Objection, I will give it up without further Argument.

My son Charles<sup>2</sup> has lately been so diligent & assiduous in endeavouring to improve himself in such Exercises as have appeared to me for his future Benefit, that I judge him very meritorious of what is called a Holiday or of any innocent Recreation for a few Hours on a leisure Day.-- Now I think I can manage to command Wednesday, June 4.<sup>3</sup> & as Charles has a great Desire to hear the Tower Guns fired,<sup>4</sup> he has asked me to permit him to go thither that Day, to which I have consented; & my subsequent Notion was, that if you were unengaged, we might contrive to pass the Remainder of the Day entre nous trois, & what I thought of proposing was to go down to Billingsgate,<sup>5</sup> & dine upon some fresh Fish, if so be there should be any left by that Time: to stay there just as long or as short as we might find it pleasant, & then stroll towards Chalk Farm<sup>6</sup> (which is the best Prospect I know among the Tea-Gardens), & finally, if we were not quite sick of one another's Company, repair to N. 9 Arlington Street, & take an unceremonious



Crust of Bread & Cheese.-- Here is the grand Plan of Operation, which if it meet your Suffrage, shall certainly be put into Execution.-- If there were a Possibility of changing his Majesty's Birth Day from June 4. "at 22 Minutes past 2 in the Morn",<sup>7</sup> I should have been glad, because Wednesday is now one of the Days on which I have the most oppressive Work but as I think I can engage my Assistant<sup>8</sup> to mount Guard for me throughout the whole of the Afternoon Business, I trust, that in Case of your Coincidence I shall be able to make all smooth on the Occasion.

Your early Opinion & Decision upon this momentous Stratagem, will oblige

My dear Sir,

Yours ever truly

S Wesley

P.S. I hope to be informed that your Son Joseph<sup>9</sup> is better than when we last met.

9. Arlington Street. Camden Town | Friday 30. May. 1806.

1. SW moved to Arlington Street, Camden Town, some time before 1 Apr. 1806, when this address appears on a letter to his mother (Fitzwilliam). Because of the paucity of correspondence from the immediately preceding period, the date of the move is impossible to establish. He and Charlotte appear to have been reconciled some time in the early part of 1805, and their daughter Emma Frances was born in Feb. 1806. The move to Arlington Street can be presumed to have coincided with or to have shortly followed their reconciliation. SW and Charlotte lived there until the final breakdown of their marriage in early 1810.

2. SW's son, born 25 Sept. 1793. Following a recent financial crisis, SW had been obliged to remove him from St Paul's School, and was now taking care of his education himself.
3. The birthday of George III.
4. It was (and is still) the custom to fire the guns at the Tower of London at noon on the sovereign's birthday.
5. London's principal fish market, where most of the trade was done in the early hours of the morning.
6. East of Primrose Hill, at the lower end of Haverstock Hill, not far from SW's house in Camden Town. The tea gardens may have been those attached to Chalk House Farm, an inn on the site of the present Chalk Farm Tavern on England's Lane (Encyclopedia of London, under 'Chalk Farm').
7. A quotation from 'Hurly burly, blood and thunder', a 'Burlesque Ode for the Birthday of George III' by Edward Thurlow (1731-1806), Lord Chancellor 1778-92, which SW later set for three voices. It concludes: 'This is a day for Fun and drinking / This is a day for dancing and sinking / For on this day Big George was born / At twenty three minutes past two in the morn'. Thurlow, a keen amateur musician, was the patron of R. J. S. Stevens, and is frequently mentioned in his Recollections. (DNB; Argent, passim).
8. Possibly Matthew Cooke (1760/1-1829), who was SW's assistant in 1809: see SW to Smith, 23 Apr. [1809].
9. Joseph Edward; he may have been the son mentioned in SW to Street, 18 Aug. 1801.

To Charles Wesley Junior

Camden Town, 15 January 1807

ALS, 11 pp. (Rylands, DDWF 15/12)

Dear Charles,

I should certainly have sent you a Line long before now,<sup>1</sup> but have been waiting an Opportunity of accompanying it with a Copy of the Glee,<sup>2</sup> which you desired, as also an Epitome<sup>3</sup> (for I have not had Time to transcribe the Score) of the Responses in the Litany,<sup>4</sup> & I thought you would also be pleased in my adding a Copy of a new "Dixit Dominus" for three Voices, which was performed lately at what is called the Concentores Society,<sup>5</sup> of which you may have heard, and which consists solely of 12 select musical Professors, each of whom is expected to produce a new Canon, and a new Glee, on whatever Day he happens to be chosen President.-- My Invitation thither was as a Visitor only, from Elliott<sup>6</sup> (Master Elliott in Days of yore) who is a very amiable sensible Man, & I need not say much to you of his Skill and Taste in singing.-- What will I think amuse you in the present Instance is, that at the broaching of this Dixit Dñs were aiding and assisting Mess<sup>rs</sup> Harrison<sup>7</sup> & Greator,<sup>8</sup> together with Stevens,<sup>9</sup> Callcott,<sup>10</sup> little Master Tommy,<sup>11</sup> cum septem aliis quæ nunc præscribere longum est.<sup>12</sup> In fine, the Verse made a great Splash, or as the English French Phrase is, a great Sensation. Old Horsefall<sup>13</sup> was Bawler Maximus, as usual, & he was so transported that I feared he would be seized with some mortal Spasm or other, which (as I want no more Deaths laid at my Door) I was glad to find averted.

I know not the Rules of your Harmonic Club,<sup>14</sup> therefore cannot determine whether they perform such a Thing as I have been writing about,<sup>15</sup> but if they admit Latin & Scripture among festive & Cytherean Lays,<sup>16</sup> & you think it would suit any of their Voices, you are quite welcome to make what Use you will of it, only that I should by no means like any Copies to get abroad, until it be published, (in Case I should so resolve) for various Reasons, among which the Danger (or rather the Certainty) of its being mangled & mutilated in Transcription is not the least.-- You remember what a perfect Scaramouch<sup>17</sup> the learned Miss Abrams<sup>18</sup> made of Goosy Gander!<sup>19</sup>

And now to the Contents of your Letter.<sup>20</sup> I have no Objection to my Music appearing at any of the first-rate Shops in Bath, (for there, as well as elsewhere, I presume are Orders of Dignity), but I should not like them to be set in an inferior Window, as if soliciting Purchase.-- If the Person you mention is inclined to order a Number of Copies, either of the Voluntaries,<sup>21</sup> the new Glee,<sup>22</sup> or whatever else I may vomit out next, (I would have said sh-te, but the Word is already engaged by M<sup>r</sup> Geminiani)<sup>23</sup> & will signify his Wish either by you or otherwise, it shall be speedily complied with.

Apropos of Geminiani.-- Master Jacky Owen, Arch-Deacon of York,<sup>24</sup> & own Brother in Law to John Beardmore Esq<sup>re</sup><sup>25</sup> Crewel Manufacturer (not cruel Malefactor) Milk Street Cheapside hath lately fallen deeply in Love with Geminiani's Solos, & his Niece<sup>26</sup> having recommenced her musical Studies with me, was desirous of knowing whether they were practicable in the Form they appear for the Violin? to which I ventured to answer in the Negative; but added, that I knew they were to be obtained, (altho' scarce) as adapted for a



keyed Instrument by the Author himself.<sup>27</sup>-- I also promised to get them for her if possible.-- Now I really am rather at a Loss to say how, for modern Music Shops disdain such Trash, & those who love such obsolete Stuff are so bigotted to their fond Prejudices that you might as easily wrest a Bone from Cerberus,<sup>28</sup> or a good harmony from K-ll-y,<sup>29</sup> as persuade them to part with a Copy on any Terms.-- therefore I desire your Advice & Assistance upon this Point.

I dare say that your Selection by Rauzzini<sup>30</sup> was a good one.-- You have already discovered (I presume) that he is thoroughly versed in every Species of good Music, & that he knows & values appropriately the everlasting Bulwarks of Canto Fermo, as well as the Refinements of those who have since (by Degrees) almost entirely anatomized the chromatic (& even the enharmonic) Scale.

I am glad to hear so favourable an Account of D<sup>r</sup> H.'s<sup>31</sup> Health.-- I wish we could say the same of his worthy & learned Contemporary D<sup>r</sup> B.<sup>32</sup>

With regard to a real Judge of Music disliking Haydn & Mozart, it is a Thing so strange to me, that I have been frequently endeavouring how to account for it.-- Thus far is certain, that the Sounds which we have been earliest delighted with, will claim a Preference, from the very Circumstance you instance, to wit, the Ideas annexed to those Things of which they remind us, & for the same Reason, there are certain Strains, (even in modern Authors) which altho' not eminently beautiful, yet as they immediately bring me into the Situation where I first heard them, they exceedingly distress and torment me.

How far Taste in Music is inherent, I will not attempt here to enquire, but sure it is, that Taste (however acquired) may be wonderfully improved by Cultivation, & Acquaintance with the best Authors; & I have remarked, that even those who have in Words reprobated all modern Innovations in musical Style, yet when they came to write, imperceptibly slipped into several of the very Phrases with which they professed to wage War.

Haydn & Mozart must be heard often before they are thoroughly understood, (as it strikes me) even by those who have heard much Music of more gradual Modulation; but I do think, that when the Ear & Mind become perfectly habituated to their rapid Successions of Harmony, the Feast is rich indeed, & the Surprize is still maintained, notwithstanding Familiarity, which to me is a very extraordinary Circumstance.

You speak of a Movement in Handel's original MS.<sup>33</sup> I have lately seen a very curious Original of Marcello's Psalms,<sup>34</sup> which become of Course more valuable from their being almost impossible to read.-- They were placed upon a Desk before a young Friend of ours, who was wholly puzzled, & no Marvel (as J. W.<sup>35</sup> would say) for really they might have made Argus<sup>36</sup> stare to no Purpose.

By the Way I think very moderately of Marcello, as far as Spirit & Effect are concerned.-- His Writing is chaste; his Style generally solemn, & his Harmonies occasionally rich-- but he wants the Sweetness of Steffani,<sup>37</sup> the Strength of Purcell,<sup>38</sup> & certainly the Fire of Handel.-- If I am not mistaken, Boyce<sup>39</sup> thought that Marcello has been over-rated.-- Whoever thinks so, I am quite of his Mind.

Now to the Business of the Litany.-- Little Master Tommy, altho' he has been a Year or two (at least) the doughty Organist of Paul's Church,<sup>40</sup> yet, it seems, has never studied those Parts of the Church Service called Rubricks, one of which directs that the Litany is to be read or sung on all Sundays, Wednesdays, & Fridays throughout the Year.-- Christmas-Day, you may remember, happened on a Thursday: therefore the Consequence was that no Litany was to be had for Love or Money, the latter of which I could not offer, & the former, among Musicians & Church Dignitaries I was not Fool enough to expect.<sup>41</sup>

However, to do Justice to the Sub-Dean, & Honour to myself all under one, I must observe, that he wrote me a very handsome Excuse for the Disappointment, & a Panegyric upon the Composition (which it seems he had heard in private) & added his Testimony of Approbation concerning the Manner in which it was produced.

Attwood has since been anxious to have it sung, on any Sunday I may appoint.-- I shew him my Indifference upon this Head, by leaving it from Time to Time without fixing any Day-- But he means very well, tho' occasionally a Marplot, & one never can be thoroughly angry with an honest Blunderer.

All I regretted was, the Disappointment of some People, who I know went to Church on Purpose.-- It only remains now with me to perform the said Article, together with your Sanctus, whenever most convenient to myself.

I hope that D<sup>r</sup> Shepherd<sup>42</sup> is recovered of his Gout.-- You remember my Father's speech to Petit Andrews<sup>43</sup>-- "M<sup>r</sup> Andrews, pray where did you



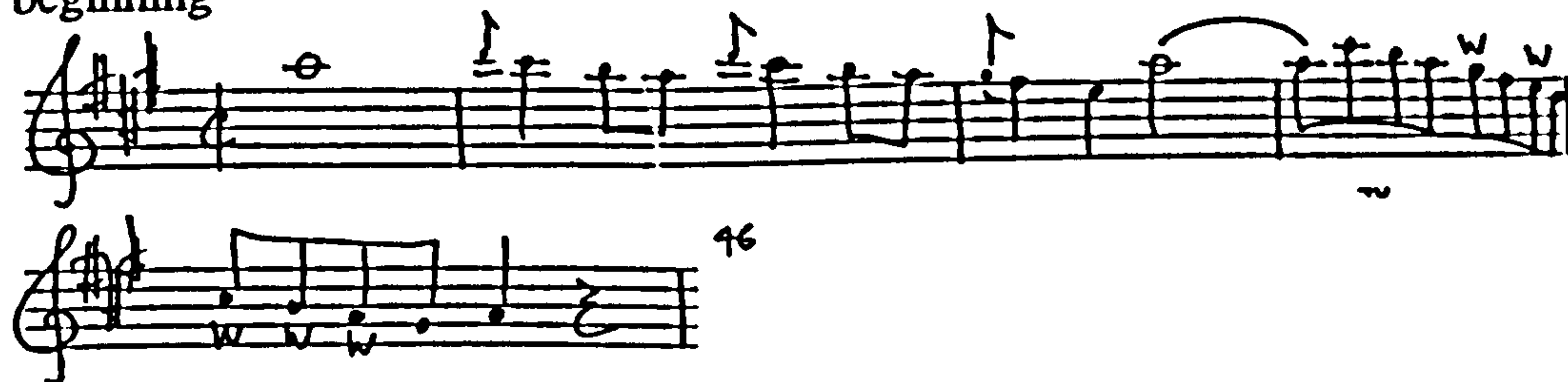
pick up your Greek? I thought that a Man of Fashion had nothing to do with Greek." So I say, "Where did D<sup>r</sup> Shepherd pick up his Gout? I thought that a Man of Temperance had nothing to do with Gout."

He is a very sensible (& evidently a learned) Man, with a Degree of Energy & Originality which to me were excessively interesting: he is just the Man whom I could hear talk for four Hours together, & be sorry that he would not talk six.

I send herewith a few Lines to M<sup>r</sup> Bowen,<sup>44</sup> which you will forward at your first convenient Opportunity.

Pray give my old Love & good Will in return to M<sup>r</sup> Millgrove,<sup>45</sup> & ask him whether he remembers my pestering him about a Solo of Giardini,

beginning



You are very sarcastic (tho' very just) about a certain English-German-Musician-Divine.<sup>47</sup>-- You describe him between Bath & Bristol: is this to express his halting between the Love of this World & the next?-- I do not wonder that not only musical Professors, but all Professors "stare at him, & know not what to make of his odd way of Humour."--

I do not think if we had seen S<sup>t</sup> Paul personating Punch, we should have extremely respected his Apostleship.-- I would have a Tom T--dman remain a Tom T--dman, & not carry on the Perfumery Trade at the same Time.



I called on Gray the Organ Builder,<sup>48</sup> who has been closely confined by reason of an Accident he met in coming out of his Carriage by which he has hurt his Leg so as to have been laid up for this Month past.-- The organ of M<sup>r</sup> Hoare<sup>49</sup> cannot be finished (in Consequence of this Mischance) for some Weeks to come, therefore, of Course, the Remuneration due to you<sup>50</sup> will be deferred till this Event shall take Place.

John Cramer<sup>51</sup> has lately sent me some charming Scraps of his for the Piano Forte, among which is a Toccata, which if you can get at Bath, I think I can answer that you will be much delighted with it.--<sup>52</sup> The Subject is quite in an Organ Style, & conducted throughout in the most Cantabile Way, altho' very difficult in various Passages, from the great Number of double Semiquavers in the Bass: but it is a Nut worth the cracking.

If Fame & Flattery would make a Man fat, Sir John Falstaff would be a Shrimp to me, as far as musical Flummery is concerned.-- My Nerves having been (thank God) in a less agitated State for some Months past than I have know them to be for Years, the Consequence is, that I have been enabled to bear the Bustle of Society with much less Perturbation of Spirits than heretofore, so that I have frequently mingled in those Sort of public Parties, wherein alone a Man is likely to be talked of to any Purpose, that is, where he hath the Opportunity, (if the Will be consentient) of opening whatever there may be of Mind or of Genius belonging to him, & where he is sure of being heard by the candid as well as the envious Critic.--

I attended the first Meeting of the Harmonists Society,<sup>53</sup> (to whom I presented the Glee as you will see by the Title), & Stevens, who is, as

Madan<sup>54</sup> would call him, "a mighty gentlemanly Man" soon after dinner proposed to the President<sup>55</sup> my giving them a Piece on the Piano Forte (which is an unusual Thing at a merely Glee Party) & which Hint was received with a great Fuss of Clapping & the usual Concomitants.-- I was in a very good Humour, & played much to my own Satisfaction.<sup>56</sup>

On Sunday last,<sup>57</sup> Carnaby<sup>58</sup> & myself went down together to Parson Barry<sup>59</sup> at Dulwich, where we met the most hospitable Reception.- - There were 9 Guests invited besides ourselves, & most of them very sensible, agreeable People. You know what a very clever Musician Carnaby is, & he gave us some vocal Compositions of his which were highly finished, & extremely delightful.-- He sang among the Rest, one which begins "Man can thy Lot no brighter Soul allow"<sup>60</sup> which he says you much approved, & he boasts every where of your good Word.-- He carries himself pretty high among ordinary Professors, & there are but few among them by whose Praise he is gratified.

I have promised to go on Sunday next<sup>61</sup> to the Abbey,<sup>62</sup> after which I am to dine with Rob' Cooke,<sup>63</sup> the Organist, the Son of the D<sup>r</sup> whom you remember.-- He is very knowing in Music, & is a pleasant Man when you get at him, tho' he is rather shy & reserved at first.-- Callcott having heard that I am to play at the Abbey on Sunday has engaged John Cramer to come too, so that I must mind my P's & Q's in such "worshipful Society."-- The Touch of the Organ<sup>64</sup> is remarkably good; indeed rather too light for me.-- It is a complete contrast with S<sup>t</sup> Paul's,<sup>65</sup> where you may remember that the Keys are all as stubborn as Fox's Martyrs,<sup>66</sup> & bear almost as much buffetting.

This letter reminds me of the Story of the Man who was asked to sing after Dinner in Company.-- He was a long while before he could be prevailed on to comply, but when he began, he continued for six Hours.--

There was a Time when I was very fond of writing long Letters; but it was when I had few of the Cares of this Life to distract or disturb my Attention.-- The Heart was light & gay, & every Path was Bowling Green:<sup>67</sup> but when the Mind has its Way hedged up with the Thorns & Brambles of Trouble, Disappointment, & Loss, & must often plunge, nolens volens into the Ruts of pecuniary Embarrassment, it is Odds but that a great Majority of the Brains become confused, if not oppressed into Stupidity, or sublimated into Madness.

When two Persons, each wishing well to the other, are separated in Distance by Circumstances, epistolary Communication being the only possible one, the Trouble vanishes in the Consideration of a mutual Agrément, one to the Writer, & the other to the Reader.

The domestic Occurrences, of Births, Deaths, Marriages, Promotions &c in the Vicinity of Marybone,<sup>68</sup> which have occurred lately, I mean to recount in my Mother's Letter, to whom I shall write, having finished this.<sup>69</sup>

D<sup>r</sup> Callcott, who is indefatigable in searching out every Information he can obtain concerning Musick, & having conceived a high Notion of me as a Greek Scholar (which shows how People may deceive themselves) has besought me to peruse a Greek Author, (Aristoxenès)<sup>70</sup> for the Purpose of discovering if possible whether Rameau<sup>71</sup> is not mistaken in asserting that the ancient Radicals of B, C, D, & E (the Tetrachord) were G, C, G, C, (thus



making the Mode Major) or whether the Ancients did not consider their Fundamentals to be rather E, A, D, A, & so the Mode was originally Minor.-  
- Whether I shall be able to poke out any satisfactory Intelligence from the Author in question is to me a Doubt, but I have promised him what Assistance I can render, & he is so good a Creature that no one but a morose & savage Mind could bear to refuse him any Request it could reasonably grant.

I went yesterday to D<sup>r</sup> Crotch's<sup>72</sup> Lecture:<sup>73</sup> it was upon the distinct Merits of Pleyel,<sup>74</sup> Kozeluch,<sup>75</sup> & Mozart.-- The last of the three, he much underrated, in my Opinion, & the first, he much exceeded the Truth in panegyrising.-- To Kozeluch he appeared to me to render exact Justice, & impartial Praise.

His playing a Score is very extraordinary.-- I cannot understand how he manages to play all the Parts of a Symphony of Mozart so that you do not miss the Absence of any one Instrument, whether stringed or wind.

I remain in Haste

(tho' certainly not in short)

Dear Charles

Yours very truly,

S. Wesley.

Camden Town | 15 Jan<sup>r</sup> 1807

1. Charles Wesley jun. was in Bath with his mother: see SW to his mother of this date (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 15).
2. No doubt 'When Bacchus, Jove's Immortal Boy', a setting of a translation by Thomas Moore of an Ode by Anacreon, performed in Bath at the Society of



Harmonists on 18 Dec. 1806 and subsequently published (see n. 22).

3. i.e. a short score; not preserved.
4. The autograph of SW's setting of the Litany Responses, dated 29 Nov. 1806, is at BL, Add. MS 71107; for plans for the first performance, see n. 41.
5. The Concentores Society was active from around 1798 to 1812 and from around 1818 to 1847. The autograph of SW's three-part setting of 'Dixit Dominus' discussed here (BL, Add. MS 71107, f. 111), notes that it was 'presented & performed' at the meeting of the Concentores on 27 Dec. 1806. In his journal, R. J. S. Stevens records SW's presence on this date, but states that only the compositions of Samuel Webbe were performed: 'the rule of this Society, when any member is President for the day'. Stevens also records SW's presence at the previous meeting on 18 Dec. (Argent, 150, 291).
6. James Elliott (1783-1856), singer and composer, chiefly of glees. He had appeared (as 'Master Elliott') as a boy treble soloist at the 1799 Birmingham festival, and had a successful later career as a bass. He was later to appear with SW as one of the soloists at the Tamworth Festival (Brown and Stratton).
7. Samuel Harrison (1760-1812), a leading tenor of the day, well known from his appearances over the years at the Handel Commemoration, the Concert of Ancient Music, and the oratorio concerts. In 1791 he founded the Vocal Concerts with Charles Knyvett. He was also active in the world of glee singing: he was elected to membership of the Catch Club in the same year as Stevens, and was a founder member of the Glee Club (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Argent, 292-3).
8. Thomas Greatorrex (1758-1831), singer, organist, and teacher. After apprenticeship with Benjamin Cooke and a period as organist of Carlisle Cathedral, he settled in London and became particularly associated with the Concert of Ancient Music, where he succeeded Joah Bates as conductor in 1793. He joined Harrison and Knyvett in re-establishment of the Vocal Concerts in 1801, and became organist of Westminster Abbey in 1819 (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Argent, 292-3).

9. Richard John Samuel Stevens (1757-1837), English glee-composer, teacher, and lecturer. He was organist at St Michael's, Cornhill (1781), the Temple Church (1786) and the Charterhouse (1796), Gresham Professor of Music (1801), and music master at Christ's Hospital (1808), where he was succeeded in 1810 by SW's friend and future son-in-law Robert Glenn. His somewhat plodding Recollections, a condensation of five volumes of diaries kept between 1802 and 1837, are nonetheless a valuable and detailed source of information on his activities and the various musical circles in which he moved (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Argent). For an astringent assessment of his position in the musical society of his day, see Ehrlich, Music Profession, 32-5.
10. John Wall Callcott (1766-1821), organist, teacher, composer, music historian, and theorist. A noted composer of glees, he had in his youth been notorious for the single-mindedness of his approach to the annual Glee Club competitions, for which in one year he had submitted no fewer than 120 entries. In later life, his interests turned increasingly to music theory. His projected history and dictionary of music were abandoned following his mental collapse in Apr. 1808, after which he was confined to a lunatic asylum near Bristol. His daughter Elizabeth married SW's near-contemporary William Horsley in 1813 (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
11. Attwood.
12. 'With seven others, whom it would take too long to describe'. In addition to those mentioned by SW, Stevens records the presence of the glee composer Reginald Spofforth (1768-70-1827) and Robert Cooke (1768-1814), organist of Westminster Abbey.
13. James Horsfall: not otherwise identified (Argent).
14. The Bath Harmonic Society, founded by Henry Harington (see n. 31). Charles Wesley jun. is known to have directed a concert of glees at its Ladies' Night at the Lower Assembly Rooms on 19 Dec. 1806 (programme and texts at Drew (shelfmark BY 321 A5 G555g)), and it was no doubt for a subsequent meeting of this society that SW was offering his new 'Dixit Dominus' setting.



15. i.e. SW's setting of 'Dixit Dominus'.
16. Cytherea was Venus, the goddess of love; SW's 'Cytherean Lays' are therefore glees on the subject of love.
17. This use of 'scaramouch', evidently meaning a poor performance or a botched job, is not recorded in OED.
18. Probably Harriett Abrams (c.1758-c.1822), the best known and most popular of three Abrams sisters who all sang professionally at this time; the others were Theodosia (c.1765-post 1834) and Eliza (c.1772-c.1830) (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
19. Presumably SW's three-voice setting of this popular song, composed c.1781 and published c.1800.
20. Not preserved.
21. SW's Op. 6 organ voluntaries, the first six of which had been published individually by this time.
22. 'When Bacchus, Jove's Immortal Boy', published as A New Glee, for three voices ... performed at the Society of Harmonists, on Thursday Decr 18th, 1806, reviewed in MM, Feb. 1807.
23. Francesco Geminiani (1687-1762), Italian composer, virtuoso violinist, and theorist, who after an early career in Italy settled in London in 1714 and established a considerable reputation as a violin virtuoso, composer, and teacher. In the 1730s he made two lengthy visits to Dublin and moved there permanently in 1759.
24. John Owen (1773-1824), matric. Hertford College, Oxford (1793), BA (1797), MA, Christ's College, Cambridge (1801), Archdeacon of Richmond (1801), Rector of East Horsley and of St Bennet's, Paul's Wharf (1802), later Chaplain General to the Armed Forces (Venn; GM, 1824<sup>2</sup>, 18).
25. SW's reference appears to be to Joseph Beardmore (1745/6-1829), listed in commercial directories of the period as a wholesale hosier with premises at 38 Milk Street, Cheapside. He was a prominent Methodist who had been a personal friend of John Wesley and was one of the trustees of the City Road Chapel. He had married

Mary Owen (1750-1809), presumably John Owen's sister, in 1776. Their daughters Mary (1778/9-1838) and Frances (1789/90-1868), were pupils of SW. Other Beardmores who appear in directories and membership lists at this time were probably members of the same family: Thomas Beardmore of 4 Castle Alley, Cornhill, was a contributor to the library of the Royal Institution, and George Beardmore of Crown Office Row, Temple, was elected to membership of the Madrigal Society on 13 Mar. 1810. Frances Mary Beardmore (1840-1921), a member of a later generation of the family, was married to the poet and man of letters Austin Dobson (1840-1921), and SW's two letters to Mary Beardmore are preserved with other family papers in the Austin Dobson collection at London University. Also included in this collection are some letters to John Owen (Stevenson, City Road, 384-5; commercial directories).

26. i.e. John Owen's niece, either Mary or Frances Beardmore.
27. Pièces de Clavecin, tirée des différens Ouvrages de Mr. F. Geminiani, adaptées par luy même à cet Instrument (London, 1743, reissued c.1780), or The Second Collection of Pieces for the Harpsichord. Taken from different Works of G. Geminiani, and adapted by Himself to that Instrument (London, 1762) (CPM).
28. In Greek mythology, the dog with three heads which guarded the entrance to Hades; here, evidently the nickname of one of SW's acquaintances. For another reference, see SW to Jacob, 28 May 1809.
29. The Irish tenor, composer, theatre manager, and music publisher Michael Kelly (1762-1826), best known for his Reminiscences (1826) and for having in his youth created the roles of Don Curzio and Don Basilio in Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro. Following his return to London in 1787 he pursued a successful career as a singer and composer of theatre music. As a composer, 'he commanded a limited but prolific vein of melodic invention and seems to have relied on others for harmony and orchestrations' (Grove<sup>6</sup>). Thomas Moore commented in 1801 that 'Poor Mick is rather an imposer than a composer. He cannot mark the time in writing three bars



of music: his understrappers, however, do all that for him'.

30. Venanzio Rauzzini (1746-1810), Italian soprano castrato, composer, and harpsichordist. He moved to London from Italy in 1774 and sang regularly at the King's Theatre from 1774 to 1777. He then moved to Bath, where he managed concerts at the New Assembly Rooms (Grove<sup>6</sup>; M. Sands, 'Venanzio Rauzzini - Singer, Composer, Traveller', MT, 94 (1953), 15, 108).
31. Henry Harington, MD (1727-1816), doctor, musician and author, matric. Queen's College Oxford (1745); BA (1749), MA (1752), MD (1772). While at Oxford he joined an amateur musical society founded by William Hayes, the Professor of Music, membership of which was restricted to those who could read music at sight. He set up in medical practice at Wells in 1753 and moved to Bath in 1771, where in addition to continuing to practise medicine he became in turn an alderman, magistrate, and mayor, and founded the Bath Harmonic Society. Although an amateur, he was a noted composer of glees, many of which appear in the anthologies of the period, and one of which is still known as a hymn tune under the alternative titles 'Retirement' and 'Harington' (DNB; Grove<sup>6</sup>).
32. Burney.
33. Possibly one of the collection of Handel autographs owned by Richard, Viscount Fitzwilliam (1745-1816), to which Charles had access.
34. Benedetto Marcello (1686-1739), Italian composer, writer, and theorist. The Psalms referred to here were his settings of the first fifty psalms in paraphrases by his friend G. A. Giustianini, published in Venice in eight volumes between 1724 and 1726, which became widely known and went into several subsequent editions, including an English one of 1757. SW's 'very curious original', whether an autograph or a first edition, has not been identified.
35. John Wesley.
36. In Greek mythology, a monster with a hundred eyes.
37. Agostino Steffani (1654-1728), Italian composer.

38. Henry Purcell (1659-1695), English composer.
39. The English composer William Boyce (1711-79), who had known both SW and Charles as boys, and whose views would have been well known to them.
40. Attwood had been organist of St Paul's Cathedral since 1796.
41. As is clear from a letter from SW to his mother of Dec. 1806 (Rylands, DDWes 6/50), the original plan had been to perform SW's setting of the Litany Responses on Christmas Day 1806, along with the Sanctus setting of his brother Charles: 'I wanted to have found the Sanctus of my Brother, which he wrote, & wished to have performed at St Paul's-- this I think may be easily done, on Christmas Day, if I can but get at it in Time, & that must be soon, because Attwood has been very urgent for my Litany, which I have now sent him, & which he is so desirous of having well-performed, that he chuses to have it well studied previously.-- This is kind, & handsome; & I wish the same by the Sanctus in Question.' SW here explains why the projected Christmas Day performance failed to take place. The Litany Responses were first performed on Easter Day (29 Mar.): see SW to Charles, 21 Mar. 1807. Charles's Sanctus has not been traced.
42. Dr Edward Sheppard (1731-1813) of Chatham Row, Bath, an old friend of the Wesleys, and a well-known and somewhat eccentric figure in Bath. A number of letters from him to SW's sister Sarah are preserved at Rylands; in one, dated 16 Nov. 1804 (DDWF 26/66), he proposed marriage to her.
43. James Pettit Andrews (c.1737-1797), magistrate, historian, and antiquarian, author of History of Great Britain connected with the Chronology of Europe from Caesar's Invasion to the Accession of Edward VI (1794-5) and History of Great Britain from the death of Henry VIII to the Accession of James VI of Scotland (1796); he also contributed many papers on topographical subjects to Archaeologia and GM (DNB).
44. Not identified: evidently a family friend in Bath.
45. Not identified: evidently a family friend in Bath.
46. The Sonata no. 4 in A of his Sei Sonate, Op. 1.



47. Not certainly identified, but probably Latrobe.
48. William Gray (c.1757-1821) (Grove<sup>1</sup>; Grove<sup>6</sup>).
49. Not certainly identified, but probably a member of the celebrated banking family of this name, several of whom were patrons of the arts and enthusiastic amateur musicians (see also SW to Jacob, [24 Nov. 1809]. The three partners in Henry Hoare and Co., the family firm, at this time were Henry Hoare of Mitcham (1750-1828), William Henry Hoare (1776-1828), and Henry Hugh Hoare (1762-1841) ([Henry Peregrine Rennie Hoare], Hoare's Bank: A Record 1672-1955: The Story of a Private Bank (London, 1955), 41-2). The organ has not been traced.
50. CW's commission for recommending Gray to Hoare.
51. Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1858), composer, pianist, and publisher, the son of Wilhelm Cramer (1746-99). He studied with J. S. Schroeter from 1780 to 1783 and then for one year with Clementi, who exerted a decisive influence on his musical character. He made his London debut in 1781, and quickly established himself as an outstanding performer. He made extensive foreign tours in 1788-91 and 1799-1800. After 1800 his career was almost entirely in England, although he made another tour in 1816-18. His playing was highly influential on several generations of pianists, and Beethoven regarded him as the finest pianist of his day. As a prolific composer, mostly of piano music, he liked to regard himself as a latter-day Mozartian: Grove<sup>6</sup> describes his music as combining 'a conservative bias with the most advanced, idiomatically pianistic passage-work' and as 'nearly always skilful, pleasant and sophisticated'. He entered the music publishing business in 1805 (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
52. A Collection of Rondos, Airs with Variations and Toccata, published in separate numbers between 1805 and 1807 (Grove<sup>6</sup>). The Toccata in G (No. 7 in the collection) had been advertised in The Times for 13 Nov. 1806 (Thomas B. Milligan and Jerald Graue, Johann Baptist Cramer (1771-1850): A Thematic Catalogue of his Works (Stuyvesant, NY, 1994), item 12.05).
53. A small glee club founded in 1794 by R. J. S. Stevens and three of his friends,

which met in alternate weeks during the winter for dinner and glees. The meeting in question was the one on 18 Dec., when SW's glee 'When Bacchus, Jove's Immortal Boy' was performed.

54. Presumably Martin Madan (1756-1809), son of SW's godfather the Revd Martin Madan (1725-90) (Falconer Madan, The Madan Family and Maddens in Ireland and England: A Historical Account (Oxford, 1933), 118-19).
55. Probably the Duke of Sussex (1773-1843), sixth son of George III.
56. R. J. S. Stevens recorded this occasion in his Recollections: 'Tuesday, Dec. 18th, was the first meeting of the Harmonists Society this Season. Mr Samuel Wesley was one of our Visitors. After dinner, being perfectly collected, and not in the least flushed with liquor (his usual practise at this time of his life) he played on the Piano Forte, some of the most ingenious and astonishing Combinations of Harmony, that I ever heard. By way of Finale, to his Extemporary, he took the burthen of, O strike the harp [a popular Trio by Stevens], and made as simple and pleasing a movement on its subject, that we were all delighted. A rare instance of his wonderful abilities' (Argent, 150, 293).
57. 11 Jan.
58. William Carnaby (1772-1839), admitted Trinity Hall, Cambridge (1805), Mus.B. (1805), Mus.D. (1808), was a chorister at the Chapel Royal under James Nares and Edmund Ayrton and was subsequently organist of Eye and Huntingdon before settling in London some time before 1808. He composed a good deal of vocal and piano music (Grove<sup>5</sup>; DNB; Venn).
59. Probably Edward Barry, MD, DD (1759-1822), religious and medical writer. The son of a Bristol doctor, he gained his MD at St Andrews, but 'always preferring theology to physic', was later ordained into the Church of England. He was for several years curate of St Marylebone and 'one of the most popular preachers in London'. He was also grand chaplain to the Freemasons (DNB). He was probably one of the two Barry brothers mentioned in SW to Street, 18 Oct. 1799.



60. Not traced.
61. 18 Jan.
62. i.e. Westminster Abbey.
63. Robert Cooke (1768-1814) had succeeded his father Benjamin Cooke (1734-93) as organist of St Martin in the Fields in 1793, and had become Organist and Master of the Choristers at Westminster Abbey (posts his father had also held) in 1802.
64. By Christopher Shrider, built for the coronation of George II in 1727 (Boeringer, iii. 258).
65. By 'Father' Smith, c.1700 (Boeringer, ii. 152-7).
66. Actes and Monuments of these latter perillous days, touching matters of the Church, popularly known as the Book of Martyrs, by John Foxe (1516-87) first published in Strasbourg in 1559 and in an English translation in 1563 (OCEL).
67. The source of this quotation or proverbial saying has not been traced.
68. i.e. Marylebone, where SW's mother, brother, and sister lived. By this time they had moved the short distance from Chesterfield Street to Great Woodstock Street.
69. SW's letter of this date to his mother is at BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 15).
70. Aristoxenus (b. 375-360BC), Greek music theorist, parts of whose Harmonics were included in Marcus Meibomius's Antiquae musicae auctores septem, Graece et Latine, 2 vols. (Amsterdam, 1652), from which source SW no doubt intended to study them. For Burney's discussion of Aristoxenus, see History, i. 441-5; Mercer, i. 349-52.
71. Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764), whose Traité de l'harmonie reduite à ses principes naturels (Paris, 1722; English translation, London, 1737) and Nouveau système de music théorique (Paris, 1737) were both highly influential (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
72. William Crotch (1775-1847) had begun his musical career as a child prodigy. After early concert tours and a period in Cambridge as assistant to John Randall, the aged Professor of Music, he moved in 1788 to Oxford. He was appointed organist at Christ Church, Oxford in 1790, and in 1797 became Professor of Music on the death

of Philip Hayes. Between 1800 and 1804 he gave several courses of lectures on music in Oxford, and their success led to him being invited to lecture at the recently founded Royal Institution of Great Britain. He moved to London late in 1805, and gave no fewer than five courses of lectures at the Royal Institution in 1806 (J. Rennert, William Crotch (Lavenham, 1975); Kassler, 'Lectures', 15).

73. This was the eleventh of a course of thirteen lectures at the Royal Institution which Crotch had started late in 1806. The text is at the Norwich Record Office (Kassler, 'Lectures', 15).
74. Ignace Joseph Pleyel (1757-1831), French composer.
75. Leopold Kozeluch (1747-1818), Bohemian composer.

To Charles Wesley Junior

Camden Town, 21 March 1807

AL, 4pp. (Rylands, MA 9787)

Camden Town

March 21. 1807.

Dear Charles

I am perfectly convinced that you would not grudge the Postage of a Letter from me, & perhaps it is this very consideration which has rendered me less willing to extort Money. The Packet which you formerly received I paid the Carriage for at the White Horse Cellar, Piccadilly, where it was booked, & if they charged you for it, they were Thieves.-- I wish to be certified of this Fact.

You know too well the Miseries I have undergone, & the irreparable Losses I have sustained to believe that I am desirous of Length of Days. The Jews were great Coveters of Longevity, & David seems dissatisfied with Providence when he says "behold thou hast made my Days as it were a Span long"<sup>1</sup>-- B<sup>p</sup> Warburton<sup>2</sup> has gone about to prove that they had no Belief in a State after Death.-- I suppose you would not dare to contradict a Bishop!

Whilst I am above Ground I must be employed wholly, which is my only Resource against Insanity, & altho' I often am obliged to bustle about with a crazy Carcase, as if nothing was the Matter, & am often almost ready to faint with Fatigue, yet these Inconveniences I prefer to the Horrors of



reflecting on my Sacrifice of Peace, Liberty, Honour, & Independence to ----  
one of the most unworthy of all Mortals.

I am too far advanced in the Vale of Years to say with any Probability  
-- forsan & haec olim meminisse juvabit."<sup>3</sup>-- but --

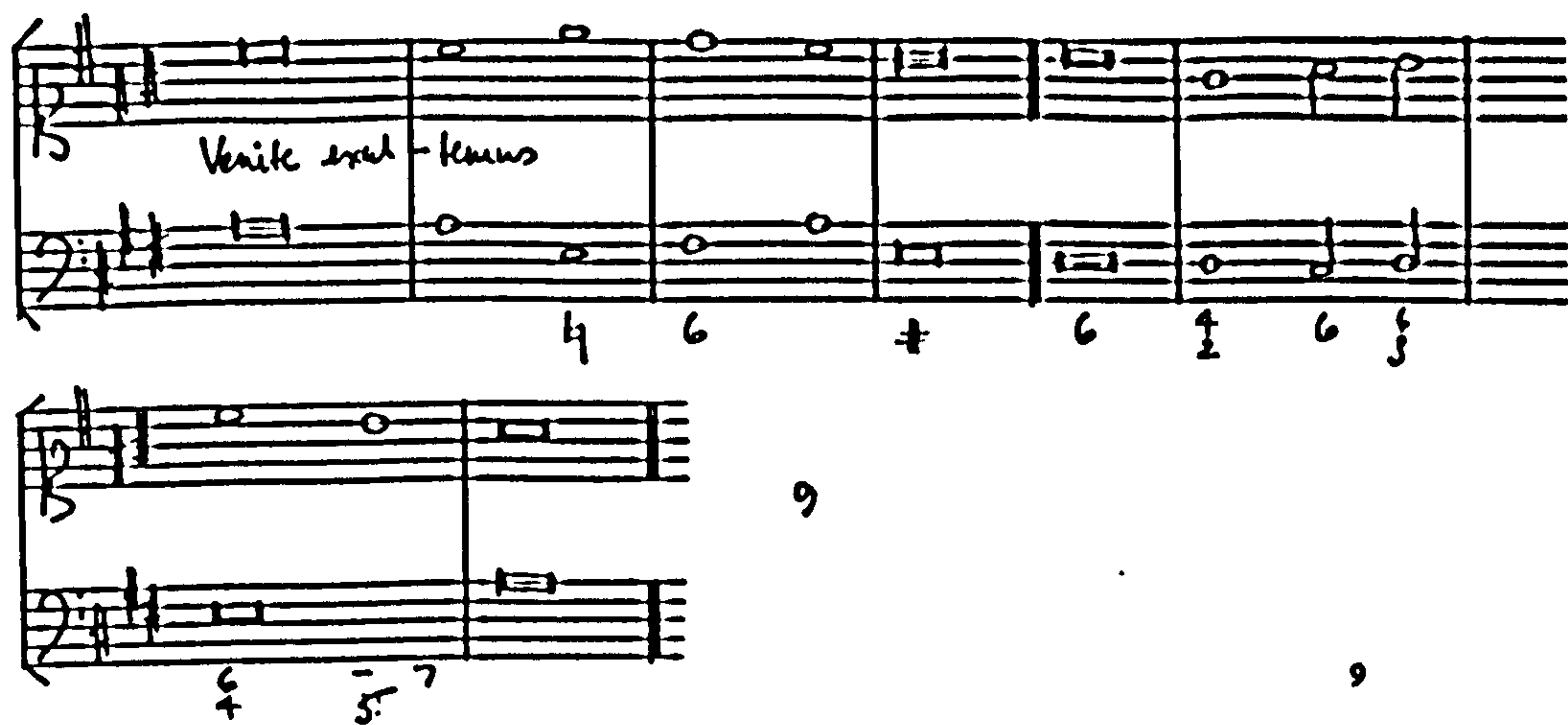
Here endeth the croaking Page.<sup>4</sup>

I am at present engaged in a literary Business with M<sup>r</sup> Nares of the  
Museum<sup>5</sup> (D<sup>r</sup> Nares's Son whom you remember of old, who was a notable  
Puppy, peeping thro' a quizzing Glass, long before such things were  
authorised by Custom, & if Report say true, as accomplished a whoremaster  
as any learned Man of his Times, but is now ranked among the most worthy  
& enlightened characters, equally admired & respected).<sup>6</sup>-- What the Subject  
is, must not be disclosed until its publication announce the Murder of its own  
Accord.<sup>7</sup>-- If we live a few Weeks longer, the whole will be explained.

My Litany is fixed for next Sunday week,<sup>8</sup> (Easter Day) at St Paul's.  
I shall I neither be surprised nor much embarrassed if the Organ Blower  
should choose to observe the Sabbath just at the most interesting Point of the  
Music.-- My dear Sir, I am so hardened by the great Vexations, that my Soul  
is become Brawn; you may pull & tear at it with all your Might, but it jerks  
back again to its old Place, like a Piece of India Rubber.

A Chaunt which I have cobbled up for the Occasion (which very likely  
will not be done, since I had rather it should), I here add.





Poor Master Tommy has lost his Brother, who died only a few Hours after his Arrival from Ireland, whence he came, it seems, principally to see him.<sup>10</sup>

About a Fortnight ago, I met our merry S<sup>r</sup> Andrew, La Trobe by Appointment at Beardmores. Master Jacky Owen was with us, who was in excellent Humour, & launched out some shrewd sayings in his old lack-a-dazy Manner.-- I know not whether he speaks German, but I rather imagine not, otherwise our Sacerdotal Orpheus would probably have given him a Broadside of Wouchten Sprouchten denderhofften splanchshags, to the great Edification of all the Auditors who could be moved "by Concert of sweet Sounds."<sup>11</sup>-- We had some Music from his Collection,<sup>12</sup> in the Evening, but Owen cried out that it was desperate dull, for to say the Truth, La T. had selected all the most lachrymose, whining, catterwauling Melodies he could stumble upon, and among both Germans & Italians we know there is great plenty to be found, whenever they can fall foul upon the Words "Miserere mei Deus"<sup>13</sup> "Quis est homo qui non fleret,"<sup>14</sup> or any Sense that has Relation either to Penitence or the Crucifixion.

I not only agree with D<sup>r</sup> Boyce, that chromatic Subjects produce the worst Fugues, but I go further, I think that they generally produce the worst Melodies in Descant for the Voice. --The best Italian Melodies consist of

diatonic Intervals, & unless deep Sorrow or acute Pain are to be expressed, I cannot subscribe to the Propriety of wire-drawing the chromatic Scale, till your Hair stands on end & then calling it Melody-- As Johnson said of another Subject, "Sir, you had as well call it Geometry."<sup>15</sup>

And that the deepest Sorrow may be completely expressed without one chromatic Semitone, we need go no further than the Air "Behold & see", in the Messiah, which I take to be the most finished Specimen of the simple sublime in Melody that ever was produced.

D<sup>r</sup> Coghlan,<sup>16</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Bowen's Friend is in Town, & wishes my Opinion of a Piano-Forte which is to be disposed of at a Sale.-- I have engaged to look at it, but these Things are very hazardous Purchases, just vamped up to serve a present Turn, & falling to Pieces in a Month.-- This reminds me of a Story of old Thompson<sup>17</sup> the Music-Seller in S<sup>t</sup> Paul's Church Yard, who, when a Gentleman applied to him to purchase for him the finest Cremona<sup>18</sup> he could procure, said "Psha, psha, don't be such a silly Man-- a Cremona!-- why they ax 50 or 60 Guineas for an old worm-eaten Fiddle, full of Cracks & Joins from Top to Bottom.-- No, no-- take my Advice-- don't be humbugged by any of them Sharpers; do as I tell ye-- buy a New One, & then you know the Wear of it."

By the Way, having mentioned Melody, do you know Crescentini's Ariettes (or Canzonets?)<sup>19</sup>-- as poor Jonathan<sup>20</sup> would say, "Beshrew me, but they are gallant Things."-- but they are very far from gallant: they are however gallant: they are sweet gentle Melodies, & accompanied by much better Basses than Italians generally write.-- Look at them-- I am sure you will



find them useful to your vocal scholars.

1. Ps. 39: 6.
2. William Warburton (1698-1779), divine and man of letters, ordained 1727, successively preacher at Lincoln's Inn (1746), Prebendary of Gloucester (1753), King's chaplain (1754), Prebendary of Durham (1755), Dean of Bristol (1757), Bishop of Gloucester (1759), and the author of many works of theological controversy. SW's reference is to The Divine Legation of Moses (1738-41), his most celebrated work (DNB; OCEL).
3. 'Perhaps one day we will take pleasure in recalling even these experiences' (Virgil, Aeneid, i. 203).
4. This remark concludes the first page of the letter.
5. Robert Nares (1753-1829), philologist, BA Christ Church, Oxford (1775), MA (1778), canon residentiary of Lichfield (1798), Prebendary of St Paul's Cathedral (1798), Archdeacon of Stafford (1801); Assistant Librarian in the Department of Manuscripts of the British Museum (1795), Keeper of Manuscripts (1799-1807); FSA (1795), FRS (1804). His principal work was his A Glossary, or Collection of Words, Phrases, Names, and Allusions to Customs, Proverbs, &c. which have been thought to require Illustration in the Works of the English Authors, particularly Shakespeare and his Contemporaries (1822). He was editor of The British Critic from its beginning in 1793 to 1813 (DNB). For the 'literary work', see n. 7.
6. James Nares (1715-83), composer, organist, and teacher, organist of York Minster (1735), organist and composer of the Chapel Royal (1756), MusD Cambridge (1757), Master of the Children of the Chapel Royal (1757). He had a 'pleasant but slender talent for composition', chiefly exercised in keyboard and church music, and wrote treatises on singing and keyboard playing (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
7. SW's lengthy anonymous review of Callcott's A Musical Grammar, which appeared in The British Critic, 29 (1807), 398-407, 597-605. This remark confirms the

identification of SW as its author made by A. F. C. Kollmann in Quarterly Musical Register, 1 (1812), 5, 129.

8. 29 Mar.
9. This chant also appears fully written out at RCM, MS 4021, f. 1.
10. Nothing is known of Attwood's brother.
11. Merchant of Venice, V. i. 84.
12. A Selection of Sacred Music from the Works of the Most Eminent Composers of Germany and Italy, the first part of which was published in 1806.
13. 'God have mercy on me', the first line of Ps. 51.
14. 'Who is the man who would not weep': part of the text of the Stabat Mater, a medieval hymn describing Mary standing at the foot of the cross. It was sung at this time as an Office hymn on the Friday after Passion Sunday, and was a favourite text for more extended musical treatments.
15. The source of this quotation has not been traced.
16. Lucius Coghlan (c.1750-1733), admitted to Trinity College, Dublin (1768), BA (1773), BD and DD (1797). He was a prominent Freemason, and later principal chaplain of the United Grand Lodge of England (Burtchaeall and Sadlier, Alumni Dublinienses (Dublin, 1935)).
17. One of a family of musical instrument makers, music sellers, and publishers who had a shop at 75, St Paul's Church Yard from around 1746 to 1805 (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Humphries and Smith).
18. i.e. a violin from Cremona, a town in Lombardy famed for the quality of its stringed instruments.
19. 12 Ariette italiane (Vienna, 1797) by Girolamo Crescentini (1762-1846), Italian mezzo-soprano castrato and composer.
20. Not certainly identified; probably the organist and composer Jonathan Battishill (1738-1801), whose later life was marred by over-indulgence in drink following the breakdown of his marriage (Grove<sup>6</sup>).



To George Polgreen Bridgetower

[Camden Town], 15 June [1807]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (Upper Room, L-148)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Bridgtower | John Street | S<sup>t</sup> James's Square | N. 3

Pmk: 16 JU 180

Dear Sir

I am extremely sorry that I was under a Necessity of going out on Saturday Evening last,<sup>2</sup> but shall depend upon the Pleasure of your Company next Saturday,<sup>3</sup> when I hope you will come early that we may have a long Gossip.-- I have been so occupied with correcting the Copyist's Blunders in Barthelemon's Oratorio<sup>4</sup> that I have not been able as yet to do Justice to your Manuscript,<sup>5</sup> which I will examine at the first Leisure Moment with the utmost Attention.--

In full Expectation of seeing you on the Day above-mentioned,

I remain, Dear Sir

most truly yours

S Wesley

Monday June 15.

1. The year is given by 15 June falling on a Monday, the partly legible postmark, and the reference to the forthcoming performance of Barthélemon's oratorio (n. 4).
2. 13 June 1807.
3. 20 June 1807.
4. The Nativity, the first part of which was to be performed at Barthélemon's concert

at Hanover Square Rooms on 19 June, at which SW played the organ (The Times,  
19 June 1807).

5. Not identified.

To [William] Marriott<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 3 November 1807

ALS, 1 p. (Rylands, DDWF 15/13)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Marriott jun<sup>r</sup> | Broad Street | Cornhill | Paid 2<sup>d</sup>

Sir

I was rather surprized To-Day on applying at the Bank for half a Year's Dividend at being contradicted by the Clerk when I demanded the Interest of £1420-- which I believe will be found to be the real Amount of my Due, as I have made no Alteration whatever in my Stock since you last sold out for me.-- The first Money was £50, & the second, £30, which I rather think will appear by a Memorandum in your Books.<sup>2</sup>-- I am at a Loss to guess how this Mistake could happen, & shall be obliged to you for a Line which may tend to explain it-- I knew that Dispute at the Office would then answer no good End, therefore accepted £25=7=8 (which I was assured was right,) but concerning which being far from satisfied, I thought necessary to make this Application to you upon the Subject.--

I remain

Sir

Yours very obediently

S Wesley

Camden Town | Nov. 3. 1807

1. William Marriott junior, a stockbroker and family friend. His father, William

Marriott senior (1753-1815), was a close associate of John Wesley and was one of his executors; several letters to him from SW's sister Sarah are at Rylands (Stevenson, City Road, 182-3).

2. Although SW's meaning is not entirely clear, he appears to state that he was expecting to receive £30 as the half-yearly dividend on his £1420 of stock, £50 being the amount he had received before Marriott had sold some of his holding on his behalf.



To Joseph Payne Street

Camden Town, [9 November 1807]<sup>1</sup>

AL, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 56228)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Street | Mark Lane | 17

Pmk: 9 NO

My dear Sir

My Friend Madan<sup>2</sup> used to maintain in Argument that there is a physical Perverseness in Things, which very frequently crosses & defeats our best arranged Plans, & our most laudable Purposes.--

I do not implicitly accede to this Doctrine, but am rather inclined to believe that we are apt to attribute the Cause of our Want of Patience to an existing Deficiency in Rerum Naturâ, & that our general Notions of Good & Evil are mostly settled by our Perceptions of Gratification or Disappointment.-  
- Locke has somewhere said that we estimate Good & Evil by our Sensations of Pleasure & Pain, which by no Means proves that we are truly acquainted with their real & essential Constitution, abstractedly considered.<sup>3</sup>

Pope (or rather L<sup>d</sup> Bolingbroke)<sup>4</sup> you know has endeavoured to reconcile us to the few Calamities which await us from the Cradle to the Grave, by declaring that it is our Duty to believe.

"All partial Evil, universal Good."<sup>5</sup>-- Which I take to be a very pacifying & convenient Proposition, altho' I have my Doubts whether it may not be more readily acceded to when we have just gained £30,000 in the Lottery, than in a Paroxysm of Gout or Stone.

What could have tempted me to being a moral & metaphysical Essay, I can hardly guess, unless it was this Sheet of Fool's Cap Paper which happened first to come to Hand, & which I being too lazy to divide, (for you must know I am writing in Bed) I felt as if it deserved something frightful & tedious to make it look grander.--

However I believe upon second Thoughts that the Subject of my Discourse originated in the odd & vexatious See-Saw Engagements we have been mutually making for so long, without as yet having vanquished our opposing Destiny.-- To make Matters more agreeable, I have been considerably unwell for these last few Days, & on Saturday Night so very ill as to be precluded from officiating at Covent Garden Church<sup>6</sup> yesterday, as also from performing an Engagement at Brompton, where I was to have passed the Day among some Friends purposely invited to give me the Meeting.<sup>7</sup> I am still very queer & relaxed,<sup>8</sup> & my Progress To-Day must determine whether or no I can have the Happiness of meeting you To-morrow according to your Arrangement & my own Wish.-- I will however put the Matter sufficiently out of Dou<bt> to prevent your experiencing any chronical Inconvenience.-- My Conditions are these:-- If it be in my Power to be with you, I will be in Mark Lane as near 4 as possible, & if I should be later than 10 Minutes after, or a Quarter at the outside, you may safely conclude my Incapability of attending you.

I have frequently felt (when much indisposed) so sudden & unexpected an Alteration for the better, just when it has enable me to keep an Engagement I have been loth to forego, that I never sacrifice the Hope of Performance till

the Time has failed for attempting it.-- I will therefore not despair in the present Instance, & try what Quiet & Nursing will effect To-Day for the Attainment of my Wishes.--

In case I should be disappointed To-morrow, it just occurs to me to enquire if you can obtain Information for me of the exact Address of Lady Dacre<sup>8</sup> (somewhere near Blackheath), the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Lock, who has the Living of Lee;<sup>9</sup>-- Sir Francis Baring,<sup>10</sup> & Thomson Bonar Esq<sup>r</sup>.<sup>11</sup>-- All of whose Residences are doubtless in the Court Guide,<sup>12</sup> of which I am not possest, 'tho it is a Book that every one should have who has any Business in England.-- But I will have it for the next Year if I do not forget to buy it.

I was highly pleased by some Lines of Colman<sup>13</sup> which I read Yesterday in Bell's Weekly Messenger, entitled "A Reckoning with Time;"<sup>14</sup>-- Pray look at them:-- I have not for a long while seen a Collection of Verses more uniformly witty & pointed.-- I am told that they appeared in the Morning Post of the Saturday or Friday preceding, which I can scarcely credit, as I have not met with any Thing in that Paper for six Months past either rational or interesting, except the Details of the Nobility's Routs & Concerts, & the State of the Health & Bowels of the Royal Family. (admitting they have any.)

You have heard of the Gentleman whose Philosophy induced him to blow his Brains out because it was too much Trouble for him to pull his Stocking off.-- As I am just now about to put on mine, I will with your Leave meditate upon the Rationale of his Conclusions on the Subject, bidding you for a short Time only, (as I hope)



Adieu

Camden Town | Monday Morning 9 <o'Cl>ock

1. The month and year are given by SW's 'Monday morning', the incomplete postmark, and SW's Camden Town address.
2. Probably Martin Madan (1756-1809), rather than his father.
3. Locke: An Essay Concerning Human Understanding, ii. 20. 1-2.
4. SW's remark reflects the view commonly held at the time that Pope's Essay on Man (1734) was inspired by the philosophical writings of Viscount Bolingbroke (1678-1751).
5. Essay on Man, Epistle 1, i. 292.
6. i.e. St Paul's, Covent Garden, where SW may have been deputizing for Callcott, who was the organist.
7. The nature and purpose of this meeting are not known.
8. Gertrude Brand, Baroness Dacre (1750-1819). In fact, she lived at 2 Chesterfield Street, Mayfair, with a country property at Lee, Kent (Burke's Peerage, under 'Hampden'; GM, 1819<sup>2</sup>, 371).
9. George Lock (1780/1-1864), Rector of Lee, Kent, from 1803 to his death (Foster). He does not appear in the 1807 Court Guide.
10. Sir Francis Baring, Bart (1740-1810), banker and MP, of 33 Hill Street, Berkeley Square (DNB).
11. No doubt Thompson Bonar, who was elected a Governor of the Foundling Hospital on 30 Dec. 1801; at that time he lived at Old Bethlem (Nichols and Wray, 391).
12. Boyle's New Fashionable Court and County Guide and Town Visiting Directory included listings of the upper echelons of society, both alphabetically and street by street. It was thus a useful publication for those soliciting subscriptions or sending out publicity, and SW's enquiry was no doubt for one of these purposes.
13. George Colman the Younger (1762-1836), playwright and theatre manager. His



greatest success was Love Laughs at Locksmiths (1808).

14. Colman's humorous poem 'A Reckoning with Time' ('Come on, old Time - nay, that is stuff') appeared in Bell's Weekly Messenger on 8 Nov. (p. 359). SW was misinformed about it having also appeared in the Morning Post.

To Charles Burney

Camden Town, 22 March 1808

ALS, 2 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1192)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Burney | Chelsea College | Tuesday 22 March. PM 23  
MR 1808

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕

Editor's note: Burney's reply to this letter, undated but c. 23 March 1808, and beginning 'Your remembrance, after (I do believe) so long', is at Osborn, MSS 3, Box 5, Folder 319.

My dear Sir

Although your many and important Engagements & my own necessary Drudgery have denied me the Happiness of a personal Interview for so long an Interval of Time, yet I trust you are assured that my high Respect & cordial Esteem have in no Degree diminished, & I felt extreme Satisfaction in having lately heard that your Health is considerably improved.<sup>1</sup>

I scarcely need say that I shall have great additional Pleasure in congratulating you Vivâ Voce, whenever you can indulge me with an Hour, compatible with your more consequential Concerns.--

I have also to prefer a Petition which if admissible, both myself & your Petitioner will rest always obliged.-- M<sup>r</sup> William Linley<sup>2</sup> (Brother to the late M<sup>rs</sup> Sheridan the celestial Songstress)<sup>3</sup> is exceedingly desirous of the Honour of being introduced to you, & I felt not a little proud in the Privilege of informing him that I was so happy as to have long enjoyed your

Acquaintance & good Will.-- I also promised him what I now perform, to request of you whether he may expect this Favour upon any Morning when you can with least Inconvenience sacrifice a few Moments.-- I will make any Pre-engagement of my own yield to whatever Time you may appoint, & I am very certain that M<sup>r</sup> L. will look forward to it with much Exultation.<sup>4</sup>

With every best Wish, believe me,

My dear Sir,

Your most devoted & faithful Servant,

S. Wesley.

Camden Town | Tuesday. March 22<sup>d</sup> 1808.

1. Burney had suffered a slight paralytic seizure in his left hand in early Oct. 1806, but had made a good recovery. In Aug. 1808 his granddaughter Marianne Francis found him 'as young and gay as ever, reading & writing without spectacles, (which he has never used yet,) and cheerful and entertaining, and sprightly, and kind, as he had been 23 instead of eighty three' (Lonsdale, 460-2).
2. William Linley (1771-1835), civil servant, theatrical manager, author, and composer, son of Thomas Linley of Bath (1733-95) and one of a distinguished family of musicians. After education at Harrow and St Paul's School, he worked in India for the East India Company between 1790 and 1795 and between 1800 and 1807. In the late 1790s he shared the management of Drury Lane Theatre with his brother-in-law Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), and composed two unsuccessful operas. On his return to England from his second Indian tour of duty he was able to devote himself to writing and composition as a gentleman amateur. Among his compositions were several sets of songs and some elegies and glees. He also wrote two novels. His most important musical publication was a two-volume anthology of Shakespeare

settings by himself and others (Grove<sup>6</sup>, under 'Linley (6)'; DNB; Clementina Black, The Linleys of Bath (rev. edn., 1971)).

3. The soprano Elizabeth Ann Sheridan, née Linley (1754-92), sister of William Linley. After early appearances as a singer in Bath and Bristol she made her London debut in 1767 and subsequently sang regularly in the London oratorio seasons (1769-73) and at the Three Choirs Festivals (1770-73). She eloped with Richard Brinsley Sheridan (see below) in 1772; they married in 1773. She then retired from singing in public but continued for a while to give private concerts at her home, sometimes accompanied by Burney (Grove<sup>6</sup>, under 'Linley (2)'; Alan Chedzoy, Sheridan's Nightingale: The Story of Elizabeth Linley (Cambridge, 1997); Margaret Bor and L. Clelland, Still the Lark: A Biography of Elizabeth Linley (London, 1962); SW, Reminiscences).
4. In his reply, Burney explained that his health had been good 'till the March Lion began to roar'. Since that time, however, he had been scarcely out of bed, and he had been advised by his friends to remain bedridden until 'the departure of this oriental monster'. When the weather improved, he would be glad to arrange a time to meet SW and Linley.



To Charles Burney

[Camden Town], 12 April [1808]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1192)

Addressed: To Dr Charles Burney

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕

Tuesday Morning

10 o'Clock

My dear Friend

Your kind Letter<sup>2</sup> has reached me only 5 Minutes ago, & it is needless to express to you the Regret I feel in being unable to avail myself of your Permission to attend you this Day. I will immediately communicate your welcome Summons to my Friend Linley, who will rejoice to be informed that he is likely soon to become Voti Compos.<sup>3</sup> I sent him your former Letter,<sup>4</sup> which delighted him to Enthusiasm, & the Part of it relative to M<sup>r</sup> Sheridan he read to his Mother, whom it affected in the tenderest Manner, & who is charmed with the delicate & affectionate Panegyric you have bestowed on so amiable & interesting a Personage.<sup>5</sup>

If you will indulge me with a Line, naming any Morning, or Afternoon which might suit you to receive us, in next Week, I will make my Arrangements accordingly, & I am sure that M<sup>r</sup> Linley will eagerly embrace the Opportunity he has longed for, & if our westerly Wind continue (as I hope & trust it will) every succeeding Day will probably produce a renovating

Effect on your Health, but pray do not venture too soon out, for the Evenings are yet very sharp & wintry.<sup>6</sup>

I have long wished for an Occasion to beg your Opinion & Advice upon a Scheme of which I know not another Friend who can be so competent a Judge.-- The Preludes & Fugues of Sebastian Bach<sup>7</sup> are now become exceedingly scarce in England, & almost unattainable: I have for some months past paid much Attention to them, & consider them in the Light which I flatter myself you do, as the highest Stretch of harmonic Intellect, & the noblest Combination of musical Sounds that ever immortalized Genius.<sup>8</sup>-- I have frequently played them among Professors, many of whom had never before heard a Note of them, & others who had imbibed such a Prejudice against them, from the false Idea of their being dry, harsh, & unmelodious, that it was really a triumphant Moment to witness their agreeable Surprise.-- The Satisfaction which they have generally produced to all the Judges wherever I have had the Honour of performing them, & the Eagerness they seem to shew for the Possession of them, incline me to think that a new Edition of them by Subscription might prove a Work beneficial to the musical World, as well as profitable to the Editor.<sup>9</sup>-- Even in the Zurich Copy<sup>10</sup> (which I am told is the best) are several little Omissions, if anything ought to be termed little relating to so stupendous a Structure, & I, determining at all Events to have a Copia Vera, have not grudged the Labour of transcribing the whole 48 Preludes with their corresponding Fugues, & I believe I can pretty securely affirm that mine is now the most correct Copy in England.

If you judge this Design worth the Attempt, you will extremely oblige

me by the most unreserved Communication of your Thoughts upon the Subject.-- I remember that in one of your Letters to me some years ago,<sup>11</sup> you remarked that "Subscriptions are troublesome Things," but yet, perhaps in the present Instance, no other Mode of Proceeding would be so likely to evite Risk & dangerous Expence, as I certainly would not think of publishing until the Charges for Printing were wholly defrayed.

I am, my dear Sir,

Your ever obliged & affectionate Friend,

S. Wesley


April 12.

1. The year is given by 12 Apr. falling on a Tuesday and SW's continuing discussion of arrangements for him and Linley to meet Burney. Burney's reply to this letter, undated but c. 13 Apr. 1808, is at NYPL (Berg).
2. Not preserved: a subsequent letter to Burney's reply to SW to Burney, 22 Mar. 1808, it evidently contained an invitation to SW and Linley to visit Burney and a suggestion that they should choose this day for their visit.
3. 'To have achieved his wish'.
4. In his reply to SW's first letter, Burney had expressed his delight at having once more heard from SW after 'unwittingly losing sight of each other so long', and reminisced about his friendship with Elizabeth Linley.
5. Burney had written: 'I did not know that the first dear M<sup>rs</sup> Sheridan had a brother living .... But that most charming and accomplished of female beings I adored, and regarded her as an angel, in correctness and form, conversation and voice, indeed I c<sup>d</sup> neither look at her nor listen to her divine breathings, but with extatic rapture.' In a letter to Thomas Twining of 1 Dec. 1778 (Burney, Letters I, 265), Burney had



remembered Elizabeth Sheridan's voice as having been 'as sweet as sugar'. He had reason to have such pleasant memories: Elizabeth Linley had sung the principal soprano part in a performance of his Oxford D.Mus. exercise 'I will love thee, O Lord, my strength' in Oxford in 1772.

6. Burney replied: 'the weather for some days past has been truly balmy & amended me much; but your kind advice "not to venture out too soon, as the Evenings are yet very sharp & wintry" is anticipated: as I have made ... a firm resolution never again to be in the open air after sunset, by w<sup>ch</sup> I have banished myself for the rest of my life from dinners, public places, private Concerts, conversazioni, and all the delights of society in quiet parties of select friends & persons of learning, worth, & talents.

Any day therefore in next Week from between 12 & 3 -- or evening from 5 to 8, I can offer you and M<sup>r</sup> L.[--] suppose it were Tuesday -- let me but know, & [I] shall be Sempre not at Home to any other human creature<sup>re</sup>. If you individually wish sooner to compare notes ab<sup>t</sup>  name some day & hour as convenient as possible to your own engagem<sup>ts</sup> ....'

7. The '48'.
8. As SW was later to explain in his long letter to Jacob of 17 Sept. 1808, he had already written to Burney in Sept. or Oct. 1807 about his enthusiasm for the music of J. S. Bach. In his reply (not preserved: partly summarised by SW in his letter to Jacob) Burney had invited SW to visit him and to play him some examples of Bach's music. SW's letter to Jacob goes on to give an account of this famous occasion.
9. The edition of the '48' by SW and Charles Frederick Horn was eventually published by subscription in four parts between 1810 and 1813.
10. The Nägeli edition.
11. Not preserved.



To [Charles Burney]

[Camden Town], 14 April [1808]<sup>1</sup>

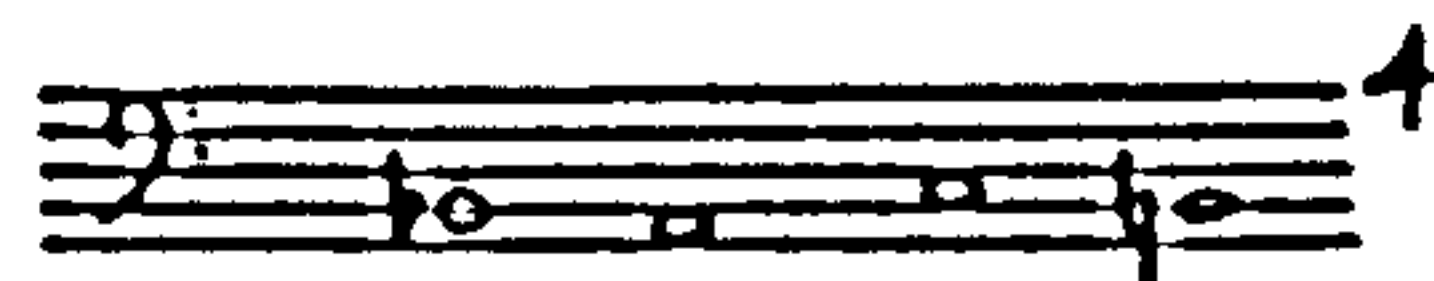
ALS, 1 p. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1192)

Addressed: To Dr Charles Burney

My dear Friend,

I have sent your Letter<sup>2</sup> to Linley, who will be delighted with the kind Interest you take in his musical Reputation.-- He is indeed worthy "Laudari a Laudato,"<sup>3</sup> as I flatter myself a further Acquaintance with him will convince you.

Many thanks for your friendly Cogitations on



The scheme certainly claims some previous Deliberation, & I know of no one who is so amply qualified to anticipate the probable Result as yourself, therefore if you will give me your best Advice, (which I know to be the best of the best) I will sing

"Nil desperandum TE DUCE"<sup>5</sup>

Yours ever faithfully

S W

Thursday 14. Ap.

1. The year is given by 14 Apr. falling on a Thursday and SW's continuing discussion of the meeting with Linley.
2. Burney's reply to SW to Burney, 22 Mar. 1808.
3. 'To be praised by a man who has himself been praised' (and whose praise for this reason carries particular authority): a quotation from Naevius's lost play Hector

Profiscens, known from a number of quotations in Cicero.

4. The four notes spell out Bach's name.
5. 'No need for despair, if you are leading', adapted from Horace, Odes, vii. 27.

To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town, mid-April-mid-May 1808]<sup>2</sup>

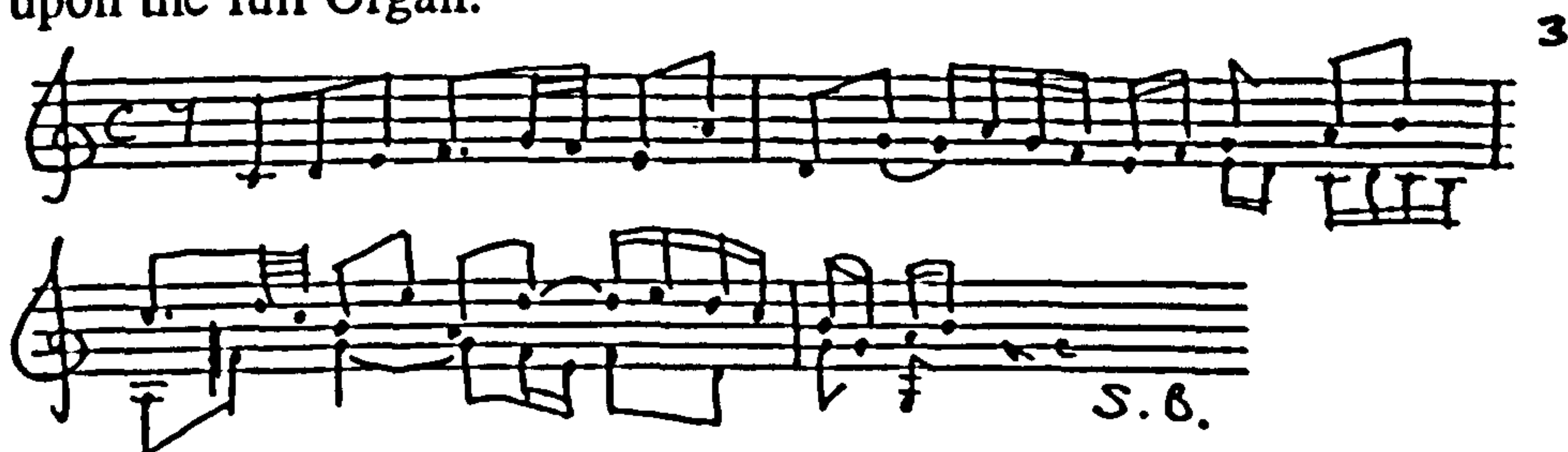
AL fragment, 2 pp. (Rylands, DDWF 15/8a)

Editor's note: parts of the letter have been crossed through, presumably by Mme d'Arblay.

2<nd>

S<h>eet

However, having proceeded through half a Dozen bars without Molestation, Success, by Degrees, begot a sense of comparative Security, & my Tremor began gradually to subside, till at last I became so temerarious as to give out upon the full Organ:



And Fortune favoured the bold, for I continued an inquisitorial Persecution of my Bellows Blower for two Hours at least, without the least Interruption from without.

This long (& I feel tedious) Narrative may incline you to ask "quorsum haec"?<sup>4</sup> but it is remotely connected with your Scheme of performing the Fugues in public.-- Salomon, who was there on that dangerous Day,<sup>5</sup> brought with him two beautiful Women,<sup>6</sup> whose deep Attention conspired not a little to enliven & inspire me; he himself appeared to be excessively pleased, &

when I called on him (shortly after) he said finer Things than I have the Impudence to write.-- However, one part of his Panegyric I will venture to put down, that altho' he had heard S. B. played by some of the best German Organists, particularly at Berlin, yet he had never witnessed their producing so smooth an Effect as on that Morning.-- This was the more gratifying to me, as the Organ in the said Chapel<sup>7</sup> has a very deep & a very obstinate Touch. He added-- "What a Shame it is that such Music should not be known in this Country, where every Body pretends to be musical! I will tell you what strikes me: if you were to have a Morning Party in some large Room capable of containing a good Organ, & to play some of these Fugues of Bach, interspersed with Voluntaries of your own, & make the tickets 7 shillings a Piece, I am persuaded that you would make Money by it."<sup>8</sup>-- The Abbe Vogler did the same kind of Thing here, in St Paul's Cathedral, by the private Circulation of Tickets, & by which he cleared at least 200l.<sup>9</sup>

Having previously experienced, in the last named Speaker, more Zeal in planning, than Steadiness in the Execution of his Schemes, altho' I thought his Suggestion worth Consideration, yet I should not have bestowed on it that serious Attention which after what you have written it undoubtedly claims.-- With regard to lecturing upon the Subject,<sup>10</sup> Q can there be sufficient Time to prepare anything like a Course during the present advanced State of the Season? For I should not be fond of producing only rudis indigestaque Moles<sup>11</sup> upon a Work challenging such minute Criticism.-- If I live to another Winter I may perhaps be able to form at least an Outline of such a Course,<sup>12</sup>



1. Burney is identified as the addressee of this letter by his daughter's characteristic docketing.
2. Although it is clear from internal evidence that this fragment dates from the spring of 1808, its more precise dating and its placing in the correspondence is problematical. SW's description of playing Bach on the organ may relate to his recital at Surrey Chapel on 15 Mar. (see n. 5). What appears to be a fragment of Burney's undated draft reply to this letter, beginning 'but this mornings business more complicated', is at NYPL (Berg). The content of both fragments suggest a dating after the exchange of correspondence between SW and Burney of late Mar. and Apr. 1808. The suggestion of Salomon, quoted here, and of Burney, in his draft reply, that SW should organize a 'Morning Party' at which he would play Bach's music on the organ was taken up by SW, and resulted in his concert on 11 June (see n. 8). Given all these factors, a date between mid-Apr. and mid-May 1808 seems most probable.
3. The opening of the C major fugue from Book I of the '48'.
4. 'What's the purpose of these remarks?', a locution often used by Cicero.
5. Possibly 15 Mar. 1808: according to R. J. S. Stevens, SW on this date gave a recital at Surrey Chapel in Blackfriars Road, where SW's friend Jacob was organist (Argent, 156).
6. Not identified.
7. If SW's reference is to Surrey Chapel, a 1794 instrument by Thomas Elliot (Boeringer, iii. 124).
8. In his draft reply, Burney advised: 'lay your traps, & bait them so as to catch the country organists in the way Salomon & myself suggested -- have your congress assembled of a morning, & I should think the Hanover Square room best, in which there is always an excellent Org. ready erected.' SW took the advice of Burney and Salomon and promoted a concert at the Hanover Square Rooms on 11 June, at which it was announced that he would 'perform on the Organ ... several admired

compositions of the celebrated SEBASTIAN BACH, together with several EXTEMPORANEOUS VOLUNTARIES' (Morning Chronicle, 7 June 1808). Burney noted the concert in his diary, and may have been present: 'Mr S. Wesley's morning performance on the Org. Extempore, & on the P.F. Sebastian Bach's preludes and Fugues, in Hanover Square new room.'

9. Georg Joseph Vogler (1749-1814), German theorist, teacher, organist, pianist, and composer. He was a flamboyant virtuoso performer on the piano and organ, noted particularly for his improvisations. His organ recitals, of which he gave over 2,000, attracted a great deal of attention. He visited London in 1783 and 1790. The performance in St Paul's Cathedral mentioned here has not been traced.
10. Following the success of William Crotch's courses at the Royal Institution, public lectures on music had recently become popular and fashionable, and were seen by SW as a particularly effective way of promoting the music of Bach. In his draft reply, Burney advised: 'let alone the lecturing till next year -- but cease thinking of it: as my daughter [Sarah Harriet Burney (1772-1844)] and I see infinite credit & advantages that must necessarily flow from your diagnosis & we have not the least doubt that you will be called for at the Royal Institution; where after Crotch & Callcott have expended all their ammunition, & though they have performed wonders, they will leave you a rich aftermath.' The reference to Callcott here provides additional evidence for the dating of this fragment: Callcott had agreed to give two courses of lectures at the Royal Institution in early 1808, but had only been able to deliver seven lectures in his first course before a breakdown in his health in early Apr. caused him to withdraw. The lack of mention of Callcott's breakdown should not, however, be taken to indicate that the fragment antedates it, as news of it may not have yet reached Burney.
11. 'Chaos, a rough and unordered mass' (Ovid, Metamorphoses, i. 7).
12. This incomplete sentence occurs at the bottom of the page. The remainder of the letter, presumably continued on a subsequent sheet or sheets, is missing. As Burney

had predicted, SW was invited to lecture at the Royal Institution in the following season.



To [Charles Burney]

[Camden Town], 23 June [1808]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1192)

Addressed: To Dr Charles Burney, MusD

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕

My dear Friend,

I cannot advance a Step without your Advice, therefore must pester you (as long as you consent to bear it) as sedulously as a thorough Papist does in cases of Conscience when he has ensured the Heart of his Confessarius.

Yesterday, M<sup>r</sup> Griffin junior<sup>2</sup> (an excellent Organist, & a most worthy & amiable Man) informed me, that my Lady Somebody or other,<sup>3</sup> (I have a very plebeian Knack of forgetting Titles) sent to him for the Loan of Seb. Bach's Fugues: she had already ransacked every Musick Shop in Town, but in vain; & was accidentally informed that he was in Possession of this invaluable Treasure:-- What ought he to do?-- However let me tell you what he did.-- He felt himself puzzled by the Request, for he is among those who think with me & the Poet, that "When Women sue, Men give like Gods"<sup>4</sup>-- but his Prudence overcame his Philogyny, & he had the German Sincerity which extorted from him the unwilling tho' determinate Answer that "it was true he had the Fugues in Question, but that they were so scarce, and to him so precious, that he never trusted them from under his Roof."

Here is a Proof of the Truth of your Prophecy, that this admirable Musick might be played into Fashion:<sup>5</sup> you see I have only risked one modest



Experiment,<sup>6</sup> & it has electrified the Town just in the way we wanted.-- Now what I request of you is to give me an Order how to proceed:-- Shall I immediately issue Proposals about lecturing, or about publishing Sebastian with annotations & an explanation?-- Or is it too late to make any Noise about it till next Season?<sup>7</sup>--

I know you will give me your kind Counsel, & I also know that "Nil desperandum est, te Duce."

SW

27 Arlington Street Camden Town | June 23

1. The year is given by SW's address and the content: SW's reference to 'my Lady Somebody or Other' (n. 3) firmly ties it to the following two letters, both of which also refer to her. It also helps to pinpoint the date of a change of address, or more probably a renumbering of SW's house. SW was at 9 Arlington Street at the beginning of 1808; by the time of his fully dated letter to Burney of 7 July he had moved (or the house had been renumbered) to No. 27. The underlining of '27' here suggests that the move or renumbering was recent.
2. The composer, pianist, and organist George Eugene Griffin (1781-1863), son of George Griffin (1740/1-1809). He was organist of St Botolph, Bishopsgate from 1805 to 1815, and elected to membership of the Royal Society of Musicians in 1808. He was later a founder member of the Philharmonic Society; a string quartet and a piano quartet were performed at early concerts, and he on occasion played the piano (Matthews; Foster, Philharmonic, 14, 30, 35, 41, 42).
3. In fact, Lady Chambers (see next letter).
4. Slightly misquoted from Measure for Measure, I. iv. 80.
5. In his undated response to SW's enquiry about publishing the '48' (NYPL, (Berg)).

Burney had written: 'If you determine on immediate publication, your expedients for saving the expence of newspaper advertisements I think are prudent & in a long shop bill you may dilate on the excellences of the work at any length you please -- but to say the truth I would not hazard the expence of printing till you had played and lectured the work into favour; when I have little doubt but that all studious professors & dilettanti male & female will make Sebastian their future Study as Steffani's ducts & Leo's Solfeggi won the morning studies of all the great Italian Singers during the early part of the last Century.'

6. SW's Hanover Square Rooms concert on 11 June 1808.
7. SW appears to have published no proposals for lectures or editions in the summer of 1808.

To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], 28 June [1808]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (Upper Room, L-151).

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕.

My dear Friend

As your Words & Sebastian's Notes are to me equally precious, I must request & intreat you to favor me with the Letter you first designed for me upon the Subject of my Layady.<sup>3</sup>-- By the Way it was Lady Chambers, the Wife of Sir Will<sup>m</sup> Chambers, a Knight or Barrownight (Baronet) pretty well known.<sup>4</sup>--

I shall strictly follow your Advice upon all Points in which you will condescend to bestow it upon me, and as I was Yesterday raised to the Dignity of a Master Mason at the Somerset House Lodge,<sup>5</sup> where a solemn Oath of Sincerity is taken, I have no urgent Temptation to break my Word with any one, & particularly with You, who have so kindly & so constantly extended your invaluable Friendship to

Your faithful

S Wesley

Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> of June

1. Burney is identified as the addressee of this letter by his daughter's characteristic docketing.
2. The year is given by 28 June falling on a Tuesday and the reference to 'my Layady', also referred to in the following (fully dated) letter.

3. Not preserved: as is clear from the following letter, Burney subsequently sent it to SW.
4. Probably the Lady Chambers listed in the Court Guide as living at 43 Mortimer Street East and at Snaresbrook, Essex. She was in fact the widow of the eminent architect Sir William Chambers (1726-96).
5. SW's involvement with Freemasonry went back to his early adulthood. He had been initiated into Preston's Lodge of Antiquity on 17 Dec. 1788 and had become Junior Deacon in the following year. Among his fellow lodge-members either at that time or later were Samuel Webbe I and II and Robert Birchall. His membership lapsed in 1791 through non-payment of lodge dues, but he rejoined in 1811. His involvement with the Somerset House Lodge (like the Lodge of Antiquity, one with strong musical traditions, and with many musician members) had begun earlier in 1808, when he had been admitted as an honorary member at the lodge meeting on 23 Jan. A number of SW's friends and colleagues were already, or later became, members of the lodge (Oxford).



To Charles Burney

Camden Town, 7 July 1808

ALS, 3 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1193)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Burney | Chelsea College

Pmk: 7 JY 1808 EV

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕

My dear Friend,

I am just returned from the Cambridge Commencement,<sup>1</sup> to which I went by the joint Request of Professor Hague,<sup>2</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> Carnaby, who particularly wished me to be present at his taking his Doctor's Degree. He produced a very pretty & correct Anthem<sup>3</sup> which was very well performed: M<sup>r</sup> & M<sup>rs</sup> Vaughan,<sup>4</sup> & M<sup>r</sup> Leete<sup>5</sup> were the principal Singers.-- There was also a Selection from the Messiah, & from the Creation, on another Morning, in which I conducted the Choruses, which gave general Satisfaction, & I assure you that I have worked very hard (particularly on Sunday, to the scandal of all good Presbyterians)-- For to say the Truth, no sooner had I tired out one Bellows-Blower but they dragged me away to attack another, & when he was settled, away to a third, so that I have lived in a perpetual contention of Fingers versus Fists, & the Joke of the Thing is that the Odds concluded in Favour of Fingers.

Although my Absence from Home has unavoidably caused two or three little Disappointments (principally such as the immediate Reply to Letters) yet, upon the whole, I by no Means repent having made this Excursion.-- The

Place (at which I had not been for 20 years before) is infinitely beautiful & interesting.-- The Walks, the Quiet of the Streets, the Order, the Neatness, the Security, the Magnificence & Antiquity of the Buildings, the elegant Manners of the elder Graduates & venerable Masters, are altogether so irresistible, that I never quitted any Sejour, even in the happy Days of Childhood, with more Regret.

By the way, this Journey has also advanced Sebastian Bach's Cause not a little, for I made a Point of playing him (even at their Glee Parties, upon the Piano Forte) wherever an Evening Meeting took place.-- Magna est Veritas, et prævalebit:<sup>6</sup>-- In the present Case I may say prævaluit, for it surprized me to witness how they drank in every note.-- Some of the Auditory were frequently Men of considerable musical Talent: a few of them would sit down (between the several Pieces of various Kinds) & try a few Bars of one of the Fugues or Preludes, & when they found themselves set fast (which you know could not be very long first) they used to say "Well!-- if I had but these Compositions, I would practise them Night & Day.-- I once thought that Handel's were not only the best but the hardest Fugues in the World, but now I find myself mistaken in both Suppositions."--

So I have now a fresh Instance of the Truth of your Prophecy, that by playing them into Fashion, the Avidity for possessing them could be infallibly increased.<sup>7</sup>--

A Friend of mine (a very clever Artist) has nearly finished a Painting of Seb. Bach, from a small Drawing lent me by M<sup>r</sup> Kollmann,<sup>8</sup> which latter Circumstance I believe I previously mentioned to you.<sup>9</sup>-- Quære, would not

an Extract, translated from the Life in German,<sup>10</sup> be a good Avant-Courcur to the Fugues, with a Portrait prefixed to the Title?-- In this also I shall follow your Advice.

I found on my Return yesterday your petit Billet upon the subject of my Layady,<sup>11</sup> for which I am (as always) thankful to you.

I could not resist the Temptation of telling you all how & about it:<sup>12</sup> All indeed is a Mistake, for there are a thousand Incidents which I wish to inform you of relative to this grand Tour, which will be better vivâ Voce, & I shall lose no Time in bringing my Budget of Gossip to Chelsea (between 3 & 5) within these few Days.

Yours, my dear Friend,

as ever

S Wesley

Camden Town. | Arlington Street. 27. | Thursday. 7. July. 1808.

1. Commencements (i.e. degree ceremonies) at Oxford and Cambridge were occasions for large-scale music festivals. The 1809 Cambridge Commencement opened with a service at Great St Mary's (the University church) on Thursday 30 July which included contributions from Carnaby and SW, and was followed by evening concerts in the Town Hall on 30 June and 1 July, and a morning concert on 1 July at Addenbrooke's Hall.
2. Charles Hague of Trinity Hall (1769-1821), English violinist and composer, Mus.B. (1794), Mus.D. (1801), who had in 1799 succeeded John Randall as Professor of Music at Cambridge. After early years in Cambridge he had gone to London in 1786



to study with Salomon and Benjamin Cooke; he and SW would doubtless have met at this time (Grove<sup>6</sup>; DNB).

3. Carnaby's Mus.D. exercise (not identified) was performed after service at Great St Mary's on Sunday 3 July (Cambridge Chronicle and Journal, 25 June, 2, 9 July 1808).
4. The tenor Thomas Vaughan (1782-1843) and his wife Elizabeth, née Tennant, a soprano. Both were active singers in London and on the provincial music festival circuit, and appeared with SW the following year at the Tamworth Festival (Brown and Stratton; Sainsbury).
5. Robert Leete (ante 1772-post 1836), a bass. He was a member of both the Catch Club and the Glee Club, and secretary of the Catch Club from 1828 to 1836. (Brown and Stratton; Argent).
6. 'Great is truth, and shall prevail', a quotation from Thomas Brooks (1608-1680), The Crown and Glory of Christianity (1662), p. 407, adapted from the Vulgate's 'magna est veritas, et praevallet' (3 Esdr. 4: 41).
7. See SW to Burney, 23 June 1808, n. 5.
8. The composer and theorist Augustus Frederic Christopher Kollman (1756-1829) moved to London from Hamburg in 1782 and was appointed organist of the Royal German Chapel in St James's Palace in the same year. He was one of the leading figures of the English Bach movement, whose interest antedated SW's own by some years: in his Essay on Practical Musical Composition (1799) he included the organ Trio Sonata in E flat, BWV 525, the C major Prelude and Fugue from Book II of the '48', BWV 870 (the first example from the '48' to be published in England), and proposed the publication of an analysed edition of the '48'.
9. The identity of SW's artist friend is not known, and neither the drawing of Bach lent to SW by Kollmann nor the painting taken from it is known to be extant.
10. Forkel's Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst, und Kunstwerke (1802); for plans for the publication of a complete translation of Forkel, see SW to Jacob, 17



Oct. 1808.

11. Lady Chambers: see SW to Burney, 28 June [1808]. Her 'petit billet' was presumably the letter referred to there.
12. A favourite phrase of SW; its source has not been traced.

To [Mary] Beardmore<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 7 July [1808]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (London University, ALS 293)

Addressed: To | Miss Beardmore | Canonbury Place | Islington | N. 5

Pmk: 7 JY 1808

My dear Madam

The Reason of my long Silence & Absence has been my Attendance at the Cambridge Commencement where I have been to assist a Friend upon his taking his Doctor's Degree in Musick, and at which place I have been solicited to remain much longer than I intended in so kind & friendly a Manner that I felt unable to resist so much Importunity.--

I shall hope to be with you on Saturday next,<sup>3</sup> & will procure you some new Musick.

I remember recommending to you a beautiful Song of Bach, from the Opera of Orfeo, which I fear is scarce, but which if I can I will obtain:<sup>4</sup> otherwise I will endeavour to bring some others that may be suitable.--

I remain

My dear Madam

Yours very sincerely

S Wesley

Camden Town. Thursday July 7.

1. Mary Beardmore (1778/9-1838), the elder daughter of Joseph Beardmore; SW also taught her sister Frances (1789/90-1868).
2. The year is given by the postmark.
3. 9 July.
4. Possibly the Andantino from J. C. Bach's Orfeo ed Euridice (1770), a manuscript copy of which in SW's hand dated '23 June' is at BL, Add. MS 69854, ff. 14-15.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 13 August [1808]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 23)<sup>3</sup>

Camden Town 13. Aug<sup>4</sup>

My dear Sir,

I do not profess myself to be so great a Schemer as our late Friend Dr Arnold, who, we all know, speculated himself into Mischief too often;<sup>4</sup> but I have a Plan to propose to you of which I should be glad to have your early Opinion.

It is manifest that Sebastian makes that Sort of Sensation which will in a short Time form a Party Business among several societies of musical Pretenders; of those who know & like nobody but Handel, others who swear in only Haydn's, Mozart's, & Beethoven's Words, others who relish only "Little Peggy's Love,"<sup>5</sup> "A Smile & a Tear,"<sup>6</sup> & similar Sublimities of which you need not be reminded.

Now I really think that all those who have the Courage to speak out in Defence of the greatest of all Harmonists ought to coalesce & amalgamate in a Mode which should render their cordial Sentiments & Judgement unequivocal in the Face of the World, & that we ought to stigmatize such Hypocrites as affect to be enchanted with Sebastian on one Day, & on the next, endeavour to depreciate & vilify him.

In order to ascertain who are verily & indeed "the Israelites in whom



is no Guile"<sup>7</sup> I can think of nothing more expedient than the Formation of a Junto among ourselves, composed of characters who sincerely & conscientiously admit & adhere to the superior Excellence of the great musical High Priest; & who will bend their Minds to a zealous Promotion of advancing the Cause of Truth & Perfection.-- Such a society would at least produce one happy Effect, that of rendering thoroughly public what as yet is but partially so.-- I look upon the State of Music in this Country to be very similar to the State of the Roman Church when the flagrant Abuses & Enormities had arisen to such a Height as to extort a Reformation.-- We know what Wonders were wrought by the Resolution & Perseverance of a single Friar, & that Martin Luther,<sup>8</sup> having Truth for his firm Foundation (for this was the Reason of his Success) managed in a very short Time to shake the whole Fabric of Ignorance & Superstition, although sanctioned by the Precedence of many former Ages, & enforced by the most despotic Authority both ecclesiastical & civil.

It is high Time that some Amendment should take place in the Republic of Musick, & I know of no Engine equally powerful with the immortal & adamantine Pillars of Sebastian's Harmony.-- I really think that our constant & unremitted Question to all who call themselves Friends to Excellence should be "Who is on our Side, who"?<sup>9</sup>-- And I have but little Doubt that by the Establishment of a regular Society in Defence of the Truth, we should e'er long reap some good Fruits of our laudable Endeavours.-- Write me your Thoughts <on> the Subject as soon as convenient, <and be>lieve me, my dear Sir,

ever truly yours

S. Wesley.

1. Benjamin Jacob (1778-1829), organist of Surrey Chapel, friend and collaborator of SW in the promotion of the music of J. S. Bach, and the recipient of an important series of twenty-four letters from SW, subsequently edited by SW's daughter Eliza and published in 1875 as Letters of Samuel Wesley to Mr Jacobs, Organist of Surrey Chapel, Relating to the Introduction into this Country of the Works of John Sebastian Bach (the Bach Letters). As a boy he was a chorister at Portland chapel and studied harpsichord and organ under William Shrubsole and Matthew Cooke, organist of St George's, Bloomsbury. His appointments included the Salem Chapel; Carlisle Chapel, Kennington Lane; and Bentinck Chapel, Lisson Grove. He was invited by Rowland Hill to be organist of Surrey Chapel in 1794, and remained there until 1825. He appears to have been known as (and to have signed himself) Jacobs at the beginning of his correspondence with SW, but soon afterwards to have changed his name to Jacob (Grove<sup>6</sup>; Emery, 'Jack Pudding', 306). He lived at Charlotte Street, Blackfriars Road (the western end of the present Union Street), close to Surrey Chapel. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. The year of this letter is not given. It is apparent, however, from the discussion of the 'sensation' caused by Bach's music and SW's proposal for the formation of a Bach 'junto' that it comes from an early stage in SW's promotion of Bach, and that the year is 1808 rather than 1809, as implied by its position in Eliza Wesley's edition.
3. This collection contains all the letters to Jacob subsequently published by Eliza Wesley. Some fragments of other letters to Jacob, not included in the Bach Letters, are at Edinburgh University Library.
4. Samuel Arnold (1740-1802), composer, organist, editor, and impresario, had a long

and varied career. He was at different times composer to both Covent Garden and the Little Theatre in the Haymarket, composer to the Chapel Royal, conductor of the Academy of Ancient Music, director of the oratorios at Drury Lane and the King's Theatre, organist of Westminster Abbey, and editor of the first uniform edition of Handel's works. SW's reference may be to Arnold's disastrous tenancy of Marylebone Garden between 1769 and 1774, which reputedly lost him £10,000, or to the episode in 1794 when he took a lease of the Lyccum near Exeter Exchange, which he attempted unsuccessfully to establish as a 'combination playhouse and circus', but was forced to give up when he was unable to retain a licence (Grove<sup>6</sup>; BD).

5. The 'Scotch Dance' from the ballet Little Peggy's Love by Cesare Bossi (1774/5-1802), frequently performed at this time as a separate item, and popular in arrangements for piano: see The Celebrated Scotch Air danced by Madam Hilligsberg ... in Little Peggy's Love, arranged as a Rondo for the Piano Forte by M. P. King [1796?] (CPM).
6. A song by Harriett Abrams.
7. John 1: 47.
8. Martin Luther (1483-1546), whose nailing of ninety-five theses on the sale of indulgences to the church door at Wittenberg in 1517 instigated the Reformation.
9. 2 Kgs. 9: 32.



To George Smith<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 14 August 1808

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 31764, f. 24)

Addressed: To | -- Smith Esq<sup>r</sup> | Feversham<sup>2</sup> | Kent

Pmk: AU 15 1808

Sir

On Thursday last I was informed by your excellent & very extraordinary Daughter, that you have (for the present) waved all Thoughts of her applying to the Organ, as in that Case it would be absolutely necessary for her to practise upon that Instrument, without which it were utterly impossible to acquire the true Style of it, & as I before observed, this is so totally different & contrary to that of the Piano Forte, that the equal Study of both would unavoidably disturb & impede the Progress on either.

I am told by M<sup>r</sup> Barnes<sup>3</sup> that you wish Miss Smith to commence private Lessons upon the Piano Forte, & in Consequence of her uncommon Abilities, it appears to me quite sufficient for her to take these Lessons only, & to give up the School Lessons altogether.<sup>4</sup>-- It remains with you to determine whether she shall have one or two Hours in the Course of the same Week.-- If she continue to improve in the Ratio which I have hitherto witnessed, I am of Opinion that one Hour in a Week will do great Things.-- At all Events, I do sincerely assure you Sir, my Opinion of your Daughter's musical Talent is so high, & my Partiality to her whole Behaviour so great, that rather than not proceed in endeavouring to make her a first rate



Performer, I would sacrifice my Time gratis for the Purpose; You may therefore hence conclude that pecuniary Consideration has no much to do with my Proposals of her Advancement, & I shall feel myself peculiarly gratified by being able ultimately to produce my Pupil to the musical Criticks such as I know she must prove, if her future Acquirements shall keep Pace with present Acquisitions.

She has considerably surprized me by her rapid Comprehension & Execution of Cramer's first Book of the Studio;<sup>5</sup> the Remainder of which she has so successfully digested during the late Holidays;<sup>6</sup> & the Manner in which she went on Thursday through some of the Examples which she had not acquired previously with me, afforded me extreme Delight, & prophecied so much Perfection, that I really regard myself singularly fortunate in having happened upon a real Genius for the Exertion of very high & rare musical Powers, joined to the very best Disposition for Instruction, as her mild & docile Temper cannot fail to accelerate her Improvement in a Way seldom to be witnessed.

I really could go on to expatiate upon the rare Intelligence of your amiable young Lady, till I might be suspected of Flattery on that Point; but I am so conscious of not exaggerating the Fact, (& having been conversant with great Variety of musical Students from a pretty early Age) that I trust you will acquit me of any Charge but that to which I willingly plead guilty, namely, that I contend Miss Smith is, (bonâ Fide) possessed of the most illuminated musical Intellect that I have met with for very many Years.

I remain,

With much Respect,

Sir,

Yours most obediently,

& very sincerely

S Wesley

Camden Town | Aug. 14. 1808.

1. The father of one of SW's pupils; not otherwise certainly identified. He may have been the George Smith elected a member of the Madrigal Society on 10 Dec. 1798, when his address was given as the Navy Office (MADSOC).
2. i.e. Faversham, near Canterbury, Kent.
3. One of two sisters, joint proprietors of Oxford House, a girls' school on Marylebone High Street, where SW had taught music since around 1784.
4. It was evidently possible to take lessons either through the school ('school lessons') or by private arrangement with the teacher ('private lessons').
5. Johann Baptist Cramer's influential and widely used Studio per il pianoforte (1804-10), a collection of piano exercises and studies in all the major and minor keys.
6. The summer holidays appear to have begun around midsummer, and the new term to have started in early Aug.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], 28 August [1808]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 39)

Sunday. 28 Aug.

My dear Sir

Many thanks for your kind Attention: I herewith return a Book which I borrowed on Friday last as a Compagnon de Voyage, though he is not the most flattering Friend in the World.-- "The Centaur not fabulous"<sup>3</sup> is among the bitterest of religious Satires, & although I believe D' Young might mean to do good by whatever he wrote, there is always an Asperity of Mind, & a gloomy Cast of Disposition in the Majority of his Works, which seems to have been the Result of either a saturnine Temper, or some disappointed Passion.

I was certainly in very good Humour for playing yesterday Evening.-- I know not whether I was not put rather upon my Mettle by my old Rival's Introduction of his two Critical Companions.<sup>4</sup>-- That M<sup>r</sup> Abbot<sup>5</sup> seems to know something about the Matter, but I guess that he is one who delights to mix among his Praise "as much detraction as he can."--

Your Man is in Haste, which renders me equally so to conclude myself

D<sup>r</sup> Sir

Yours most truly

S. Wesley

M<sup>rs</sup> W. desires her kind Respects.

P.S. -- I will write to you before Sunday.

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. The year is established by 28 Aug. falling on a Sunday and SW's inclusion of 'kind Respects' from 'Mrs W': he and Charlotte were still living together in 1808, but separated in early 1810.
3. The Centaur not Fabulous (1755), by Edward Young (1683-1765). Young was a favourite author of SW's father, and echoes from Night Thoughts, Young's most celebrated work, frequently appear in his hymns and poems (J. R. Watson, The English Hymn (Oxford, 1997), 251-3).
4. SW's 'old rival' may have been his brother Charles. The 'two critical companions' have not been identified.
5. Not identified: perhaps one of the 'critical companions'.



To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 17 September 1808

ALS, 7 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 1)

Sept' 17. 1808

Dear Sir

I am much obliged by your ingenious & circumstantial Detail of your Success with Saint Sebastian,<sup>2</sup> as you very properly term him, & am rejoiced to find that you are likely to regard his Works with me as a musical Bible, unrivalled, & inimitable.

I am grieved to witness in my valuable Friend Doctor Burney's Critique<sup>3</sup> (for he is a Man whom I equally respect and love) so slight an Acquaintance with the great & matchless Genius whom he professes to analyze: & I have however much Satisfaction in being able to assure you from my own personal Experience that his present judgement of our Demi-God is of a very different Nature from that at the Time he imprudently, incautiously, and we may add, ignorantly pronounced so rash & false a verdict (altho' a false Verdict is a Contradiction in Terms) as that which I this Day read for the first Time, upon "the greatest Master of Harmony in any Age or Country."

It is now (I think) nearly a Twelvemonth since I wrote to the Doctor respecting my profound Admiration (& Adoration if you like it as well) of Sebastian:<sup>4</sup> I stated to him that I had made a Study of his Preludes & Fugues, adding that his Compositions had opened to me an entirely new musical

World, which was to me at least as surprizing as (when a Child) I was thunderstruck by the opening of the Dettingen Te-Deum at the Bristol Cathedral, with about an hundred Performers: (a great Band in those Days.)<sup>5</sup>-- I went into something like a general Description of what I conceived to be his characteristic Beauties, & particularly specified Air as one of the chief & most striking.<sup>6</sup>-- I have by me the Doctor's Reply to my Letter,<sup>7</sup> although I cannot at the present Moment advert to it, but I fully remember his observing in nearly the following Words, "In order to be consistent with myself with regard to the great Sebastian Bach, before I precisely coincide with you, I must refer to what I have written at various Times, & in various Places of my History, Travels, &c. in which I had Occasion to mention him, but I shall feel exceedingly gratified in hearing his elaborate & erudite Compositions performed by you (for I never yet heard any one of them) & can tell you that I have a very curious & beautiful Copy of his Fugues, which was presented to me many years since by his Son Emanuel,<sup>8</sup> & which I shall have much pleasure in shewing you."

When I waited on my venerable Friend, he had been kind enough to previously lay upon his Music Desk the MS in Question (together with several other beautiful & superb Works of our immortal Master); but when I came to examine this said rare Present, how much was I surprized to find it so full of scriptural Faults, that it was not without some Difficulty I could manage to do Justice to one of the Fugues which I had been formerly the most familiar with, & although I did not boggle, yet I played with extreme Discomfort!-- My Friend however was extremely delighted, & the very first Part of his Critique



expressed his Wonder how such abstruse Harmony & such perfect & enchanting Melody could have been so marvellously united!--

What a convincing Proof this is that his former Criticism upon our matchless Author was an hasty & improvident Step! I conceive that the Fact stands thus: When Burney was in Germany, the universal Plaudits & Panegyrics upon the Father of universal Harmony were so interesting, that it would have been impossible for him to have avoided giving such a Man a Place in his Account of Musical Authors in his General History:<sup>9</sup>-- Nevertheless it appears very evidently from the erroneous Sentence he has pronounced therein upon the Comparative Merit of him & Handel,<sup>10</sup> that he never could have taken due Pains to make himself Master of the Subject; otherwise his late candid Acknowledgment would not have been made; and is Proof sufficient that he only wanted Experience of the Truth to make him ready & willing to own it.

I must also tell you another Piece of News; namely that this imperfect & incorrect Volume, this valuable & inestimable Gift of Sebastian's dutiful Son, happens to contain only the 24 first Preludes & Fugues; all written in the Soprano Clef, (to make them more easily understood, I suppose),<sup>11</sup> & the Preludes so miserably mangled & mutilated, that had I not met them in such a Collection as that of the learned & highly illuminated Doctor Burney, I verily believe that I should have exclaimed, "An Enemy hath done this";<sup>12</sup> I should have at once concluded that such a Manuscript could have been made only by him who was determined to disgrace instead of promote the Cause of correct Harmony.<sup>13</sup>

Ever since I had the Privilege of so great a Triumph (for I can call it nought else) over the Doctor's Prejudice, he has evinced the most cordial Veneration for our sacred Musician, & when I told him that I was in Possession of 24 more such precious Relicks,<sup>14</sup> he was all aghast in finding that there could be any Productions of such a Nature which he had not seen:<sup>15</sup> this again is another proof of his having hastily judged, & also how remiss the Germans must have been, not to have made him better acquainted with the Works of their transcendant Countryman.

I am told by the Rev<sup>d</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Picart,<sup>16</sup> (one of the Canons of Hereford Cathedral) that Seb. B. has written Pieces for three Organs,<sup>17</sup> & innumerable others which are not sent to England purely from the Contempt which the Germans entertain of the general State of Music in this Country, & which unfavourable sentiment, I am sorry to say, has but too much foundation on the Truth.

You see, that there are others who have as much Cause to apologize for the length of Letters as you, if Apology were at all necessary among Friends, but yours, which I this Day received has given me so much real Satisfaction, as I fully trust that you are determined to defend the cause of Truth & Sebastian (for they are one) against all the frivolous Objections of Ignorance, & the transparent Cavils of Envy, that I safely rely upon you as one of my right hand Men against all the prejudiced Handelians.-- It has been said that Comparisons are odious; but without Comparison, where is Discrimination? and without Discrimination, how are we to attain a just Judgement?-- Let us always weigh fairly as far as human Powers will allow,



& endeavour to divest ourselves of the Propensity which leads us either to idolize or execrate whatever we have been unfortunately habituated so to do, without previous & due Examination.

I feel great gratification in having been accessory to your Study of Sebastian: I knew that you had only to know him to love & adore him, & I sincerely assure you, that in meeting so true an Enthusiast in so good a Cause (& depend on it that nothing very good or very great is done without Enthusiasm) I experience a warmth of Heart which only Enthusiasts know or can value.

That our Friendship may long continue, either with or without Enthusiasm (tho' I think a Spice of it even there no bad thing) believe me, is the very cordial wish of

Dear Sir

Yours very faithfully

S Wesley

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. SW's reference to Bach as 'Saint Sebastian' and his extended use of religious imagery when discussing him and his music is characteristic.
3. Either in the two passages from Burney's History quoted below (see nn. 9 and 10), or in his article on Bach in Rees: 'Sebastian Bach is said by Marpurg, in his "Art de la Fugue," to have been "many musicians in one, profound in science, fertile in fancy, and in taste easy and natural;" he should rather have said original and refined, for to the epithets easy and natural many are unwilling to assent; as this truly great

man seems by his works for the organ, to have been constantly in search of what was new and difficult, without the least attention to nature and facility.' For Burney's contributions to Rees and the relationship of these to his earlier writings, see Roger Lonsdale, 'Doctor Burney's "Dictionary of Music"', Musicology, 5 (1977), 159-71.

4. This letter, presumably written in Sept. or Oct. 1807, is not preserved.
5. This performance of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum* (1743) may have been at the annual Festival of the Sons of the Clergy, held in Bristol Cathedral each Aug.; it presumably took place some time before 1776, when the Wesley family moved permanently to London. Alternatively, it may have been at a special service in the Cathedral for the benefit of the Infirmary: one such service, which included the *Dettingen Te Deum*, was held on 31 Mar. 1774 (advertised Felix Farley's Bristol Journal, 26 Mar. 1774, report 2 Apr. 1774; see also F. G. Edwards, 'Samuel Wesley a Boy-Poet', MT, 48 (1907), 91-4).
6. A pointed rejoinder to one of Burney's chief criticisms of Bach: see nn. 9 and 10.
7. Not preserved.
8. Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach (1714-88), son of J. S. Bach, whom Burney had visited in Hamburg in Oct. 1772 (Percy A. Scholes (ed.), Dr Burney's Musical Tours in Europe, 2 vols. (London, 1959), ii. 219-20; Hans-Gunter Ottenberg, C. P. E. Bach (Oxford, 1987), 145-6).
9. Burney had written: 'Of the illustrious musical family of BACH I have frequently had occasion for panegyric. The great Sebastian Bach, music-director at Leipsic, no less celebrated for his performance on the organ and compositions for that instrument, than for being the father of four sons, all great musicians in different branches of the art .... If Sebastian Bach and his admirable son Emanuel, instead of being musical-directors in commercial cities, had been fortunately employed to compose for the stage and public of great capitals, such as Naples, Paris, or London, and for performers of the first class, they would doubtless have simplified their style more to the level of their judges; the one would have sacrificed all unmeaning art and



contrivance, and the other been less fantastical and recherché, and both, by writing in a style more popular, and generally intelligible and pleasing, would have extended their fame, and been indisputably the greatest musicians of the present century' (History, iv. 594-5; Mercer, ii. 954-5).

10. 'Handel was perhaps the only great Fughist, exempt from pedantry. He seldom treated barren or crude subjects; his themes being almost always natural and pleasing. Sebastian Bach, on the contrary, like Michael Angelo in painting, disdained facility so much, that his genius never stooped to the easy and graceful. I never have seen a fugue by this learned and powerful author [i.e. J. S. Bach] upon a motivo that is natural and chantant; or even an easy and obvious passage, that is not loaded with crude and difficult accompaniments' (History, iii. 110; Mercer, ii. 96).
11. A sarcastic reference to the choice of clef for the notation of the upper stave of the manuscript: the soprano clef would in fact have been more difficult to read than the more usual treble clef.
12. Matt. 13: 28.
13. For a subsequent account of this meeting, see SW to Charles Butler, 7 Oct. 1812.
14. i.e. Book II of the '48'.
15. According to Burney's account of his visit in Dr Burney's Musical Tours in Europe, ii. 219-20, C. P. E. Bach had showed Burney two manuscript volumes of fugues, which Ottenberg takes to have been both books of the '48'.
16. Samuel Picart (1774/5-1835), matric. Brasenose College, Oxford (1792), BA (1796), MA (1803), BD (1810), senior master of Hereford School (1803), Prebendary of Hereford (1805), and Rector of Hartlebury (1817-35) (Foster). He subscribed to Novello's A Collection of Sacred Music (1811) and to the Wesley-Horn edition of the '48', and was a noted collector of music (Foster; Percy M. Young, The Bachs, 1500-1850 (London, 1970), 295-6; King, 47).
17. Picart's reference was presumably to pieces which require three-manual instruments.

To Benjamin Jacob

[Camden Town], 17 October 1808

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 5)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road | Oct<sup>r</sup> 17  
1808.

Pmk: 17 OC 1808

My dear Sir

We are going on swimmingly. Mr. Horn<sup>1</sup> (the Music Master to the Princesses) is furthering the Cause of our grand Hero with Might & Main. He had arranged 12 of the Fugues for 4 Instruments<sup>2</sup> before I had the Pleasure of his Acquaintance, & was longing to find some spirited enthusiast like himself, to co-operate in bringing the musical World to Reason & Common Sense, & to extort a Confession of the true State of the Case against the Prepossession, Prejudice, Envy, & Ignorance of all anti-Bachists.

We are (in the first Place) preparing for the Press an authentic & accurate Life of Sebastian, which M<sup>r</sup> Stephenson the Banker<sup>3</sup> (a most zealous & scientific Member of our Fraternity) has translated into English from the German of Forkel, & wherein is a List of all the Works of our Apollo.<sup>4</sup>-- This we propose to publish by Subscription, as a preparatory Measure to editing the Fugues,<sup>5</sup> & which will naturally cause a considerable Sensation not only in the musical but also in the literary World.<sup>6</sup>-- Is not this all as you would have it?-- I cannot doubt your Affirmative, & you perceive that I have not been idle.

It appears by the Life of Sebastian, that he was not only the greatest



Master in the World, but also one of the most worthy & amiable Characters that ever adorned Society.-- I remember often exclaiming when working at him "I am sure that none but a good man could have written thus," & you perceive that my Conjecture was accurate.

M<sup>r</sup> Horn has a vast Quantity of his Compositions that have never seen the Light; among the Rest, stupendous Trios for the Organ,<sup>7</sup> which he used to play thus: his right Hand played the first Part on the Top Row of the Clavier; his left the 2<sup>d</sup> Part on the 2nd Row, & he played the Base wholly upon the Pedals. There are Allegro Movements among them, & occasionally very brisk notes in the Base Part, whence it appears that he was alike dextrous both with Hands & Feet.<sup>8</sup>

Horn has a further Design than the mere Publication of our 48 Preludes & Fugues; he wishes to extend the Work to a complete Edition of all his Compositions that are to be found: and if God spare our Health, why should we despair of presenting the World with "all these Treasures of Wisdom & Knowledge?"<sup>9</sup>

He is as indefatigable as yourself, & has written with his own Hand whole Centuries of Pages which would amaze you.-- He has not only transcribed all the 48 Preludes & Fugues, but also written them on Paper ruled for the purpose, capacious enough to contain an entire Fugue, however long, upon two Pages only, thus avoiding the Inconvenience of turning over, for which there is hereby no necessity even from the Beginning of the Work to the End.

M<sup>r</sup> Kollman in his Essay on Practical Musical Composition 1799 has

published one of those Trios above mentioned,<sup>10</sup> towards the End of the musical examples (N. 58).-- by this you will be able to judge of the rest; for there is no Inferiority throughout them: all are equally admirable & excellent altho' each in an entirely different Style.

I sadly want to see you, tho' I know not well how to contrive it: S<sup>r</sup> Paul's opens again on Sunday next,<sup>11</sup> & I have promised Attwood to look in there in the Morning: In what part of the same Day should I be most likely to find you?

Yours ever truly

S Wesley

I know not M<sup>r</sup> Neate's<sup>12</sup> correct Address; will you therefore be so kind as to forward the enclosed to him immediately?

Do not forget my best Regards to my kind Friend M<sup>rs</sup> Jacobs.

1. Charles Frederick Horn (1762-1830), German-born organist, teacher, composer, and theorist, who had come to England in 1782. He was Queen Charlotte's music teacher from 1789 to 1783, and thereafter taught various members of the royal family, including some of the daughters of George III and Charlotte. He was an important figure in the English Bach movement: in addition to his arrangement of Bach fugues for string quartet discussed in this letter, he was later co-editor with SW of the organ Trio Sonatas and of the first English edition of the '48'.
2. A Sett of twelve Fugues composed for the Organ by Sebastian Bach ... arranged as Quartettos (1807); the Preface is dated 1 May 1807. Horn's title reflected the general belief at this time that Bach's keyboard fugues were all written for the organ. Only ten of the set are in fact from the '48': the fugues in C major and C# minor from Book I, and the fugues in D major, Eb major, D# / Eb minor, E major, G minor,



A♭ major, B♭ minor, and B major from Book II; some of these are transposed into keys more convenient for stringed instruments. The remaining two fugues are the organ fugue in D minor, BWV 538 ('The Dorian') and the probably spurious keyboard fugue in B♭ on 'BACH', BWV 898.

3. Edward Stephenson (1759-1833), banker, amateur musician and collector of music and violins, was a long-standing friend of Horn, and was (with J. P. Salomon) godfather to Horn's son Charles Edward (1786-1849). He and Horn were at this time neighbours: he lived at 29 Queen's Square Bloomsbury, and Horn at No. 25. He has in the past been erroneously identified as Rowland Stephenson (1782-1856), his brother-in-law (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
4. An announcement that SW and Horn were preparing a translation of Forkel's Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst, und Kunstwerke for the press appeared in the Nov. number of The Librarian and the Dec. number of MM, although without identifying Stephenson as the translator. This translation did not appear, and the first English translation (reprinted in New Bach Reader, 419-82) was finally published in 1820; the identity of its translator and its relationship to the Stephenson translation are not known (New Bach Reader; Walter Emery, 'The English Translator of Forkel', ML, 28 (1947), 301-2).
5. i.e. the '48'. In fact, it was not until almost a year later that SW and Horn began to prepare this edition: see SW to [Horn?], [c. 30 September 1809]. The edition was announced in the Mar. 1810 number of MM and was published in four parts between Sept. 1810 and July 1813.
6. In a letter now lost, SW had written to tell Burney about Horn and their plans to publish Stephenson's translation of Forkel. In his reply of 17 Oct. 1808 (Osborn), Burney had replied: 'I am glad you like Mr Horn; I have never seen him-- but from all that I have heard of him, I set him down in my mental list as a worthy, ingenious, & liberal minded professor .... With respect to your plan of publishing the life of our divine Sebastian jointly with Mr Horn, I shall be extremely glad to have a talk with

you on so very interesting a Subject; you and your co-partner will confer honour on yourselves by blazoning the powers of our Idol. I have formerly had some dealings with Dr Forkel-- I have not the honour of knowing Mr Stephenson-- if his translation of the life is well done, it is pity to undertake a new version. I wish you had perused it. Mr Kollmann's Geese, you know, are all Swans'. The implication of the latter part of this quotation may be that objections had been raised by Kollmann to the quality of Stephenson's translation, but that Burney considered them to be exaggerated and not sufficient to justify the commissioning of a new translation.

7. The six Trio Sonatas for organ, BWV 525-30, an edition of which was published in separate numbers by SW and Horn in 1809. In his Reminiscences SW implied that the editorial work and the authorship of the preface were his alone.
8. SW's remarks show how little was known of Bach's organ music at this time, even by musicians: he needed to spell out to Jacob the importance of Bach's pedal parts and the fact that Bach was 'alike dexterous both with hands and feet'.
9. Col. 2: 3.
10. The Trio Sonata No. 1 in E flat, BWV 525, which appears as Pl. 58-67.
11. 23 Oct.; the reason for the closure is not known.
12. Charles Neate (1784-1877), pianist and composer, doubtless the 'Master Neate' who played a piano concerto at Ashley's performance of Haydn's Creation performance at Covent Garden on 4 Apr. 1800. He joined the Royal Society of Musicians in 1806 and was a founder member of the Philharmonic Society in 1813, when his address was given as 4 Duke Street, Portland Place (Matthews; Loan 48.1).



To Benjamin Jacob

Camden Town, 19 October [1808]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 7)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs | Organist | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's  
Road.

Camden Town.

Wednesday Ev<sup>g</sup> Oct 19.

My dear Sir,

I thought you would be gratified in gaining early Intelligence of our Intention to come forward with Memoirs of our matchless Man (if Man he may be called), as I am clearly of Opinion that they will serve as a thorough Defiance of all the Snarlers & would-be-Criticks, howsoever dispersed throughout the British Empire.-- Upon the Continent his Fame has been so long circulated & established that they must have for many years past sneered at our Ignorance of such an Author, professing (as we do) to be a Nation attached to Music.-- Salomon has said truly & shrewdly enough that the English know very little of the Works of the German Masters, Handel excepted, who (as he observes) came over hither when there was a great Dearth of good Musick, & here he remained (these are his Words) establishing a Reputation wholly Constituted upon the Spoils of the Continent.<sup>2</sup>

This would nettle the Handelians devilishly, however it is the strict Truth, for we all know how he has pilfered from all Manner of Authors

whence he could filch any thing like a Thought worth embodying, & altho' it is certain that what he had taken he has generally improved on (not when he robbed the Golden Treasury of Sebastian, by the Way) yet there is such a Meanness in putting even his own Subjects in so many different Works over & over again, vide his Lessons, Concertos, Chamber-Duets, Instrumental Trios, & almost all his Compositions, that I do sincerely think, & am ready to maintain it among sensible unprejudiced Judges, (for it is but time lost to argue with Bigots, which is another Word for Madmen) [that] Handel, for so great a Master, has as little just claim to the Merit of original Genius as the most servile of his Imitators.<sup>3</sup>

I am glad you tickled up Gaffer Stevens<sup>4</sup> a Bit: I need not tell you that half, & more than half even of such Professors as ought to know & do better, give a Decision hap-Hazard upon sundry Matters which they have never duly considered-- I am delighted that you happened to remember Burney's identical Words:<sup>5</sup> your anticipation of what he<sup>6</sup> was about to say must have been not an agreeable Surprize, but rather of the confounding Kind.-- Just while I think of it let me provide you with immediate Ammunition against the feeble Defence of Handel upon the score of his clear & marked Subjects. The Doctor's Fugue you have accurately, as also the Judgement Fugue, & what I call the Saints in Glory-Fugue, by which I mean that in E Major, 4# #.<sup>7</sup> Add to this the one hard by it in Eb Major, & I think these will furnish sufficient for many Rounds against such as "love Darkness rather than Light, because their Eyes & Ears are evil."<sup>8</sup>

However, as I before observed to you, History & Experience teach us,

that the Progress of Truth, however slow, is always infallibly sure.-- How many hundreds have been regarded as Hereticks & Atheists (& treated accordingly) for maintaining that the Earth turns round, & now, who but Savages & Ideots believe the contrary?-- The Affair is this: a great Majority of those who exist, or at least derive Emolument by teaching & governing others, are themselves very incompetent to either: it is natural that they should dread the Detection of their Ignorance, since, as was said of old, "it is by this Craft they get their Gain."<sup>9</sup>

You may rely on it that you yourself are looked upon with a thorough envious Eye by your Brother Organists, who instead of endeavouring successfully to imitate your persevering Industry, by which you have accomplished so much, & gained such a clear Insight into the true Style of our Autho[r,] prefer the shorter & easier Way (as they think) of establishing their Pretensions to Criticism by defaming their Superiors.

Your Letter found me this Evening in my Chamber, to which I have been confined all Day, or rather from which I dreaded to go out, having had a severe Touch of a bilious Complaint, to which I am occasionally subject, particularly at this Time of the year: but a Day's nursing & a few grains of Rhubarb & Magnesia or the like, almost always set me to Rights again, & I fully expect to get out To-morrow, of which indeed I should much regret to be disappointed, as I am engaged to a Party<sup>10</sup> where we are to have some Sebastian, arranged by Horn for 2 Violins, Tenor & Bass,<sup>11</sup> & a glorious Effect they produce, as you may guess.-- What must they do in a full Orchestra!<sup>12</sup>



Even Germans themselves are not free from the Envy of such a transcendant Genius. I will not tell you the Name of the Person till Sunday (for I mean to be with you) neither would you believe, & perhaps can hardly credit it on my solemn Asseveration that a Man of real musical Judgement, some Science, & admirable Talent on his own Instrument, compared one of those Fugues which Horn has arranged (which you do not remember as it is not among the 48),<sup>13</sup> to a Hog floundering in the Mud.

Thank Heaven that Prejudice & Spite, however prevalent in England, are not solely found here: if it were so, I should wish rather to be ranked among the honest Hindoo Barbarians.

Adieu, I trust to see you on Sunday by 1 o'Clock.

Yours ever truly

S. Wesley

M<sup>rs</sup> W. joins in best wishes to M<sup>rs</sup> J. yourself & Family.

1. The year is given by 19 October falling on a Wednesday and SW's Camden Town address.
2. After an early career in Halle, Hamburg, and Italy, Handel had arrived in England late in 1710 and rapidly established himself as the foremost composer in England.
3. Handel's borrowings, both from himself and from other composers, were well known in the late eighteenth century (see Burney, History, iii. 536, iv. 154, 315; Mercer, ii. 426, 617, 742-3), and were discussed at around this time by Crotch in his lectures. Although Handel was sometimes criticized for lack of originality, he generally escaped the more serious charge of plagiarism: a commonly expressed view was that what he borrowed, he repaid with interest. For a conspectus of attitudes over two centuries to Handel's borrowings, see George J. Buelow, 'The Case for



Handel's Borrowings: the Judgment of Three Centuries' in Stanley Sadie and Anthony Hicks (eds.), Handel Tercentenary Collection (London, 1987), 61-82. SW was not usually so censorious of Handel: on other occasions he was quick to spring to his defence against anti-Handelians (see SW to Novello, 17 Feb. 1813). The reference in his accusation of Handel's plagiarism of Bach is not clear, unless by 'The Golden Treasury' he meant the '48' and was thinking of the close similarity between the subject of the chorus 'And with his stripes we are healed' from Messiah and the A minor Fugue from Book II. But Handel could not have known the '48', and the subject in question is in any case a stock cliché of the period and was no more Bach's property than Handel's.

4. R. J. S. Stevens. In his diary entry for 12 Oct., he noted: 'Coffee with [Joseph] Smith. Bradbury Trueman and Jacobs there, who played some of Sebastian Bach's fugues' (Argent, 164). SW is probably referring to this occasion.
5. Perhaps the comparisons between Bach and Handel in Burney's History and his contributions to Rees (see SW to Jacob, 17 Sept. 1808, n. 9).
6. i.e. Stevens.
7. i.e. fugues by Bach with 'clear and marked subjects', to counter Stevens's criticism. The 'Doctor's Fugue' and the 'Judgement Fugue' have not been identified. It seems likely from SW's choice of the E major fugue (the 'Saints in Glory Fugue') and the one 'hard by it' in E flat that he was referring here to Book II of the '48'.
8. John 3: 19.
9. Acts 19: 25: a reference is to Demetrius and other silversmiths of Ephesus, who derived their income from making shrines to Diana, and whose activities St Paul sought to curb.
10. In Paddington: see SW to his mother, 20 Oct. [1808] (John Wesley's Chapel, London).
11. i.e. from Horn's A Sett of twelve Fugues: see SW to Jacob, 17 Oct. 1808, n. 2.
12. Less than a year later SW included an arrangement of the D major fugue from Book

II of the '48' (one of the fugues arranged by Horn) in a revised version of his D major organ concerto which he performed at Tamworth: see SW to Jacob, 25 Sept. 1809.

13. Either the organ fugue in D minor, BWV 538 ('The Dorian') or the probably spurious keyboard fugue in B flat on BACH, BWV 898.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], [17 November 1808?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 4 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 9)

Editor's note This letter is dated 17 November 1808 in pencil in another hand, possibly that of Eliza Wesley.

My dear Sir,

I always suspect the Sincerity of sudden Conversions.-- Had not my Brother<sup>3</sup> known of your intimate Acquaintance with me, I should have been sooner induced to think that his Heart & his Words went together on Monday Night, but as I know he can play Salomon's Tricks (if not upon the Fiddle, yet upon a more dangerous instrument described by S<sup>t</sup> James),<sup>4</sup> I own I am a little of the Sadducee<sup>5</sup> in the present Instance, & am really afraid that (in regard to my Brother's real Opinion of Bach) "there is no Resurrection."<sup>6</sup>

I have already repeatedly expressed to you my Regret that a Man of my Brother's very transcendant musical Knowledge & skill should have been so betrayed by bad Company into Habits of thinking & acting so diametrically opposite to his Convictions & better Judgement: of course it follows (and I am sure that you will give me Credit for it) that whatever I ever have said or ever shall say, which may have an Appearance of Severity, can not be the Result of any worse Principle than the Grief, not the Anger, I feel in the Perversion & Perversity of such a mind.

Well then, you will not suppose that in what I speak to you confidentially concerning C.W. I have either "Envy, Hatred, Malice, or



Uncharitableness."<sup>7</sup> The Searcher of all Hearts knoweth the contrary: I think of him with some Pleasure, as to the native & original Goodness of his Disposition, but with more Melancholy when I consider such a cruel Sacrifice to the Whims & Artifices of designing Persons who have made him the mere Puppet of their base & interested Designs.

Now to more pleasing Reflexions.-- I am glad that you brought forward the Hymn Tune<sup>8</sup> for two Reasons, the former (& the better) because I know it is just in the Style which particularly pleases C.W. (for his best Compositions are pathetic:) & 2<sup>dly</sup> if he should venture to report the Fact to our worthy Sister,<sup>9</sup> she will be extraordinarily chagrined in finding that a Man whom she has represented (these are her own words) as "destitute of every Sentiment, of Justice, Honour, or Integrity"<sup>10</sup> should have had sufficient Respect to any religious Words to think of setting them to Music: I dare say she will add that they are thoroughly profaned by the experiment.

Your playing Bach on Monday set my Brother upon his Battle-Horse. I'll answer for it that he made Handel's Harmonies tolerably full.-- I never yet found any other Man who seemed so made for him.-- Kelway,<sup>11</sup> C.W.'s Harpsichord Master (an admirable Musician & perfect Player) was known to have said every where that W. played Handel in a vastly superior Manner even to Handel himself.-- Kelway (by the Way) was one of the most accurate Criticks of Performance of his (or perhaps any other) Time.--

I can have no possible Objection to acceding to your Request about sitting to M<sup>r</sup> Bacon,<sup>12</sup> but would wish to know how long at one Time he would require my Attendance: it will be extremely agreeable to me to be better



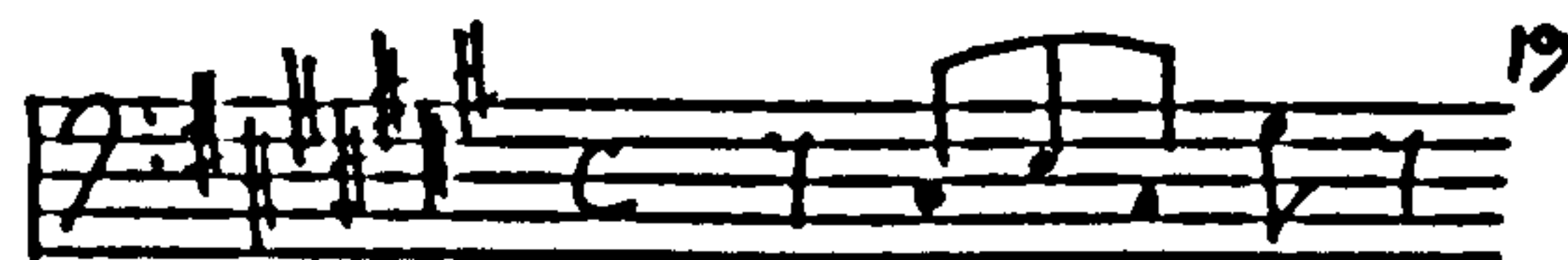
acquainted with him, & I wish you to signify the same to him at your first convenient Opportunity.

If he will give me legal Notice, by which I mean about the space of a Week, I will wait upon him with much Pleasure; we can then settle a Time for my sitting to him, which I do not think would suit me on any day when I go to Cossens's,<sup>13</sup> as I am always full of crowded Work then from Morning till Night.

Pray inform M<sup>r</sup> G. Gwilt,<sup>14</sup> that I shall with great satisfaction attend him on Wednesday:<sup>15</sup> I must cut & contrive how to manage, for this is my Paddington Day, & I must be cunning to transfer some of the Business on the Occasion. I fear there is no Possibility of getting previously to your Organ,<sup>16</sup> because it will be no easy Matter for me to get into your Latitude sooner than ½ past 4, & even then I must beg Leave to attend the Brats at a much earlier Hour than usual in order to accomplish this.<sup>17</sup>

You may also tell Elliott<sup>18</sup> that I will dine with him on some Day between the 20<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> as desired, altho' I do not love "a little Church Organ."-- Perhaps this is only an Antiphrasis, & that he & you mean a great one.

Remember me in the kindest way to M<sup>rs</sup>



& all my young Bachists, & I trust that I shall remain, (not only in this, but in a better World,)

Your lasting Friend,

S. Wesley.

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. This date is added on the manuscript in pencil in another hand, and is repeated in Eliza Wesley's edition. It is possible that it was taken from a postmark or a date on an address panel which is no longer extant.
3. SW's brother Charles had evidently been evincing some enthusiasm for Bach's music. SW was not disposed to trust the sincerity of his words: Charles was an arch-conservative and a staunch Handelian in his musical tastes.
4. The tongue: see Jas. 3: 1-12.
5. The Sadducees were the traditionalist Jewish priestly party, noted for their reactionary conservatism.
6. Matt. 22: 23.
7. BCP: The Litany.
8. Possibly SW's 'Might I in thy sight appear' (1807), the opening of which he quotes in his next letter to Jacob.
9. SW's elder sister Sarah (1759-1827). She was involved in a small way in various literary activities and acted as governess to a number of families; by this time she was increasingly involved with the care of her mother, with whom she and her brother Charles continued to live. SW's relations with her and Charles had been strained since his adolescence, and for much of his adult life he had little contact with them except in times of personal or financial crisis. Sarah's many letters to SW (which, untypically, he preserved) are characterized by plain speaking and frequent criticisms of his conduct.
10. Evidently a quotation from a letter from Sarah: not preserved.
11. Joseph Kelway (c.1702-82), English organist, harpsichordist, and composer, organist at St Michael's, Cornhill (1730) and St Martin's in the Fields (1736). He had been the teacher of SW's brother Charles and earlier of Handel's friend Mrs Delany, who rated him 'little inferior to Handel'. Burney described his playing style as one of



'masterly wildness ... bold, rapid, and fanciful' (Grove<sup>4</sup>; Burney, History, iv. 664; Mercer, ii. 1009).

12. Like his father John Bacon the elder (1740-99), John Bacon (1777-1859) was a highly prolific sculptor who specialized in monuments. After initial training from his father he entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1782. He won a silver medal in 1786 and a gold medal in 1797, and exhibited at the Royal Academy from 1792 to 1824. He was another member of the Wesley-Jacob circle of Bach enthusiasts, and had apparently succeeded in introducing the music of Bach to his own children. In a letter to him of 12 Dec. 1808 (Emory), Jacob remarked: 'It delights me to hear that your children are Bachists! What a convincing proof it is that the subjects are natural and beautiful for otherwise babes would not be able to reach them, and there are several families within my circle, where the divine strains are to be heard from the lisping voices of infants.' Jacob went on to quote a passage from SW's letter to him of 8 Dec. SW sat for his portrait, which was completed and delivered to Jacob in Nov. 1809 (Jacob to Bacon, 18 Nov. 1809 (Emory)). The portrait, which according to this letter was in pencil, has not been traced. For Bacon, see Rupert Gunnis, Dictionary of British Sculptors 1660-1851 (London, 1953) 28-31.
13. Probably the school in Paddington where SW taught on Wednesdays and Saturdays. SW's letters to Bacon are addressed to him at Paddington Green, where Bacon may have had a studio. It may have been suggested to SW that he could conveniently sit for his portrait while in the neighbourhood.
14. Both George Gwilt (1775-1856) and his brother Joseph (1784-1863) were for a time members of SW's musical and social circle. They were prominent architects, shared SW's interests in the music of J. S. Bach and Gregorian chant, and were Freemasons. George Gwilt was a close neighbour of Jacob: he lived close to Surrey Chapel at 8 (now 18) Union Street (DNB; Howard Colvin, A Biographical Dictionary of British Architects 1600-1840 (London, 1978); Survey of London, xxii. 84). For Joseph Gwilt, see SW to Novello, [24 Nov. 1809].

15. 23 Nov.
16. At Surrey Chapel.
17. It was a considerable distance from Paddington to the Blackfriars Road area, where Gwilt and Jacob lived and where Surrey Chapel was situated.
18. The organ-builder Thomas Elliot (c.1759-1832) was a close professional associate of SW at this time. He built the organ at Surrey Chapel (1793), supplied the organ for SW's lecture courses at the Royal and Surrey Institutions, and built SW's own house organ. He had evidently offered to demonstrate 'a little church organ' to SW.
19. i.e. Mrs Jacob. The music example is the opening of the C sharp major fugue from Book II of the '48'; the significance of its use here is unknown.



To Benjamin Jacob

[Camden Town], [21 November, 1808?]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 4 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 11)

My dear Sir,

Although I fully hope & expect to enjoy your Company on Wednesday next,<sup>2</sup> yet as you ask me a question in your last, concerning a Personage<sup>3</sup> who (as you very truly observe) is an Acquisition to any musical Cause that he is determined to espouse, I am pleased in an Opportunity of coinciding with you upon so agreeable a Subject as a candid Confession proceeding from a mind formerly prejudiced, but now (I trust) conquered by the irresistible Omnipotence of Truth.

You ask me what I think-- I think with you that my Brother held out as long as he could, but that being so closely besieged by very many Judges of Music who have been so thoroughly & sincerely converted to the Truth of the Bach Perfection, he found it impossible to maintain a tenable Post any longer, & therefore wisely made a Virtue of Necessity, for I am yet of Opinion that if he could even now defend the Pre-eminence of Handel, he would; & I have but little Doubt (so long & so well as I have known him) that amongst mere Handelians he will but too readily relapse into Blasphemy.

Now observe, that I do not say this as if I were indifferent on which side he enlisted, but am only endeavouring to prove to you, from my own experience, that you will do well not to be too implicit in your Faith, with Regard to his real Opinion.-- There can be no Question that while he is

hearing the Sublimities of our Idol, he must prefer them to any other Sounds that could have been conceived: but no sooner does a Temptation to his besetting Sin (the blind Worship of Handel) fall in his Way, than he returns "to his Wallowing in the Mire."<sup>4</sup>--

Time proves all Things, & I sincerely hope (tho' I much doubt) that it may prove my Conjectures erroneous.

On Wednesday we may appoint a Day for M<sup>r</sup> Bacon, & on Saturday<sup>5</sup> I will some how or other endeavour to manage a Meeting at Elliott's-- the fact is that Saturday is one of my Paddington Days, & there is that Nuisance in Society yclept a Dancing Master who usurps my Territory till 1 o'Clock, & I have always 4 Hours work after him. The Governess is not among the most accommodating of her Sex, & often gives herself more Airs than I can very patiently tolerate.-- Although upon occasion I can be a Match for saucy people, yet as Litigation always puts me in a Fever (which is a dear Sacrifice for Victory) I would rather prevent Dispute than exert my Power of Defence.-  
- We will however talk this Matter over thoroughly on Wednesday, or rather perhaps on Thursday Morning, for I shall make Use of my Blanket Privilege in Charlotte Street on the preceding Night, unless any Circumstance in your domestic Arrangements may possibly render it inconvenient.

With regard to Lyne's Primer Grammar,<sup>6</sup> I can take it with me when I next part from you.-- Charles<sup>7</sup> is quite overjoyed in anticipating the Utility of which I know it will be to him, even now, after having waded through Lilly's.<sup>8</sup>-- The Method is beautifully simple, & I am persuaded that with your Application (which I know not a Parallell unto excepting in John Cramer &

S<sup>r</sup> Isaac Newton<sup>y</sup>) I am persuaded that all the Latin you will find occasion for, you will acquire within a few Months.

I have changed my form of salutation this Time-- Pray remember me most kindly to M<sup>rs</sup> Adieu,  
SW



1. This letter is dated 22 Nov. 1808 in another hand. This date, which may have been taken from a postmark on an address portion no longer preserved, is repeated in Eliza Wesley's edition, and its accuracy is accepted here. 22 Nov. was a Tuesday in 1808; SW's reference to 'Wednesday next' (instead of 'tomorrow' or 'tomorrow week') for his meeting with Bacon suggests that he may have written the letter in the evening of Monday 21 Nov.
2. Possibly 23 Nov., the same meeting as referred to in the previous letter.
3. Charles Wesley jun.
4. cf. 2 Pet. 2: 22: 'The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire'.
5. Possibly 26 Nov., and the meeting at Elliot's premises referred to in the previous letter.
6. Richard Lyne, An Introductory Book for the Use of Grammar Schools: The Latin Primer (1795), which had evidently supplanted Lilly's Primer (see n. 8).
7. i.e. SW's son. Like his father, he had a lively interest in the classics, and was evidently a precocious scholar: the Apr. 1808 number of MM carried a letter from him in which he queried the correctness of the quantity of a syllable used in a Latin epitaph (MM, 25 (1808), 222).
8. William Lily (?1468-1522), A Short Introduction of Grammar ... for the Bringing up of all those that Intend to Attain to the Knowledge of the Latin Tongue (1567),



the standard Latin primer in England since the sixteenth century.

9. Sir Isaac Newton (1642-1727), English scientist and mathematician.
10. The opening of SW's 'Might I in thy sight appear' (1807), a setting for solo voice and keyboard of v. 4 of his father's hymn 'Saviour, Prince of Israel's race', first published in Hymns and Sacred Psalms 1 (1749). Autographs of SW's setting are at BL, Add. MSS 14340 and 71107; for modern editions, see Geoffrey Bush and Nicholas Temperley (eds.), English Songs 1800-1860 (Musica Britannica, vol. 43) (London, 1979); Robin Langley and Geoffrey Webber (eds.), Samuel Wesley, Two Sacred Songs (Oxford, 1997). For SW's later quotation of the text, see SW to [William Hone], 18 Aug. 1825.



To William Crotch

Camden Town, 25 November 1808

ALS, 3 pp. (NRO, MS 11244, T 140A)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Crotch | Dutchess Street | Portland Place | Friday 25<sup>th</sup>  
Nov.

Pmk: 4 o'Clock 25 NO

Camden Town

Nov. 25 1808

Dear Sir

I hope that I shall always feel ready to render any Service to the cause of real good Musick, & of all those who are zealous to promote it, among whom it is known, & acknowledged that you are eminently conspicuous.<sup>1</sup> In answer to your Questions concerning the Date of Seb. Bach's Birth & Decease I cannot at this Moment give you correctly the Year of either, but it will perhaps be satisfactory News to inform you that M<sup>r</sup> Horn, Sen<sup>r</sup><sup>2</sup> (the quondam Instructor of the royal Family) & myself are preparing for the Press the whole Life of Sebastian together with an accurate List of all his Works which much resemble Handel's for their Multitude & which (not much to the Honour of England) have been as yet totally unknown here, even by their Titles.-- This Life was written in German by Forkel,<sup>3</sup> & has been translated by M<sup>r</sup> Stephenson of Queen Square, a great Enthusiast in the Cause, & a most excellent Judge of Musick.-- If you however have any immediate Occasion to be informed of the exact Dates in Question, I will apply to M<sup>r</sup> Horn, who,

upon referring to the Life will be able instantly to satisfy you concerning them.<sup>4</sup>

It is known that Bach & Handel were Contemporaries, & that the latter outlived Bach, who had a high Respect for the Talents of Handel, & made several Efforts to obtain a Conference with him, which he never could accomplish.<sup>5</sup>

The Pains you have taken to sift & analyse every Note in the Fugue to which you are justly so partial,<sup>6</sup> convince me that you are fully determined to appreciate his true Worth.-- As my own Value for him exceeds all Power of Language the less said by me perhaps the better, but this I will venture to affirm from my own Experience (which I find to be the safest Criterion of Truth) that the more he is studied, understood, & heard, the more he instructs, charms, & affects us. I find new Beauties every Time I take him up, & am always tempted to declare when I shut the book that the last Page I have perused is the most interesting.

Let me advise you as a Friend to burn your London Copy<sup>7</sup> without Delay or Ceremony: it is a Libel upon the great Author it affects to announce, & if an indifferent Judge of Musick were to be asked his Opinion of Bach from such a nefarious Specimen, I think he would be fully warranted in saying that "his Harmonies are full of grammatical Blunders, & he could not have understood the Rules of Counterpoint.["]

I understand that Wilkinson<sup>8</sup> in the Haymarket is trying to insult the Public with a similar Grub Street<sup>9</sup> Performance, but I shall write him down publicly with a Pen dipped in Gall.-- If my Life & Health are spared, you

shall see not only the Preludes & Fugues but some other odd Matters of this poor Gentleman who has remained so long incognito to our learned musical Nation, which will not disgrace him.

The Zurich Edition,<sup>10</sup> from which I made my MS. copy is the only one, on which any tolerable Dependence can be safely placed, & even in this I have found not fewer than 30 or 40 Faults, such as the Omission or Intrusion of a ♭, ♯, or ♮, which you know in Works of chromatic & sometimes enharmonic Modulation, produce very queer & crude Effects.

By the way, in the Edition above mentioned, a double ♯ is contradicted, not by a single one, but always by a ♮; this used to puzzle me devilishly for a long Time till I was up to the Rig (to use an elegant Phrase) for I played it the old orthodox white Key wherever it came, which you know made the Harmony delightful, & well confirmed what had been said by People who ought to have known better, that "Bach had no air", they might have added "nor Harmony either" in those Circumstances.

Adieu, my dear Sir, forgive my Prolixity, & be assured that I am with  
Esteem

Yours very truly

S Wesley

P. S. The reason why I think Bach wrote B ♮ in the 24<sup>th</sup> <B>ar, is because before the 6<sup>th</sup> crotchet in the same Bar, a ♯ is placed in the Zurich Edit. & this had been superfluous had the same Note been sharpened in the first Instance; besides, upon repeated Trials I think you will find that the ♯ B after the ♮ produces an agreeable Variety.<sup>11</sup>



N.B. Bach composed the 48 Preludes & Fugues expressly for the Purpose of making Proficients on the Clavier in all the 24 Keys, & he calls it (I believe) in German, the compleatly well tempered Clavier, which you know is alike applicable to Clavichord, Harpsichord, Piano Forte, or Organ but there is no Question that it is only on the Organ their sublime & beautiful Effects can be truly heard.

1. This letter is evidently in response to enquiries from Crotch concerning J. S. Bach, no doubt in connection with his work on vol. 3 of his Specimens of Various Styles of Music Referred to in a Course of Lectures read at Oxford & London, a spin-off from his Royal Institution lectures. Vols. 1 and 2 been published earlier in 1808; vol. 3 was published around Apr. 1809. It included the E major Fugue from Book II of the '48', discussed by SW in the postscript to this letter, as its sole example of J. S. Bach's music. In his Preface, Crotch wrote: 'Sebastian Bach was contemporary with Handel. His most celebrated productions are organ fugues, very difficult of execution; profoundly learned, and highly ingenious .... The student should be careful not to form a hasty judgment of his character as the riches of his learning are not scattered superficially, but lie too deeply buried to be immediately perceived. In the management of a strict fugue he stands unrivalled, and he seems to be the most scientific of all composers.' In a footnote which helps to establish the date of the preface, Crotch remarked that 'the life and several works of this great composer will shortly be published by Mr. Horn and Mr. Samuel Wesley; to the latter I am much indebted for the use of his valuable and correct manuscript copy of the above work.'
2. i.e. Charles Frederick Horn, in distinction from his son Charles Edward Horn (1786-1849).
3. Johann Nikolaus Forkel (1749-1818), German music historian, theorist, and bibliographer. His Über Johann Sebastian Bachs Leben, Kunst und Kunstwerke



(Leipzig, 1802) was the first biography of J. S. Bach, and was a key work in the rediscovery of Bach's music (Grove<sup>6</sup>).

4. SW's comment reveals that he did not at this time have a copy of Forkel's biography in his possession. SW's copy, apparently acquired later, is now in the Pendlebury Library, Cambridge, and is annotated by him as being 'the gift of my very kind & respected Friend, M<sup>r</sup> William Drummer'.
5. This information was doubtless from Forkel, who described two unsuccessful attempts that Bach made to visit Handel during Handel's visits to Halle (New Bach Reader, 460-1).
6. No doubt the E major Fugue discussed above, which Crotch in his Substance of Several Courses of Lectures on Music, Read in Oxford and the Metropolis (1831), 120, described as 'perhaps the best' of the fugues in the '48'.
7. Not identified. The London re-issues of continental editions of the '48' of which copies have survived are those of Lavenu (of the Nägeli edition) and Broderip and Wilkinson (of the Simrock edition). Crotch's 'London copy' cannot be either of these, as both are discussed later in this letter. SW's reference to Wilkinson's intention to bring out 'a similar Grub Street Performance' suggests that Crotch's copy was a printed, rather than a manuscript, one: it may possibly have been an otherwise unknown London re-issue of the Hoffmeister edition (1801).
8. Of the firm of Wilkinson & Co., which had succeeded Broderip and Wilkinson earlier in 1808, and had premises at 13 Haymarket.
9. According to Johnson's Dictionary, 'originally the name of a street near Moorfields in London, much inhabited by writers of small histories, dictionaries, and temporary poems, whence any mean production is called grubstreet'.
10. i.e. the Nägeli edition.
11. SW's postscript refers to the E major fugue from Book II of the '48', and is doubtless in response to an enquiry from Crotch about a reading in his own copy. SW is arguing for the correctness of the reading in his manuscript copy and the

Nägeli edition on which it was based, both of which have a B $\flat$  at the third crotchet in the bass part of bar 24 followed by B $\sharp$  at the sixth crotchet in the tenor. The two other early printed editions have a B $\sharp$  in the bass at this point. The reading favoured by SW is adopted by Crotch in Specimens and is also in the Wesley-Horn edition. Most modern editions, including the Neue Bach Ausgabe, prefer the other reading.

To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], 6 December 1808

ALS, 1 p. (private collection of Michael Burney-Cumming; address panel Osborn, MSS 3, Box 5, folder 319)<sup>2</sup>

Pmk: 6 DEC 1808

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay:

My dear Friend

"The Time cries Haste & Speed must answer it".<sup>3</sup> I do not mean that I need feel hurried in the Preparation of these Lectures,<sup>4</sup> but yet I am so averse from the Probability of being hard run, or of doing any Thing (that I can do at all,) in a slovenly Way, I wish to pipe all Hands without Delay, & plunge con Amore, in Medias Res.

Since I parted from you, I have thought that perhaps the following Subjects for two of the Lectures might not be inappropriate; I mean On the Power of musical Prejudice, & on the Power of Musick upon Morals.<sup>5</sup> Pray tell me whether you approve these as Theses.

But first tell me what you think will be the most taking Style of introductory Lecture?<sup>6</sup> My grand Aim is to endeavour to dispel a few of the Clouds of Partiality & Prejudice which certainly have too long overshadowed Apollo<sup>7</sup> in this Country.

In a successful Attempt at this, your very sincere & grateful Friend will avow, (& swear if it should be necessary) that he has not lived in vain.

Adieu my dear Sir, you know my Heart, I trust



SW

Dec<sup>r</sup> 6. 1808

1. Burney is identified as the addressee of this letter by his daughter's characteristic docketing.
2. The address panel also bears Burney's undated draft reply, beginning 'those that seldom go to a concert or Theatre'. The year of the postmark on the address panel was misread by Hemlow as 1802, and the date of CB's draft reply is accordingly given by her as '[post 6 Dec. 1802?]' (Joyce Hemlow, A Catalogue of the Burney Family Correspondence, 1749-1878 (New York, 1971), 45).
3. Slightly misquoted from Othello, I. iii. 276-7 ('th' affair cries haste, and speed must answer it'), and one of SW's favourite quotations.
4. As Burney had predicted, SW had been invited to lecture at the Royal Institution. His course was originally planned to begin in Feb. 1809, but was postponed first to 3 Mar. and then to 10 Mar. This was to be SW's first experience of lecturing, and he was understandably keen to ask Burney's advice on how best to proceed. (Kassler, 'Lectures'; Royal Institution of Great Britain, Minutes).
5. The text of a later lecture on musical prejudice, delivered on 13 Jan. 1830, but possibly incorporating some material dating back to SW's 1809 Royal Institution course, is at BL, Add. MS 35014, f. 53. The text of SW's lecture on Music and Morals has not been preserved.
6. The eventual title of SW's first lecture was 'On Music as an Art and as a Science' (see SW to Burney, 20 Dec. [1808]). The text of a later lecture with a similar title, dated 7 Jan. 1828, but possibly incorporating some material dating back to SW's 1809 Royal Institution course, is at BL, Add. MS 35015, f. 175.
7. i.e. J. S. Bach.



To [Benjamin Jacob]

Camden Town, 8 December 1808

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f.13)

My dear Sir,

Previously to the Receipt of your last kind Letter,<sup>1</sup> which I this Day received, I had resolved to have nothing to do with that infamous Libeller, the Satyrist:<sup>2</sup> for any Person either of decent Character or tolerable Education to contend with such a Wretch, would be about as wise as for a General to send a formal Challenge to a Scavenger.

I was informed to Day that I am to expect a Summons from a Friend to a grand Birth Day Anniversary Dinner on the 21<sup>st</sup> however as it has not yet arrived, I shall consider myself previously engaged to you & M<sup>r</sup>. Bacon,<sup>3</sup> therefore I hereby commission you to convey my Respects to him, & if 6 o'Clock should not be too late for him (as I cannot get loose from the Manor House<sup>3</sup> till ½ past 5) I will hope for the Pleasure of joining your Party.

I am glad to find that Sebastian is to be heard even "out of the mouths of Babes & Sucklings":<sup>5</sup> depend on it, there is nothing more necessary to render his divine Strains the chief Delight & Solace of all truly harmonized Souls, but an assiduous Cultivation of them.--<sup>6</sup> He was certainly dropped down among us from Heaven.

I am concerned to find that your Friend ᾠωνιζόμενος<sup>7</sup> is not likely to domesticate among us, but yet am rejoiced to find there are Hopes of at least a transient Visit.-- He certainly is a very superior man, & as such men are

scarce, I am indeed idolatrously covetous of such Society. I am happy in being able to declare that I feel myself supported by the Friendship (the best human Prop) of a little Phalanx of such Characters as I do think I may venture to say were "made only a little lower than the Angels,"<sup>8</sup> & what I most fear is that the Kindness I experience in this World will render me too fond of it, & make me mistake Earth for Heaven.

I am much flattered by the good Opinion which your venerable Friend is pleased to entertain of me, although I have afforded him no practical Proof of deserving it, unless in the exercise of my Fingers.-- I assure you that I have not felt so much affected by any Harangue from the Pulpit for many years past as I was on Sunday by the honest unstudied natural Discourse M<sup>r</sup> Hill<sup>9</sup> gave us: I prefer such a Sermon to all the polished rhetorical Essays in the world, which (most falsely) are called Preaching-- moralising is the utmost extent of the Term suitable to such cold, dry, lifeless Compositions, & I had rather hear two Pages of John Bunyan's Pilgrim<sup>10</sup> than Folios of such uninteresting Trash.

N.B. I had rather be your joint Organist than your Successor, altho' I am very grateful to M<sup>r</sup> Hill for his thinking me worthy the latter Post: I trust that (if it be best for us) we may live some Years yet to be mutually serviceable to the Cause of Music, of Friendship, & of Truth; which I am old fashioned enough to think ought never to be separated, & in the love of the Truth believe me

My dear Sir

Yours faithfully

S. W.

M<sup>rs</sup> W. unites with us all in kindest Regards.

Camden Town | Thursday 8 Dec<sup>r</sup> 1808.

1. Not preserved.
2. The Satirist, or Monthly Meteor, a monthly periodical published between Oct. 1807 and June 1814, edited first by George Manners and later by William Jerdan. It had attacked the Surrey Institution in Sept. 1808 (pp. 136-9), but the immediate cause of SW's remark was no doubt the heavy-handed 'Hints to Lecturers' in the Dec. number (pp. 508-13), which Jacob may have drawn to SW's attention in his letter (Sullivan, TRA, 383-6; The Satirist, 3 (1808), 136-9, 508-13).
3. Doubtless for a sitting for his portrait.
4. The Manor House at Paddington Green, where the school at which SW taught was located: see SW to Bridgetower, 23 Feb. 1797, n. 4. The meeting was presumably at Bacon's nearby house or premises (see SW to Bacon, 28 Dec. [1808], n. 2), as there would have been insufficient time for SW to travel from Paddington to Blackfriars.
5. Ps. 8: 2.
6. These two sentences are quoted by Jacob in his letter to Bacon of 12 Dec. (see SW to Jacob, [?17 Nov. 1808], n. 11).
7. 'Struggler': the nom-de-plume of a prominent convert of Rowland Hill, not now identifiable. The story of his conversion was evidently well known at the time. For a letter from him to Hill, see Edward Sidney, The Life of the Rev Rowland Hill, A.M. (London, 1833), 217.
8. Ps. 8: 5.
9. The Revd Rowland Hill (1744-1833), evangelistic preacher and minister of Surrey Chapel. The sixth son of Sir Rowland Hill, first Baronet, he was educated at



Shrewsbury and Eton, and entered St John's College, Cambridge in 1764, graduating BA in 1769. He began his preaching career while at Cambridge; after graduation he sought ordination, but was repeatedly refused on account of his irregular and controversial preaching. He was eventually ordained in 1773 and was subsequently appointed to the curacy of Kingston, Somerset. He remained a controversial figure, and on leaving Somerset was refused a licence by the Bishop of Carlisle. He continued to preach 'wherever he could find an audience, in churches, chapels, tabernacles, and the open air, often immense congregations, and sometimes amid great interruption and violence' (DNB). He and his brother Sir Richard Hill, Bt, built Surrey Chapel in 1782 and he became its minister, where his 'earnest, eloquent, eccentric preaching' attracted large congregations. He was also active in the Religious Tract Society, the British and Foreign Bible Society, and the London Missionary Society, and was an enthusiastic advocate of vaccination, carrying out thousands of vaccinations in person (DNB; Edward Sidney, The Life of the Rev Rowland Hill, A.M. (London, 1833). For Surrey Chapel, see SW to Jacob, 4 Sept. 1809, n. 13).

10. The Pilgrim's Progress (1678-84) by John Bunyan (1628-88).



To [Charles Burney]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 20 December [1808]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1193)

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay:

Editor's note: Burney's draft reply, dated 28 December 1808, is on the same sheet.

My dear Friend

I am eternally pestering you, but you bear my Baiting so patiently, that like the generous Majority of the World, I avail myself of your Non-Resistance, & resolve to put your Philosophy to the extreme Test.

Two more Questions previous to breaking the Ice (which by the Way is no easy Thing to do at present) & I will promise to be quiet until I come to rehearse my first Lecture to you at the College.

Although I have been used to play in Public from a Child, & therefore never feel embarrassed if my Tools are good, yet to speak in Public is another Affair, & of Course Want of early Habit must naturally create a Diffidence & Uncertainty of Success. Quaere therefore, whether it would not be advisable for me to hatch a little prefatory Apology, previous to the absolute Business of the Lecture, in Order to deprecate that Sort of Censure which might be excited by any Failure in the Manner of Delivery?

The second Point is, whether you think that there seems any real Necessity of adducing practical Examples in the first Discourse, the Subject of which (by your Approbation) will be on Music considered as an Art & as

a Science.-- This being so broad a Question, & where general Observations only appear to me requisite, that I see not well a fair Opportunity of any manual Operations, without using some Force towards the Argument, & Purport of the Disquisition.<sup>3</sup>

Favour me with your early Thoughts on these Topicks my dear Friend  
SW

Camden Town 20 Dec<sup>r</sup>

1. Burney's identity as the recipient of this letter is given by his draft reply on the same sheet (see n. 2).
2. SW's request for advice on how to proceed with his forthcoming course of lectures at the Royal Institution of Great Britain establishes the year as 1808. Burney's draft reply, dated 20 Dec. with '1808' added in another hand, is on the same sheet; his references to the recent death of his eldest son Richard Thomas and the serious illness of his daughter Esther confirm this dating.
3. Burney replied: 'With respect to your two queries, pauca verba will suffice. I approve entirely a prefatory apology and deprecation of severity to a lecturer unpracticed in public speaking with anything but his Fingers. And I am as clearly of opinion that you sh<sup>d</sup> keep back your performance till it is necessary to illustrate some remarkably pleasing style of composition w<sup>ch</sup> you have been describing.'

To Charles Wesley Junior      Camden Town, [ante 23 December 1808]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (BL, Add. MS 35012, f. 119)

Dear Charles,

Perhaps you or some of your friends will like to hear my Te Deum, Jubilate, and Litany, at St. Paul's, next Sunday, Christmas Day.<sup>2</sup> They always keep this service of mine for high days and holidays; therefore there is hardly any other opportunity of hearing it but upon the four great festivals.<sup>3</sup> The prayers begin at a quarter before ten in the morning.

I am sorry you cannot come to Mr. Smith's<sup>4</sup> on Saturday next, more particularly because I shall have no other day for this month to come vacant. The people at Bath are besieging me perpetually to come down without delay, and Dr. Harrington, Rauzzini, and the rest of the musickers, are already making great preparations.<sup>5</sup> My fingers are so cold I can scarcely hold my pen.

Yours truly

SW

Love to my mother

1. The year is given by Christmas Day falling on a Sunday and by SW's reference to his settings of the Te Deum, Jubilate, and Litany (see n. 2).
2. For SW's setting of the Litany, composed in 1806, see SW to Charles Wesley jun., 15 Jan. 1807, n. 4. The autograph of the Te Deum and Jubilate (BL, Add. MS 14342) are dated 1808.

3. i.e. Christmas Day, Easter Day, Ascension Day, and Whitsunday.
4. Not certainly identified.
5. SW visited Bath in Jan. 1809, returning on 27 Feb.



To John Bacon

Randalls, near Leatherhead,<sup>1</sup> 28 December [1808]

ALS, 1 p. (Emory, Box 6)

Addressed: To | -- Bacon Esq<sup>r</sup> | Paddington Green<sup>2</sup> | near | The Church

Pmk: DE 29 1808

Randalls

Near Leatherhead

Dec<sup>r</sup> 28<sup>th</sup>

Dear Sir

You must forgive my Non-Attendance To-morrow, by Reason of an Embargo laid upon me by one Richard Brinsley Sheridan,<sup>3</sup> of whom you may possibly of heard, & who detains me here vi et armis<sup>4</sup> a close Prisoner in his strongly fortified Castle.-- I have already projected a Plan for breaking Gaol but whether it will not prove abortive in the Execution To-morrow must decide.-- The Instant I shall have been so fortunate as to arrive once more at the great City, I will give you immediate Intelligence, mean while believe me

Dear Sir

Yours very truly

S Wesley

1. The house of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (see n. 3).

2. This was probably the address of Bacon's studio and workshop. Jacob's letter to

Bacon, 12 Dec. 1808 was addressed to Newman Street, which according to the Memoir of John Bacon in the Jan. 1815 number of EM was the house in which he was born, and in which he was at that time living.

3. The playwright and MP Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816), proprietor and manager of Drury Lane theatre. This is the only reference to him in the correspondence and it is not known how SW came to be staying with him. SW may have known him through his connections with William Linley, the brother of Sheridan's first wife Elizabeth (DNB; Fintan O'Toole, A Traitor's Kiss: The Life of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (London, 1997); Linda Kelly, Richard Brinsley Sheridan: A Life (London, 1997).
4. 'By force of arms'.

To John Bacon

Camden Town, 1 January 1809

AN, third person, 1p. (Emory, Box 6)

Addressed: To | -- Bacon Esq<sup>re</sup> | Paddington Green | near | The Church

Pmk: 2 JA 1809

M<sup>r</sup> S. Wesley presents his Respects to M<sup>r</sup> Bacon, proposing to have the  
Pleasure of attending him next Tuesday<sup>1</sup> as near One o'Clock as he possibly  
can.

Camden Town | Sunday Jan<sup>y</sup> 1. 1809

1. 3 Jan.

To William Savage<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 28 February [1809]<sup>2</sup>

AL, third person, 1 p. (Royal Institution of Great Britain)

Arlington Street

Camden Town Feb 28<sup>th</sup>

M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Wesley begs Leave to inform M<sup>r</sup> Savage that he arrived in Town last Night, from Bath, where he was unavoidably detained some Weeks longer than he at first expected to be.<sup>3</sup>-- He is at present considerably indisposed with a bad Cold, attended with swelled Glands of the Throat, which have rendered him very hoarse, & unable to speak out without much Inconvenience.-- On this Account he would wish Permission to fix Wednesday next<sup>4</sup> for reading the Lecture, by which Time he hopes entirely to have recovered, and also would be glad to know whether any personal Attendance upon any one of the Managers is customary or expected previous to the Commencement of the Series.

M<sup>r</sup> S. may be assured that Nothing short of Illness should have occasioned this Procrastination, & requests him to communicate this Observation to the Managers.

1. William Savage (1770-1843), printer and engraver, was born in Howden in the East Riding of Yorkshire, and had in 1790 set up in business as a printer and bookseller in partnership with his brother James. In 1797 he moved to London, and around 1799 was appointed printer to the newly founded Royal Institution of Great Britain,



where he also became assistant secretary to the board of managers, secretary to the library committee, secretary to the chemistry committee, and superintendent of the printing office. He was also in business on his own account from around 1803, and in 1807 printed Forster's British Gallery of Engravings, the high quality of which established his fame. His Dictionary of the Art of Printing appeared in 1840-1 (DNB).

2. The year is given by SW's references to his recent visit to Bath and to his forthcoming course of lectures at the Royal Institution.
3. SW had been enthusiastically received and much in demand in Bath. In a letter to Sarah of 28 Jan. (Wesley College, Bristol), he wrote: 'I continue here in very good Health and Condition, and the Doubt only is when I shall be suffered to come away, for really the Bath People are most extremely kind & polite .... I have very hard work to fight off the Invitations by which I am beset from Morning till Night'.
4. 8 Mar., instead of Friday 3 Mar. as originally planned. For reasons given in the next letter, SW eventually gave the lecture on 10 Mar.

To Benjamin Jacob

Camden Town, 2 March 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 15)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs. | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road

Pmk: 2 MR 1809

Camden Town.

March 2. 1809.

My dear Sir,

Here I am once more, and shall rejoice in the first Opportunity afforded me of an Interview after so long an Interval of Separation. You will I know give me full Credit for not having intentionally neglected writing to you: believe me I have been a greater Slave during the Holidays than I am when in the Mill-Horse Road of A B C Drudgery:<sup>1</sup> hurried & dragged about from Pillar to Post, and at Times when I most wanted & needed Retirement & Quiet for preparing my first Lecture, which although not designed for a profound or very luminous Composition (which I assure you bonâ Fide, that it will not be) yet some previous Meditation was needful, were it only to make a String of Trifles of the same Tissue; for nothing you know can be less tolerable than the mere outward & visible Sign of a Discourse without any of the inward & spiritual Grace that ought to attend it.

As Matters have turned out I am all in good Time: My first Lecture, such as it is, has been in Readiness for some Days, & I think I have no very

contemptible Skeletons prepared for a second & third, which will make up half the course: I also think that I have at least a good Subject for a 4<sup>th</sup> if not a 5<sup>th</sup>, & if the miracles of Sebastian will not furnish me Ammunition for a 6<sup>th</sup>, I think I must have rather changed my Faith in him.-- By the Way, I have had the Loan of many Exercises<sup>2</sup> of his, for the Harpsichord, which are every whit as stupendous as the Preludes & Fugues, & demonstrate him (what every fresh Scrap of his I meet does) the very Quintessence of all musical Excellence. It's droll enough that amongst these is inserted a beautiful Air,<sup>3</sup> which is published along with a Sett of Emanuel Bach's Lessons,<sup>4</sup> & which I saw at Bath: I am very much inclined to think that this Son, like many others, made but little Scruple of robbing his Father; and that he was not concerned for his Honor seems plain enough by the vile & most diabolical Copy that he gave Doctor Burney as a Present,<sup>4</sup> & from which the latter was wise enough to judge of & damn his works (as he thought): but the Phoenix must always revive.

I assure you I have long wished to be again among my London Friends, and am not a little revived by feeling myself in the old Saddle again, hard as I must travel;-- for new Friends, however kind & sincere they may eventually prove, have not the mellow effect upon the Mind (if I may so say) as older ones, & it takes some Time to study Peoples' Habits & Inclinations before we can be in that perfectly pleasant Familiarity in their Conversation which to me is the most delicious Point in Society.-- I trust that my good Friend & generous Hostess, whose name I need not mention, is in good Health; whom I assure you I mean to visit before long, whether you are in the Way or not, so now you have legal Notice, & may take your Measures



accordingly.

As my Lecture is not to be read before next Friday week<sup>6</sup> (by the Request of some of the Governors who cannot attend on the Wednesday before, as I had appointed, & who do me the Honor to wish to be present) I shall be able, by Hook or by Crook to see you, & have a Pennyworth of Chat upon the Fun, some Day or other between now & then.-- I am given to imagine that the Squad (you know whom I mean) had rather that their old Friend the Devil were Lecturer than I.--

Yours ever truly

S. Wesley.

Remember me to Rowley & all the young Powlies.<sup>7</sup>

1. This phrase is very reminiscent of Burney: cf. Lonsdale, 296, citing Burney to Twining, 3 Nov. 1786: 'the constant drudgery of a musical ABCdarian'.
2. From SW's subsequent remarks (see n. 3), evidently Bach's Clavierübung I (the six Partitas, BWV 825-30), published by Hoffmeister in 1801-2 as Exercices pour le clavecin.
3. Either the Aria in Partita IV, BWV 828, or in Partita VI, BWV 830. Neither has been found in published editions of C. P. E. Bach's music.
4. Presumably his Six Progressive Lessons for the Harpsichord or piano forte in different keys (London, c. 1740), an English edition of the 18 Probestücke in 6 Sonaten, (Wq. 63; H. 70-75).
5. See SW to Jacob, 17 Sept. 1808.
6. 10 Mar.
7. Presumably a reference to Jacob's children (one of whom may have been called Rowland, after Rowland Hill) and to the refrain of the popular song 'A frog he



would a-wooing go'. At his concert at Birmingham later in the year SW played a 'fantazia' concluding with this song: see SW to Jacob, 25 Sept. 1809.

To Benjamin Jacob

Camden Town, 3 March 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 17)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs. | Charlotte Street | Black Friars Road

Pmk: 4 MR 1809

Camden Town.

March 3. 1809

My dear Sir

I have just received your very prompt Answer to mine,<sup>1</sup> & regret much that I am unable to be with you either To-Morrow<sup>2</sup> or Sunday,<sup>3</sup> but I think that if Wednesday next<sup>4</sup> would suit, I could manage to get to you by 5 o'Clock, tho' I fear not sooner. I wish as speedy a Line as you can give me on the Subject.

To your Query respecting Sebastian, I at once reply in the Affirmative: his Works would furnish Materials for 600 as easily as for 6 Lectures, & were all or half which he has written to be critically analyzed & duly animadverted upon, I doubt much whether the longest Life would not prove too short for the Task.--

But we must for the present confine & repress our Inclination to publish too hastily our Creed in the transcendant Merits of this marvellous Man: it will all go on well by slow Degrees, and the Instance you give of Stevens's beginning to revoke his Blasphemies, may be considered as a very

strong & extraordinary Proof of it.--

I am glad you like Linley: he is a great Favourite of mine, & indeed I should be peculiarly ungrateful were I not attached to him, as I have every reason to think his Regard very sincere-- He is a man of much musical Talent, as I dare say you soon discovered.

I have not forgotten having left your Book of Bach's Lutheran Hymns<sup>5</sup> at John Cramer's House: I will get them back at the first Opportunity: I was reminded particularly of the Circumstance two Days ago, when I found a Trio or two among the Exercises which I immediately remembered having played with you from your own Book.

I am about to put the 1<sup>st</sup> Trio of the Six lent me by Horn,<sup>6</sup> into the Engraver's hands almost immediately-- the best Way will be unquestionably to print them singly.

Remember me very cordially to M<sup>r</sup> J. and all the young Fry-- all here join in kind Respects with

Dear Sir

Yours ever sincerely

S Wesley

1. Not preserved.

2. 4 Mar.

3. 5 Mar.

4. 8 Mar.

5. Presumably Joh. Seb. Bachs vierstimmige Choralgesänge, ed. J. P. Kirnberger and

C. P. E. Bach, 4 vols. (Leipzig, 1784-7).

6. The Trio in E flat, BWV 525, the first of the six organ Trio Sonatas, BWV 525-30.  
The edition by SW and Horn appeared as single numbers at intervals in 1809; in his Reminiscences SW stated that it was prepared from a manuscript copy supplied by Horn.



To [William Savage]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 16 March [1809]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (Royal Institution of Great Britain)

Dear Sir

Having heard nothing from you to the contrary, I conclude that the Day on which I appointed to read, which was next Wednesday,<sup>3</sup> is agreed to, & will hold myself in readiness accordingly.-- The Subject of the Lecture will principally relate to the Improvement of the Chromatic Scale, evinced in the Construction & Effects of the Patent Organ, designed by Will<sup>m</sup> Hawkes Esq<sup>re</sup> and built by M<sup>r</sup> Elliot.<sup>4</sup>

Perhaps this will serve as a sufficient Syllabus

I remain

Dear Sir

Yours truly

S. Wesley

Thursday 16 March

1. The preservation of this letter in the correspondence files of the Royal Institution leaves no doubt that it was written to someone there. In the light of SW's letter to him of 28 Feb., William Savage is the most probable recipient.
2. 16 Mar. falling on a Wednesday and SW's reference to his forthcoming lecture establish the year of this letter.
3. 22 Mar.

4. This lecture caused considerable controversy. SW used it to demonstrate the Hawkes-Elliot patent organ, which sought to overcome the problems of intonation encountered on conventionally tuned instruments in some keys by the provision of additional pitches controlled by a pedal. SW's action in promoting a commercial product and his alleged disingenuousness in omitting to point out some of the new system's imperfections were the subject of repeated attacks in NMMR from May 1809 on. The text of a later and considerably revised version of this lecture is at BL, Add. MS 35014, ff. 2-16. For a more extended discussion of the controversy, see Philip Olleson, 'The Organ-builder and the Organist: Thomas Elliot and Samuel Wesley', JBIOS, 20 (1996), 116-25.

To George Polgreen Bridgetower

Camden Town, 25 March [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (Emory, Box 6)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower | John Street | 3. | Pall Mall | Saturday  
Afternoon

Pmk: 27 MR 1809

Camden Town

25<sup>th</sup> of March

Dear Sir

I need not multiply Words (I trust) to assure you that I am much disappointed by the Necessity of deferring the Pleasure of your Visit on Monday next:<sup>2</sup> when I made the Engagement, it did not occur to my Remembrance that I am obliged to dine with the Somerset House Lodge on Account of adding my Vote to the Ballot for a most deserving Acquisition to the Society.-- If Friday next,<sup>3</sup> commonly called Good Friday be a Day on which you have no Scruples concerning the Lawfulness of a Major or Minor Key, I shall be quite chez moi & most happy to receive you at 4 o'Clock to fast with me.-- You know that an Englishman's Religion in Lent consists in eating salt Fish instead of fresh, and I find no particular Mortification in conforming to this pious Custom upon solemn Occasions.

Yours ever truly

S Wesley

1. The year is given by the postmark.
2. 27 Mar.
3. 31 Mar.



**To George Polgreen Bridgetower**

**Camden Town, 14 April [1809]<sup>1</sup>**

**AL, third person, 1 p. (Rylands, DDWF 15/14)**

**Addressed: M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower | John Street | Pall Mall**

**Pmk: AP 15 1809**

**S Wesley is compelled to inform M<sup>r</sup> Bridgetower that M<sup>r</sup> Novello<sup>2</sup> has put off the Party at the Portuguese Chapel<sup>3</sup> for to morrow, all the Priests being engaged in absolving their Penitents from the Crime of slandering the Duke of York's Reputation.<sup>4</sup>**

**Friday 14<sup>th</sup> April | Camden Town**

- 1. The year is given by the postmark.**
- 2. Vincent Novello (1781-1861), organist, choirmaster, composer, and publisher, later to become SW's closest professional associate, and the recipient of over 170 letters from him between May 1811 and Dec. 1825. As a boy he had been a chorister at the Sardinian Embassy chapel, where he also received lessons from Samuel Webbe I. He was appointed organist of the Portuguese Embassy chapel at the age of sixteen in 1797 or 1798, and SW had probably known him from this time, if not earlier.**
- 3. The chapel of the Portuguese Embassy, in South Street, off South Audley Street, Mayfair, where Novello was organist. It was a leading centre for Roman Catholic worship, with a long and distinguished musical tradition. The nature of the 'party' has not been discovered; it was perhaps a recital, conceivably the 'Portugueze fun' mentioned in SW to Jacob, [?26 Apr. 1809].**
- 4. Frederick Augustus, Duke of York (1763-1827), the second son of George III and Queen Charlotte and younger brother to the future George IV, had formed an ill-**

advised liaison with Mary Anne Clarke, described by DNB as 'a handsome adventuress'. She exploited her relationship with the Duke, who was Commander-in-Chief of the Army, by 'promising promotion to officers, who paid her for her recommendations'. The matter was raised in the Commons on 27 Jan. 1809 and referred to a select committee. The Duke of York resigned his position as Commander-in-Chief on 28 Mar. 1809, and the allegations of corrupt practices were in time dropped (The Times).

To George Smith

Camden Town, 23 April [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (BL, Add. MS 31764, f. 20)

Addressed:: To | George Smith Esq<sup>r</sup> | Feversham | Kent | 24<sup>th</sup> of April

Camden Town

April 23<sup>d</sup>

Sir,

I feel it my Duty to apprize you of a very extraordinary Derangement that has taken Place at Oxford House Marylebone.-- The Mesdames Barnes, after my Services at their School for 25 Years, have at length thought proper to engage another Master,<sup>2</sup> under the Pretence of my allowing the Pupils too small a Portion of Time for each Lesson, to advance them in a musical Progress.

It is rather an extraordinary Circumstance that no such Remonstrance has ever been made at four other Schools,<sup>3</sup> two of which I now continue to attend, and the other two I quitted, one because the Number was not of sufficient Consideration to render it worth the Trouble, and the other on Account of the Governess's quitting the Concern & retiring altogether from Business.--

I received some Weeks ago, an exceedingly flippant & ungenteel Letter from M<sup>rs</sup> B. in which she observed that "M<sup>r</sup> Smith would be extremely angry, when he should know that his Daughter had been so much neglected by me."--

this neglect (as she falsely termed it) was merely my Continuance at Bath, for a Fortnight longer than I had originally designed to do, during which Time M<sup>rs</sup> B. had not the slightest Pretext of Reason to complain, since M<sup>r</sup> Cooke,<sup>4</sup> a most able Master & excellent Musician constantly attended the School in my Absence: but I did not commission him to instruct Miss Smith, as I did not consider myself in Honour authorized to depute a private Master<sup>5</sup> in that Instance without having previously consulted your Inclination upon the Subject: but I fully resolved at my Return to supply all the Deficiency which might possibly have been the Consequence of my Detainer, & have done this fully, by giving Miss Smith an Hour's Lesson in several Instances, as will appear when the List of her Lessons shall be transmitted.-- Indeed I have always felt so warmly interested for her Improvement that I am conscious of having at all Times exerted every Effort which I conceived could be efficacious to promote it; and the immediate Occasion of my troubling you with this Letter is to enquire whether it is your Wish that she should continue my Pupil, or whether she is to be turned over to whatever Master whom the Governesses (who know not a Note of music) shall think proper in their weighty Judgement to appoint in my Stead.--

I have the Pleasure to acquaint you that your Daughter is at every Lesson gaining much ground, especially in reading Music she has not seen before: & this Facility gives very cordial Delight & Satisfaction to

Sir,

Your obliged & obedient Servant

S Wesley



1. SW's references to his recent absence in Bath and his dismissal from the Barnes's school establish the year of this letter.
2. SW's replacement was William Horsley (1774-1858). SW had in fact been dismissed over a month earlier: Horsley's diary entry for 21 Mar. had noted: 'Wesley finally rejected by Mrs Barnes. School offered to me at Midsummer'(Oxford, Bodleian Library, Horsley Papers (MS Eng e. 2134)).
3. The two schools at which SW was teaching at this time were at Turnham Green and Paddington; the identity of the other two is not known.
4. Probably Matthew Cooke (1760/1-1829), organist of St George's, Bloomsbury, and former teacher of Jacob.
5. Cooke had evidently been teaching SW's 'school' pupils in his absence, but not his 'private' pupils. For the distinction between the two, see SW to Smith, 14 Aug. 1808, n. 5.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, [26 April 1809?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 19)

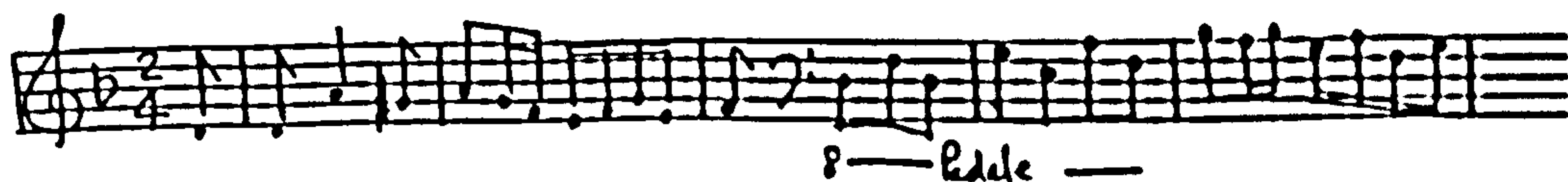
My dear Sir

I am a great Fool-- I forgot whether I desired you to bring with you To-morrow my two Books of Bach.<sup>3</sup>-- Whether I did or not, let me now request you to bear it in mind.-- I do not forget that your Choral Vorspiele<sup>4</sup> is (or ought to be) in Cramer's Possession; but rather than you should be bilked out of it, you should have my Copy<sup>5</sup> to all Perpetuity, if there were never another in the varsel World.--

I hope & expect an happy Day To-morrow; but "who knoweth what a day may bring forth"?<sup>6</sup>-- How every Hour proves that "in the Midst of Life we are in Death"!<sup>7</sup>-- but it is well we are assured of whom we may seek for Succour.

Sermonizing<sup>8</sup> having become now a Part of my Profession, I will make no Apology for what some of the fine Bloods & Bucks would call Canting: but you & I know better Things:-- I have much to say to you, but I fear that there will be but little Time to-Morrow to talk, save and except with our Fingers.--

I will bring To-morrow the Vorspiele, if it be only to electrify my Brother with



The Portugeze Fun<sup>10</sup> is not settled yet: we will give all the stiff  
Handelians & Wolfians<sup>11</sup> a Death Wound to their Prejudice & their Impudence  
or there is no Truth in

SW

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. This date is added in pencil on the manuscript in another hand and is repeated in Eliza Wesley's published edition. It is possible that it was taken from a postmark or a date on an address panel which is no longer extant.
3. Not identified.
4. J. S. Bachs Choral Vorspiele für die Orgel mit einem und zwey Klavieren und Pedal, 4 vols. (Breitkopf, 1806).
5. SW's copy of vols. 1 and 2 of the Choral Vorspiele, inscribed as having been given to him by Joseph Gwilt in 1809, is now at the RCM.
6. cf. Prov. 27: 1: 'Boast not thyself of to morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth'.
7. BCP, Burial Service.
8. i.e. lecturing.
9. The opening of Bach's chorale prelude 'Wir gläuben all an einen Gott', BWV 680, contained in vol. 1 of the Choral Vorspiele. SW's quotation of the opening is incorrect: the first two notes ought to be joined with a tie. The passage is correctly given in the Choral Vorspiele.
10. Not identified: perhaps a projected recital at the chapel, and possibly the 'party' discussed in SW to Bridgetower, 14 Apr. [1809].
11. Possibly the supporters of the German music teacher and composer Georg Friedrich Wolf (1761-1814); but the point of the reference is not clear.

**To [George Smith]<sup>1</sup>**

**Camden Town, 26 April [1809]<sup>2</sup>**

**ANS, 1 p. (Emory, Box 8)**

**Sir**

**Frankness on one Side demands it on the other: and as you are of Opinion that your Daughter is more likely to improve with M<sup>r</sup> Cramer than with myself, I recommend to you the immediate Engagement of him, and shall directly apprize him of your Intention; remaining,**

**Sir,**

**Your very obedient Servant**

**S Wesley**

**Camden Town. | Wednesday 26 April.**

- 1. The content of this letter establishes Smith as the recipient.**
- 2. The year is given by 26 Apr. falling on a Wednesday and SW's Camden Town address.**



To George Smith

Camden Town, 9 May [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (BL, Add. MS 31764, f. 22)

Addressed: To | George Smith Esq<sup>r</sup> | Feversham | Kent | May 9<sup>th</sup>

Camden Town

Tuesday May 9<sup>th</sup>

Sir

As I am not conscious of having "acted any Part" either towards yourself or M<sup>r</sup> Barnes that can justly be considered as incorrect, I am not only willing, but desirous to enter into the most unequivocal Explanation of my Conduct relative to the Misunderstanding at Oxford House.

During my Stay in the West<sup>2</sup> I engaged a professional Man of real Worth & Talents (who is now my Assistant at another School) to attend the Pupils regularly until my Return, & I regret that I did not apply to you for Information whether it would have been agreeable to you that Miss Smith should also take her separate Lessons of him; if I had, it is probable that as you appeared at that Time to have a thorough Confidence in my Judgement & Opinion, you would have acceded to the Proposal, & in that Case, all these unpleasant Consequences would have been evited.— It is a most unaccountable Affair to me, that M<sup>r</sup> Barnes, who upon my Arrival in Town, expressed the highest Approbation of M<sup>r</sup> Cooke's Attention & Punctuality, & who, it was to be expected, would have rather felt an Increase than a Diminution of

favourable Sentiments towards the Person who recommended him, should have suddenly, & without any Kind of reasonable Pretext that I can assign, inform[ed] me that it was their Intention to engage another Master after the Midsummer Holidays;<sup>3</sup> and whether this was a becoming Behaviour towards one who had been their constant Servant for nearly 30 Years,<sup>4</sup> I leave to all dispassionate & unprejudiced Persons to judge.

With Regard to the individual Case of your Daughter, it appears to me, that if you were as well satisfied with her Progress now (which has been certainly a very rapid one) as you formerly seemed to be, I cannot guess why you should have wished to remove her into other Hands: you certainly have an unquestionable Right to engage as many Masters as may suit your Inclination, & to change them as often: but after having so strongly expressed your complete Approbation of my Instructions, & seemed so fully to rely upon my Advice relative to the Choice of her Music, & Manner of Study &c I own I could not but consider your subsequent Intention as inconsistent with that Reliance on my Candour which you formerly professed.

I have no Inclination to disguise to You that I have always felt considerable Zeal to render your Daughter an excellent Player, & have used my utmost Efforts towards the Accomplishment of it.-- This being the Truth, I did always suppose it your Intention that I should have the full Credit due to my Exertions in her Favour, & that she should be considered exclusively my Pupil.-- The Friendship which subsists between me and M<sup>r</sup> Cramer will at all Times prevent the Possibility of his suspecting me of an Atom of Jealousy as to the Eminence of his Abilities, and I do not retract a Word of

my Opinion given you that I consider him as 'the Prince of Piano-Forte Players,' or I <may> add the Emperor, for the Word Prince <has> deservedly fallen into some Disrepute.<sup>5</sup>-- At the same Time, I know (& he knows) that I understand the Principles of Piano Forte playing as well as himself, & after having taught it for 30 Years, with the compleat Knowledge of a very superior Instrument, it would reflect Disgrace on me if I did not.--

I have only to add, that if you should choose Miss Smith to go on with me, I would make no Objection whatever to attend her, whatever Master M<sup>r</sup> Barnes may employ to instruct the other Pupils: the Favour of an early Answer on this Question will oblige,

Sir

Yours very obediently

S Wesley

1. The year is given by 9 May falling on a Tuesday and SW's Camden Town address.
2. i.e. at Bath.
3. Horsley noted in his diary that he started teaching at Oxford House on 10 Aug.
4. In his letter to Smith of 24 Apr., SW had stated that he had taught at the Barnes's school for twenty-five years.
5. A reference to George, Prince of Wales, who in 1810 became Prince Regent and in 1820 George IV, and whose conduct was a byword for depravity.



To William Crotch

[Camden Town], 15 May [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (RCM, MS 3073)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Crotch | Dutchess Street | Portland Place | N. 2

Dear Sir

I am much obliged by your Attention concerning Bach.-- The Choral Vorspiele I had obtained some Months ago, & am truly glad to find that you have gotten hold of it, as I am sure it must afford you great Delight. If you have not had Time as yet to examine it throughout, I particularly recommend to your Notice the Numbers 8 (page 18). 10 (26) 15 (p.5 2<sup>d</sup> Book) 18. 19. 20.<sup>2</sup>

You are (I presume) aware that the German Titles to the several Pieces, are the first Words of certain Lutheran Hymns to which Sebastian added all that florid Counterpoint in Fugue & Canon which you meet with, & which I need not tell you produces on the Organ the most magnificent Effect.-  
-

I am again unlucky, for I fear I cannot have returned from Turnham Green<sup>3</sup> To-Morrow in Time for your Lecture,<sup>4</sup> mais je ferai mon possible.<sup>5</sup>

Adieu & believe me,

most truly Yours

S Wesley

Monday Morning | 15<sup>th</sup> of May



1. The year is given by 15 May falling on a Monday and Crotch's address.
2. 'Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr', BWV 676; 'Wir gläuben all' an einen Gott', BWV 680; 'Wer nur den lieben Gott lässt walten', BWV 691; 'Liebster Jesu, wir sind hier', BWV 706, 633, and 634; 'Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr', BWV 711; and 'Allein Gott in der Höh sei Ehr', BWV 664.
3. A hamlet in the north of the parish of Chiswick, west of London, where one of SW's schools was situated.
4. 16 May: one of a course of lectures on 'The Rise and Improvement of Scientific Music' that Crotch was currently giving on Tuesday and Friday afternoons at the Hanover Square Rooms (GM, 1809<sup>1</sup>, 252; The Times, 30 Mar., 8 Apr. 1809).
5. 'I will do what I can'.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], [c. 15 May 1809]<sup>2</sup>

AL, 4 pp. (Edinburgh) Damaged.

Editor's note: This letter consists of a single sheet, folded in half so as to form four pages. The bottom of the sheet has been irregularly torn away so that the last few lines of each page are lacking in their entirety and parts of four lines immediately above the tear are also missing. The missing text has been conjecturally restored where possible.

Dear Sir

I am told (how truly I cannot answer) that my Antagonist & your Correspondent<sup>3</sup> is M<sup>r</sup> Purkis the blind Organist:<sup>4</sup> if this be so, your having called him as blind as a Bat will be a little unlucky; & as being capable of a personal Construction, which however he deserves for fighting in the Dark: had he given us his real Name, we might have managed the Contest in a more secure Manner.-- As it is, Facts confute him, & these are the most powerful of all Weapons.-- I should be glad to be thoroughly certain that Purkis is the Man: I know however that lately, when he was told that I defended the new Tempera<ment he> said "Does he? -- I w<ish I could> hear him, I w<ould wager a pound> or two that < ... >

[p. 2] You find that my Lecture<sup>5</sup> hangs an A—c,<sup>6</sup> as the genteel saying is.-- They pretend that they did not get my Heads of it soon enough for the Cards to be distributed.-- It happens well, for all the Fools of Fashion, which you know constitute a large Majority of my Audience, are all running

helter-skelter, pell-mell to the Epsom Races,<sup>7</sup> & leaving the Lecture Room as empty as their own Heads. Only two Lectures are < ... > this Week, the one by < ... , the o>ther by Davy,<sup>8</sup> but < ... > be my last, & the < ... > to prepare < ... >

[p. 3] I beg you many Pardons for disappointing you of the Trios.-- The D--l of the Matter is that your Carrier's Beat does not extend so far south as your Domain.<sup>9</sup>-- I will send them at a Venture by him to Clementi's<sup>10</sup> with a Note directed to you-- surely they will reach you safely thence.--

On Saturday 3<sup>d</sup> of June I have fixed to have my Morning Party.<sup>11</sup>-- Horn has lent me a divine Mottett of Sebastian for 5 Voices,<sup>12</sup> which I am adapting to Latin Words:<sup>13</sup> the Original ones are German, always harsh, & mostly unintelligible to an English Audience.-- I hate the Language as much as I respect the People.

The Reason that the Cards announcing the Trio<sup>14</sup> were not delivered is b<ecause> there is a Rule (it see<ms>) not to issue out < ... > or Scheme<s ... >

[p. 4] I am informed that it will be advisable for us to print the Numbers of Croft & Greene<sup>15</sup> upon less expensive Paper, otherwise that the Concern is by no means likely to answer: I should like much to have a Meeting upon the Subject, & shall summon Page<sup>16</sup> for the Purpose, whereat if you can manage to join, & as "in the Multitude of Counsellors is safety",<sup>17</sup> I have hopes of an Improvement in our Arrangements.-- I have To-Day received 5 Subscription Names from a Dean & Chapter, <and am pr>omised 5 More from < ... > ecclesiastical < ... > cathedrals take < ... > more,



it will < ... > Singers < ... >

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. The approximate date of this letter as established by the reference to SW's Hanover Square Rooms concert on 3 June (see n. 12). SW's reference to the Epsom race meeting (18-20 May) suggests that it was written at the beginning of that week.
3. A reference to the attack on SW by an anonymous correspondent signing himself 'J. P.' that had appeared in the May number of NMMR following SW's Royal Institution lecture of 22 Mar. 1809, in which SW had demonstrated and recommended the Hawkes-Elliot patent organ (see SW to [Savage], 16 Mar. [1809], n. 4). An extended controversy followed in subsequent numbers. SW here identifies 'J. P.' as John Purkis; in a later letter to Jacob he identifies him as the Hon. George Pomeroy (SW to Jacob, 28 [?Sept.] 1809; Emery, 'Jack Pudding'; Philip Olleson, "'The Perfection of Harmony Itself': The William Hawkes Patent Organ and its Temperament', JBIOS, 21 (1997), 108-28).
4. John Purkis (1781-1849), organist of St Clement Dane's and St Olave, Southwark, 1793. He regained his sight in late 1810 or early 1811, and subsequently became the principal performer on the Apollonicon, the giant organ built by Flight and Robson and exhibited by them at their premises in St Martin's Lane (Dawe; Matthews; Grove<sup>5</sup>).
5. At the Royal Institution.
6. 'Is delayed'.
7. The Epsom race meeting was held from 18 to 20 May.
8. The chemist Sir Humphry Davy (1778-1829), who was giving a course of lectures at the Royal Institution at this time. The other lecturer has not been identified.
9. i.e. Blackfriars Road.
10. Clementi and Co. had premises at this time in Tottenham Court Road.



11. The concert was at the New Rooms, Hanover Square. According to an newspaper advertisement quoted in Edwards, 654 (original not traced), the programme included 'several compositions of Sebastian Bach, among which a grand sacred Motetto for five voices.'
12. 'Jesu, meine Freude', BWV 227.
13. 'Jesus, decus meus'. SW presented a copy of this motet in Latin translation to the Madrigal Society on 24 Apr. 1810 when he attended one of its meetings as a visitor (BL, MADSOC F5 (Attendances and Transactions, 1785-1828)).
14. One of the Bach organ Trio Sonatas in the edition by SW and Horn: see SW to Jacob, 3 Mar. 1809, n. 6.
15. A paragraph in MM for Dec. 1808 had announced: 'One of the most desirable treats ever offered to the musical public is preparing for the press by Mr S. Wesley and Mr. John Page, vicar choral of St. Paul's Cathedral, in the publication of the transcendant Anthems of Dr. Croft and Dr. Green [sic], of which a new edition has long been wanted.' The projected publication was probably a new edition of Musica Sacra: or Select Anthems in Score (1724; second edn. as Cathedral Music, or Select Anthems in Score, 1780) by William Croft (1678-1727) and Forty Select Anthems (1743) by Maurice Greene (1696-1755). SW's comments suggest that insufficient subscriptions had been received by this time to proceed with publication according to the original plan. No copies of the edition have been traced, and it is likely that it was never published.
16. John Page (c.1760-1812), cathedral musician and editor. His Harmonia Sacra appeared in 90 separate numbers, making up three volumes, and was complete by 1800. It was intended as a supplement to Arnold's Cathedral Music (1790), which itself was conceived as a supplement to Boyce's title of the same name (3 vols., 1760-1773). Apart from two examples it did not go back beyond the Restoration, but it was a useful compendium of music by Blow, Purcell, Croft, Greene, and Boyce, and also contained music by SW ('I said, I will take heed'), Battishill, and others

(Grove<sup>6</sup>).

17. Prov. 11: 14.

**To Tebaldo Monzani<sup>1</sup>**

**Camden Town, 26 May [1809]<sup>2</sup>**

**AN, third person, 1 p. (Kassler)**

**M<sup>r</sup> S. Wesley desires M<sup>r</sup> Monzani's Acceptance of the enclosed Tickets,<sup>3</sup> & should any more be required than the 24 he has sent for Sale, he will thank M<sup>r</sup> M. to drop him a Line p<sup>r</sup> Post, which shall be immediately attended to.**

**Friday May 26<sup>th</sup> | Camden Town**

- 1. Tebaldo Monzani (1762-1839), Italian flautist, instrument maker, composer, and publisher of sheet music, who had settled in England around 1787. He had gone into partnership with Giambattista Cimador around 1800, and at the time of this letter was in partnership with Henry Hill in the firm of Monzani and Hill at 3 Old Bond Street (Grove<sup>4</sup>; Post Office Directories).**
- 2. The year is given by 26 May falling on a Friday and SW's Camden Town address.**
- 3. For SW's Hanover Square Rooms concert on 3 June, obtainable from Monzani and Hill and from other music shops.**

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], [29 May 1809?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 40)

Monday Morning

My dear Sir

You must play the Trio,<sup>3</sup> will ye nill ye so no more on that subject.--  
I cannot fix Thursday<sup>4</sup> positively till the Day of our grand vocal Rehearsal be settled, & this depends upon M<sup>r</sup> Vaughan and the Rest of the Lungs to be exerted in the Proof of Sebastian being no mere Organist.<sup>5</sup>

I find that the Cerberus<sup>6</sup> has been known to say "-- Yes -- we allow Bach to be a good Writer for the Organ, but what strange Stuff his attempts at vocal Music would have been"!

Y<sup>r</sup> in Haste

S. Wesley.

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. The date is suggested by SW's 'Monday' and the discussion of the preparations for his Hanover Square Rooms concert on 3 June 1809, featuring choral music by J. S. Bach to demonstrate that Bach was 'no mere organist' (see n. 5).
3. One of Bach's organ trios, which Jacob and SW would have performed together as a duet; probably the one most recently published.
4. 1 June: some unidentified engagement, which could not be confirmed until the date



of the vocal rehearsal for the concert on 3 June had been fixed.

5. A reference to the inclusion in the programme of 'Jesu meine Freude'.
6. See SW to Charles Wesley jun., 15 Jan. 1807, n. 28.

To Willoughby Lacy<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 20 June 1809

AN, third person, 1 p. (Kassler)

M<sup>r</sup> Samuel Wesley will have the Pleasure of calling on M<sup>r</sup> Lacey To-morrow  
between 11 & 12, for the Purpose of examining the State of the Organ at the  
Room in the Haymarket<sup>2</sup>

Camden Town | Tuesday 20 June | 1809

1. Willoughby Lacy (1749-1831), actor and theatrical manager, and former associate of Garrick and Sheridan (BD).
2. i.e. the Opera Concert Room at the King's Theatre, where SW was to play an extempore organ voluntary at Lacy's benefit concert on 22 June (The Times, 22 June 1809). The organ was probably the two-manual 1794 instrument by Samuel Green described in the Sperling Notebooks (Royal College of Organists); it was removed in 1825 to St Edward, Southwold, Suffolk, and in 1887 to the Congregational Church there, where it still stands (Boeringer, iii. 206-7). An instrument by England also listed by Boeringer may have been the predecessor of the Green organ, or may have been a separate instrument in the theatre itself.

To Benjamin Jacob

Camden Town, 24 July 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 21)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road

Pmk: JY 26 809

My dear Sir

The Reverend Canon Picart hath a most unhappy Mode of endeavouring to explain himself, but if we can make him out together (& it is not always two Laymen that are a Match for one Priest) we may think ourselves luckier than if we lived in the Times when one Priest could get 100 Laymen burnt without Benefit of Clergy.

Our modern Melchisedech<sup>1</sup> writeth thus: "I am sorry my confused expressions have occasioned you so much Trouble. I meant Paper ruled with Scores of six staves,-- or Scores of four Staves in a Page.-- This Arrangement I thought would cover Scores of any Number of Staves from six to three."--

He means I think a Score of 6 or 4 Staves, as often repeated in one Page, as the Length or Breadth of the Paper will admit. What think you.

My dear M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs, this is very cheap Paper, I do own-- but it costs a dear deal of Trouble to write upon it.-- The Ink will not penetrate, all I can do, & as to the present Sheet, I know & admit that it is greasy (tho' from what Cause I know not)-- Vide the Top of this and the last Page.

I however shall find good Account in employing it upon other Occasions, although not for writing Letters, either of Ceremony or Friendship-

- the former ought to be written fair and the latter fast -- and I defy any Man to do either one or the other upon this.--

Yet it is useful Paper-- It is good for making a Memorandum of a Debt to one's Tallow Chandler, or one's Butcher, which one would rather do at Leisure, & for which greasy Paper is not ill calculated when we consider the above Professions.

I have been so put out of Humour by two or three vexatious & impudent Things,<sup>2</sup> news of which I received when I returned to Day, that I was glad to have an Opportunity of getting into a less saturnine Vein by the circumstance afforded me by our Sacerdotal Bachist Picart of assuring you again how truly I am

ever yours

S. Wesley.

Camden Town | Monday. July. 24<sup>th</sup> 1809

1. Melchizedek, king of Salem and high priest (Genesis 14: 18), also mentioned in the Vesper Psalm 'Dixit Dominus' (Ps. 110), a text set three times by SW.
2. Possibly a reference to the continuing controversy in the NMMR: the Aug. number contained a further attack on SW by 'J. P.'



To John George Graeff

[Camden Town], 28 July [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (BL, Add. MS 60753, f. 121)

Addressed: To | J. G. Graeff Esq<sup>re</sup>

Friday

Afternoon. 28<sup>th</sup> July

My dear Sir

You will excuse my asking you upon a Sheet of Coarse Copy Paper whether you shall be at Leisure this Evening, & whether I may expect the Pleasure of a Call from you? As I have nothing in Particular to employ me, I think we may amuse ourselves one Way or other-- I know you have no Taste for the Sublime or Beautiful in Music,<sup>2</sup> otherwise I would give you some of Pucitta's Operas,<sup>3</sup> or Von Esch's Divertimentos with Triangular Accompaniments;<sup>4</sup> but as the Matter is, I must bear to drudge through some of old Bach's humbug dismal Ditties, all so devoid of Air, Taste, Sentiment, Science, or Contrivance, that I am astonished how a sensible Man like yourself could ever have held up such an Impostor to Admiration -- It only shews what ignorant Pretenders to musical Knowledge you Germans are.

Notwithstanding which, I am truly yours

S. Wesley

1. The year is given by 28 July falling on a Friday, the reference to Pucitta's operas (see n. 3), and the 1808 watermark .

2. Two of the three categories into which Crotch divided music in his system of aesthetics, as propounded in his lectures. This taxonomy closely followed the one formulated by Sir Joshua Reynolds for the visual arts.
3. An ironic reference. After an early career in which he wrote at least seventeen operas for the theatres of Milan and Venice and a period as director of the Italian opera in Amsterdam, Vincenzo Pucitta (1778-1861) was from 1809 to 1814 composer and music director of the King's Theatre. His career was closely associated with that of the soprano Angelica Catalani, for whom he wrote a number of operas and other compositions. No fewer than three of his operas had their premières at the King's Theatre in 1809: I villeggianti bizzarri, (31 Jan.), La caccia di Enrico IV (7 Mar.), and Le quattro nazione (11 July).
4. Little is known about Louis Von Esch (fl. c.1786-1825) beyond the music he wrote. According to Sainsbury, who described him as 'a celebrated German instrumental composer', he published harp and piano music in France from 1786 onwards; many of his compositions were published in London between around 1800 and 1825. The 'piece with triangular accompaniments' may have been the Divertissement Turque for piano, written at around this time; or it may have been one of his divertimenti with accompaniments for flute, violin, and cello.

To Mary Beardmore

Camden Town, 31 August [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (London University, ALS 293)

Addressed: To | Miss Beardmore | Canonbury Place | Islington | N 5. PM  
SP 1 1809

Camden Town

August 31.

Dear Madam

I delayed answering your last obliging Letter<sup>2</sup> in Hope that it might have been in my Power to arrange my Engagements in a Way that would have allowed me the Opportunity of attending yourself & Sister at Canonbury according to your Wish, but really I am concerned to state that I fear I cannot manage it at all regularly, as my Days are at present too much occupied to render it possible for me to command 3 Hours in a Morning: I know of no better Proposal to offer than that of waiting upon you at some Place appointed within half an Hour's Journey of Camden Town, & of your receiving your Lessons there:-- this I think might be done, should it happen to suit your Convenience, & in this Case I will make a Point to secure a Piano Forte at some musical Friend's Abode, where you shall be sure to be uninterrupted.-- I will look out some Music for you without Delay & convey it to Milk Street;<sup>3</sup> remaining, with best Regards to all your Family

Dear Madam

**Your obliged & faithful Servant**

**S Wesley**

1.      **The year is given by the postmark.**
2.      **Not preserved.**
3.      **Off Cheapside: the business premises of Joseph Beardmore, Mary Beardmore's father.**



To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], 4 September [1809]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 25)

My dear Sir

I omitted to observe to you either on Saturday or Sunday that I am all aground for Music Paper, & I was not wise enough to take down the Direction to the Person from whom you procure that necessary Article to us Minstrels, so good & so cheap.-- If you should have an Opportunity of soon going that Way, & will kindly bear my present Distress in Remembrance, you will do me a real Benefit, for I want to compleat the Parts of my Concerto<sup>3</sup> without Delay, that I may have nothing else to do but pack up my Awls<sup>4</sup> & whirl away to Tamworth<sup>5</sup> at the appointed Time.

I have just received a Letter from D<sup>r</sup> Burney,<sup>6</sup> an extracted Portion of which will not be uninteresting to you.

"I believe M<sup>r</sup> Salomon is now out of Town; but when I saw him last, in talking of our great Sebastian, he said you were in Possession of some sonatas of his divine Manufacture, with a very fine Violin Part to them,<sup>7</sup> which he wished me to hear.-- I have no Violin in Order; but when I return home (Dr. B. is now at Bulstrode, the Seat of the Duke of Portland)<sup>8</sup> & you are both at Leisure, I wish you would prevail on him to fix a Day, & to send one of his own Violins any time before 2 o'Clock.-- While you are charming me with two Parts, I shall act in a triple Capacity & play the parts of Pit, Box, & Gallery, in rapturously applauding the Composition & Performance.--

"

You see one is never too old to learn, & here is an Instance that it is never too late to mend!-- What more could the D<sup>r</sup> have said, even had he originally been the like Enthusiast with ourselves in the Cause of Truth.--

His Repentance (tho' he does not profess it yet in Words) seems so evident from the zealous Expressions he uses, that I really think we must cordially forgive the past, for we can hardly expect him when tottering over the Grave,<sup>9</sup> & having attained (whether justly or otherwise) a Reputation for musical Criticism, publicly to revoke what he advanced at so Distant a Period of Time,<sup>10</sup> & when perhaps he thinks that his Strictures are forgotten or at least overbalanced by his present Acknowledgement of the real State of the Fact.

As soon as I can command an Hour, I will set about my deliberate Opinion on the various & inimitable excellencies of the Man,<sup>11</sup> which I think will settle the Business at least as decisively as our Challenge to J--ACK P--UDDING.<sup>12</sup>

Adieu for the present,-- we must contrive one more Pull at Surry<sup>13</sup> before I hyke over to Staffordshire.

Kindest regards to all,

from

Your sincere Friend,

S Wesley.

Monday | 4 Sept'

[Enclosure]<sup>14</sup>

J.P

Tho' J. P. refuses to give up his Name  
To muffle his Malice a Hood in,  
The Matter amounts to exactly the same,  
For his Nonsense proclaims 'tis J-ack P-udding.

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the contents and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. The year is established by 4 Sept. falling on a Monday and SW's reference to his forthcoming visit to Tamworth (see n. 3).
3. The Organ Concerto in D, which SW was to perform on 22 Sept. at the Tamworth Music Festival. The autograph of the original version (BL, Add. MS 35009) is dated 22 Mar. 1800, and was probably the organ concerto that SW had played at Salomon's performance of Haydn's The Creation at Covent Garden on 21 Apr. of that year. For the performance at Tamworth he re-scored the concerto for a substantially larger orchestra and inserted his own arrangement of the Fugue in D from Book I of the '48' before the concluding Hornpipe.
4. i.e. in a punning sense, his 'alls' (OED).
5. A thriving manufacturing town of some 3,000 inhabitants, 13 miles from Birmingham on the Warwickshire-Staffordshire border. The festival, held on 21 and 22 Sept., involved over 130 performers and also included performances of Messiah and The Creation (Lightwood, 150-3; Philip Olleson, 'The Tamworth Festival of 1809', Staffordshire Studies, 5 (1993), 81-106).
6. Not preserved.
7. The six sonatas for violin and harpsichord, BWV 1014-19, an edition of which had



been published by Nägeli in 1800. SW had only recently acquired his copy: inscribed 'bought at Escher's music shop for Eighteen Shillings' and dated 11 Aug. 1809, it is now at the RCM.

8. William Henry Cavendish-Bentinck (1738-1809), third Duke of Portland, Prime Minister from 1807 until his death. Burney was a frequent visitor at Bulstrode Park, Buckinghamshire, his family seat (Lonsdale, 469).
9. This was premature: Burney did not die until 12 Apr. 1814.
10. Burney's History was published between 1776 and 1789.
11. Bach.
12. A buffoon, clown or merry andrew (OED), in allusion to the attack on SW by 'J. P.' in the pages of NMMR.
13. i.e. Surrey Chapel, where Jacob was organist: an octagonal building on the north-east corner of Blackfriars Road and Union Street, on the site now occupied by the British Library's Oriental and India Office Collections. It was built in 1782 by Rowland Hill and his brother Sir Richard Hill, Bt as a chapel for the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion. Rowland Hill became its first minister and Jacob was appointed organist there in 1794. After it closed as a place of worship in 1881 the chapel was used for a time as a factory, and later for boxing, when it was known as 'The Ring'. It was badly damaged during World War II and was subsequently demolished (Survey of London Vol. xxii. Bankside (The Parishes of St Saviour and Christchurch Southwark), 119-20 and Pl. 85, showing its exterior in 1798 and interior in 1812).
14. The following four lines of doggerel are written on a separate sheet, but they were evidently enclosed with this letter.



To Charles Burney

Camden Town, 4 September 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (Osborn, MSS 3, Box 16, Folder 1193)

Addressed: To | D<sup>r</sup> Burney

Docketed by Mme d'Arblay: ✕

Camden Town

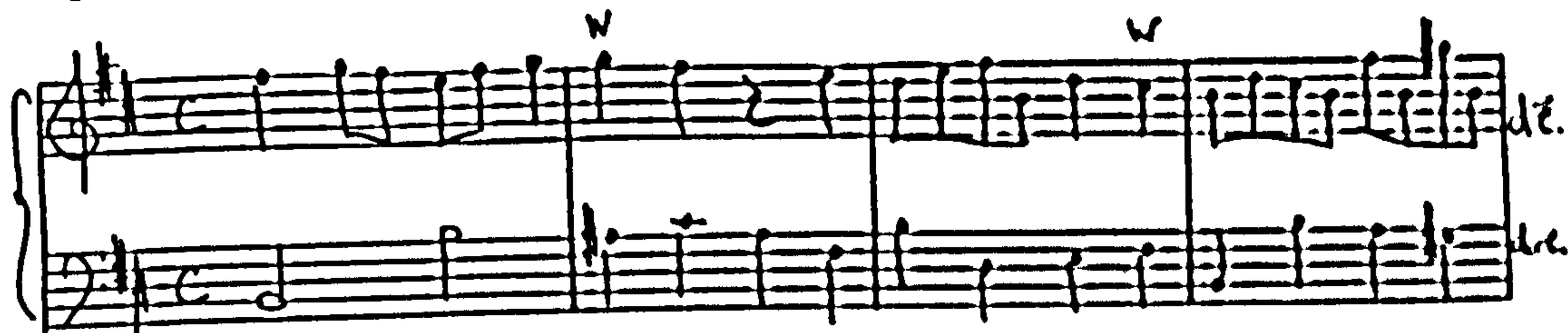
Sept<sup>r</sup> 4 1809

My dear Friend,

I am glad to find that your welcome Letter<sup>1</sup> which I have but 5 Minutes ago received<sup>1</sup> bears Date from the Country,<sup>2</sup> as I am in Hope that notwithstanding our topsy turvy Season fine Air & the Attentions of your noble Host will gradually renovate your Health & Spirits.-- You will perhaps indulge me with another Line e'er you leave Bulstrode,<sup>2</sup> by which I shall be enabled to look forward to the desirable Moment of Meeting to enjoy the lovely Sonatas which M<sup>r</sup> Salomon has described to you.-- They will confirm an excellent & true Observation which you made upon hearing some of the Preludes, that "they are as new, & as modern, as if composed only yesterday."-- I am not averse from being called an Enthusiast in the Cause of Sebastian, but I really do think, even coolly, & in my calmest Judgement, that never was such Variety of Style met with in any other Composer, at least in any that has ever come within my Observation.

The Mottivo of the Allegro in the 1<sup>st</sup> Son. is of a very original

plaintive Cast, as you will perceive-- ex pede Herculem.<sup>3</sup>



I used to play the Violin very well some 30 Years ago, but having had the Mischance of losing a favourite one in a Hackney Coach,<sup>5</sup> & never since having met with another that suited my Hand & Fancy as well, I turned sulky at the whole Genus, which you will say was acting very like an Idiot, & I readily admit it; but lol these same Sonatas have regenerated my liking of the Instrument, & I have taken up my wooden Box once more in Order to master the Obligato Part designed for it, & can now play them through without much Difficulty or Blundering, so that even if we should not readily manage to fix Salomon for an early Trial at Chelsea Coll. yet I could bring with me a good Man & true to execute the Piano Forte Part, while I attempted the Accompaniment.<sup>6</sup>

The Author of the Words of the Oratorio of Ruth<sup>7</sup> was D' Haweis,<sup>8</sup> who is yet living, & about 72 or 3. He is a Clergyman in the late Lady Huntingdon's Society,<sup>9</sup> & an excellent Judge of Music, as well as a very accomplished Flautist in Time past.-- Smart<sup>10</sup> was indeed a very superior Man: If I mistake not, he wrote the Oratorio "The Cure of Saul" which was set by D' Arnold,<sup>11</sup> & was at one while a Favourite when he<sup>12</sup> carried on Oratorios at Covent Garden.<sup>13</sup>

In Expectation of another kind Word from you when your Leisure & Inclination permit, I rest, my dear Friend, with the most sincere & unalterable

Regard

Yours ever faithfully

S Wesley

1. The letter referred to and partly quoted in the previous letter; not preserved.
2. Burney remained there until the middle of Sept. (Lonsdale, 469).
3. 'From the foot of Hercules': Burney will be able to gauge the character of the whole from the short extract quoted by SW. SW's allusion is to a story in Aulus Gellius, Noctes Atticae I. i. 1-3, which cites a lost life of Hercules by Plutarch stating that Pythagoras was able to calculate the size of Hercules from the size of his foot.
4. The opening of the second movement of the Sonata No. 1 in B minor, BWV 1014.
5. SW had lost his violin, an Italian instrument from Cremona, in or around Dec. 1783. In a letter now lost, Mary Freeman Shepherd had suggested to SW that he should place an advertisement in the newspapers offering a reward for his return, to which he had replied: 'I will tell you the Truth -- I am a little superstitious with regard to the Cremona: I am no Jansenist and yet I believe it was predestinated to be lost: the means I have used for its recovery proved successful to others that have had the like mischance, therefore I cannot but think that infinite wisdom intended it so to be: I assure you that for these three weeks I have given up all hopes of recovering it, and made myself entirely easy on that account .... Depend upon it Madam -- the Violin is in the hands of a person who knows its value, otherwise a guinea would surely have been an object to a Hackney Coachman or Pawnbroker. Whoever possesses the Instrument is well acquainted with the Treasure he has been so fortunate as to obtain, and nothing but that scarce Virtue honesty will prevail on him to part with it' (SW to Mary Freeman Shepherd, 26 Dec. [1783] (Paris, Archives de France, S4619; copy at BL, Add. MS 35013, f. 8)).
6. SW's doubts about Salomon's availability were evidently well founded: by the time



of SW to Jacob, [230 Sept. 1809], the plan was for SW to play the violin and Jacob the piano.

7. Either Giardini's oratorio (1768), which received annual performances at the Lock Hospital between 1768 and 1790, or SW's own oratorio, written in 1774: the words of both were by Haweis (Simon McVeigh, 'Music and the Lock Hospital in the 18th Century', MT, 129 (1988), 235-40.
8. The Revd Thomas Haweis (1734-1820) had been appointed chaplain to Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon, in 1768. She appointed him her trustee and executor, and after her death in 1791 he was responsible for all the chapels in her Connexion. He was a close friend of Martin Madan, SW's godfather, and was for a time his assistant at the Lock Hospital chapel. He was the composer of the hymn tune 'Richmond', usually sung to the words 'City of God, how broad and far'. SW was mistaken about Haweis's age: he was 75.
9. The Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion, a branch of Methodism founded by Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntingdon (1707-91).
10. Presumably the poet Christopher Smart (1722-71). Although he was the author of an oratorio text (Hannah, 1764) and of metrical versions of the psalms, he did not write the words of The Cure of Saul, a pasticcio by Arnold first performed at the King's Theatre on 23 Jan. 1767. According to Grove<sup>6</sup>, they were by J. Brown, Vicar of Newcastle upon Tyne (1715-66).
11. SW's memory appears to have played him false. Arnold was composer at Covent Garden from 1764 to 1769, and may also have managed the oratorio seasons there at this time. There is no evidence of any performances of The Cure of Saul at Covent Garden during this period. Arnold also managed oratorios at Drury Lane in the 1790 and 1793 seasons and at the King's Theatre in the 1798, 1799, 1801, and 1802 seasons, but no performances of The Cure of Saul are recorded for this period at either house.
12. i.e. Arnold.



To Benjamin Jacob

Birmingham, 25 September 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 27)

Addressed: To | Mr Jacobs | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road | London  
| 25 Sept<sup>r</sup>

Birmingham

Monday 25 Sept<sup>r</sup> 1809.

My dear Sir,

I have the Comfort of acquainting you that my Tamworth Excursion has proved most unexpectedly serviceable to my corporal Sensations, for I have been on the mending Order ever since my Arrival there,<sup>1</sup> & I am now in very good Condition at the Place above dated,<sup>2</sup> whence however I must set out To-morrow Morning,<sup>3</sup> & I mean to travel in the Oxford two Day Coach, to prevent over Fatigue, which I was obliged to submit to in the first Instance, from the Necessity of going at Night, which constantly disagrees with me; & if you remember the Weather on Monday Night last (or rather Tuesday Morning) you must know that the Situation of Coach Travellers, whether inside or out, could not be over & above eligible, especially as we were troubled with a restless Companion who was continually jerking the Windows up & down for what he called Air, but which was a furious Wind & pelting Rain, so that it was next to a Miracle I did not take a Cold for the Winter, but yet I escaped, to my no small Surprise.

You will wish to hear how the Performances were received; & I wish you had been among us to have witnessed the Delight they afforded to the whole Audience, who (when at the Church) seemed to long for the Privilege of clapping & rattling their Sticks.-- Even as it was, there was a constant Hum of Applause<sup>4</sup> at the Conclusion of every Piece, & there never could have been more strict & flattering Attention any where, than was manifest throughout the whole.

The Choruses went off spank, slap bang, like a Cannon, or M<sup>r</sup> Congreve's Rockets.<sup>5</sup>-- Notwithstanding I sat at a great Disadvantage, for the New Choir Organ<sup>6</sup> compleatly obstructed all Possibility of seeing any Part of the Orchestra but a Violin or two on my right & left Wing, so we were obliged to have a Mirror in Order that I might see Frank Cramer,<sup>7</sup> as it was just as well that he & I should start together, & this was managed pretty well, save & except that the Necessity of hanging the Glass so high proved a sad Annoyance to my unfortunate Neck, which was obliged to stretch till I thought I should never be able to reduce it to its common Length again.--

The Concerto<sup>8</sup> was excessively praised, & the Fugue of our Sebastian produced a glorious effect with the Instruments.

I promised Buggins<sup>9</sup> to conduct his Concert here (at Birmingham) which was very well attended at the Theatre,<sup>10</sup> & the Fantazia I played on the Piano Forte I concluded with "Roly Poly Gammon & Spinach,"<sup>11</sup> which tickled the Tobies<sup>12</sup> of the Button Makers<sup>13</sup> at such a Rate, that I thought I never should have gotten off the Stage, at least till I had broken my Back with Bowing.-- The Noise was absolutely confounding, & if I had not that valuable

Stock of Impudence belonging to me, of which you have had numerous Demonstrations, the Weight of the Welcome must have overpowered my Nerves, & I really think that even such a Jack-Gentlewoman<sup>14</sup> as Mother Storace,<sup>15</sup> would have been tempted to make a thorough Faint away of it.

I long to see all our Sebastian Squad, & I trust we shall soon meet. Remember me most kindly to all yours, & tell M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs that even the Brums are beginning to venerate our Orpheus-- at Tamworth the effect of the Fugue among the Orchestra was such, that they were perpetually humming the Subject whenever I met any of them in the Streets, either by Day or by Night.

Adieu, my good Friend, excuse this hasty Rhapsody, but I knew you would accept in good Part any rough hewn Pot Hooks & Hangers from your very sincere &

cordial Mess-Mate

S. Wesley

1. SW had travelled to Tamworth on the night of 18-19 Sept. The festival concerts comprised performances of Messiah and The Creation in the parish church on the mornings of 21 and 22 Sept., a miscellaneous concert in the theatre on the evening of 21 Sept., and a concluding 'Grand Selection of Sacred Music' in the church on the evening of 22 Sept.
2. SW had presumably travelled the 13 miles to Birmingham on 23 Sept. in time for his concert there that evening.
3. 26 Sept.; SW presumably arrived back in London on the following day.
4. i.e. general approbation: hand-clapping was evidently not permitted in the church.
5. William Congreve (1772-1828), who had in 1808 invented the rocket which bears his name (DNB). SW's piano piece The Sky-rocket: A Jubilee Waltz [1814] is dedicated



to him.

6. As a contemporary print shows, the organ was in the west gallery, a considerable distance from the orchestra if it was placed (as seems likely) in the crossing. As SW's reference implies, and as the print confirms, the new choir organ (by Thomas Elliot) was a Rückpositif, positioned at the organist's back as he sat at the console, and thus considerably obscuring his view even when a mirror was used. For the organs of Tamworth, see Boeringer, iii. 69-71; David Wickens, The Organs of Samuel Green (London, 1987), 147-8.
7. Francis Cramer (1772-1848), the leader of the orchestra, son of the violinist Wilhelm Cramer (1746-99) and the younger brother of Johann Baptist Cramer. He was taught the violin by his father and started to appear in concerts from 1790. He was a prominent orchestral musician who led the orchestra at the Ancient Concerts and later at many concerts of the Philharmonic Society.
8. SW's Organ Concerto in D.
9. Samuel Buggins, a Birmingham trumpeter and impresario who played second trumpet in the orchestra at Tamworth, and whose son Simcon was the treble soloist in the performance of Messiah there.
10. The Theatre Royal, New Street. The concert, on 23 Sept., featured many of the Tamworth performers and included much of the same music (Aris's Birmingham Gazette, 18 Sept. 1809).
11. i.e. the refrain of the popular song 'A frog he would a-wooing go', alluded to in SW to Jacob, 2 Mar. 1809. SW's use of 'fantazia' suggests an improvisation; for the autograph of an undated rondo for piano by SW on this tune, see BL, Add. MS 35006.
12. The buttocks.
13. The manufacture of buttons was one of Birmingham's principal industries.
14. A woman of low birth or manners who makes pretensions to be a gentlewoman; hence an insolent woman or an upstart (QED).



15. Nancy (Ann Selina) Storace (1765-1817), the sister of the composer Stephen Storace (1762-96), was the first Susanna in Mozart's Le nozze di Figaro in Vienna in 1786. According to Grove<sup>6</sup>, 'her short, plumpish figure made her ineffectual in the serious opera, but she was inimitable in the comic ones that constituted most of the Vienna repertory.' On her return to England with her brother in 1787, she sang at the King's Theatre until it burnt down in 1789, and then joined the Drury Lane company, where she sang in almost all of her brother's operas. Following his death she left the Drury Lane company and in 1797 year she went on a foreign tour with the tenor John Braham (1774-1856). They became lovers and had a son, Spencer, in 1802. By this time, she was singing again in the London theatres; she retired from the stage in May 1808 (Grove<sup>6</sup>; BD; Jane Girdham, English Opera in Late Eighteenth-Century London: Stephen Storace at Drury Lane (Oxford, 1997)).

To Benjamin Jacob

[Camden Town], 28 [September] 1809<sup>1</sup>

AL fragment, 3 pp. (Edinburgh)

Addressed: Benjamin <Jac>obs

Editor's note: The surviving portion of this letter, written on a single sheet folded once, consists of the lower part of three pages and forms roughly half of the original.

[p. 1] < ... > you.-- There are many Reasons for my urging a speedy Explanation upon the Subject.

I was yesterday informed in the most confident Manner (but I vouch for the Truth of scarce any Intelligence) that our J. P. is not less a Personage than the Hon<sup>ble</sup> M<sup>r</sup> Pomeroy.<sup>2</sup>-- I remember the Man, & always extremely disliked him as a most conceited Pretender to musical Criticism.

[p. 2] < ... > the Mind, increases the Indisposition of the Body.

I have enclosed the 7s. which I am ashamed of not having sooner transmitted upon the trifling Account of the Cards you were so good as to get executed.<sup>3</sup>-- I so much approve the Style in which your Printer manages these Matters, that I shall again trouble you on a similar Account.-- I think you will approve of the Proposals annexed,<sup>4</sup> which I long to see floating about in the World without further Loss.

[p. 3] < ... > I regret that it will not <be> possible for me to come towards your Quarter on Sunday next;<sup>5</sup> but will give you the earliest Notice I can, when it will be likely for me to accomplish it.

With best Regards to M<sup>n</sup> J. & all your <s> ,

I am

My dear Sir

Sincerely Yours

S Wesley

Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> 1809

< ... > the Proposals when < ... > Expedition to < ... >

1. SW's dating of 'Thursday 28<sup>th</sup> 1809' at the foot of the letter points to either Sept. or Dec. Either date is possible, but Sept. is the more likely on grounds of content.
2. George Pomeroy, an amateur musician associated with Joseph Kemp, the editor of NMMR (Kassler, Science of Music, 424, 657, 674, 699-700, 1061, 1181-2).
3. Evidently publicity materials which Jacob had had printed on SW's behalf, perhaps for SW's forthcoming lecture course at the Surrey Institution.
4. Not identified.
5. 1 Oct.

To [Benjamin Jacob?]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], [30 September 1809?]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 37)

Dear Friend

I am in the utmost Distress, & there is no one on Earth but yourself who can help me out of it.-- D<sup>r</sup> Burney is stark staring mad to hear Sebastian's Sonatas, & I have told him all how & about your adroit Management of his Music in general. He was immediately resolved on hearing you on the Clavicembalum & me on the Fiddle at them.-- He has appointed Monday next<sup>3</sup> at 12 o'Clock for our coming to him, as this is the only Time he has left before a second Excursion into the Country.<sup>4</sup>-- You see it is an extreme Case-- I had appointed three private Pupils for Monday, but shall put them all off to Tuesday-- Would to Heaven you may be able to do the like.-- The Triumph of Burney over his own Ignorance & Prejudice is such a glorious Event that surely we ought to make some sacrifice to enjoy it.-- I mentioned young Kollmann<sup>5</sup> as quite capable of playing the Sonatas, but you will see by the enclosed<sup>6</sup> (just received) that he prefers you.-- Pray comply in this arduous Enterprize-- Remember our Cause, "Good Will towards Men" is at the bottom of it, & when Sebastian flourishes here, there will be at least more musical "Peace on Earth."<sup>7</sup>

You see we are utterly ruined unless you come forward To-morrow.<sup>8</sup>-- Think of what we shall have to announce to the Public; that D<sup>r</sup> Burney (who has heard almost all the Music of other Folks) should be listening with Delight



at almost 90 years old,<sup>9</sup> to an Author whom he so unknowingly & rashly had condemned! Only imagine what an Effect this must have in confounding & putting to Silence such pigmy puerile Puppies as Williams<sup>10</sup> & Smith<sup>11</sup> & a Farrago of other such musical Odds & Ends.

I can't dine with you To-morrow, but will breakfast with you at ½ past nine, & bring the Sonatas under my Oxster<sup>12</sup> (as the Scots call it) for you will like to have a previous Peep.-- You see I make sure of you on Monday.-- I think I see & hear you saying "Yes, you may."

Love to all

Yours (in no Haste as you perceive) ever truly

S. W

1. Although this letter is included in the same collection as other letters to Jacob, it bears no address portion or other unequivocal indications that it is to him. It is possible that it is to another recipient, possibly Vincent Novello.
2. This letter continues the discussion of arrangements to perform Bach's violin sonatas to Burney, first raised in SW's letter to Jacob of 4 Sept. Burney's absence from London until around the middle of the month (Lonsdale, 469) and SW's visit to Tamworth and Birmingham rule out most dates in Sept. SW's reference to Burney's 'second Excursion into the Country', planned for early Oct., and the need to fit in the performance before his departure, suggests that it occurred on 2 Oct. The date of Portland's letter of invitation to Burney (see n. 4), which Burney could not have received until 29 Sept., and other internal evidence in the letter suggest 30 Sept. as its most probable date.
3. 2 Oct.
4. Portland's letter to Burney of 28 Sept. (Osborn) contained an invitation for Burney

to visit him for a second time at Bulstrode (Lonsdale, 469).

5. George Augustus Kollmann (1789-1845), pianist, composer, and inventor, son of A. F. C. Kollmann. He was taught the piano by his father, whose piano concerto he performed at the New Musical Fund on 15 Mar. 1804. His compositions included a set of piano sonatas (1808), an air with variations (1808), and a set of waltzes (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
6. Evidently a letter from Burney, presumably written on receipt of Portland's invitation, and requesting a performance without delay; not preserved.
7. Both quotations are from the Gloria of the Anglican communion service.
8. Presumably for a rehearsal.
9. In fact, Burney was 83.
10. Probably George Ebenezer Williams (1783-1819), organist at the Philanthropic Chapel and deputy organist of Westminster Abbey; in 1814 he was appointed organist there (Shaw; Grove<sup>6</sup>).
11. Probably John Stafford Smith (1750-1836), at this time one of the organists of the Chapel Royal, and Master of the Children there. He was also a noted musical antiquarian (Shaw; Grove<sup>6</sup>).
12. His armpit.

To [C. F. Horn?]<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], [c. 30 September 1809]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 35)

Huzza!-- Old Wig<sup>3</sup> for ever, & confusion of Face to Pig-Tails & Mountebanks!-- Chappel<sup>4</sup> at Birchall's tells me that the People tease his Soul out for the Fugues: that the eternal Question is, "when does M<sup>r</sup> Wesley intend to bring forward the Fugues in all the 24 Keys? I can plainly perceive that Chappell would be not a little glad to get the Concern into his own & his Master's Hands, but I think we shall be too cunning to suffer that.-- He says he is convinced that it would be advisable to publish 12 of the 1<sup>st</sup> Sett as soon as possible, & he must be sincere in this Instance I think, because he stopped me Yesterday in the Street (when I was very much in Haste) & dragged me Vi & Armis into the Shop, to communicate his Complaints.--

Now, what say you to making a strict Revision of the 12 first Preludes & their Correspondent Fugues, from my Copy<sup>5</sup> (which you have) & causing them to be transcribed in a capital & correct Manner for the Press, without delay?<sup>6</sup>

"Strike the Iron while 'tis hot" is among the good proverbial Advices, & I see not why we should not take very Advantage instantly of the good Disposition of the Public, which may by Degrees lead to the solid & permanent Establishment of truth, & overthrow of Ignorance, Prejudice, & Puppyism with regard to our mighty Master.-- Chappell has sold 6 Numbers of the 2<sup>d</sup>-- & wants 6 more directly, together with all the Copies of my



Voluntaries printed by Hodsoll<sup>8</sup> which I can rake out for him.--

"The Organ is King, be the Blockheads ever so unquiet"-- I really cannot sufficiently express my Thanks to that Power "which ordereth all Things well" for making me an humble Engine of bringing into due Notice that noble Instrument, by which so many Minds are brought to attend to Truths upon which their present & future Happiness depend.

It is also very remarkable (and seems to be providential) that the Contriver of these exquisite Pieces of Art, so calculated to awaken the noblest & most solemn Ideas, should himself have been an exemplary Instance of unaffected Piety, & of the mildest Christian Virtues.-- How much additional Value, & what Lustre does it not put upon his divine Effusions!

"Speed the Plough"<sup>9</sup> must really be the Order of the Day.-- Let us remember that we "have put our Hand to it," & I think we have no Temptation to "look back"-- Let us lose not an Hour in forwarding such Harmony on Earth as has the direct Tendency to bring us to the celestial, & really such Men as Williams & Smith may be considered as Satan's Implements to thwart the Designs of Providence.-- I do not think I am too severe in this Observation: I assure you I think it the literal Fact. Write to me about this Matter, & by all Means crack it about every where how vehement the Demand for Bach is at the most brilliant Music Shop in London.

I purpose to come from Paddington after the School to you on Saturday Evening, & will endeavour to be with you by 8 o'Clock. Adieu,  
SW



1. Because of the inclusion of this letter in the same collection as other letters to Jacob, it has hitherto been assumed that it is to him. SW's discussion of the preparation of a collaborative edition of the '48', however (see n. 6), gives strong grounds for concluding that the addressee is in fact C. F. Horn.
2. Although the content of this letter clearly indicates a date some time in 1809, its more precise dating is problematical. In his letter to Jacob of 3 Mar., SW announced that he was about to send the first of the six Bach organ trios to the engraver, and that it would be best to issue them singly; his reference here to the sale of copies of the second trio of the set points to a date somewhat later in the year. The conjectural dating proposed here is consonant with what is known of the chronology of the Wesley-Horn edition and with SW's reference to Williams and Smith, also mentioned in SW to Jacob, [c. 30 September 1809].
3. An ironic reference to J. C. Bach's dismissive name for his father: see SW to Novello, 25 Sept. 1824.
4. Samuel Chappell (c.1782-1834), music seller and publisher, at this time employed by Birchall. On 3 Dec. 1810 he set up in partnership with Johann Baptist Cramer and Francis Tatton Latour to form the firm of Chappell (Grove). SW's edition of the 48 was eventually published by Birchall.
5. Presumably the manuscript copy made by SW from Graeff's copy of the Nägeli edition: see SW to Graeff, 21 May [1806?].
6. Plans for the Wesley-Horn edition of the '48' had first been discussed almost a year earlier: see SW to Jacob, 17 Oct. 1808. At that stage, no further progress appears to have been made on the edition, possibly because SW and Horn subsequently decided to publish the organ Trio Sonatas first. From the time of the present letter, Wesley and Horn moved quickly: the advance announcement for the edition appeared in the Mar. 1810 number of MM, and the edition itself appeared in four parts between Sept. 1810 and July 1813.
7. i.e. the second of the Bach organ Trio Sonatas.

8. SW's Voluntaries, Op. 6, were composed over a period of years and were published individually between 1802 and 1817. Full details of their composition and publication history are not known, but by this time the first nine of the twelve had been published (Robin Langley, 'Samuel Wesley's Contribution to the Development of English Organ Literature', JBIOQS, 17 (1993), 102-116; review of Op. 6 No. 1 in MM, 13 (1802), 601).
9. An old expression, and the title of a recent comedy (1798) by Thomas Morton (?1764-1838).

To Tebaldo Monzani

Camden Town, 4 October [1809]

John Wesley's Chapel, London (LDWMM 1997/6603)

Editor's note: the text of this letter was not available for consultation.

SW asks Monzani if he wishes to purchase the copyright of his 'little burlesca'<sup>1</sup> which he thinks has 'every chance of becoming popular'.

1. Probably SW's undated 'I walked to Camden Town' (autograph RCM, MS 4021), thus described by SW on the autograph. No copies of a printed edition have been traced.

To Benjamin Jacob

[Camden Town], 5 November [1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 29)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road |

Postmark NO 6 1809

My dear Sir,

Enclosed is the Card<sup>2</sup> I promised.-- I trust that you will manage (by Hook or by Crook) to look in at the Surrey<sup>3</sup> on Tuesday Evening, as altho' the principal Body of the 1<sup>st</sup> Lecture<sup>4</sup> is an old Story to you who have both heard & read it, yet I have added two or three Touches, I think for the better, of which I should like to have your Opinion.-- I shall find my Way to the Lock-up House after I have finished my Sermon, when we will confabulate all how & about a-many Things, especially upon your Party at the Chapel,<sup>5</sup> & the immediate Promulgation of the Man,<sup>6</sup> (which expression I now prefer to any Epithet of "great" or "wonderful", & c. which are not only common, but weak, as is every other Epithet applied to one whom none can sufficiently praise)--

My services to the Scarlet Whore of Babylon To-Day<sup>7</sup> were very gratefully & handsomely received.-- If the Roman Doctrines were like the Roman Music we should have Heaven upon Earth.

Yours in Haste

ever truly,

S. Wesley.



Sunday Night. 5 Nov.

1. The year is given by the postmark.
2. Not certainly identified: probably an admission ticket for SW's course of lectures at the Surrey Institution, due to start on 7 Nov.; or perhaps a card advertising the edition of the Bach trios, also mentioned in SW's letter to Jacob of 24 Nov.
3. On Tuesday 7 Nov. SW was to give the first of a course of six lectures on music at the Surrey Institution, one of several such bodies founded around the beginning of the nineteenth century in emulation of the Royal Institution. It occupied the Rotunda in Blackfriars Road, originally built in 1788-9 for James Parkinson to house the natural history collection of Sir Ashton Lever, including the tropical and other curiosities collected by Captain Cook on his voyages. It contained a lecture theatre, reading and conversation rooms, a chemistry laboratory, offices, committee rooms, and living accommodation for the Secretary. The reading-rooms had opened on 1 May 1808 and lectures on chemistry, mineralogy, natural philosophy, and other subjects had started in Nov. of the same year. The lecture theatre, which could hold an audience of over 500, was illustrated in Rudolph Ackermann's The Microcosm of London, where it was described as being 'one of the most elegant rooms in the metropolis. It contains two galleries; one, which is the uppermost, is supported by eight Doric columns, of Derbyshire marble, whose entablature is crowned by a balustrade of the same materials. The gallery beneath is curiously constructed, being sustained by iron columns and their projecting cantilevers or trusses. The diameter of the theatre is thirty-six feet; and the parterre, or ground part, contains nine rows of seats, which rise above each other in commodious gradation. The first gallery contains two, and that above it three rows of seats' (Survey of London, vol 22: Bankside; (The Parishes of St Saviour and Christchurch, Southwark) (1950), 115-17 and Pl. 81b; Ackermann, The Microcosm of London, 3 vols. (1808-11), iii. 154-60. It survived until after World War II but has now been demolished.

4. Not certainly identified, but very probably 'On Music Considered as an Art and Science', with which SW had opened his course at the Royal Institution on 10 Mar.
5. Doubtless the concert being arranged for 29 Nov. 1809 and referred to in SW to Jacob, [24 Nov. 1809].
6. Bach.
7. i.e. the Roman Catholic church: SW had presumably been playing for a service, probably at the Portuguese Embassy chapel, where Novello was organist.

To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, [6 November 1809]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 1 p. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 41)

My dear Sir

You will think me sufficiently stupid in not recollecting when I wrote you last Night, that I have some Intention (if I can but manage it) of coming to you in the Course of To-morrow<sup>3</sup> previous to my mounting the Rostrum, for as you bespoke me to return to Charlotte Street<sup>3</sup> after Sermon, it will be very snug & commodious to put on a Pair of Shoes at so near a Distance from the Place of Execution.-- You see how ceremonious I am with my Friends, & I'll tell you another Secret, which is that if I feel very hungry when I arrive, I shall ax for somewhat to eat, look ye d'ye see? But I cannot appoint my Hour for certain, therefore I insist on your making no preparation or Spreadation for

Yours in Haste

S. Wesley.

Monday Ev<sup>3</sup> | Camden Town

1. Although lacking an address portion, it is clear from the content and present location of this letter that it is to Jacob.
2. SW's 'Monday', and his references to his letter to Jacob 'last night' and his lecture on the following day, give the date.
3. Jacob's house, off Blackfriars Road, close to the Surrey Institution.

To Benjamin Jacob

[Camden Town and] Turnham Green, [24 November 1809]<sup>1</sup>

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 31)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Jacobs | Charlotte Street | Black Friar's Road | Friday  
2

Pmk: 24 NO 1809

My dear Sir,

I wish your Opinion of delivering each person who presents a Ticket, one of the Cards announcing the Trios of Bach: I should conceive that M<sup>r</sup> Hill<sup>2</sup> could not urge any Objection against this, & that it is almost too trifling a Circumstance to render a Consultation upon it with him, necessary.-- However, as you know his Ins & Outs so much better than I, the Matter is left to your Decision-- I will bring with me a good jolly Lot of the said Cards To-morrow,<sup>3</sup> which at all events will be in as good (or a better) Train of Distribution than when facing Primrose Hill, as at present.<sup>4</sup>

I think there can be no Question that the Circulation of them on Wednesday,<sup>5</sup> would push on the Cause of the Trios materially.

I have not sent M. P. King<sup>6</sup> a Notice of Wednesday, & will leave it to you.--

I have exhausted all the Ammunition brought by your Messenger,<sup>7</sup> & have sent to Hoare,<sup>8</sup> Wright,<sup>9</sup> & some other Bankers of Consequence (Hammersley for Instance)<sup>10</sup> all of whom are musical, & will prate about the



Thing, which you know is all we want at present: & if a Majority happen to be pleased (which we may without much Presumption conclude) we shall have no bad Chance of being paid for our Work at a future Opportunity.

I think if you can borrow a Court Guide, or List of Lords, Ladies, Bucks, & other Blackguards, we may meet with a few Names that we shall be unwilling to have omitted, when the grand Day is over.

I long to know what you have written to my Brother, & whether you have given him a coaxing Word or two.-- I fear that setting J. C. B.<sup>11</sup> before G. F. H. will in Spite of all good Endeavours on your Part, be regarded as an unpardonable Sin-- I believe that no Lecture on Prejudice<sup>12</sup> will ever eradicate his-- What a grievous Circumstance for a Mind intended for Expansion equal to its Conceptions which certainly are great & extraordinary.-  
- I have repeatedly told you my high respect for his powers of musical Criticism-- Alas that one who feels the merit of "the MAN" as much every whit as we do, will not do himself the Honour of acknowledging it.

It appears to me that we shall save Trouble by borrowing M' Jos. Gwilt's<sup>13</sup> Zurich Fugues,<sup>14</sup> as the fewer References from one Book to another, the more Time we shall save, & consequently render the Auditory more patient.-- In this Case, perhaps you will secure the said Book for our Rehearsal To-morrow as well as the Fiddle de dee from Professor Perkins.<sup>15</sup>

Unless that same Straduarious<sup>16</sup> be kept in high Order, I have many Doubts of its answering our Purpose as well as my own tender Stainer<sup>17</sup>-- however, you know me not over-given to condemn without a Hearing.

Forgive my boring you thus, but the Subjects in this Billet seemed to

me of some Importance.

Adieu

till as near 6 as the Fates will allow.

Yours ever truly

S. Wesley.

Turnham Green,<sup>18</sup> | 2 o'Clock Friday.

1. SW's '2 o'Clock Friday' and the postmark give the date of this letter: SW evidently started it at home in Camden Town and continued it at Turnham Green, where he had a teaching engagement (nn. 4 and 18).
2. i.e. Rowland Hill. It is evident from this reference and from SW's later comments that the cards were to be distributed at the concert at Surrey Chapel on the following Wednesday, 29 Nov. (see n. 5).
3. 25 Nov., when SW and Jacob were evidently to meet, probably to rehearse for their forthcoming concert.
4. i.e. at SW's house in Camden Town.
5. At the concert at Surrey Chapel on 29 Nov. The concert was designed to stimulate interest in Bach's music, and was almost certainly the one referred to by SW in his Reminiscences: '[Jacob] planned with me a Selection from the works of Bach and Handel as a matter of grand Morning performance at Surrey Chapel, with the consent and approbation of the Rev<sup>d</sup> Rowland Hill. Among the organ pieces were inserted two of Bach's beautiful and brilliant Sonatas with a Violin accompaniment [i.e. two of the Sonatas for Violin and Harpsichord, BWV 1014-19]. I had been a fine Performer on that instrument many years before, but had long disused it. However on the present occasion I resolved on resuming it, and accordingly set to practise these pieces so as to be completely qualified for a public performance of them. Mr Jacobs [sic] caused a list of every article to be printed and circulated in every Quarter

where the Tickets of admission were deposited; and as the Performance was entirely gratuitous, the invitations were readily enough accepted. The chapel was very numerously attended and the performance occupied to the best of my recollection from three to four hours. The whole was executed with accuracy and Precision, and the hearers professed themselves universally gratified and satisfied with every portion of it.' A similar account is given in the entry for Jacob in Sainsbury, compiled directly from information supplied to Sainsbury by Jacob in a letter of 15 Jan. 1824 (Glasgow University Library, Euing Collection). According to Jacob, the performance lasted four hours, and the audience numbered '3,000 persons of the highest respectability, also many in the first rank of professors and amateurs.'

6. Matthew Peter King (c.1773-1823), theatre musician, teacher, and composer, principally of dramatic and vocal music (Brown and Stratton).
7. i.e. publicity for the concert.
8. Probably the same man as mentioned in SW to Charles Wesley jun., 15 Jan. 1807, and n. 49.
9. Probably Thomas Wright of the banking firm of Wright, Selby, and Robinson, and possibly the 'Mr Wright' mentioned in SW to Street, 18 Oct. 1799.
10. Presumably the Hammersley who was a partner in the banking firm of Hammersley, Greenwood, Drew and Brooksbank.
11. A slip of the pen for 'J. S. B.' This correction is made without comment by Eliza Wesley in her edition.
12. One of SW's Royal Institution Lectures, probably repeated as part of his course at the Surrey Institution, had been entitled 'On Musical Prejudice': see SW to Burney, 6 Dec. 1808.
13. Like his elder brother George (see SW to Jacob, 17 Nov. 1808) Joseph Gwilt (1784-1863) was an architect, an amateur musician, and a member of the Wesley-Novello circle. He was evidently a wealthy man: in 1811 he offered to meet the expenses of an ambitious project to publish a collected edition of harmonised Gregorian chant (see



SW to Novello, 11 Nov. [1811], 27 June [1812]) and in 1813 underwrote the cost of publishing SW's madrigal 'O sing unto mie roundelaie'(see SW to Novello, 17 Feb. [1813]). He had strong antiquarian interests, and is known to have purchased many items at the sale of Burney's library in 1814. He also shared the enthusiasm of SW and Novello for the music of J. S. Bach, and his second son, born in 1811, was christened John Sebastian after him . Like his brother, he was a neighbour of Jacob (DNB; Colvin; King, 28, 134, 136).

14. i.e. the Nägeli edition of the '48'.
15. Probably the violinist James Marshall Perkins of 75 King Street, Westminster (Doane).
16. Evidently Perkins's violin, by Antonio Stradivari (1644-1737) (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
17. SW's own violin, by the Austrian maker Jacob Stainer (?1617-1683) (Grove<sup>6</sup>).
18. SW had apparently started this letter at his house in Camden Town and completed it later in the day at Turnham Green, where he had a teaching commitment.



To [Benjamin Jacob]<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, [2 December 1809?]<sup>2</sup>

ALS, 2 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 38)

Saturday

My dear Sir

Many Thanks for your early & kind Attention-- The Numbers<sup>3</sup> you have sent will be sufficient for my Purpose, as that containing the Commencement of the Attack, is of the most Importance in the series of my Cannonade.--

We shall have Fun alive next Tuesday,<sup>4</sup> & if you can by hook or by crook, get J. P. & X. Y. Z. (who I believe one Person) to come, I think I shall have some Murder to answer for, which is a great Comfort to any delicate Conscience.--

Mrs. Billington has sent me a Letter of Thanks for the Feast on Wednesday,<sup>5</sup> inviting me to one of the Alderman Sort at her House.

Adieu--

Y<sup>rs</sup> ever

S. Wesley.

Turn Over

Linley writes to say that he will be glad of his two Books as soon as they can conveniently be sent.-- If an Opportunity should occur between now

& Tuesday perhaps you can contrive to get them handed over to him.

1. Although lacking an address portion, there can be no doubt from the content of this letter and its present location that it is to Jacob.
2. The content of this letter (see n. 3) links it to SW's controversial lecture 'On Musical Deception', which he delivered as part of his course at the Surrey Institution, which ran for six weeks from 7 Nov. The suggested dating assumes that SW gave this lecture on 5 Dec., and that the 'feast' referred to in the letter was the Surrey Chapel concert of 29 Nov.
3. No doubt the May, Aug., and Oct. numbers of NMMR, which contained the criticisms of 'J. P.' and 'X.Y.Z.' In a letter to the editor of NMMR dated 9 Oct. and published in the Nov. number, SW publicized his forthcoming course of lectures and announced his intention of replying to his critics, stating that 'if J.P., X.Y.Z., or any other such LITERARY Gentlemen, choose to attend, they may hear their gross ignorance, and defamatory falsehoods, duly exposed.'
4. See n. 2. SW's lecture, entitled 'On Musical Deception', was evidently planned to be a robust attack on his critics.
5. The Surrey Chapel concert on 29 Nov.

To [Knight Spencer<sup>1</sup>

[Camden Town], 9 December 1809

ALS, 3 pp. (RCM, MS 2130, f. 33)

Dec<sup>r</sup> 9. 1809

Sir

I have received the Favour of your Letter,<sup>2</sup> & am obliged to you for the Motive which you express as having actuated you to write it.-- Had I considered the Controversy, (the Introduction of which you seem so much to condemn) as a merely private & personal Matter between the two anonymous Antagonists<sup>3</sup> & myself, I should have coincided with you in Opinion that it was not a Subject of sufficient Importance to propose as a prominent Feature in a Lecture: but as the Authors (or Author, for I am inclined to believe the double signature only a Pretence) attacked not only myself but the whole Body of musical Professors together, in the most scandalous Style, denominating them no better than a Banditti of Pick-Pockets, I should have considered myself an unworthy Deserter of the Profession to which I belong, to suffer it to lie under the base Imputations attributed to them by a malevolent Opponent, when so fair an Opportunity offered itself of confuting his Assertions, & vindicating their Cause: Besides Sir, if you reflect for a Moment, that the Subject I chose for my Lecture was that of "musical Deception" so flagrant & flagitious an Instance of it came immediately & most naturally within the scope of my general Design, & I am sure a stronger & more disgraceful Proof



of it, could not ever be brought forward.

With regard to "making Amends" for an Act which I cannot consider in the Light of an Offence, you must excuse my differing from you as to its Necessity.-- That my "recent Conduct" (by which of Course you mean my vindication of the Profession assaulted by an anonymous Assassin) should have given cause to "unpleasant Remarks," either "universally" or partially "excited," I am thus far sorry, because I was persuaded in my own Mind, not only of the Sincerity of my Intentions to do good, by exposing Imposture, but also, flattered myself, that my Motives would have been as favourably construed as I am conscious that they deserved to be.

Having engaged to read no more than Six Lectures in the present Season, the Composition of a supernumerary one, would be attended with a Consumption of Time, which my very close Pressure of Engagement, I regret to observe, will render impossible.

I remain, with Respect, & gratitude, Sir,

Your obliged

& very obedient Servant

S. Wesley.

1. This letter is included in Eliza Wesley's edition of the Bach Letters, where it is annotated 'To Knight Spencer, Esq. Surrey Institution' in another hand. Here, as elsewhere, it is likely that Eliza took her information from an address portion which has since been discarded or lost. The identification of Spencer as the addressee is undoubtedly correct: he was at this time Secretary of the Surrey Institution.
2. Not preserved. Spencer had evidently written to SW to complain about the personal



nature of the lecture in which SW had attacked his NMMR critics, and to suggest that SW should deliver an additional lecture to make amends.

To John Langshaw junior<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 26 December 1809

ALS, 2 pp. (Emory, Wesley-Langshaw Letters)

Addressed: To | M<sup>r</sup> Langshaw | Organist | Lancaster

Pmk: 27 809

Endorsed: Dec<sup>r</sup> 26 1809

Dear Sir

Although you may not have entirely forgotten my Name, yet so long a Time has elapsed since any epistolary Communication between us has occurred, that I should not wonder at the Surprise this hand Writing may for a Moment occasion.--

Therefore altho' John Langshaw & Samuel Wesley have not very lately met either in Person or in black & white, I nevertheless am of Opinion that some Tidings of the Existence of each will be acceptable to both.--

The present Occasion of my immediate Application to you, relates to an Organ, which it seems is to be constructed for your Quarter of the World,<sup>2</sup> & I understand that several Estimates have been, or are about to be delivered in, from various Makers on the Subject.--

I therefore have taken the Liberty of suggesting to You, that in my Opinion, there is no Organ Builder in England whose Work would do him more Credit than Elliott, in the present Instance, & should you approve of his Proposals, without being pre-engaged in Favour of some previous Applicant, I do not hesitate to promise that you will not be disappointed in your Choice

nor I in Danger of any Disgrace by my Recommendation.<sup>3</sup>--

My own Organ is built by him, & notwithstanding its Limitation to three Stops (to which I consented, for the Advantage of an Octave of double Base Pedals) the Tone of it is such as to much delight all the Judges who have heard it.<sup>4</sup>

I have not the Pleasure of being known to any of your Family personally, excepting your late worthy Father & Brother; but in presenting them my best Respects & Wishes, you will oblige

Dear Sir

Your old (& yet I trust not wholly forgotten)

Friend & Servant

S Wesley

Camden Town | near London | Dec<sup>r</sup> 26<sup>th</sup> 1809

1. John Langshaw jun. (1763-1832) had been sent in 1768 as a boy of 15 to London by his father John Langshaw sen. (d. 1798) to study with Benjamin Cooke, organist of Westminster Abbey. Finding Cooke inadequate as a teacher, he quickly transferred to SW's brother Charles, and became a frequent visitor to the Wesleys' home, where he was made welcome and treated as one of the family. He returned to Lancaster in the winter of 1780-1, and apart from a visit of three months to London in early 1784 had remained there ever since. He succeeded his father as organist of Lancaster parish church on the latter's death. This letter is one of a collection of 32 letters written over a period of 49 years by Charles Wesley to John Langshaw sen. and by his two sons to John Langshaw jun. (Wainwright).
2. i.e. for Lancaster parish church. The organ was eventually built in 1811 by George Pike England (Boeringer, ii. 95).

3. SW's concern was far from altruistic. If his recommendation had resulted in a firm order to Elliot, he would have received a substantial commission.
4. Nothing more is known about this instrument.



To Charles John Smyth<sup>1</sup>

Camden Town, 10 January 1810

ALS, 3 pp. (BL, Egerton MS 2159, f. 68)

Addressed: To | The Rev<sup>d</sup> C. J. Smyth | Norwich | Norfolk

Pmks: JA 11 1810, JA 11 810

Camden Town

January the 10<sup>th</sup> 1810

Dear Sir

I am sorry that I have not sooner had an Opportunity of complying with your Request upon the Subject of M<sup>r</sup> Elliot's Organ, constructed upon M<sup>r</sup> Hawkes's Plan of Temperament,<sup>2</sup> but as I was desirous to afford you as satisfactory an Explanation as I could, (which could not be without a previous Consultation with Elliott) I delayed writing until this had taken Place; & I now trust that the few following Observations may partly remove what has hitherto seemed to you objectionable.

In your Letter to our Friend Linley,<sup>3</sup> you enquired "whether the Organ on which I exhibited at the Royal Institution had compound stops?"<sup>4</sup>-- It had but three Stops in all, namely two Diapasons & Principal.<sup>5</sup>

You observe (very truly) that "the Beatings of an imperfect Consonance are doubled by the Principal & quadrupled by the Fifteenth," and proceed,-- "Heaven knows how these Beatings would be multiplied by the

Compounds," adding that you are "persuaded the Thirds ought to be good, or Compounds excluded."

I will now transcribe what Elliot communicated to me in Elucidation of his Mode of tempering, previously remarking your Observation of being "charmed with the Beauty of the Chords in Places where you least expected to find it."-- I presume that you allude to the Keys of E $\flat$  Major, A $\flat$  Major, D $\flat$  Major, E $\sharp$  Major, B $\sharp$  Major, F $\sharp$  Major.<sup>6</sup>

These, by the Addition of real Pipes,<sup>7</sup> certainly produce an Effect, which when compared with the false old Temperament in which E $\flat$  & D $\sharp$  passed for the same Tone, A $\sharp$  for B $\flat$ , F $\sharp$  for G $\flat$ , & G $\sharp$  for A $\flat$ , & vice versa, renders the latter quite intolerable, but the former highly delightful.

Now in regard to the other Keys, Elliot thus observes:

"The Thirds, when sharpened, scarcely one Fourth of a Comma,<sup>8</sup> beat, when properly in Tune, so as to be hardly perceptible to the Ear, & by which Means the Fifths are improved, & the extreme Keys are rendered much more agreeable."

"The compound Stops, when well voiced, will so combine together as not to be distinguishable from the same Tone, as in the simple ones; & a Chord taken with them is no more unpleasant to a nice Ear than when taken on a single Stop.-- For although the Beats multiply in the acute Tones, yet they are so faint that the most critical Ear cannot distinguish them from perfect, which is not surprizing, when it is considered that they are only the 40<sup>th</sup> Part of a Tone too sharp."

The Truth of this Statement I can vouch for by various Experiments

which I made at Elliot's House<sup>9</sup> two Days ago, on Purpose to be able to give a safe Opinion upon the Subject.-- Indeed, if we only reflect upon the monstrous Crash of Dissonance which really exists in every Chord upon an Organ, (tuned any possible Way) when the compound Stops are employed, & which, if we take a compound Stop singly (Sesquialtera<sup>10</sup> for Instance) becomes execrable & intolerable, & yet consider how wonderfully all this is chastened & subdued by the fundamental Diapason, so as to form one rich & harmonious Amalgam (if I may so express it) we shall easily account for the Evanescence of the more inconsiderable Dissonances, upon which you have animadverted, which really become imperceptible.-- You well know Sir, that we may always refine upon Theory beyond what can ever be reducible to Practice, & it appears to me, that if Harmony on an Organ can be sufficiently improved by Temperament to entirely remove objectionable Sounds, & to bring every Chord, if not to absolute Perfection, yet to a very fair Proportion of it, we ought to rest contented.-- I think that Hawkes's Scheme has effected this in the extraneous Keys, & that Elliot's Temperament has sufficiently improved the others.--

I remain, with much Respect

Dear Sir, your obliged & obedient Servant,

S Wesley

1. The Revd Charles John Smyth (1760-1827), matric. New College, Oxford (1777), BA (1781), MA and Fellow (1786), rector of Great Fakenham, Norfolk and chaplain to Lady Bayning (1803), Vicar of Calton, Norfolk, Rector of St George's, Colegate, Norwich, and minor canon of Norwich Cathedral (1811). He was an amateur



musician, music theorist, and composer, who contributed a number of articles to MM and Philosophical Magazine; he also published pamphlets on music and composed a morning and evening service (Foster; Kassler, Science of Music, 955-60).

2. The Hawkes-Elliott organ, as used by SW at his Royal Institution lectures in early 1809. SW had subsequently used the same organ, or a similar one by Elliott constructed on the same principles, at his Surrey Institution lectures. For a more extended discussion of the organ and its construction, and of the technical points raised in this letter, see Philip Olleson, "'The Perfection of Harmony Itself': The William Hawkes Patent Organ and its Temperament", JBIO, 21 (1997), 108-28.
3. Either William Linley, or possibly his brother Ozias (1765-1831), who was with Smyth a minor canon at Norwich Cathedral. For Ozias, see SW to Novello, 5 Oct. 1814, n. 9.
4. i.e. mixtures, consisting of a number of ranks.
5. i.e. two eight-foot stops and one four-foot stop.
6. As is apparent from a description of the Elliott-Hawkes instrument by John Farey in Philosophical Magazine for May 1811, Elliott's temperament was a form of sixth-comma mean tone. The keys listed by SW here are those which are most out of tune in the quarter-comma mean tone temperament in general use at the time and referred to by SW as the 'false old Temperament'.
7. The additional pipes of the Hawkes system, giving separate pitches for C $\sharp$  and D $\flat$ , D $\sharp$  and E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$  and G $\flat$ , G $\sharp$  and A $\flat$ , and A $\sharp$  and B $\flat$ . The performer was able to select either all sharps or all flats by means of a pedal.
8. i.e. between 5.38 and 5.91 cents or hundredths of a tone, depending on which one of three possible commas was meant. In fact, the major thirds in Elliott's system were tuned sharp by 3.77 cents.
9. At 12 Tottenham Court, New Road, where he also had his workshop. SW lived next door at 13 Tottenham Court in 1812-13.
10. The normal diapason chorus mixture stop in England at this time, consisting of three



ranks (17-19-22).

