

thorough bass and human nature

A Musical Tour through Pride and Prejudice

3pm, Sunday 4 November 2012

Hetzel Lecture Theatre, State Library of South Australia

Gillian Dooley (Soprano) · Raechel Damarell (Mezzo-soprano)
Fiona McCauley (piano)

Readings from Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen

Volume 1, Chapter 1: A universal truth

William Felton (1713-69): Air with variations

Volume 1, Chapter 3: The Bennet females return from the Assembly

P.K. Moran (d. 1831): Boulanger – ‘Pray Papa’

Volume 1, Chapter 6: Elizabeth and Mary play at Lucas Lodge

Joseph Haydn (1732-1809): Pastoral song – ‘My mother bids me bind my hair’; words by Anne Hunter

Domenico Corri (1746-1825): Variations on ‘My ain kind dearie’

Volume 1, Chapter 8: A discussion of accomplishments at Netherfield

Giovanni Paisiello (1740-1816): Duo du Roi Théodore – Filles charmantes

Volume 1, Chapter 10: While listening to Miss Bingley’s performance, Elizabeth observes Mr Darcy watching her ...

Christoph Willibald Gluck (1714-87): Dance of the blessed spirits ‘Che faro senza Euridice’ from *Orfeo*

And Miss Bingley varies the charm

Joseph Haydn arr.: ‘My love she’s but a lassie yet’

Volume 1, Chapter 12: Mary Bennet in a nutshell

John Percy (1748?-97): ‘Sweet smells the briar’; words based on Sonnet 26 from *Amoretti* by Edmund Spenser

Volume 1, Chapter 14: Mr Bennet is thoroughly delighted with Mr Collins and encourages him in his absurdities

Samuel Webbe (1740-1816): ‘Mansion of peace’

Volume 1, Chapter 16: Mr Wickham relates his tale of woe to Elizabeth

Antoine Laurent Baudron (1742-1834): ‘Since then I’m doomed’



INTERVAL

Volume 2, Chapter 1: Jane faces life without Mr Bingley

**Thomas Arne (1710-78): 'How gentle was my Damon's air' from
*Comus***

Volume 2, Chapter 3: Elizabeth relinquishes all hope of Mr Wickham with barely a regret

William Shield (1748-1829): 'Sweet transports'

Volume 2, Chapter 17: Jane continues to pine for Mr Bingley, but puts on a brave face

**Joseph Haydn: 'She never told her love'; words by Shakespeare from
*Twelfth Night***

Volume 3, Chapter 5: Lydia's letter to her friend upon eloping with Wickham

Anon: 'The Soger Laddie'

Volume 3, Chapter 6: Kitty takes her father's threats of confinement to heart

Thomas Simpson Cooke (1782-1848): 'Nobody coming to marry me'

Volume 3, Chapter 8: Elizabeth begins to understand her feelings for Darcy

**Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire (1757-1806): 'Silent
sorrow'; words by R.B. Sheridan**

Volume 3, Chapter 11: Jane and Elizabeth await the visit of Bingley and Darcy on their return to Netherfield

Anon: 'In Airy dreams'

Volume 3, Chapter 18: Elizabeth and Darcy look forward to their married life

Anon: 'Jessy or the happy pair'

Volume 3, Chapter 19: A happy ending

Anon: 'Begone dull care'



The Austen Family Music Collections

Most of the music presented today is selected from the Austen family music collections owned by the Jane Austen's House Museum, Chawton, and descendants of the Austen family, and held at the Hampshire Records Office, Winchester, and at Chawton House Library. Many of these songs were transcribed by Gillian Dooley directly from the manuscripts during a research trip to England in 2010, and are available online in the Flinders Academic Commons.

Almost all the music dates from the second half of the 18th century, and much of it is English, reflecting the tastes of the typical domestic music-maker of the time. The Austen collections also show the usual patterns of music dissemination among amateur musicians of the time, with music copied by hand from print sources mixed with printed music. Both manuscript and printed sheet music were often collected into bound volumes. As was the usual practice in those days, most of the songs include just the melody with a bass line and some numbers or 'figures' to indicate the harmony. Even amateur musicians were expected to learn figured bass, or 'thorough bass', so as to improvise a keyboard accompaniment from this outline.

The Music

The Air by clergyman and composer William Felton is written out, with its many variations, in a manuscript book which is part of the Austen family collection, but does not contain anything identifiably in Jane Austen's handwriting. 'Pray Papa' by Moran is not in the Austen music books, but is an example of the music for the Boulanger, which was a simple repetitive circular dance danced at the end of a ball.

The Haydn canzonets 'My Mother Bids Me Bind My Hair' and 'She Never Told Her Love' were both copied in the handwriting of Elizabeth Austen, nee Bridges, Jane's brother Edward's wife. The variations on 'My Ain Kind Dearie' by Domenico Corri, and 'My Love She's But a Lassie Yet', which were copied in Jane's hand, are indicative of the fashion for music based on Scottish tunes during this period.

'Filles Charmantes' is from an opera by Giovanni Paisiello, who was Napoleon's court composer for two years. This is one of several duets written out in Jane Austen's own handwriting. The words are in the same tradition as Cherubino's aria in Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*: *Charming girls, young lovers, please kindly tell me, what is love? Is it delirium, is it martyrdom? My breast pounds, my heart is agitated, my soul feels inflamed. Today I am feeling what love is.* This elegant music seems to suit the Bingley sisters.

Gluck's 'Che Faro Senza Euridice', Orpheus' heartfelt lament for his lost wife, is present in the Austen music collection in a printed version. English words are included in the Austen's music book, but we feel that Miss Bingley would prefer to show off her mastery of Italian.

'Sweet Smells the Briar' by John Percy survives in a printed copy bound into a book which belonged to Mrs Henry Austen, nee Eliza Hancock. The words are based on a sonnet by Edmund Spenser, though they have been 'improved' in both metre and morality for this 18th century version, to make a suitably proper song to illustrate the sentiments of Miss Mary Bennet: 'Why then should I think much of trifling pain, which endless pleasure shall unto me gain?'

'The Mansion of Peace', by Samuel Webbe is in one of the manuscript books of music written out in Jane Austen's own hand. Its rather sickly sentimentality – 'Alas, silly rose, hadst thou known, 'twas Daphne that gave thee thy place, thou never from thy station hadst flown, her bosom's the mansion of peace' – seems to suit Mr Collins' ideas of 'little delicate compliments which are always acceptable to ladies'.

The tune of 'Since Then I'm Doomed' is taken from Baudron's music for *The Barber of Seville*, set to English words for a play called *The Stranger*. It seems suitably pathetic to illustrate Wickham's disingenuous sob-story.

The recitative and aria 'How Gentle Was My Damon's Air' is from Arne's *Comus*. It is one of several songs from this masque copied out by Jane into one of her manuscript books. We imagine it might have expressed Jane Bennet's secret thoughts about Bingley, had she let herself utter them. 'Sweet Transports' is a simpler lament – 'Ah, why does duty chain the mind, and part those souls which love hath joined?' – which Elizabeth might have indulged in while dutifully relinquishing the memory of Wickham. The composer, William Shield, appears to have been one of Jane's favourites. This is one of a number of his songs she copied into her manuscript books.

'The Soger Laddie' is an anonymous Scottish song in one of the manuscript books which doesn't feature Jane's handwriting. The sentiment, proud and almost boastful, seems to echo Lydia Bennet's enthusiasm for her new husband, while poor Kitty has to stay home and fret, with 'Nobody Coming to Marry Me'. This little song is found in a book of printed music owned by Henry Austen's wife Eliza.

'Silent Sorrow' is one of the few pieces of music in the collection composed by a woman, Georgiana Cavendish, Duchess of Devonshire. The words are by R.B. Sheridan, and may be

imagined to express a low point in Elizabeth Bennet's feelings of regret at her rejection of Darcy's proposal. This song is written out in Jane Austen's hand. When things become a little more hopeful with the return of Bingley and Darcy to Netherfield, Elizabeth and Jane might perhaps indulge 'In Airy Dreams' of their respective young men: 'Return, my love, and charm each anxious care to rest; thy smiles shall every doubt disarm and soothe my soul to rest.' The sheet music for this charming duet is bound in the same volume as other printed music and manuscripts mostly in Jane's own hand. No composer is given, but we know it was published in 1785.

'Jessy, or the Happy Pair' is an older song, also anonymous, from 1747. It is written out in the same manuscript book as Felton's Air and 'The Soger Laddie'. Although it is hard to imagine Mr Darcy singing this, or anything else, he might be thought to agree with the sentiments in verse 2: 'Ye shepherds so gay who make love to ensnare and cheat with false vows the too credulous fair; in search of true pleasure how vainly you roam: to hold it for life you must find it at home.'

Finally, 'Begone Dull Care', from Jane's own manuscript book, seems to sum up the happy ending of this most infectiously light-hearted of Austen's novels: 'I hold it one of the wisest things to drive dull care away!'

The Musicians

Gillian Dooley is Special Collections Librarian and an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in English at Flinders University. She first devised 'Jane Austen's Music' for the Flinders 'Fridays at the Library' series in May 2007, and, with a variety of co-performers, has presented versions at the 2008 and 2010 Adelaide Fringe Festivals, the Adelaide Lyceum Club, and the Jane Austen Festival in Canberra in 2009, 2010 and 2011. In 2010 she sang and played at the Jane Austen Festival in Bath and the Jane Austen Society Conference in Harrogate. In 2011 she presented a program titled 'The Sweets of May' in several venues in Adelaide and Canberra. In April 2012 she sang in the Jane Austen Society of Australia's concert 'A Very Superior Performance' in Sydney, and in September 2012 travelled to the UK again to present a concert titled 'Sweet Smells the Briar', with Mike Parker on harp, at the Bath Festival and the JAS Conference in Abingdon.

Details of her research on the Austen music collections, including transcripts of many of the manuscripts, can be found at sites.google.com/site/janeaustensmusic/home

Raechel Damarell has studied singing privately and at the Flinders Street School of Music, achieving her Associate Diploma in Music, Australia (AMusA) award in 1999. She has appeared as soloist with Adelaide Baroque, the Hills Choral Society, and as part of the Flinders University Lunchtime Concert series. She is also an avid chorister, having been a member of the Adelaide University Choral Society, Corinthian Singers, and Graduate Singers. Raechel regularly tours regional centres as guest artist with the Adelaide West Men's Chorus, of which her husband is a member. She will be appearing later in the month as soloist with Adelaide Baroque in a concert of Purcell works, including *Come ye sons of art*. Raechel sang in the first two Jane Austen's music concerts in 2007 and 2008.

Fiona McCauley is a graduate of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music in Glasgow. She was a senior classroom music teacher for over forty years in Scotland, England and Adelaide. Since retiring from the education sector, she has been able to pursue her love of accompanying, and has played for choirs, vocalists and instrumentalists. She has been playing the piano for Jane Austen's Music since 2009, and played the piano and spinet for Flinders University Library's 'Something Rich and Strange: Shakespeare's *Tempest* in Words and Music' in August 2012.

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