

John Chubb and music

by Tony Woolrich

9/11/2020

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One of the actors is playing a Baroque musette.

Music features in a number of John Chubb's drawings of Bridgwater people, and the Chubbs were evidently a musical family. John Chubb's great-great-great grand daughter, Mary Chubb (1903-2003) curated the collection and made a catalogue. She wrote about him in two articles in *The Countryman*, 1963-4.

The Chubb MSS, Somerset Heritage Centre, Taunton, A/CSC/1/3, is a Commonplace book by John Chubb c1770-1800, with a music example. There could well be more in his unexamined Commonplace books and unedited letters.

As a 13-14 year-old boy he spent part of 1759-1760 in London, and wrote to his sister Kitty in Bridgwater, this undated letter which is in the Chubb MSS, SRO, A/CSC:

Dear Kitty

Could you not send me one of the Schemes with the Auxiliary Verbs & Parler upon it, in a Frank**. Please to desire Mr. Walford to write out Fooks Minuet***, as I use to play it both hands in the Treble, & send it with the other to your dear Brother?*

John Chubb

* This relates to a book of French language exercises.

**This relates to the method postage then, before the days of adhesive postage stamps, when letters were pre-paid at the post office.

* ** Fooks Minuet. This clearly relates to a composition by Johann Joseph Fux (Fuchs) (c. 1660 – 1741) who was an Austrian composer, one of the most successful of his time, a music theorist and pedagogue of the late Baroque era. He published a book of 12 minuets. Here is video of an example:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0CYHJf2XfkM>

Among the Chubb MSS, in the archive of the Heritage Centre, Taunton, is a Commonplace book by John Chubb, c1770-1800, A/CSC/1/3, with a music example. There are the words in this volume of the song sung at Taunton 10 May 1770 of the occasion of the release from gaol of John Wilkes MP, who had been sentenced for Seditious Libel. In view of John Chubb's radical Whig political views, and his great involvement with Bridgwater Petition to abolish the Slave Trade of 1785, (the first in Great Britain), it is not surprising to find he included it. Indeed, he may have written the words

Song on the Enlargement of Mr Wilkes from the K. Bench
Sung at Taunton 10th April 1770

Too long 'oer Britains fertile Plains
Has curst Oppression shook her chains,
and wav'd her Iron Rod;
and injured Commerce wing'd her Flight
from her once-loved Abode.

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Yet, e'er she quits her favorite shore,
This Day fair Freedom deign's once more,
Her drooping head to rear,
Oh! not thus this lovely maid!
Hear her last Call, give instant Aid,
And fix her ever here!

Britons arouse! 'tis Virtues Cause:
Support your Rights; defend your Laws;
`Nor let them hence be driven!
Live, like your great Forefathers, free,
Or die, & bear your Liberty
to them in heaven

The background is that Wilkes was elected as a Radical Member of Parliament for Middlesex, where most of his support was located. He surrendered himself to the King's Bench in April. On waiving his parliamentary privilege to immunity, he was sentenced by Judge Joseph Yates to two years and fined £1,000; and the Lords' sentence of outlawry was overturned

When he was imprisoned in the King's Bench Prison on 10 May 1768, his supporters appeared before King's Bench, London, chanting "No liberty, no King." Troops opened fire on the unarmed men, killing seven and wounding fifteen, an incident that came to be known as the St George's Fields Massacre. The Irish playwright Hugh Kelly, a prominent supporter of the government, defended the right of the army to use force against rioters, which drew the anger of Wilkes' supporters and they began a riot at the Drury Lane Theatre during the performance of Kelly's new play *A Word to the Wise*, forcing it to be abandoned.

Parliament expelled Wilkes in February 1769, on the grounds that he was an outlaw when he returned. On his release from prison in March 1770, Wilkes was appointed a sheriff in London, and in 1771 the law on publicity of the parliamentary discussions was voted in Parliament, of which Wilkes was a great defender and who authorized the literal reproduction of the interventions of the Parliament. (*Edited from Wikipedia*)

The succeeding page has the words and score of the melody of a song (not reproduced here) :

Song

When first the Buds of Beauty break
In some fair ripening maiden's cheek
To lure the gazing Swains,
Her little tender fluttering Heart
Takes every wounded Lover's part,
and pities all their pains

But soon, when each succeeding day
Brings tribes of Victims to her Sway,
Compassion's laid aside;
Her heart grows callous to their woes
nor flutters for a thousand Beaux,
Though thousands hourly died

It is possible that this first appeared in some long forgotten Burletta, or Chubb may have written it himself. The second verse is somewhat cynical

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Pretty well nothing is known about Bridgwater music making in the C18 but it is likely that, like other small towns then, music making was a major activity of the inhabitants. A Glee Club existed at the turn of the century, and they held concerts to raise funds for the newly established Bridgwater Infirmary, of which John Chubb was Treasurer until his death in 1818.



Mary Chubb, in her *Countryman* (1963-4) article, included the above picture. It is clearly Mary Chubb, (1765- 1812) about the time they married, when she was aged about 20. She is holding an oblong song score book. The original is not in the collection now.



BWRAB : 2004/1/35

This may be his sister, Kitty Chubb, at the harpsichord.

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BWRAB 1977/53/22 Mr James Bryant.
Solicitor and Town Clerk

James Bryant was recorded in the 1780 Voters' Register as an Attorney, and was Treasurer and Clerk to the Bridgwater Turnpike Trustees. He was noted as an Attorney in the surviving voters registers to 1807. He was appointed Deputy Town Clerk in 1782, and Steward of the Manor of Bridgwater in 1787. His father, also James had been Town Clerk in the 1740s. The document on the floor is headed *Indenture*

His carrying a violin and bow, which must indicate he was a keen amateur musician, but nothing more is known so far. The tip of the bow is typical C18 design. This video shows the evolution of the violin bow:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uU48vc25vF0>

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Mary Chubb



This painting is in is one of a number he made of his wife Mary. She is seated at a chamber organ, which were often to be found in private houses. John Chubb has made a very stylistic and somewhat oversize account of the organ pipes, and what seems to be a fabric dust cover looks odd.

This is a video of a modern reproduction of Handel's chamber organ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v-J3YkRKn7c> . It explains how they sounded. This is another video of the chamber organ at Kew Palace <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOWL1GorsOc> . It it roughly the same date as organ in the picture.

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William Crotch, (1775-1847) musical child prodigy



William Crotch (1775-1847) was born in Norwich, the son of a master carpenter who built himself a small organ. When a very small child he showed a great deal of promise, and the Hon Daines Barrington wrote a brief article and later Dr Charles Burney read a paper, in February 1779, about him to the Royal Society, which was published in the *Philosophical Transactions*, for in 1779 William was brought to London, and began performing in public.

Crotch's life as travelling child prodigy continued for the next four years in a series of tours organized by his mother which took him to almost every large town in England and Scotland. Apart from some lessons from his half-brother John, from whom he learned the names of the notes and how to read and write, he remained almost completely uneducated. In his manuscript memoirs, written in his late fifties, Crotch was to comment: *I look back on this part of my life with pain and humiliation ... the manner in which my uncultivated abilities had been displayed to audiences who were frequently as ignorant of what was good and correct as myself and bestowed on me the most extravagant praises and dangerous flatteries, the attentions I received from the great, the noble and the fair, and the consciousness of possessing a musical ear such as everyone had not, made me think myself a most consequential being. ... I was indulged in all my wishes as far as it was practicable; I was becoming a spoilt child and in danger of becoming what too many of my musical brethren have become under similar circumstances and unfortunately remained thro' life.*

A similar picture of Crotch's behaviour and character at this time is conveyed in a letter of 25 May 1783 from Charles Burney to Sir James Lake, in which Burney recorded his fear that the adulation Crotch had received had caused him to be *as much satisfied with his own imperfections in performance, as contemptuous of all such instructions as his weak & vulgar mother or her connections could supply ...* Alvaro Ribeiro, SJ, *The Letters of Dr. Charles Burney*, Vol 1, 1751-1784, 1991, (pp 362-5).

Crotch was in Bridgwater in 1784, and noted it in his *Memoirs*:
May 1784 ... *I was at Bristol, where I had also been in Febry. Also abt. Hotwells, Glastonbury, Bridgwater and Tiverton. In June a letter from Hon. Daines Barrington recommends my being apprenticed to Mr Wesley...*

This drawing is signed JC '85

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In 1786 Crotch went to Cambridge as an assistant to Dr Randall, who was professor of music. He then moved to Oxford where he studied at Magdalene College with a view to entering the church. In 1790 he was appointed organist at Christ Church and in 1794 he graduated as Bachelor of Music and in 1797, became Heather Professor of Music at Oxford University and in 1799 Doctor of Music.

He delivered lectures at the Oxford music school 1800-1804, and at the Royal Institution 1804, 1805. and 1807 and again from 1820. He was appointed Principal of the Royal Academy of Music at its inception in 1822. He resigned in 1832 and made his last public performance as an organist was in June 1834 at the Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey.

He died in Taunton 29 December 1847 when visiting his son, Rev. William Herbert Crotch, who was headmaster of Taunton Grammar School. He was buried in Bishops Hull churchyard. A memorial was placed there by the Royal Academy of Music in 1902.

As a teacher he enjoyed a high and deserved reputation. In addition he was a talented topographical artist.

Writings

Specimens of various styles of music referred to in a course of Lectures of music read at Oxford and London, 1807

Elements of Musical Composition, 1812

Substance of several courses of Lectures on music, read in the university of Oxford, and in the metropolis, 1831.

Compositions

The Captivity of Judah [1], 1789

Ode to Fancy

Palestine, 1812

The Captivity of Judah [2], 1834

Besides these works he produced *Ten Anthems*; some chants; a motet, *Methinks I hear*, several glees; some fugues and concertos for the organ; several pianoforte pieces; an ode on the accession of George IV, (1830); Funeral Anthem for the Duke of York, (1837); *The Lord is King* anthem for voices and orchestra, (1843) and some works on Thorough Bass and Harmony.

Online

Well known Epiphany anthem *Lo Star-led Chiefs*: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LQqaG0hZtHI>

The Magnificat: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U9_YrI6rSc4

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Mr Kimberley



Mr Kimberley is a mystery and more work is needed to establish his link with Bridgwater. Perhaps he lived in a neighbouring village, or he may have been a musician who visited Bridgwater.

He appears to be playing a single manual harpsichord, but with the lid closed. But it could be a fortepiano which was coming into use at the time.

The following videos show how the harpsichord sounded:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=47YjpG5ODys> and the fortepiano of the period:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ef95BZfYcw>

Mary Chubb in her catalogue entry made much of Kimberley's long nose and the composer named on the music – Nasoni. No composer with a name near it can be found for the C18, but the Italian cellist and composer, Giacobbe Cervetto, (1682-1783), was nicknamed 'Nosey' and caricatures of him exist, so a link may lie there. Cervetto later became manager of Drury Lane theatre and died over 100 years old.

But it is more likely that Chubb was making a pun on Kimberley's appearance. Mary Chubb also commented on the bulbous appearance of the candle snuffer, suggesting it was done to emphasise the nose. In fact this was the little box on the snuffer, designed to contain the still glowing cut candle wick.

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John Chubb the copyist



BWRAB : 2004/1/255

Many thanks to Mike Searle for photographing it specially,
and to Janet Snowman for much bibliographical advice.

This is titled *Lethe*, (the river of forgetfulness in Greek mythology) and is about the size of the framed Bridgwater scenes by him displayed in the museum. It shows what appears to be a scene in a play or opera.

I originally thought that it was from a Ballad Opera, which was a vogue in the mid C18. This had begun with John Gay's *Beggar's Opera* of 1727, followed by Carey and Lampe's *Dragon of Wantley*, of 1737 and by 1764 had moved to an English-style Burletta. Many more were written and performed but are now quite forgotten. But Janet Snowman has identified it as a scene from David Garrick's burlesque *Lethe, or Aesop in the Shades*, first performed in 1740, and for the next half-century with several major revisions.

The character on the left, with the hunched back is clearly Aesop. The character next to him in the yellow jacket the Greek god Mercury, with his *caduceus*, and his winged hat and boots. The modern character in the tricorn hat, blue coat and sword and declaiming or singing can only be David Garrick as Lord Chalkstone, who was introduced in the 1756 revival. The lady in the purple dress and tall wig is just standing around. Mary Chubb, who made the initial catalogue, described the character next to her in the yellow-buff coat as playing an accordion, (which is what drew me to the picture). This is clearly wrong as the accordion was not invented until the 1820s. But it looks more like a concertina, also invented in the 1820s.



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A closer inspection of the figure (above right) leads to the conclusion he is playing a Baroque Musette — a type of bagpipe. Unlike the Scottish bagpipe it has no drones going over the shoulder and the wind comes from a small bellows pumped by the elbow. But Chubb was notoriously sloppy with accuracy — see how he generally drew people's hands, so it could be he was playing pipe-instrument of some kind. But this does not explain the bulky object between him and the lady to his right.

A video of a Musette being played is here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sEnazg2ukDg>. By the middle of the C18 it had become popular in France, and was often used in operas such as Rameau's *Les Indes Galantes* of 1735 : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DyhR8fmREjY>

The rest of the picture has three shadowy figures behind the main characters, and a boatman, obviously Charon, is poleing himself away after delivering his passenger.

It is possible that Chubb witnessed such a performance in London, where he lived in 1759/60, or in Bridgwater, since a theatre was in the town in his life-time, in Theatre Place, off Clare street, (now demolished). But it is most likely he based in on an engraving he came upon. Several engravings do exist, but no exact match has been found. The following print by Gabriel Smith and published by Mary Dickinson, 1766-77, certainly has a flavour of Chubb's style. Mercury, to the rear of the group, is similar to Chubb's drawing.



British Museum

This leads to the wider question of how much of Chubb's work was drawn from life, and how much was adapted from other artists' work.

A number of his drawings were of anonymous young women in pretty hats. It is scarcely likely these were the products of Bridgwater's milliners: more likely they were adapted from images in fashion magazines of the time.

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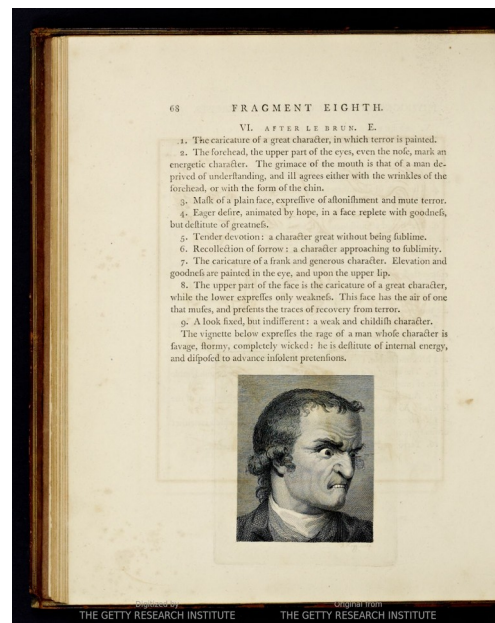
Janet Snowman has noticed that the one called 'Tom Lavater' on the Museum's web-site slide show of Chubb portraits is after a famous sketch from Johann Kaspar Lavater's *Physiognomische Fragmente zur Beförderung der Menschenkenntnis und Menschenliebe*, (1775-8), (his essays on physiognomy), and published in English by Thomas Holloway in 1789. This is a book of engravings of numerous drawings of facial expressions of the emotions— Joy, Hate, Fear, etc. etc. See *Wikipedia*.

There is a second Chubb portrait, but a young man, marked "Lavater", which is probably from the same source.



Above Chubb's drawing

BWRAB 2004/1/196



Above, a page from Holloway's edition of Lavater's book
This is after an earlier drawing by Charles Le Brun (1619 –1690)