



# Kitty Clive,

or

THE FAIR SONGSTER

BERTA JONCUS

---

Kitty Clive,  
or The Fair Songster



---

# Kitty Clive, or The Fair Songster

BERTA JONCUS

THE BOYDELL PRESS

© Berta Joncus 2019

*All Rights Reserved.* Except as permitted under current legislation  
no part of this work may be photocopied, stored in a retrieval  
system,  
published, performed in public, adapted, broadcast,  
transmitted, recorded or reproduced in any form or by any means,  
without the prior permission of the copyright owner

The right of Berta Joncus to be identified as  
the author of this work has been asserted in accordance with  
sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988

First published 2019  
The Boydell Press, Woodbridge

ISBN 978 1 78327 346 1

The Boydell Press is an imprint of Boydell & Brewer Ltd  
PO Box 9, Woodbridge, Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK  
and of Boydell & Brewer Inc.  
668 Mt Hope Avenue, Rochester, NY 14620-2731, USA  
website: [www.boydellandbrewer.com](http://www.boydellandbrewer.com)

A catalogue record for this book is available  
from the British Library

The publisher has no responsibility for the continued existence or  
accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred  
to in this book, and does not guarantee that any content on such  
websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate

This publication is printed on acid-free paper

FOR ANDREW



---

## Contents

Illustrations	viii
Preface	xi
Conventions of Transcription	xiv
1 The Siren Song: Kitty Clive in the Playhouse	1
2 ‘The Lovely Virgin tun’d her Voice’: Henry Carey and the Production of a Native Songster	28
3 ‘Charm’d with the sprightly Innocence of Nell’: The Metamorphosis of Miss Raftor	64
4 ‘HINT writes, and RAFTOR acts in Drury-lane’: Clive, Fielding, and Theophilus Cibber	105
5 ‘The pious Daughter, and the faithful Wife’: Fielding, Miller, and Clive, 1733–35	138
6 ‘A Likeness where none was to be found’: Contested Images of Clive, 1734–37	168
7 The Patriot Soprano: British Worthies at Drury Lane	194
8 Handel and the Sweet Bird of Drury Lane, 1740–43	227
9 <i>The Case of Mrs. Clive</i>	275
10 Of Scuffles and Rivalries: The Demise of ‘Kitty Cuckoe’	302
11 From Miss Lucy to Mrs. Riot: Voice and Caricature	331
12 Clive on Clive: <i>The Rehearsal: Or, Bays in Petticoats</i>	378
13 Conclusion: The Fair Songster	409
Appendix 1 Catherine Clive’s Roles 1728–69	427
Appendix 2 Lines in Catherine Clive’s Repertory 1728–69	461
Appendix 3 <i>The Case of Mrs. CLIVE</i> (1744)	477
Select Bibliography	482
Index	509



## Illustrations

- Fig. 2.1** John Faber the younger after John Ellys, *Miss Fenton*, 1728. Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1902,1011.1422. 35
- Fig. 2.2** Gerard Vandergucht, Frontispiece to *Damon and Phillida*, 1737. Engraving. Courtesy of the Center for Archival Collections, Bowling Green State University. Call number: rareovsz ML50.5 .D17 1737. 48
- Fig. 2.3** After Godfried Schalcken (*Couple d'amoureux dans un forêt*, c.1695), *MISS RAFTER in the Character of PHILLIDA*, 1729. Mezzotint. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum number: S.3874-2009. 50
- Fig. 3.1** Francis Hayman (?), Frontispiece to *The Devil to Pay*, 1731. Engraving. © The British Library Board 30/9/2018. All Rights Reserved. Shelfmark: Music Collections 11775.c.24. 99
- Fig. 3.2** Francis Hayman and studio, A Scene in *The Devil to Pay*, 1730s. Oil on canvas. By permission of the owner. 100
- Fig. 3.3** Gerard (?) Vandergucht after Francis Hayman. Frontispiece to *The Devil to Pay*, 1738. Engraving. © The British Library Board 30/9/2018. All Rights Reserved. Shelfmark: Music Collections 11775.c.25. 101
- Fig. 3.4** Richard Parr after Francis Hayman, *From the Farce, The Devil to pay or the Wife's Metamorphos'd Jobson and Nell*, 26 May 1743, 1743. Engraving. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum number: S.4303-2009. 102
- Fig. 3.5** After Richard Parr after Francis Hayman, *ROYAL AMUSEMENT or a Curious Representation of one of ye Celebrated Paintings at Vaux-Hall done by ye Ingenious MR. HYMEN, NELL and the COBLER*, c.1744. Engraving. The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford. Shelfmark: Douce Prints a. 49, fol. 114, Item 90. 103
- Fig. 6.1** John Faber after Pieter van Bleeck, *The Celebrated Mrs. Clive, late Miss Rafter in the Character of Philida*, 1734. Mezzotint. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum number: S.3816-2009. 172

- Fig. 6.2** Edward Fisher after Jonathan Richardson, *Mrs. Oldfield the celebrated Comedian*, 1758–82. Mezzotint. National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG number: D27619. 172
- Fig. 6.3** Pieter van Bleeck after Pieter van Bleeck, *Mrs. Clive in the Character of Philida*, 1735. Mezzotint. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum number: S.3817-2009. 176
- Fig. 6.4** Jeremiah Davison after Joseph van Aken, *Catherine Clive*, c.1735. Oil on canvas. Reproduced by permission of the Marquess of Bath, Longleat House, Warminster, Wiltshire. Longleat Collection Number: 9341. 176
- Fig. 6.5** John Simon after John Richardson, *Mrs. Oldfield*, c.1730. Mezzotint. National Portrait Gallery, London. NPG number: D27620. 177
- Fig. 6.6** Alexander van Aken after Joseph van Aken, 'Of all the Arts ...' [Catherine Clive, 'Printed for T. Bowles'], 1735. Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1902,1011.6026. 177
- Fig. 7.1** William Nutter after John Boyne, *Mr. MACKLIN & Mrs. POPE in the Characters of SHYLOCK and PORTIA*, 1789. Stipple engraving. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Harry R. Beard Collection, given by Isobel Beard. Museum number: S.201-2009. 207
- Fig. 8.1** William Verelst, *Catherine Clive*, 1740. Oil on canvas. By kind permission of the Garrick Club of London. Paintings: G0122. 231
- Fig. 8.2** Simon (?) Beauvais, *Mr. Beard in the Character of a Capt'n of a Man of War*, c.1740. Engraving. Folger Shakespeare Library. Call number: ART Vol. d45 no.186. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. 250
- Fig. 9.1** 'Historical Chronicle, October 1743,' *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. 13, October 1743, p. 553. The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford. Shelfmark: Per.Bibl. 2. 285
- Fig. 9.2** 'Historical Chronicle, November 1743,' *The Gentleman's Magazine and Historical Chronicle*, vol. 13, November 1743, p. 609. The Bodleian Libraries, The University of Oxford. Shelfmark: Per.Bibl. 2. 287
- Fig. 9.3** *The Theatrical Contest 1743*, 1743. Etching. The Folger Shakespeare Library. Call number: PR3291.T39 Cage 1. Used by permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library. 300
- Fig. 10.1** Thomas Booth, *The Green Room Scuffle, or, Drury Lane in an Uproar*. Letterpress broadside song illustrated with etching, 1746 ('Publish'd Pursuant to Act of Parliament Jan. 29, 1746, by G. Foster on Ludgate-Hill, and Sold at the Print and Pamphlet Shop; in London and Westminster'). Yale Collection, Lewis Walpole Library. Call number: 746.01.29.01+. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. 320

- Fig. 10.2** Made by the Bow porcelain manufactory; Catherine Clive (?), left; Peg Woffington (?), right; c.1750. Soft-paste porcelain. Philadelphia Museum of Art, Gift of Mrs. Morris Hawkes, 1942-59-5758. 327
- Fig. 11.1** Pieter van Bleeck, *Catherine Clive as Mrs. Riot, the Fine Lady in Lethe; or Aesop in the Shades*, c.1749. Oil on canvas. By kind permission of the Garrick Club of London. Paintings: G0121. 356
- Fig. 11.2** Charles Mosley after Pieter van Bleeck, *Mrs. Clive, in the Character of the fine Lady in Lethe*, 1750. Etching and engraving. Lewis Walpole Library. Call number: Portraits C642 no. 3. Courtesy of the Lewis Walpole Library, Yale University. 357
- Fig. 11.3** After Charles Mosley, after Pieter van Bleeck, *Mrs. CLIVE IN THE CHARACTER OF THE LADY IN LETHE*, 1750. Watch-paper. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1902,1018.71. 358
- Fig. 11.4** Made by the Bow porcelain manufactory, after Charles Mosley, after Pieter van Bleeck, *Kitty Clive as 'The Fine Lady' in Lethe*, 1750. Soft-paste porcelain. © Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. Object Accession Number: EC.3-1938. 359
- Fig. 13.1** Alexander van Aken after Joseph van Aken, *The FAIR SONGSTER* [original 1735], 1763-67. Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: K,58.180. 417
- Fig. 13.2** Robert Sayer, after Johann Ludwig Fäsch (?), *Mrs. CLIVE in the Character of Mrs. Heidelberg* [in *The Clandestine Marriage*], 1769. Coloured engraving. © Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Museum number: S.440-1997. 418
- Fig. 13.3** Johann Ludwig Fäsch, *Mrs. CLIVE in the Character of Lady FUZ in a Peep behind Curtain*, c.1767. Print study. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1931,0509.252. 419
- Fig. 13.4** Alexander van Aken after Joseph van Aken, *Mrs. CLIVE, from the Picture at Strawberry Hill* [original 1735], after 1793. Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1902,1011.6028. 421
- Fig. 13.5** William Hoare, *Mrs. Clive in the Character of Philida* [sic] *Drury Lane*, 1736. Red chalk on paper. Unknown collection. Photograph National Portrait Gallery, London. 423

The author and publisher are grateful to all the institutions and individuals listed for permission to reproduce the materials in which they hold copyright. Every effort has been made to trace the copyright holders; apologies are offered for any omission, and the publisher will be pleased to add any necessary acknowledgment in subsequent editions.

---

## Preface

In 1735 the ‘beauteous Ease’ of Drury Lane star Catherine Clive and the ‘heavly Strains’ of her song were extolled in the same popular press which in 1746 would call her a ‘*Red-Fac’d* B[it]ch!’.<sup>1</sup> By the late eighteenth century, stage historians typically sneered at her figure, manner, and nature. Why did Clive, who debuted in 1728 and for whom Handel, Henry Fielding, and David Garrick wrote, rise and fall so drastically in public report? Modern scholars have shown her to be an important actress and a fascinating stage writer. But what marked Clive most strongly has never been properly considered: her song – by which means she shot to first rank – and her sudden downfall.

Clive possessed a protean voice, dazzling audiences equally in exquisite airs and raw ballads. Such singing is unknown today, as is, Handel’s works apart, the music she sang. Clive drew energy from playhouse audiences, who loved in particular that she could defy a playbook author’s intent; she did this repeatedly, spontaneously, and often through music. Her first great success, in 1731 as Nell in *The Devil to Pay*, resulted from this skill. Until 1750, Clive used song to bond with her audiences, improvising for them, directly addressing them, and delighting them with send-ups of fashionable Italian sopranos.

Yet her dizzying climb bred her career crash of the 1740s. Clive confronted formidable biases against women, and while she tried to project herself as a witty and incorruptible model Briton, her empowerment caught up with her. While on stage she could project the self of her choosing, but she couldn’t control what was said or written about her. Once her high wages and influence behind the scenes became public knowledge, her boldness was heard as insolence and her ease seen as temerity. Gaining weight as she aged made her vulnerable to charges of excess and self-indulgence; fandom, in its progeny-eating dynamic, made her into a figure of fun. To save her career Clive took up this parodic view of herself, managing thereby to reign at Drury Lane for another twenty years. What divides her first career, founded on respect, from

<sup>1</sup> On Clive’s ‘beauteous Ease’, see [Aaron Hill], ‘The Stage’s Acknowledgment’, *The Prompter*, no. 99 (21 October 1735), p. 331, and Chapter 6, p. 178; on her ‘heavly Strains’, see Fig. 6.6 and Chapter 6, p. 177; and on ‘*Red fac’d* B[it]ch!’ see Fig. 10.1a and Chapter 10, p. 321.

her second, founded on disrespect, is serious song. Around 1750 serious song receded from her repertory; this book, which is about Clive as songster, ends there.

I have been living with Kitty Clive for a long time. A brief description of her in Roger Fiske's *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* led to Clive becoming the topic of my 2004 PhD dissertation, supervised by Reinhard Strohm, who first emboldened me to challenge my material.<sup>2</sup> Writing as a post-graduate, however, I lacked long immersion in the sources and their contexts. Findings from my post-doctoral research allowed me to see beyond standard accounts of her repertory and career, and to formulate new ones. Learning and performing Clive's music brought her stage works alive to me as events. Reports about Clive, including her own, revealed themselves to me not as faithful records but as a welter of often conflicting updates from the shopfloor of playhouse stardom. That also is my subject: how playhouse stars, especially women, were made and marketed, and in particular how they could use song to produce themselves. By virtue of her stagecraft, Clive shaped stage works and stage politics. A Clive-informed view asks us to rethink both, sometimes radically.

I am deeply grateful to all those who have made this book possible. Many scholars generously shared their expertise with me in emails, conversations, and feedback on draft chapters. I especially thank Ruth Smith, David Coke, Jeremy Barlow, Felicity Nussbaum, Susan Rutherford, Thomas Lockwood, Vanessa Rogers – who kindly put the scores she had made at my disposal – Rebecca Harris-Warwick, Robert D. Hume, and Judith Milhous for their thoughtful and illuminating responses. My Handel Institute Council colleagues Colin Timms and Helen Coffey facilitated access to University of Birmingham holdings and to the forthcoming *George Frideric Handel: Collected Documents* volumes. Several discoveries came from this material.

The expert staff of, among other institutions, the British Library, the Bodleian Libraries, the National Portrait Gallery, the Harvard Theater Collection, the Folger Shakespeare Library, the Huntington Library – where Anita Weaver checked foliation against digitized sources for me – the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, and the Garrick Club of London aided my archival work. The Garrick Club has graciously allowed me to reproduce in this book, without charge, their oil portraits of Clive. During my research trip to the Lewis Walpole Library, Sue Walker helped me navigate their valuable collection. The archivists with whom I corresponded – from Eton College, Shropshire Archives, Herefordshire Record Office, Kilkenny Family Archives, the National Library

<sup>2</sup> Roger Fiske, *English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century* (London and New York, 1973), pp. 214–16; Berta Joncus, 'A Star is Born: Kitty Clive and Female Representation in Eighteenth-Century English Musical Theatre' (PhD diss., Univ. of Oxford, 2004).

of Ireland, and Christchurch College Library, Oxford – provided valuable evidence otherwise inaccessible to me.

For help in preparing the bibliography and music examples, I thank Chandler Hall and Christopher Gould respectively. I am particularly grateful to Natassa Varka, who meticulously checked all this book's quotations, citations and music analyses against their original sources and formulated along with me an editorial policy for transcribing words. Her absolute commitment kept my spirits high during this book's final phase. My perceptive sons, Gustav and Oliver, have helped me refine my reflections on Clive through conversation. It is, however, to my husband Andrew that I am most indebted. His brilliant editing, constant counsel, shared enthusiasm for my subject, and shrewd observations about my findings have been crucial to bringing this book into being. I dedicate it to him.

---

## Conventions of Transcription

Eighteenth-century writing is based on phonetics. Spelling, punctuation, italicization, and capitalization typically communicate how the reader should hear words, whether spoken aloud or mentally registered. When quoting period sources – I use them even if other scholars quote the same material – I forego modernization to capture the original as far as possible. Proper nouns are, however, shorn of the italics which they automatically were given in the eighteenth century, to avoid modern readers erroneously assuming emphasis where none was intended. Where entire passages are italicized in the original, I reverse the lettering of italics to plain text, and vice versa. I follow online resources in omitting the first article from a newspaper's title (*Grub-street Journal* rather than *The Grub-street Journal*), even if the first article is in the original printed title. Clear printer's errors, such as omitted spaces, are silently corrected, except for possessive apostrophes whose variant usage – *The Beggar's Opera*, *The Beggars' Opera*, or the *Beggars Opera* – might impute different meanings. I don't insert '[sic]' unless I think its absence would confuse the reader. Superscripts are faithfully transcribed, as are contractions which are completed only where deemed necessary. Old Style dates are silently changed to New Style dates, although the former are retained in quoted material. For a person's name in my main text, I ignore variants and use the spelling of the person's headword entry in modern dictionaries such as *Oxford Music Online*. Other editorial interventions include standardizing punctuation with a full colon before the subtitles of stage works. I also omit quotation marks that in primary sources are repeated in lines that follow each other; finally, at the start of a quote, I change any lower-case letter to upper case and set it in square brackets.

I use the abbreviation *The London Stage* for *The London Stage, 1660–1800: a Calendar of Plays, Entertainments and Afterpieces, together with Casts, Box-Receipts and Contemporary Comment*, 5 parts, 11 vols; Part 2: 1700–1729, ed. Emmett L. Avery, 2 vols (Carbondale, IL, 1960); Part 3: 1729–1747, ed. Arthur H. Scouten, 2 vols (Carbondale, IL, 1961); Part 4: 1747–1776, ed. George Wincheste Stone, Jr., 3 vols (Carbondale, IL, 1962). For dates of performance, original press notices, rather than *The London Stage*, have been consulted whenever possible; these announcements are cited with the issue number.

## The Siren Song: Kitty Clive in the Playhouse

If therefore this Theatrical Genius was able to entertain, contrary to the Intention of the Author – what must we say of her, or what Words can describe her Merits, when she appeared in the Fulness of her Powers, and was the very Person she represented?

Benjamin Victor on Catherine Clive, *The History of the Theatres of London, from the Year 1760 to the Present Time* (London, 1771), vol. 3, p. 145.

Who was Kitty Clive? Her earliest ‘portrait’ shows a bare-bosomed nymph whose song, verses below the image tell us, seduces male listeners. Like so many representations of Clive, this image was a fiction; it was taken from a canvas painted c.1695, sixteen years before she was born. Stories were spun around Clive, some of them by Clive herself. She asserted the kind of person she was through performance, which was when she had greatest control over her self-presentation. Audiences knew that what she enacted was a show, with postures and antics, but soaring above this noise was her seemingly incorruptible voice, which fascinated them. Clive became the first playhouse principal to attain and maintain stardom primarily through song.

Her ascent was improbable. She was born Catherine Raftor, to William and Elizabeth Raftor, in London in 1711.<sup>1</sup> She once suggested that her birthday was 15 November,<sup>2</sup> but her twentieth-century biographer Patrick J. Crean found evidence that she may have been baptized ‘Ellenor’ on 15 July 1711.<sup>3</sup> Her father

<sup>1</sup> Patrick J. Crean, ‘The Life and Times of Kitty Clive’ (PhD diss., Univ. of London, 1933), pp. 10–11. Clive’s maiden name was spelled both ‘Raftor’ and ‘Raftor’; I follow most eighteenth-century and modern dictionary entries for ‘Catherine Clive’ in spelling it ‘Raftor’. Crean contends that the ‘more correct form is Raftor, a modernisation of the ancient Irish surname “Mac Reachtagain”’. *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Catherine Clive to Jane Pope, letter of 15 November 1782: ‘I write to you on my Birth day, it is no matter how Long ago; I was born as Some say in the Consious lovers [*The Conscious Lovers*] in one thousand seven hundered and something or other; I little thought four months ago I shoud have lived to have seen Another.’ ‘Autograph Letters from Catherine Clive to Jane Pope’, Bodleian Library, Toynbee b.1. Some modern sources give her date of birth as 5 November; earlier scholars appear to have misread the ‘15’ in this letter as ‘5’.

<sup>3</sup> The entry is in the Registers of St Paul’s, Covent Garden, found in *The Harleian Society Publications*, vol. 33; Crean, ‘The Life and Times of Kitty Clive’, pp. 10–11. The register



was the son of dispossessed Catholic Anglo-Irish landowners. Disgraced through his support of the Stuart King James II, William Raftor was on 21 April 1691 listed as one of the 'Jacobites of the County Kilkenny and Upper Ossory[,] outlawed' by England's new monarch, King William.<sup>4</sup> After the Crown expropriated his lands, he fled to France, like many of his compatriots. He sued for and was granted pardon, came to London, and married Elizabeth Daniell, daughter of 'an eminent Leather-seller ... with whom he had a handsome Fortune'.<sup>5</sup> William Raftor was trained in law but as a Catholic was unable to practise his profession in London.<sup>6</sup>

Despite her politically compromised parentage, and without theatre connections, Clive rose to top rank at Drury Lane. This house had been the licensed home of English-language theatre since 1707, when the Lord Chamberlain sequestered spoken drama from opera and made the Queen's (later King's) Theatre the exclusive venue for 'Operas and other Musically presentments'.<sup>7</sup> Yet music was crucial at Drury Lane and at London's other playhouses.<sup>8</sup> As celebrity production grew in scope during the century, English-language song helped both to generate and to constitute the personae of several London playhouse principals.<sup>9</sup> Clive spearheaded the self-production of stars through song. This book is about Clive's singing career until 1750, and is for that reason in part a study in vocal music's semantic richness, and how it might be exploited.

To understand Clive's success requires us to re-imagine her voice, engage with her technical proficiency, and identify her moments of improvisation.

---

passage reads: 'Ellenor Da[ughte]r of W<sup>m</sup> Raster by Eliz. his Wife'. Crean, *ibid.*, points out that the 's' could originally have been 'f', the two letters being hard to tell apart in the cursive writing of the time.

<sup>4</sup> William Carrigan, *The History and Antiquities of the Diocese of Ossory*, vol. 4 (Dublin, 1905), p. 398 (copied from the original in the Public Record Office, Dublin); William Raftor's name appears on p. 403. Cited in Crean, 'The Life and Times of Kitty Clive', pp. 6–7.

<sup>5</sup> Crean, 'The Life and Times of Kitty Clive', p. 8. Crean speculates that William Raftor may have fled to the exiled court of King James II at St Germaine en Laye and repeats the assertion of Edmund Curll – an unreliable eighteenth-century writer – that William Raftor was awarded a Captain's Commission in the army of Louis XIV. As yet, these assertions are undocumented. Crean, 'The Life and Times of Kitty Clive', pp. 5–7.

<sup>6</sup> Crean, 'The Life and Times of Kitty Clive', pp. 8–9. William Raftor had apparently earlier practised law in New Ross, Wexsex. *Ibid.*, pp. 1–7.

<sup>7</sup> 'The Haymarket Opera House', *Survey of London: Volumes 29 and 30, St James Westminster*, Part 1, ed. F. H. W. Sheppard (London, 1960), pp. 223–50. *British History Online* <<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/vols29-30/pt1/pp223-250>>. Accessed 20 January 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Vanessa Rogers, 'Orchestra and Theatre Music', *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737–1832*, ed. J. Swindells and D. F. Taylor (Oxford, 2013), pp. 304–20.

<sup>9</sup> Ballad opera and its cousin, pastiche comic opera, served as vehicles for producing later playhouse celebrities such as John Beard and Charlotte Brent. See Berta Joncus, 'Ballad Opera: Commercial Song in Enlightenment Garb', *The Oxford Handbook of the British Musical*, ed. R. Gordon and O. Jubin (Oxford, 2016), pp. 31–63.

The distinctiveness of her vocalism helped Clive to unify, in her person, improbably diverse stage characters. Within each character, she shaped song in ways that only she could duplicate. In stage speech also, Clive's early musical training helped to distinguish her from other actresses. She was aided in this by the spatial intimacy of Drury Lane and the freedoms its audiences enjoyed. Physically close to her public, she reached out musically to them.

Her stage productions accommodated two kinds of reciprocity: between Clive and the *dramatis personae* she enacted, and between her self-projections and what audiences knew and thought they knew about her. She brought a *dramatis persona* into being, and this persona, because it belonged to a character type, guided how audiences saw her; yet by investing this type with her 'self', she helped to shape the very audience taste that guided her performance. Clive variously bolstered, circumvented, challenged, and overturned conventions of stage production as she involved audiences in the business of her self-construction. This dynamic broke down in 1745–46 as audiences came to view her success as unseemly, and derision of Clive overtook approbation of her. To salvage her career, Clive began to play up to the negative caricature that had been imposed on her in the press. Refined song, foundational to her early career, disappeared from her stage line as she enjoyed a late flowering of success as a fat, ageing, outrageous Fine Lady.

### Hearing Kitty Clive

From 1728, when she first appeared on stage, until the mid-1740s, Clive sang most nights that she performed. She led English-language musical productions across genres: masque, ballad opera, burlesque, serenata, cantata, oratorio, serious opera, and interpolated song. Of these, masque and ballad opera were the most important to Clive's career. Masque was the English-language equivalent of Italian opera: high-style, sung throughout, based on classical myth, and written by one composer. Ballad opera, by contrast, was pastiche: begun by John Gay with *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), ballad opera was essentially sentimental comedy interlarded with common tunes – that is, melodies already in the public sphere, identified by title alone. The sources of the tunes were heterodox, ranging from broadsides to opera arias. A ballad opera might contain as few as nine and as many as sixty sung numbers. Cousin to ballad opera was interpolated song. Usually newly composed, interpolated songs were independent numbers inserted into revived or new comedy. Burlesque was more a practice than a genre, and Clive specialized in applying burlesque to individual Italian arias that she interpolated; composers also wrote burlesque operas, oratorios, and pastorals which she co-led.

In the 184 roles she performed by 1750, she usually sang, as shown in Appendices 1 and 2. While Clive's post-1900 reputation has rested mainly on her acting, her most celebrated parts before 1750 – in Henry Carey's masque

*Cephalus and Procris*, Milton's masque *Comus*, the ballad opera *The Devil to Pay* and Fielding's ballad farces – were in musical stage works. Given Clive's evident reliance on song during her career, why have historians passed over it? Reasons for this oversight are several. Modern scholars tackling her history have mostly been theatre specialists and as such have engaged neither with reading her music nor re-imagining her execution of it.<sup>10</sup> Because so much of Clive's repertory is of humble origin or content, musicologists have also tended to pass it by.<sup>11</sup>

Yet modern ignorance of Clive as initially a celebrated songster, and then a first comedienne-soprano, stems largely from eighteenth-century writings, including Clive's. An assumption underpinning this contemporary opinion was that acting, not singing, determined a player's merit, and in early commentary about Clive her singing is almost never discussed. Obscuring our view of Clive more generally is her eventual career devolution: after 1746, not even Clive herself thought that audiences would accept her in a serious part. This made it easy for a new generation of writers, including Thomas Davies and Charles Burney, to relegate her to low comic representations.

Clive's song is hidden from us also because we have no model for such a voice. She excelled in opposing genres. Her vocal production ranged widely: in polite repertory, she was said to transport audiences with her 'meaning *Raptures*';<sup>12</sup> in ballads, her voice was compared to 'London Cries' – that is, to the raw sound of street vendors.<sup>13</sup> Beyond this, she hijacked the vocal identi-

<sup>10</sup> I am indebted to the findings of these scholars, who include Felicity Nussbaum, Fiona Ritchie, Matthew Kinservik, and Richard Frushell. Their publications are cited below.

<sup>11</sup> Because English, and because derived sometimes from common tunes, Clive's song has been marginalized in music histories. During the formation of musicology as a discipline, leading nineteenth-century German scholars identified Britain as 'Das Land ohne Musik' ('The country without music'). Although a product of nineteenth-century prejudices – *inter alia*, the centrality of great works, and of male (Austro-German) composers and scholars, to the creation of a European music history – this characterization is not uncommon today. For a pithy summary of this historiography, see Bennett Zon, 'Histories of British Music and the Land without Music: National Identity and the Idea of the Hero', *Essays on the History of English Music in Honour of John Caldwell: Sources, Style, Performance, Historiography*, ed. E. Hornby and D. Maw (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 311–24. On the challenges with which this legacy lumbars scholars of British eighteenth-century music, see Peter Holman, 'Eighteenth-Century English Music: Past, Present, Future', *Music in Eighteenth-Century Britain*, ed. D. Wyn Jones (Burlington, VT, 2000), pp. 1–13. From 1845, when scholars began to devise British music histories, they looked to 'heroes', and to authors, rather than to 'heroines', or to performers, to rescue British music from oblivion.

<sup>12</sup> [Aaron Hill], 'The Stage's Acknowledgment' *The Prompter*, no. 99 (21 October 1735), p. 331; repr. in the *London Magazine, or, Gentleman's Monthly Intelligencer* [1732–1735], vol. 4 (October 1735), p. 566. Quoted in full and discussed in Chapter 6, p. 178.

<sup>13</sup> [Christopher Smart], 'EPILOGUE written by a FRIEND, spoken by Mrs. CLIVE', Arthur Murphy, *The Apprentice: A Farce, in Two Acts* (London, 1756), pages unnumbered. See Chapter 2, p. 33.

ties of her Italian operatic rivals, building a line for herself in the comic 'taking off' of London's reigning *prime donne*.

What is clear is that Clive commanded her instrument. Vocal production is complex, with techniques that shift according to musical genre.<sup>14</sup> The vocalist must control her lungs, diaphragm, chest, and abdominal muscles; raise, lower, or hold neutral her larynx and its associated muscles, nerves, and cartilage; direct air flow through phonators (throat, mouth cavity, nasal passages) while modifying articulators (tongue, soft palate, lips).<sup>15</sup> For Clive to shift between common and serious song, or to ape the voice of another, will have required patiently acquired physical mastery and meticulous attention to the physics of sound production. The inner discipline needed for this seems to have registered with Clive's audiences.

Clive's facility in vocalizing diverse identities was central to her appeal, not least because in so doing she reminded audiences of what was unchanging about her. Sounding like Clive, while inhabiting multiple stage personae, was what marked her integrity. One of Clive's champions, William Chetwood, called her singing 'peculiar to herself'.<sup>16</sup> I understand this peculiarity of Clive's voice to have been vested in what Roland Barthes would call its 'grain', that is, the 'materiality of the body' as heard by the listener, especially the sense of the singer's own self created through diction.<sup>17</sup> According to Barthes, the listener

<sup>14</sup> In pedagogy, vocal teachers tend to categorize training into practices for jazz, gospel, popular, and 'classical' repertoires. See, for instance, Scott D. Harrison and Jessica O'Bryan Springer, *Teaching Singing in the 21st Century* (Dordrecht, 2014), Chapters 3, 4, 5, 18, and 19; see especially, in Chapter 4, 'Table 4.1: Fundamental Differences between Classical and Contemporary singing', p. 37, and 'Table 4.2: Broad Generalizations of Stylistic Variation' p. 49. On the eighteenth century, Martha Feldman hypothesizes about the castrato's vocal mechanism in Martha Feldman, 'Red Hot Voice', *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds* (Oakland, 2015), pp. 79–132. Feldman's findings are necessarily speculative because lungs, cartilage – including the soft and hard palate – and resonance cavities were altered by castration, which hasn't been practised on singers since the nineteenth century.

<sup>15</sup> For a good introduction to vocal science, see Johan Sundberg, 'Where does the Sound come from?', *The Cambridge Companion to Singing*, ed. J. Potter (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 231–47. Inspired by extended techniques used in contemporary music, composer and acoustician Michael Edgerton explores vocal physiology in Michael Edgerton, *The 21st-Century Voice: Contemporary and Traditional Extra-Normal Voice* (Lanham, 2004). He provides a useful glossary, and, in 'Appendix A: Voice Science', analyses of pitch, quality, and register as a consequence of airflow, the function of the larynx, vocal folds, and mucosal wave; he considers also the interaction between the voice and acoustic space. *Ibid.*, pp. 149–65, 'Glossary', pp. 169–74.

<sup>16</sup> 'Miss Raftor had a facetious Turn of Humour, and infinite Spirits, with a Voice and Manner in singing Songs of Plesantry peculiar to herself.' William R. Chetwood, 'Mrs. CATHARINE CLIVE (formerly Miss RAFTOR)', *A General History of the Stage, from its Origin in Greece down to the present Time. With the Memoirs of most of the principal Performers that have appeared on the English and Irish Stage for these last Fifty Years* (London, 1749), p. 127.

<sup>17</sup> Roland Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, ed. and trans. S. Heath (London, 1984), pp. 179–89.

broadly shares with the singer the experience of generating musical sounds, yet the singer's control and interpretation of music arouses the listener's wonder. Diction binds them together, the listener revelling in how the singer renders language as musical sound.<sup>18</sup> Eighteenth-century reports suggest that audiences listened to Clive for something like this thrill.

The high-style music she sang required inner coolness, and, as we shall see, Clive was famously unflappable on the boards. From the extended phrases of her masque music by Henry Purcell and Henry Carey through to the eye-popping melismas of John F. Lampe's burlesques and the swift patter of William Boyce's burlettas, this was music Clive could only have performed by being a brilliant technician, and could only have been acclaimed for by being a consummate artist. Polite singers in the eighteenth century were judged in part by their skill in extemporizing ornaments, cadenzas, and dynamics to enhance the words they sang; where *galant* dance rhythms occur, they were to add emphases according to the steps of *la belle danse*, knowledge of which was a social essential.<sup>19</sup> When she made such additions early in her career, Clive provoked great praise.

Clive was acclaimed also for her execution of the English language in song. She was a principal exponent of British Worthies – Shakespeare, Milton, Dryden, and Congreve – whose words she sang in masques, odes, and oratorios. In lower-style comic airs she married the smartness of satirical verses, Fielding's especially, to familiar playhouse tunes. Her fine rendering of the distinctive sonic elements of the English language helped to forge the idea of a polite British song. She sounded – literally, and also in the sense of plumbing depths – what it was to be British, elevating words above music to teach as well as delight. Comic song was a fertile medium for this project. In the late seventeenth century William Congreve had identified humour with Englishness: to write and perform comedy was considered an exercise of the 'great Freedom, Privilege, and Liberty which the Common People of England enjoy ... under no restraint.'<sup>20</sup> Against this backdrop, the high regard commanded

<sup>18</sup> Barthes calls this delight 'jouissance'. Adopting Julia Kristeva's distinction between pheno-text – text adduced through rules of languages – and geno-text – text according to its material realization – Barthes links jouissance to the geno-text, where language systems meet bodies. When the singer relishes his mother tongue, for instance the bass Russian cantor whom Barthes discusses, the materiality of that mother tongue is restored. Barthes contrasts such aural impact with that of a singer like Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, whose mastery of emotive modes he saw as being harnessed commercially rather than arising from an encounter with language through music. Barthes, *Image, Music, Text*, pp. 179–89.

<sup>19</sup> Such practices are important to the notion of 'rhetorical music' – that is, seventeenth- and eighteenth-century music-making that borrows from oratory – and are usefully catalogued in Bruce Haynes and Geoffrey Burgess, *The Pathetick Musician: Moving an Audience in the Age of Eloquence* (New York, 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Letter of William Congreve to John Dennis on 10 July 1695, cited in Stuart M. Tave, *The Amiable Humorist: A Study in the Comic Theory and Criticism of the Eighteenth*

by Clive's comic song, even when part of a slight stage work, is more readily comprehensible.

Almost from the start of her career, Clive exercised both a fearless charisma and an elaborate respect for propriety. Summing up the Clive persona as he perceived it in 1761, Charles Churchill wrote:

In spight of outward blemishes she shone  
For Humour fam'd, and Humour all her own.  
Easy, as if at home, the stage she trod,  
Nor sought the Critic's praise, nor fear'd his rod.  
Original in spirit and in ease,  
She pleas'd by hiding all attempts to please.<sup>21</sup>

Note that Churchill, a theatre critic writing eight years before Clive retired, makes no mention of her singing. After 1750 Clive's musical repertory was little more than occasional song, but her skill in pleasing 'by hiding all attempts to please' owed much to a delivery she had honed in becoming Drury Lane's first songster.

On stage Clive served a representative function. She was a servant of the Theatre Royal, and part of her job was to help realize the aims stated in the prefaces to the stage works she performed: to instruct audiences about proper and improper conduct. Her playhouse song was designed around this function. Its symmetries, modest proportions, and well-behaved harmonic progressions instantiated approved models of gender and nation. When building her career, Clive only rarely flaunted a vocal virtuosity that historians would later assume she had never possessed. Yet playhouse song also offered Clive licence. Through smart ballads, she could show off her talent and intelligence in ways socially acceptable for a woman. She had a prodigious memory, to which the number of her roles, the quantity of her music, and the speed of her learning testify. More singularly, Clive had an astonishing ear, and polite song provided openings for musical ad-libbing: her ingenuity as an improviser was a major audience draw.

Reviewing the playbook of the first farce that Clive wrote as a vehicle for herself, a critic of 1753 noted: 'As the lady [Clive] cou'd not print her acting with her writing, it appears to want, in the reading, some of that spirit, humour, and

---

and *Early Nineteenth Centuries* (Chicago, 1960), p. 100, and in Lisa Freeman, *Character's Theater: Genre and Identity on the Eighteenth-Century English Stage* (Philadelphia, 2001), p. 209. 'English humor', Tave says, 'is the national shield, the mark and defense of a free nation'. Tave, *The Amiable Humorist*, p. 101. Clive moved freely between the two categories of comedy recognized by period critics, wit and humour. Wit was considered more elevated, yet artificial, and humour, while tending to lowness, expressed passions and was therefore seen as a conduit for 'Nature ... / Unhelpt by Practice, Books, or Art'. Jonathan Swift, 'To Mr. Delany' (1718); cited *ibid.*, pp. 113–14.

<sup>21</sup> Charles Churchill, *The Rosciad: The Third Edition, Revised and Corrected* (London, 1761), p. 18.



meaning, which it might seem to have on the stage, from the brilliancy of her performance.’<sup>22</sup> The key word here is ‘meaning’: Clive produced the meaning of her texts for her audiences through performance, and this escaped written transmission even in a work that she wrote for herself to lead. In works by others, Clive could create a meaning that overwrote that of the playwright, guiding audiences to apprehend her as she wished. The first half of Benjamin Victor’s praise, quoted to open this chapter, speaks to this: her Genius lay partly in being ‘able to entertain, contrary to the Intention of the Author’. She once urged her protégée Jane Pope, unnerved by the weakness of a role she had to perform, to follow this example:

I am sorry to hear you have an indifferent part in the new Comedy, but I don’t at all wonder when you tell me the author. [H]e is a wretch of wretches, however I charge you to make a good part of it[.] Let it be never so bad, I have often done so myself therefore I know it is to be done[:] turn it & wind it & play it in a different manner to his intention and as hundred to one but you succeed.<sup>23</sup>

This was how Clive authored her own parts in real time. With some immersion in the practices of the period, we can imagine the interpretations through which she transformed the abused housewife Nell in *The Devil to Pay* into a sentimental heroine, the harlot of *The Harlot’s Progress* into a patriot and, in *Comus*, Milton’s muse Euphrosyne into a divine version of herself.

Clive redesigned stage characters to her advantage; her characterizations, because hugely popular, were then ploughed back into roles designed for her, in stage works whose generic parameters altered as a result. That process is a major focus of this book. To appreciate its workings, we must consider the practices, discourses, and constraints peculiar to the creation of eighteenth-century playhouse stars.

## In the Playhouse: Engagement, Reciprocity, and Stage Stars

### *The Stage Work and the Player*

The terms ‘celebrity’ and ‘star’ are today often deployed interchangeably,<sup>24</sup> but it is useful to distinguish between them, not least because Clive did so. Whereas the reputation of a celebrity might rest on notoriety, a star earns her

<sup>22</sup> *The Monthly Review; or, Literary Journal*, vol. 8 (May 1753), p. 392. The passage refers to the 1753 version of Clive’s farce, *The Rehearsal: Or, Bayes in Petticoats*, discussed in Chapter 12.

<sup>23</sup> Letter of Catherine Clive to Jane Pope of 15 December 1774, ‘Copies of letters to Jane Pope from various people, 1769–1808, in the hand of James Winston [manuscript], ca. 1840’, Folger Shakespeare Library, W.b.73.

<sup>24</sup> For an introduction to this field, see Sean Redmond and Su Holmes, ed., *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader* (Los Angeles and London, 2007); P. David Marshall, *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis, 2001); and Richard Dyer with Paul

status through unique gifts acknowledged publicly.<sup>25</sup> Throughout her career Clive emphasized that her top ranking depended on the 'Publick alone' – as opposed to private patrons – recognizing her merit.<sup>26</sup> By presenting herself as her audiences' servant, Clive gave playgoers the right to judge her; this helped her to forge an alliance with them through which her most outré flouting of convention could find favour.

Social identities were both reinforced and challenged in the playhouse, among audience members as well as on stage. Playhouse seating was designed to sort attendees into their proper ranks. Roughly speaking, the front and side boxes, and onstage seats, were the preserve of the *beau monde*; the pit was for intellectuals, professionals, and the less affluent; the first or middle gallery was for wealthy tradespeople; and the upper gallery was for the lower orders.<sup>27</sup> Because ticket prices determined these boundaries, they were fluid; royal boxes alone lay beyond purchasing power. At Drury Lane, the royal boxes were split at pit level between the King's box, to the left of the auditorium, and the Prince of Wales's, to the right; each was accessed by a private entrance near the stage door.<sup>28</sup> The chance to ogle royalty and their guests sometimes – but not always – boosted ticket sales.<sup>29</sup> Even with royals present, social conduct could break down: playhouse audiences might call for the manager, or riot; gentry, if seated onstage, could distract actors and spectators alike; audience members generally would watch and converse with each other.<sup>30</sup> A principal player represented this theatricalized collective – what Betsy Bolton calls 'a fantasy of communally embodied, public identity'<sup>31</sup> – yet also rose above it by virtue of commanding attention despite its distractions.

---

McDonald, *Stars*, 2nd rev. edn (London, 1998). Aspects of these writings are discussed below.

<sup>25</sup> Chris Rojek, *Celebrity* (London, 2001), esp. 143–98; Berta Joncus, 'Producing Stars in Dramma Per Musica', *Music as Social and Cultural Practice: Essays in Honour of Reinhard Strohm*, ed. M. Bucciarelli and B. Joncus (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 275–93.

<sup>26</sup> See, for instance, her first letter to the press, in *The London Daily Post and General Advertiser*, issue 641 (19 November 1736), reprinted in Chapter 6.

<sup>27</sup> Jim Davis, 'Spectatorship', *The Cambridge Companion to British Theatre, 1730–1830*, ed. D. O'Quinn and J. Moody (Cambridge, 2007), pp. 57–70.

<sup>28</sup> Harry William Pedicord, 'Preface', *"By Their Majesties' Command": the House of Hanover at the London Theatres, 1714–1800* (London, 1991), p. x.

<sup>29</sup> For the period 1714 to 1800 Pedicord calculates 'approximate grosses' at London's three theatres royal, and compares the largest and smallest receipts for performances by royal command. According to his findings, 'on only five nights did the presence of royalty cause the admission receipts to exceed' a house's average gross intake. He asks modern historians to 'temper' the view that audiences were 'flocking' to playhouses to see royals. *Ibid.*, pp. 38–41.

<sup>30</sup> 'In the Name of Freedom', Harry William Pedicord, *The Theatrical Public in the Time of Garrick* (New York, 1954), pp. 41–63.

<sup>31</sup> Betsy Bolton, 'Theorizing Audience and Spectatorial Agency', *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737–1832*, p. 37.



On stage, social identities were dramatized for the ‘Spectator’, an imagined personage who in the eighteenth century stood for the subject generally. The perspective was famously cultivated by Joseph Addison, who in 1711 co-founded one of the century’s essential periodicals, *The Spectator*.<sup>32</sup> Addison believed that subjectivity formed itself extrinsically: by watching, weighing, approving, or rejecting the conduct of others, the spectator could gain understanding and improve himself.<sup>33</sup> For such a selfhood, forged by observing others and being observed by them, the playhouse was an ideal forum. Claiming to instruct, playwrights invented generic ‘Characters’ – not simply to be copied or rejected, but, as Lisa Freeman emphasizes, to spark debate about what constituted a persuasive social performance.<sup>34</sup> Caught up in this dynamic, stage players proved their mettle by being fascinating *despite* being forced into a stock character. As Felicity Nussbaum shows in her important study *Rival Queens*, the playhouse star dazzled by both fulfilling and resisting expectations of ideal conduct.<sup>35</sup>

This achievement crystallized in the ‘line’, also called ‘cast’, or ‘walk’, that a principal player owned.<sup>36</sup> These terms referred during Clive’s career both

<sup>32</sup> *The Spectator* was the continuation of Richard Steele’s *Tatler*. First issued on 1 March 1711, and reprinted for decades, its impact on generations of eighteenth-century writers, from abolitionists to theatre critics, has long been a subject of scholarly debate, some of which is surveyed in Alison O’Byrne, ‘The Spectator and the Rise of the Modern Metropole’, *The Cambridge Companion to the City in Literature*, ed. K. R. McNamara (Cambridge, 2014), pp. 57–68.

<sup>33</sup> Terence Bowers, ‘Universalizing Sociability: The Spectator, Civic Enfranchisement, and the Rule(s) of the Public Sphere’, *The Spectator: Emerging Discourses*, ed. D. J. Newman (Newark, 2005), pp. 150–74. Bowers compares writings to show that ‘*The Spectator* forged a *constitutive* relationship with the public sphere *throughout* the eighteenth century’ (italics original) and that, at a ‘basic level, buying *The Spectator* was an endorsement of the system itself’. *Ibid.*, pp. 152, 170. See also Freeman, *Character’s Theater*, pp. 193–97.

<sup>34</sup> Freeman holds that the generic characters of stage drama offered audiences a ‘dynamic model of identity’, with which playwrights experimented. Besides being a ‘rubric for shaping identities’, stage character became a means to critique what was being posited as an ideal way of being. Freeman, *Character’s Theater*, p. 12. Although ground-breaking in many respects, Freeman’s view that dramatic performance concerned itself primarily with creating and questioning social types tends to overlook performers’ creative practice, which I seek to account for in this book.

<sup>35</sup> Analyzing the way Freeman posits genre to have encoded subjectivity, Nussbaum notes that ‘a talented actress could affect a persona that carried far beyond the surface codings typical of a particular genre, sometimes mocking these codings’. Felicity Nussbaum, *Rival Queens: Actresses, Performance, and the Eighteenth-Century British Theater* (Philadelphia, 2010), p. 20.

<sup>36</sup> Peter Holland shows that the ‘line’ was an essential element in the formation of comic stereotypes on the London stage; he cites testimony from several Restoration dramatists about their strategy when writing in this vein. Peter Holland, *The Ornament of Action: Text and Performance in Restoration Comedy* (Cambridge, 1979), esp. pp. 73–79. Building on his findings, Tiffany Stern argues that the line absorbed into itself the perceived personality of the principal player to whom it was assigned, and that this metacharacter

to the family of stock characters in which a principal player specialized and to parts within a stock type owned by a player. Appendix 2 shows the eleven stock types in which Clive specialized and, within them, which roles were hers. Her stage characters required that she excel in acting and singing. In high-style entertainment such as masques, her perceived merit depended largely on the persuasiveness with which she realized an affect and so moved audiences. In comic parts, her merit tended to be measured by the recognizability of a character type, which she could render in an incomparable yet instantly comprehensible fashion.

In tragedy, the ideals prescribed by European court and salon culture shaped corporeal display, physical movement, and stage speech. Critics found their ideals for corporeal display in history painting, for physical movement in etiquette and dance manuals, and for stage speech in classical oratory.<sup>37</sup> A great tragic actor synthesized these ideals to transport audiences in a moment of shared effervescence. Praise for David Garrick describes this: '[T]he Beholder feels himself affected he knows not how, and it may be truly said of him ... *His powerful Strokes prevailing Truth impress'd, / And unresisted Passion storm'd the Breast*.'<sup>38</sup> In farce, protagonists were two-dimensional figures said to be intended to expose persons whose conduct audiences should shun.<sup>39</sup> In sentimental comedy – an entertainment that sat between comedy and tragedy – actors were, in the words of Richard Steele, to 'touch the viewer's heart' by combining the ideal representations of tragedy with Restoration comedy's simulation of urban life.<sup>40</sup>

---

generated 'the kind of personal interest in specific actors that brings about a "star" system'. Tiffany Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan* (Oxford, 2000), p. 149. See also Freeman, *Character's Theater*, pp. 30–32.

<sup>37</sup> Drawing on his book *Illusion and the Drama* (1991), Frederick Burwick deftly summarizes period and modern writings on tragic acting and ideal embodiment in 'Emotion, Expression and the Size of Theatres', *The Oxford Handbook of the Georgian Theatre, 1737–1832*, pp. 181–88. Commentary on this topic until 1760 is collated into the first two of five volumes in the reprint series, *Acting Theory and the English Stage, 1700–1830*, ed. L. Zunshine (London, 2009). Paul Goring outlines mid-eighteenth century acting methods and relates theoretical writings about acting to the practice of writing sentimental plays; see Paul Goring, *Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture* (Cambridge, 2005).

<sup>38</sup> [David E. Baker], 'Garrick, David', *The Companion to the Play-house* (London, 1764), pages unnumbered.

<sup>39</sup> Tave, *The Amiable Humorist*, pp. 91–100.

<sup>40</sup> Preface to Richard Steele's *The Conscious Lovers*; cited in Maik Goth, 'Exaggerating Terence's *Andria*: Steele's *Conscious Lovers*, Bellamy's *The Perjur'd Devotee* and Terentian Criticism', *Ancient Comedy and Reception: Essays in Honor of Jeffrey Henderson*, ed. S. Douglas Olson (Berlin, 2014), pp. 503–36. Goth argues that Steele relied on Terence's writings to formulate his of ideas about sentimental comedy. On the history and legacy of Steele's sentimental comedy, see the literature cited in note 41 of *The Oxford History of Classical Reception in English Literature: Volume 3 1660–1790*, ed. D. Hopkins and C.

Principal players were held to own those roles in which the Town had consistently applauded them. When a player's stage manner was compelling enough to become its own convention, the original performance became the benchmark against which new players in the role were assessed. With principals themselves able to forge new roles through their own reputations and stage manners, bespoke vehicles came to be written for them.<sup>41</sup> Strengthening a player's sense of ownership of a role were its physical manuscript parts, which the players retained for training. Preparation tended to be, as Tiffany Stern shows, largely private – by oneself, or one-to-one – rather than through ensemble rehearsal.<sup>42</sup>

Within each part, audiences looked for 'points', or dramatic junctures, during which a player's distinctive artistry would crystallize in performance.<sup>43</sup> The 'point' was a clap trap, a moment at which the audience could be nudged into applause. According to one critic, only a 'few passages' of a play were thought worthy of 'notice', and the polite theatregoer was expected to know 'where an actor is to exert his abilities.'<sup>44</sup> Stars were known to 'give the signal when they are to be applauded'; at such moments, 'Othello has a most languishing aspect, Monimia is all sighs and softness, Beatrice will bridle, and pretty Peggy Wildair leers you into a clap.'<sup>45</sup> Within this dramatic syntax, Clive had the added advantage that song was itself a kind of point which typically arrested or stood outside the narrative flow. David Garrick's later practice of holding a frozen attitude may well have been a leaf borrowed from Clive's book.<sup>46</sup>

---

Martindale (Oxford and New York, 2012), p. 475. See also Freeman, *Character's Theater*, pp. 204–19.

<sup>41</sup> 'The rule must be to start with the [principal] actor and consider the development of the line as an historical process in relation to that actor. The actor precedes the role.' Holland, *The Ornament of Action*, p. 79.

<sup>42</sup> Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, pp. 260–70. In Stern's words: 'Though the value of ensemble rehearsal was constantly stated, no one, not even the managers, actually had an ensemble mentality.' *Ibid.*, p. 266.

<sup>43</sup> Shearer West defines the 'point' as the eighteenth-century 'actor's depiction of a specific character at a specific moment [that] obscured other concerns'. Shearer West, *The Image of the Actor: Verbal and Visual Representation in the Age of Garrick and Kemble* (London, 1991), p. 19. In practice, this meant that parts 'were ... divided into "moments" that were both key to the characterization and separate from it'. Stern, *The Rehearsal*, pp. 258–59.

<sup>44</sup> *A Guide to the Stage: Or, Select Instructions and Precedents ... towards forming a Polite Audience* (London, 1751), p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14. The actors and roles referred to are: Garrick as Othello, Susanna Cibber as Monimia in *The Orphan or The Unhappy Marriage*, Hannah Pritchard as Beatrice in *As you Like it*, and Peg Woffington as Harry Wildair in *The Constant Couple*. For Freeman, the 'art of "pointing"' consists of 'of bracketing off a set speech ... and directing that speech, along with a set of gestures, at the audience'. Freeman, *Character's Theater*, p. 31.

<sup>46</sup> On Garrick's practice, see Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, p. 163. Elsewhere Stern discusses multiple examples of the practice of striking fixed attitudes and notes its instructive value.

If a role passed from one principal player to another, audiences looked to the new incumbent to duplicate every 'stroke'. In period parlance, a 'stroke' was a trick, as in the title to the comedy, *A Bold Stroke for a Wife*; used in relation to actors, a stroke was a stage mannerism with which a player stamped a part. Celebrated players would sometimes drill their protégées in their own strokes,<sup>47</sup> as Clive did when training Jane Pope, or before her, Mary Edwards. In this way, principal players used their authority to perpetuate their stage legacies. The expectation of a quasi-mechanical reproduction of a benchmark interpretation militated against innovation, or even improvement. Apothecary, would-be actor, and sometime theatre critic John Hill claimed that 'the only way to please the greater part' of the audience was 'to copy ... [the] faults' of the 'player ... to have last perform'd the same character with success.'<sup>48</sup> Because Clive primarily led not only new productions, but also new genres of stage work, she was unusually free to be 'Original in spirit', as Churchill described, crafting personifications to her own strengths. She then fiercely guarded these roles and passed some of them publicly onto Edwards and Pope, who tried without lasting success to duplicate her performances. In this way Clive, who throughout her career cultivated originality, embraced a system which denied it to her protégées.

In contrast to the insouciance Clive enacted on stage, offstage she cultivated the image of a woman beyond reproach.<sup>49</sup> Many of the period's onstage practices – of speech, song, dress, dance, and physical action – were rooted in sanctioned forms of conduct expressed as models thought proper to each

<sup>47</sup> Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, pp. 260–66. Prior to the creation of early modern playhouse stars, court wits and theatre professionals trained up principals like Elizabeth Barry, the protégée of John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester, 'in essentially puppet-fashion'. *Ibid.*, p. 156.

<sup>48</sup> [John Hill], *The Actor: A Treatise on the Art of Playing. Interspersed with Theatrical Anecdotes* (London, 1750), pp. 178–9. This treatise was mostly a plagiarized translation of Pierre Rémond de Sainte-Albine's *Le Comédien* (Paris, 1747) that Hill passed off as his own. In 1755 he revised and expanded the treatise as *The Actor: Or, a Treatise on the Art of Playing. A new Work, written by the Author of the former, and Adapted to the Present State of the Theatres*, and named its source. The 1750 translation varies only slightly from the original, but the 1755 version is thought to 'stand as an original work'. Joseph Roach, *The Player's Passion: Studies in the Science of Acting* (Newark, 1985), p. 101; cited in Goring, 'The Art of Acting', *Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, p. 136, note 51. Earl Wasserman compares Hill's 1750 with his 1755 treatise in Earl R. Wasserman, 'The Sympathetic Imagination in Eighteenth-Century Theories of Acting', *The Journal of English and German Philology*, vol. 46 (1947), pp. 264–72. John Hill is identified as an apothecary during his row in 1739 with manager John Rich, whom he accused of stealing his wordbook, for instance, in *Mr. Rich's Answer to the many Falsities and Calumnies advanced by Mr. John Hill, Apothecary* (London, 1739). See Chapter 5, p. 141 and note 8.

<sup>49</sup> Kimberly Crouch notes that 'Clive, circumspect in sexual matters, used chastity as an indicator of the social acceptability'. Kimberly Crouch, 'Attitudes towards Actresses in Eighteenth-Century Britain' (PhD diss., Univ. of Oxford, 1995), p. 277; for her general comments about Clive see *ibid.*, pp. 198–227.

sex.<sup>50</sup> The 1765 pamphlet *A Critical Balance of the Performers* rates playhouse principals according to standards of etiquette: 'Figure', 'Grace', 'Spirit and Ease', 'Dignity [and] Manners', 'Elocution [and] Voice', 'Dress'.<sup>51</sup> Striking performances of decorum on stage would sometimes be imitated by women in polite society, who, as Nussbaum observes, adorned their assemblies with stage stars whose dress fashions they copied.<sup>52</sup> By 1788 the custom led Richard Kimberley to protest: 'I revolt with indignation from the idea of a lady of fashion being trammelled in the trickery of the stage, and taught her airs and graces, till she is made the mere *fac-simile* of a mannerist, where the most she can aspire to is to be the copy of a copyist.'<sup>53</sup> Participating in this exchange of manners, Clive flagged her membership of polite circles by dressing as a Woman of Quality even in low-style roles.<sup>54</sup>

The business of being a well-bred woman conflicted with that of being a stage player. Guidance in treatises for those aspiring to politeness typically recommended a woman's exclusion from public and professional life, her dedication to running a household, her education only in the womanly pursuits thought to enhance home life, and her acknowledgement of the innate superiority of men.<sup>55</sup> By contrast, the female playhouse principal was a trained

<sup>50</sup> The means by which gender is defined by and produced for a community vary widely. For my understanding of this process within Georgian London's entertainment industry I am indebted to many scholars, including John Brewer, Elizabeth Eger, Elizabeth Howe, Vivien Jones, Jane Moody, Daniel O'Quinn, Gill Perry, Angela Smallwood, Kristina Straub, and Cheryl Wanko.

<sup>51</sup> *A Critical Balance of the Performers at Drury-Lane Theatre. For the last Season 1765* (London, 1765) (broadsheet). A less detailed list rates actors according to four categories (Genius, Judgment, Vis Comica, Variety). It was issued in *The Theatrical Review: For the Year of 1757, and Beginning of 1758* (London, 1758), p. 46.

<sup>52</sup> 'Influential patronage was often exchanged for glamorous clothing and fashion expertise,' Nussbaum, *Rival Queens*, p. 147.

<sup>53</sup> [Richard Cumberland], *The Observer: Being a Collection of Moral, Literary and familiar Essays*, vol. 4 (London, 1788), p. 288. Already in 1725, Horace Walpole is said to have complained – though this may be apocryphal, being from a nineteenth-century report – that 'the young ... adopted ... as a fashion' Cuzzoni's 'brown silk gown, trimmed with silver', which he found vulgar and 'indecorous'. Allatson Burgh, *Anecdotes of Music, Historical and Biographical: In a Series of Letters from a Gentleman to his Daughter*, vol. 3 (London, 1814), p. 51; cited in Donald Burrows et al., ed., *George Frideric Handel Collected Documents: Volume 1 1609–1725* (Cambridge, 2013), p. 752.

<sup>54</sup> Crouch, 'Attitudes towards Actresses in Eighteenth-Century Britain', pp. 71, 159, 220–27. Crouch meticulously investigates the means by which Clive safeguarded her reputation after 1745 – through friendships, press reports, and epilogues. Complementing Crouch's findings, I look particularly at the reputation constructed by and for Clive before that date.

<sup>55</sup> To quote Vivien Jones: 'The concern of all eighteenth-century "conduct" manuals for women is how women might create themselves as objects of male desire, but in terms which will contain that desire within the publicly sanctioned form of marriage.' Vivien Jones, ed., *Women in the Eighteenth Century: Constructions of Femininity* (London, 1990), p. 14. A collation of treatises prescribing and challenging models of female

professional – rare at this time for a woman – whose prodigious gifts could secure her earnings to rival those of her male colleagues.

Tension between the female player's conduct and what was expected from a woman of breeding whet public appetite for news about actresses. Female principals were the subject of gossip, portraits, ephemera, scores ('as sung by'), fake memoirs, and memoir-like commentary that fed audience desire to know more about them. Reports about female principals are often libellous, falsified, or unfalsifiable.<sup>56</sup> Chetwood contributes a cautionary tale about how a woman's reputation could ruin her credibility as a player. Recommending that performers ... 'be as blameless as human Nature will allow', he recalls an episode when cognitive dissonance between an actress's putatively louche behaviour and her lines as Cordelia in *King Lear* – '*Arm'd in my Virgin Innocence I'll fly*' – provoked 'a Horse-laugh' from the audience that turned 'the Scene of generous Pity ... to Ridicule.'<sup>57</sup> Yet prurient curiosity could also aid a female principal, as in the case of Peg Woffington, whose stardom owed much to her flouting of conventions both onstage and off.<sup>58</sup>

Unlike Woffington, Clive chose to project a blameless personal life from the start of her career. By 1733, five years after her stage debut, she had earned the soubriquet 'Miss Prudely Crotchet' in recognition of her musicianship and proud chastity. This stood at odds with the racy characters and epilogue speakers she routinely enacted on stage. From 1733 onwards authors lauded her as an exemplary daughter and wife, despite Clive reportedly having separated

---

sexuality, together with a selected modern bibliography, are reprinted in Jones's collections. A helpful overview of proscriptive seventeenth- and early eighteenth-century literature on female conduct is found in Ingrid H. Tague, *Women of Quality: Accepting and Contesting Ideals of Femininity in England* (Woodbridge, 2002); see especially 'Modesty, Chastity and Feminine Conduct in the Early Eighteenth Century', pp. 30–48. Tague compares didactic writings to correspondence among Women of Quality who, while sometimes circumventing restrictions, thanks to their rank, perpetuated social regulation as a means to demarcate rank; in Tague's words, 'Chastity was, as always, a primary concern.' *Ibid.*, p. 47. The interplay between iconography, conduct manuals, and proper female embodiment of musical performance is the subject of Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 1988).

<sup>56</sup> A primary medium of fabrication was the so-called memoir of the stage actress. In her pithy account of its narrative strategies, Wanko shows that the memoir 'assumes a Foucauldian circularity, as the celebrity develops into someone whom the spectator aspires to emulate and mutual "controlling" mechanisms result.' Cheryl Wanko, *Roles of Authority: Thespian Biography and Celebrity in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Lubbock, 2003), p. 13.

<sup>57</sup> Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage*, p. 28. Discussing this same passage, Freeman concludes that audiences conflated the actress's 'publicly acted' with her 'privately lived' character. Freeman, *Character's Theater*, pp. 38–41.

<sup>58</sup> Nussbaum, 'The Actress, Travesty, and Nation: Margaret Woffington', *Rival Queens*, pp. 189–225, and 'The Nation in Breeches: Actress Margaret Woffington', *'The Stage's Glory': John Rich, 1692–1761*, ed. B. Joncus and J. Barlow (Newark, 2011), pp. 211–22.



from George Clive soon after their marriage. I have concluded that George and Catherine Clive in fact only pretended to be married, and that the fiction of their union may have been known to some of her peers. Whether or not this was the case, becoming 'Mrs. Clive' was an important step forward for Kitty Raftor.

*The Self Staged: In propria persona*

Given the glaring artifice of eighteenth-century playhouse entertainments, the star herself may well have been, as Nussbaum argues, the most credible representation on stage.<sup>59</sup> Clive exploited this, highlighting the artifice of her roles to make her own self seem more genuine. Physical proximity, particularly when the player stood on the forestage, encouraged a sense of intimacy between audience and star. Practices of spectatorship allowed free exchanges between players and audiences; there are for instance documented incidents of players bowing to specific patrons, and of monologues being repeated at the insistence of audience members.<sup>60</sup>

As both agent and commodity, a principal player like Clive participated actively in producing herself, using liminal moments in the entertainment to reveal her putatively true nature. Prologues and epilogues were among Clive's most important points, providing opportunity for her 'real' and fictional characters to meld and separate.<sup>61</sup> Her speeches were of course written by another, often the author of the work performed. Prologues and epilogues also had to comply with good form. Prologues were typically reserved for men, and epilogues for women. At licensed playhouses, they were usually spoken by a star, sometimes from outside the production's cast. Much less frequently a new company member might, as a novelty, be designated to speak.<sup>62</sup> Prologues,

<sup>59</sup> 'Brilliant actresses such as Oldfield, Clive, Woffington, and Abington pre-figured a modern subjectivity, a commoditized version of the self that they offered to consumers as an *effect* of an interiority that encapsulated and ascribed a certain value to be exchanged in the theatrical marketplace.' Nussbaum, 'Introduction: At Stage's Edge', *Rival Queens*, p. 21.

<sup>60</sup> The attendees of the middle gallery were charged with 'frequent and injudicious interruption of the business of the play by their applause', *The Connoisseur*, no. 43 (21 November 1754); quoted in Pedicord, *The Theatrical Public*, p. 58. Regular authors of *The Connoisseur* were Bonnell Thornton, William Cowper, Robert Lloyd and George Colman the elder. Pedicord in general defends the behaviour of mid-eighteenth-century playhouse audiences. Stern documents multiple instances of actors ad-libbing to please audiences; see Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, pp. 101–5, 183–85, 232–33. For Bolton, interactivity between players and audience – which after 1750 included so-called 'spouting clubs', and enthusiasts' imitation of favourite actors' prologues and epilogues – has a parallel in the 'cultural convergence and overflow' described by present-day media theorists. Bolton, 'Theorizing Audience and Spectatorial Agency', p. 33.

<sup>61</sup> Nussbaum, 'Introduction: At Stage's Edge', *Rival Queens*, pp. 18–22.

<sup>62</sup> Mary E. Knapp, 'Speakers', *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1961), pp. 34–81. As she notes: 'A minor actor might make a name for himself by his skill ... but in general only the great actors were allowed to speak.' *Ibid.*, p. 36.

spoken between the band's second and third 'music' (overtures), introduced the play's subjects and aims; epilogues, spoken immediately after the play, summed up the action and sued for audience approval.<sup>63</sup> In epilogues, the player spoke as her reputed self and also, if a cast member, as the fictional character she had just been enacting; her monologue was typically designed to conflate the two. Limited usually to the early part of a new production's run,<sup>64</sup> prologues and epilogues were a powerful draw for audiences, who occasionally insisted on hearing them again and were known to riot if they were omitted from performance.<sup>65</sup> To speak these texts well was, according to Chetwood, the height of the player's art: 'Prologues and Epilogues are the most difficult Tasks of both Sexes on the Stage, it is to be remark'd, but few, besides the capital Performers, are trusted with them; and a good Prologue and Epilogue have often help'd a bad Play out of the Mire, or, at least, sent the Audience home a little better humour'd.'<sup>66</sup> Richard Cumberland, writing decades later, saw prologues and epilogues as 'vehicles of humiliation at the introduction of a new play, and traps for false wit, extravagant conceits and female flippancy at the conclusion of it.'<sup>67</sup>

A prologue, due to its function, typically divulged less about its speaker than the epilogue.<sup>68</sup> Though pretending to first-person address, an epilogue was structured less as a window into the player's thoughts and more as a monologue on a subject prescribed by tradition, and created according to line. For an eighteenth-century female player, typical epilogue topics were patriotism, women's rights, playwrights' weaknesses, the rules of drama, and the

<sup>63</sup> Knapp, 'Presentation', *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 82–85.

<sup>64</sup> Discussing the function of prologues and epilogues, Knapp and Pierre Danchin link them to the opening of a run. See Knapp, 'Presentation', *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 5–6; Pierre Danchin, 'Introduction', *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century: A Complete Edition* (Nancy, 1990), p. xv. There is, however, some 'debate whether whether epilogues (and prologues) were performed during the first performance only, during the first three performances, or throughout the play's entire first run; but scholars agree that revivals generally did not feature the initial para-texts.' Diana Solomon, 'Tragic Play, Bawdy Epilogue?', *Prologues, Epilogues, Curtain-Raisers, and Afterpieces: The Rest of the Eighteenth-Century London Stage*, ed. D. J. Ennis and J. Bailey Slagle (Newark, 2007), p. 172, note 18.

<sup>65</sup> Knapp, 'Popular Demand for Prologues and Epilogues', *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 1–33.

<sup>66</sup> Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage*, p. 254.

<sup>67</sup> [Cumberland], 'Remarks upon the Present Taste for Acting Private Plays', *The Observer*, vol. 4 (London, 1788), p. 287; cited also in Janine M. Haugen, 'The Mimic Stage: Private Theatricals in Georgian Britain' (PhD diss., Univ. of Colorado, 2014), pp. 73–74.

<sup>68</sup> Knapp, Holland and Solomon discuss epilogues that, for audience delectation, include seeming personal information about either the speaker or her fellow actors. See, for instance, Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 42–85, Holland, *The Ornament of Action*, pp. 65–80, and, on Nell Gwynn, Solomon, 'Tragic Play, Bawdy Epilogue?', pp. 155–78. Solomon notes that the 'bawdy epilogue originated from the deliberate merger of the actress's character and public persona'. *Ibid.*, p. 156.



didactic value of the work just seen.<sup>69</sup> Because standardized, yet seemingly personalized, epilogues illustrate particularly well the contradictions inherent to playhouse star production. By cleaving to convention, the epilogue reinforced tradition; by being a platform for self-representation, it invited the player to challenge tradition in novel ways. In epilogues, a real-life performer ghosted behind a construction of self, articulating views she possibly, but not necessarily, held. Typically spoken 'in character', epilogues were efficient carriers for the 'poignant antimonies' that Joseph Roach identifies as vital to stars and stardom.<sup>70</sup> Stars, in Roach's view, distinguish themselves from ordinary actors by embodying seemingly opposed qualities, thereby generating a social apartness, or 'It' effect, which fans cannot penetrate.<sup>71</sup> Within this central conundrum, publicity then nests other oppositions, most notably the apparent intimacy but actual distance created by reproduced images of the star.<sup>72</sup>

In Clive's case, epilogues were moments of both risk and empowerment: while the eroticism of her early epilogues imperilled the blameless reputation she cultivated, her later epilogues allowed her to challenge the playwright's authority. Clive's epilogue characters were, as Mary Knapp has noted, as 'definite as those which she represented in the play itself',<sup>73</sup> and just as imposed. Neither Clive's outrageous stage action nor her defiant epilogues were necessarily taken as proof of what 'she' thought; rather, it was a teasing suggestion. That Clive was sometimes brought in for comic epilogues after tragedies bears witness to her ability to lift an audience's spirits, as well as to her top rank.

Her songs, like her epilogues, were summative points during which she proved herself 'unbiddable',<sup>74</sup> that is, self-confident and beyond influence,

<sup>69</sup> Danchin, 'Introduction', *The Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. xv–xxxiii. Surveying prologues and epilogues written from 1701 to 1720, Danchin notes the continuity between earlier and later prologues and epilogues. One may also sort many post-1720 prologues and epilogues into the four categories that he creates: 'patriotic or political manifestoes', 'competition of foreign performers', 'the "uselessness" of prologues and epilogues', and 'female revolt'. *Ibid.* The first and second categories are treated in Knapp, 'The Patriotic Prologue', *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 205–33.

<sup>70</sup> 'Introduction', Joseph Roach, *It* (Ann Arbor, 2007), pp. 1–44, esp. p. 11. Many of my readings are in dialogue with Roach's work.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 4–11.

<sup>72</sup> On the ways that the proliferation of the star's image nourishes fandom, see, for instance, P. David Marshall, 'The System of Celebrity', *Celebrity and Power*, pp. 185–9, or John Ellis, 'Stars as Cinematic Phenomenon', *Stardom and Celebrity: A Reader*, pp. 90–97. The latter passage builds on Richard Dyer's theories. For Roach, the image is an 'effigy'; that is, a depiction rooted in, and animated by, assumed knowledge and viewer fantasy. To quote Roach, 'the consumer of celebrity icons does the work of creating the effigy in the physical absence of the beloved'. Roach, *It*, p. 40.

<sup>73</sup> Knapp, *Prologues and Epilogues of the Eighteenth Century*, p. 68. On Clive's epilogues, see *ibid.*, pp. 68–75.

<sup>74</sup> Socialite, writer and taste-broker of the 1920s Eleanor Glynn identified 'It' with being unbiddable, defining both as a state wherein the subject is 'entirely unselfconscious ...

while also conforming to generic codes. She was familiar in song, speech and manner, yet remote as a goddess. She was vulnerable, yet imperious and defiant of men. She was inimitable, yet held to typify her sex, her nation, and her social position as one of the middling sort. Her transgressive conduct was a stage draw, even as she herself was thought virtuous. A wealth of portraits – in oil, print, watercolour, chalk drawing, and porcelain – adorned private spaces with likenesses of an indecipherable Clive.

It was not, however, Clive's body which fascinated audiences, but her voice. Among female stage stars of her era, she stood apart for not selling herself as a sex object; through voice, she escaped the constraints of her physical self. Voice allowed Clive, as Drury Lane's first songster, to move freely between high and low genres, between ideal English elocution and mimicry of Italian accents, between personifying herself and playing someone else. Her allure lay in hiding yet baring herself, and testing this process by repeatedly switching identities. Her mimicry, being the opposite of 'her', was evidence of her personal immutability. Her rectitude was credible because she did not pretend to appeal to the male gaze. A plain woman with an indomitable voice, Clive never had lovers that we know of – although her male promoters put out that she wanted them. Music distinguished Clive from other players, whether her song was part of the work staged or an independent interlude. In ballad opera, her song was often didactic, articulating the lessons a viewer was meant to draw from the stage action. Clive typically addressed audiences directly in her airs, which strengthened her authority. During these parenthetical moments she could bind together contradictory traits – coldness and tenderness, intelligence and stupidity, candour and cupidity – to generate tension, without owning either extreme.

The stage genres in which Clive specialized, low-style ballad opera and high-style masque, were themselves contradictory. Her ballad opera songs were points minted from 'common' tunes derived chiefly from playhouse entertainments, dance collections, and Thomas D'Urfey's song collections.<sup>75</sup> Because familiar to audiences, these tunes were easily recalled and usually carried a host of associations. While playwrights such as Gay or Fielding typically selected a melody, and its associations, to heighten satire,<sup>76</sup> players like Clive or Lavinia Fenton – the first Polly in Gay's *Beggar's Opera* – could spin a melody, and its associations, to dress their own natures to advantage.<sup>77</sup>

---

full of self-confidence, indifferent to the effect he or she is producing, and uninfluenced by others'. Roach, *It*, p. 4.

<sup>75</sup> Joncus, 'Ballad Opera', pp. 34–38.

<sup>76</sup> On Gay's strategies for choosing common tunes, see Dianne Dugaw, *Deep Play: John Gay and the Invention of Modernity* (Newark, 2001).

<sup>77</sup> Berta Joncus, "'The Assemblage of every female Folly': Lavinia Fenton, Kitty Clive and the Genesis of Ballad Opera", *Women of Fashion: Popular Culture in the Eighteenth Century and the Eighteenth Century in Popular Culture*, ed. T. Potter (Toronto, 2012), pp. 25–51; Berta Joncus, "'A Likeness where none was to be found': Imagining Kitty Clive (1711–1785)", *Music in Art*, vol. 34 (2009), pp. 89–106.

Ballad opera followed Restoration and post-Restoration mainpiece comedy in using song to stop action and ask audiences to reflect on a moral.<sup>78</sup> Clive appeared in mainpiece comedy revivals far less frequently than she did in ballad operas, but could realize more cultural capital from them because their songs tended to be newly composed and fit to her line, while those in ballad operas were common tunes, often of smutty renown. A new song for Clive would add lustre to any revived mainpiece she led.

Clive's high-style masque repertory was a more substantial foil to her ballad opera roles. From 1728 until 1740 her ownership of masque parts, shown in Appendix 2, rivalled that of her ballad opera parts. Stage masque was loosely related to the ritualistic masque of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century English courts. A masque could be either a stand-alone work, or part of a revived seventeenth-century drama, or a series of scenes which alternated with harlequinade in a pantomime.<sup>79</sup> Independent stage masques were mounted for royal celebrations and 'commanded' by their honourees, whose playhouse visits constituted their own spectacle.<sup>80</sup> Far more frequent in Clive's repertory were masques embedded within pantomime. Regardless of the context within which it was presented, a masque's music married the 'English Tongue' to 'the Excellencies of the Italian [operatic] Composition'<sup>81</sup> – while its scenes, machines, decorations, choruses, and choreographies drew on French court traditions to create dazzling spectacle. So for instance into the story of *Cephalus and Procris*, led by Clive as Procris, were shoehorned dances, choruses, ascents by chariot, Neptune's Temple rising 'out of the Sea', and 'a fine Hunting Country [scene] ... painted by Tilemans of Antwerp'.<sup>82</sup> Clive's high-style song

<sup>78</sup> Dianne Dugaw, "Critical Instants": Theatre Songs in the Age of Dryden and Purcell, *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, vol. 23 (1989), p. 175. Curtis Price categorizes Restoration theatre music according to interpolative types ('Melancholy Music', 'Music for Discoveries', 'Music for Love Scenes', etc.). Curtis Price, *Music in the Restoration Theatre* (London, 1979), pp. 1–67.

<sup>79</sup> Michael Burden, 'The British Masque 1690–1800' (PhD diss., Univ. of Edinburgh, 1993), pp. 1–63; Michael Burden, 'The Independent Masque 1700–1800: A Catalogue', *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle*, vol. 28 (1995), pp. 59–62; and Michael Burden, 'Britannia versus Virtue in the Harmony of the Spheres: Directions of Masque Writing in the Eighteenth Century', *Miscellanea musicologica*, vol. 17 (1990), pp. 78–86. See also Chapter 2, p. 57 and note 130.

<sup>80</sup> 'The doors of the theatres were opened at were opened at 5.0[0] pm ... Some time after 5.30 the royal carriage arrived at a private entrance near the stage door, and a proprietor greeted the notables with a candelabrum with which he lighted the King and Queen to the royal box ante-room at pit level ... At his Majesty's first appearance from the ante-room the entire audience rose and applauded, as the King bowed to the assembled spectators. Then followed the entrance of the Queen and the rest of the Royal Family, bowing to the King and then to the house. After this brief ceremony the play commenced.' Pedicord, "By Their Majesties' Command", p. x.

<sup>81</sup> Colley Cibber, 'The Preface', *Venus and Adonis: A Masque* (London, 1736), pp. iv–v.

<sup>82</sup> *Cephalus and Procris. A Dramatic Masque. With a Pantomime Interlude, call'd, Harlequin Grand Volgi* (London, 1733), pp. 13, 18.

in such works will have made her seem as remote as her low-style music in ballad operas made her seem familiar.

Until 1745 Clive also routinely sang during interludes. These performances helped established her signature tunes, such as 'Life of a Beau', which then migrated into Clive's spoken parts. Like Italian singers with their 'baggage arias', Clive was apparently able to choose when to perform her signature tunes. This liberty is suggested by what she sang, not least when in 1746 she was able to replace Thomas Arne's new songs in *The Tempest* for her with those by Willem De Fesch.<sup>83</sup> A signature song, once removed from its original production, flagged up its singer even more than when first performed. When Clive executed 'Life of a Beau', written by her friend and singing teacher Henry Carey, she was clearly performing 'Clive' rather than a *dramatis persona*. 'Life of a Beau' was in fact pure Clive product, having been created for her to sing *in propria persona* in James Miller's *The Coffee House* (1738).

The signature song and the *in propria persona* vehicle were just two of a range of eighteenth-stage practices – among them the benefit performance, the play about theatrical politics, the practice of *ad hominem* mimicry – which mainly served the production of stars, whose rank, character, taste, sympathies, off-stage antics, professional strengths and weaknesses, and social and professional networks were monitored, probed in the press, and sometimes staged. Such practices and entertainments were not so much reflections of stars as the means for making and monetizing them. Playhouse personae were continually being constructed, challenged and re-assembled on the boards, in the press, and in the minds of audience members. The star's challenge of continually constructing the self was moreover shared by members of polite society, who had constantly to negotiate between private desire and publicly approved behaviour.

### Representation Offstage and On: Simulation and Authority

Although Clive could project herself from the stage, she had very little control over how she was represented outside the playhouse. Her first 'portrait', mentioned at the start of this chapter, evidences her vulnerability to misrepresentation: rather than being her likeness, it was an erotic nymph lifted from a seventeenth-century Dutch oil painting. One of this book's major concerns is to challenge how Clive has been transmitted through scores, wordbooks, press commentary, and her own writings, as well as through pictures. I intend to explore conventions, identify Clive's contributions, correct false attributions, investigate rips in received narrative surfaces, and speculate about the agendas informing her various representations. Throughout, I aim to illuminate the processes of star production, and her agency within them.

<sup>83</sup> I discuss this incident in Chapter 10, pp. 313–15.

Clive's portraits were perhaps the most potent way for audience members to recall her. Images are of course vital to the industry of stardom, and in the eighteenth century portraiture was a lodestone for writers about the theatre, as both object and metaphor. Actor-manager Colley Cibber, in his memoirs, describes the failure of an actor to copy a pioneering interpretation as an act of disfigurement akin to 'a Child's Painting upon the Face of a *Metzo-tinto*'.<sup>84</sup> Extending Cibber's metaphor, Clive's composite 'portrait' might be thought to consist not just of images of her, but also of written depictions by memoirists, theorists, puffers, and satirists.

The popular press, to which Clive occasionally contributed, both advanced Clive's interests and threatened them. From 1732 onwards her meteoric ascent grabbed the attention of connoisseurs and those parading as such, like John Hill. Rather than acknowledge Clive's talent, Hill explained away her success as the consequence of an overlap between the 'kinds of temper' evoked in her roles, and her own nature; no comedian, he asserted, 'ever acted a part well, who was not in some degree, of the same turn in his own mind'.<sup>85</sup> Hill's invention of this seemingly empirical law, and his denial of Clive's agency, were moves typical of eighteenth-century treatise writers. His observations, at first mostly plagiarized in 1750 from a French treatise and only in 1755 updated with substantial comments about London players, often provide more insight into the prejudices of their author, and his desire to be an arbiter of taste, than into what happened on stage.<sup>86</sup>

No less biased than the connoisseur was the puffer, whose task was to promote works – often without seeming to. Writing in *The Grub-street Journal* in 1737, 'Puffemofius' sorted puffs into five categories: 'material' (brief announcements), 'formal' (reports clearly favouring a production), 'direct' (seeming news items which then slip into praise), 'oblique' (seeming news items concluding with a strong endorsement), and 'circular' (seeming news items which

<sup>84</sup> Colley Cibber, *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber*, 2nd edn (London, 1740), p. 247. In this passage, Cibber denigrated his rival, the 'famous Mimick' Thomas Escourt, who for his London debut re-invented the title role in John Dryden's *The Spanish Friar* immortalized by Tony Leigh. According to Cibber, although Escourt 'remembred every Look and Motion of the late Tony Leigh, so far as to put the Spectator very much in mind of him ... the true Spirit ... was not the same, but unskilfully dawb'd on, like a Child's Painting upon the Face of a *Metzo-tinto*: It was too plain to the judicious, that the Conception was not his own, but imprinted in his Memory, by another, of whom he only presented a dead Likeness.' *Ibid.*, pp. 246–47.

<sup>85</sup> [Hill], *The Actor* (1755), pp. 174, 176.

<sup>86</sup> Bias in writings about the theatre is the subject of Robert Schoch, *Writing the History of the British Stage: 1660–1900* (Cambridge, 2016). Schoch treats mid-eighteenth century theatre writings mainly in his fourth chapter, identifying the volumes that established the viewpoint of the 'theatrical insider': Downes' *Roscius Anglicanus* (1708), Charles Gildon's *Life of Betterton* (1710), Colley Cibber's *An Apology for the Life of Mr. Colley Cibber* (1740), William Oldys's *Biographia Britannica* (1747), and Thomas Davies' *Dramatic Miscellanies* (1747).

hide the puffing altogether). In his summary he equates these announcements with flatulence ('crepitative puffs') and burping ('eructative puff[s]')<sup>87</sup>. Another article, 'On the Modern Art and Mystery of Puffing' likewise warns readers of the 'inextricable labyrinth of PUFFING'.<sup>88</sup> Like treatises, puffs tend to tell us more about strategies than they do about events, and I interpret all such testimony about Clive in this light.

Examination of creative practice grants us more immediate access to what might have taken place on stage. If, as Peter Holland claims, the modern study of past theatre is flawed in its preoccupation with the 'visual rather than the aural',<sup>89</sup> this would help account for the elusiveness to scholars of Clive's appeal, which lay in the performance of music and stage speech. Clive's musicianship was part of what made her as prized as an actress as she was as a singer. Just as stage appearance in the eighteenth century was measured against a painted ideal,<sup>90</sup> so was the actor's voice measured against the sounded ideal of high-style music.

Period stage critics routinely compared speech to high-style music, focusing on four components: tempo, timbre, rhythm, and melody. Critics tended to analyze the tempo of stage speech simplistically, recommending a slow rate in tragedy and a quick one in comedy. Affective weight bred this split: tragedy, with its 'sorrow, grief, pain, &c' required 'a voice slow, solemn and affecting, like the melancholy plaintive notes of an Adagio'; by contrast, the 'proper

<sup>87</sup> Puffemoffius, 'A Short Dissertation on Puffs', *Grub-street Journal*, issue 285 (12 June 1735) and Puffemoffius, 'A Short Dissertation on Puffs [part 2]', *Grub-street Journal*, issue 286 (19 June 1735).

<sup>88</sup> [Bonnell Thornton], 'On the Modern Art and Mystery of Puffing' (annotation in MS 'April 13, 1752'), *Have at you all: Or, the Drury-Lane Journal. By Madam Roxana Termagant* (London, 1752), p. 270.

<sup>89</sup> Peter Holland, 'Hearing the Dead: The Sound of David Garrick', *Players, Playwrights, Playhouses: Investigating Performance, 1660–1800*, ed. M. Corder and P. Holland (Basingstoke, 2007), p. 249. Drawing on testimony from present-day actors and historical testimony about elocution – including Joshua Steele's 'exact' representation of Garrick's voice as he spoke Hamlet's monologue 'To be, or not to be' – Holland analyses conflicting accounts of pauses, accents and the speed of Garrick's tragic stage speech. He concludes that while the historian's grasp of vocal inflection is necessarily imprecise, such study is requisite to appreciate Garrick's artistry. *Ibid.*, 248. This view is taken up by Judith Pascoe in her study of Sarah Siddons' speaking voice. For Pascoe, how 'Sarah Siddons sounded was what made her seem so staggeringly original'. *The Sarah Siddons Audio Files: Romanticism and the Lost Voice* (Ann Arbor, 2014), p. 109. Pascoe believes that Siddons' aural impact cannot be understood today because not recorded, and that Siddons' audiences longed for such aural permanence.

<sup>90</sup> Actors followed a lexicon of gestural representation, famously illustrated by Charles Le Brun and based on history painting, to optimize declamation and affective expression. Foundational studies of this stagecraft include Roach, *The Player's Passion*; West, *The Image of the Actor*; Holland, *The Ornament of Action*; and Dean Barnett and Jeanette Massy-Westropp, *The Art of Gesture: the Practice and Principles of Eighteenth-Century Acting* (Heidelberg, 1987). For a useful summary of this acting legacy, see Goring, 'The Art of Acting', *Rhetoric of Sensibility in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, pp. 114–41.



execution ... [of] Joy and Pleasure, those 'marks of Comedy,' called for speaking at a tempo of 'Spirituoso, or chearful vivacity'.<sup>91</sup> Timbre was an aspect over which the player was held to have no control: certain musical instruments, which the actor's 'pipe' either did or did not match, were thought optimal for exciting certain passions. For instance, in 1752 Bonnell Thornton praised Susannah Cibber, London's top tragedienne, for having a 'soft easy pipe' with the 'mellowness of a GERMAN FLUTE [transverse flute] ... whose sounds are adapted to the languishings of love ... extatic mildness ... [and] wild fury of extravagant Despair'.<sup>92</sup> In 1759 Samuel Derrick reasoned that an actor 'whose voice has all the roughness of a base-viol' or the 'rougher tones of a bassoon' was ill-suited to love scenes, because 'Love in general requires a soft, alluring, and melodious voice'.<sup>93</sup> Thornton likened Garrick's voice, in its expressive range, to a 'double-key'd [two-manual] HARPSICORD struck by the nice finger of an HANDEL' which could sound '[a]ll the powers of harmony' by virtue of being a 'various and delightful instrument'.<sup>94</sup> Garrick and Clive in particular became known for commanding instruments whose timbres they could change to suit their presentations.

On stage speech's proper rhythm and melody, one of the clearest writers was the politician John Burgh, an early advocate of free speech and universal suffrage. *The Art of Speaking* (1761), which he wrote to educate common readers in public address,<sup>95</sup> specifies and summarizes practices a speaker should follow. For the rhythms of free stage speech – as opposed to verse, whose metre would determine the rhythm – he advocates maintaining a basic pulse, just as a musician would follow a time signature's meter. When encountering punctuation, the speaker should count the pause, as would a musician a notated rest, with discretionary flexibility. 'The common rule,' says Burgh, 'for holding [stops] out to their just length, is too exact for *practice*, viz. that a comma is to be held the length of a syllable, a semicolon of two, a colon of three, and a

<sup>91</sup> [Samuel Derrick], *A General View of the Stage. By Mr. Wilkes* (London and Dublin, 1759), p. 111. Thornton thought the variety that Hannah Pritchard brought to the placement and timing of rests made her superior to Susannah Cibber, whose repetitiveness in this regard dulled her declamation: 'I could wish indeed Mrs. CIBBER's stops were regulated with the judgment of a PRITCHARD, that we might not be so often tir'd with a constant and unalter'd monotony. [Thornton], *Have at you all*, p. 89.

<sup>92</sup> [Thornton], *Have at you all*, p. 89.

<sup>93</sup> [Derrick], *A General View of the Stage*, p. 111.

<sup>94</sup> [Thornton], *Have at you all*, pp. 87–88; likewise, Thornton equated the 'rich music' and 'harmonious utterance[s]' of George Ann Bellamy with a curious blend of the 'softness of the FLAGELLET, the mellowness of the [traverse] FLUTE, and the fullness of the HAUTBOY'. *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>95</sup> [John Burgh], *The Art of Speaking. Containing I. An Essay; in which are given Rules for expressing properly the principal Passions and Humours, which occur in Reading, or public Speaking; and II. Lessons taken from the Antients and Moderns (with Additions and Alterations, where thought useful) exhibiting a Variety of Matter for Practice; the emphatical Words printed in Italics; with Notes of Direction referring to the Essay* (London, 1761).

period of four.' When Burgh recommends that speakers deviate or add pauses 'to render the *sense clear*' or 'shew ... beauty',<sup>96</sup> he could almost be coaching musicians.

It was in melody that the so-called 'natural' school of acting – a new method pioneered from 1733 by theatre impresario Aaron Hill<sup>97</sup> – broke most decisively from pre-existing stage practice. Characteristic of old-style acting were rant (angry pronunciation), cant (whining or loving pronunciation), and declamation or 'tone' (cadenced, intoned pronunciation).<sup>98</sup> Burgh, an exponent of 'natural' acting, likens all these old-style modes to 'psalmody and ballad in music, a strain consisting of a few notes *rising* and *falling* without variation, like a peal of bells, let the *matter* change how it will'.<sup>99</sup> He criticizes cant as 'chaunt, with which the prose psalms are half-sung, half-said, in cathedrals'.<sup>100</sup> For Burgh, 'canting, whining, drawling or [an] *un-animated* manner'<sup>101</sup> is simply a 'uniform humming sound', in place of which he commends the '*natural* inflections of voice'.<sup>102</sup>

In Burgh's view, an actor worth emulating brings out, in accordance with the action, a word's inherent melody. Like cant and its cousins, such elocution is a musical speech; but unlike cant, it generates variety. Practices borrowed from high-style song provide this variety. Burgh's practice for delivering a parenthetical phrase parallels how a musician typically marks a main theme and its return: he recommends that the stage player speak 'with a *lower* voice, and *quicker* than the rest, and with a short *stop* at the beginning, and end; that the hearer may perceive where the strain ... *breaks off*, and where it is *resumed*'.<sup>103</sup> Cadential resolutions – generated by either lowering or raising vocal pitch at the end of a sentence – separate one idea from another. Phrases shaped by a '*stronger* accent' highlight crucial words.<sup>104</sup> Burgh even tells speakers to select a home key, and be ready to apply dynamics:

<sup>96</sup> [Burgh], *The Art of Speaking*, p. 8.

<sup>97</sup> 'The informal advice Hill had offered the Drury Lane actors in autumn 1733 began to expand into what he himself described as his "system" of acting – a system which he developed in a series of journal articles, letters, poems, and essays between 1733 and 1746. Hill was writing during the decade before Charles Macklin and David Garrick pioneered the new style of acting which was to take London audiences by storm.' Christine Gerrard, *Aaron Hill: The Muses' Projector, 1685–1750* (Oxford, 2003), p. 167. Aaron Hill was not related to John Hill.

<sup>98</sup> John Harold Wilson, 'Rant, Cant and Tone on the Restoration Stage', *Studies in Philology*, vol. 52 (1955), pp. 592–98; cited in Stern, *Rehearsal from Shakespeare to Sheridan*, p. 159.

<sup>99</sup> [Burgh], *The Art of Speaking*, p. 8.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>103</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>104</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.



[The speaker's] *success* with his audience, depend[s] much upon his *setting out* in a proper *key*, and at a due pitch of *loudness*. If he begins in too *high* a tone, or sets out too *loud*, how is he afterwards to rise to a *higher note*, or swell his voice *louder*, as the more *pathetic* strains may require? The *command* of the voice, therefore in this respect, is to be studied very *early*.<sup>105</sup>

'The *command* of the voice' is precisely what Clive demonstrated throughout her career. Due to the Town fashion for ballad opera, she was trained primarily to lead such productions as a singer. This developed not just her vocal talents, but also her musical invention. She joined music and musical knowledge with her '*natural* inflections' to make her voice stand out from all others.

### Conclusion: Imagining Kitty Clive

In the playhouse, entertainment and commerce met public reputation and social convention, often redirecting the business of the evening from its stated aims. Tragedy, despite the sublime heights it was said to reach, could be followed by a comic epilogue; farce pretending to instruct often served instead to titillate, or to invert standard pieties; pantomime juxtaposed antipodal serious and comic scenes. This confusion of modes and aims helped Clive to create unseemly stage characterizations yet seem respectable, and the Barthian 'grain' of her voice provided a means for her public to recognize her through all the diverse guises she assumed on stage.

Performing performance was a big part of what Clive did, thrilling spectators in part with the risk of failure. Among what Roach calls the 'suddenly reversible polarities' of stardom,<sup>106</sup> perhaps none is stronger than the twinned desire of audiences to worship idols and to smash them: the fan reveres the star, but delights in her fall.<sup>107</sup> The power and savagery of playhouse audiences impressed even the hardened stage professional Fielding: 'In the Theatre especially, a single Expression which doth not coincide with the Taste of the Audience, or with any individual Critic of that Audience, is sure to be hissed; and one Scene which should be disapproved, would hazard the whole Piece'.<sup>108</sup> Whether Clive would be idolized or reviled was tested night after night at Drury Lane. She could fail in either of two ways: by leaving the audience cold, or by delivering an unpersuasive performance of self. In either case, audience disenchantment would put in question her power to induce laughter, wonder, sympathy, and reflection; it would cast doubt on her inimitability; it would

<sup>105</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>106</sup> Roach, *It*, p. 9.

<sup>107</sup> As Chris Rojek explains, star idolatry functions like worship within, and rejection of, a religion: the aura of the idolized first is perceived and then denied. See Chris Rojek, 'Celebrity and Religion', *Celebrity*, pp. 51–100.

<sup>108</sup> Fredson Bowers and Martin C. Battestin, ed., *Henry Fielding, The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (Oxford, 1974), p. 571.

lead audience members to question the authority they had given her. Kitty Clive had to justify her status as a star every time she stepped out on stage. As high as she soared, it was her potential to crash that made her a signal attraction.

On the battlefield of representation, Clive often surrendered what we might call her integrity. To advance in public favour, she pandered to ugly prejudices about women, Jews, Britons, foreigners, sexual orientation, and social rank. She contributed to press wars by stealth to avoid the opprobrium that female writers provoked. She was sometimes dishonest with her audiences while pretending to a disarming directness. When negative tattle imperilled her respectability, she turned it into stage entertainments. This last was perhaps Clive's deftest manoeuvre: by appointing herself the chief critic of Clive, she ultimately helped steer audience desire to witness her own failure.

Clive gave life to her parts so persuasively that they couldn't be successfully re-imagined in any other way. Her variety of line confounded easy synthesis, allowing each spectator to imagine her differently. Her success lay not in representing a stock type, but in using each type to alternately suggest and deny who she was. Her voice was her instrument, and commanding it, she commanded her audiences. This book explores how.

## ‘The Lovely Virgin tun’d her Voice’: Henry Carey and the Production of a Native Songster

*Enter Catherine Raftor – Carey as composer and teacher – Clive’s hybrid voice – pretty Polly Fenton swoops in – Colley Cibber tries to tame Town taste – the shepherdess ‘Miss Raftor’ – Phillida lingers, but Arethusa is cut down – from swains to gods, or traversing musical spheres – Procris prevails*

When she auditioned for Drury Lane, Catherine Raftor reportedly bowled over veteran manager Colley Cibber. The audition took place some time before 13 April 1728, when she apparently debuted on stage. More than twenty years later, Drury Lane prompter William Chetwood would recall:

Miss Raftor had a facetious Turn of Humour, and infinite Spirits, with a Voice and Manner in singing Songs of Pleasantry peculiar to herself. Those Talents Mr. Theo. Cibber and I (we all at that Time living together in one House) thought a sufficient Pasport to the *Theatre*. We recommended her to the *Laureat* [Colley Cibber] ... and the Moment he heard her sing, [he] put her down in the List of Performers at twenty Shillings *per Week*. But never any Person of her Age flew to Perfection with such Rapidity ... like a Bullet in the Air, there was no distinguishing the Track, till it came to its utmost Execution.<sup>1</sup>

Chetwood’s 1749 account is the earliest we have of Clive’s career. A year later, in a theatre memoir for Dublin readers, Chetwood noted that ‘her teacher in music was the luckless Henry Carey and we find her furnishing her talent to entertainments given for his benefit on several occasions.’<sup>2</sup> Chetwood’s admiration of Clive tinges all his writings about her, and seems to have been shared

<sup>1</sup> Chetwood, ‘Mrs. CATHARINE CLIVE (formerly Miss RAFTOR)’, *A General History of the Stage*, p. 127.

<sup>2</sup> [William R. Chetwood], *The British Theatre: Containing the Lives of the English Dramatic poets ... Together with the Lives of Most of the Principal Actors, as well as Poets* (Dublin, 1750); entry for Catharine Clive, cited in Joseph N. Gillespie, ‘The Life and Work of Henry Carey (1687–1743)’, vol. 1 (PhD diss., Univ. of London, 1982), p. 84. The Dublin version of this book that Gillespie quotes differs from the Dublin print digitized on *Eighteenth Century Collections Online*, which contains no entry for Clive.

by many of the Irishmen with whom she worked. By 1740 not only Chetwood, but also Charles Coffey and James Quin, had helped boost her career. Chetwood had ties to Kilkenny and was probably from there, like Clive's father.<sup>3</sup>

In early 1728, two people badly needed Clive employed at Drury Lane: Colley Cibber and Henry Carey. Drury Lane nominally had three managers, but Cibber had in fact been running the business since the early 1720s,<sup>4</sup> competing hard against his rival John Rich, the manager of London's only other licensed playhouse. In the autumn of 1727 Cibber had made a bad decision, rejecting *The Beggar's Opera* when John Gay offered it to him.<sup>5</sup> Gay had then taken his 'Opera' to Lincoln's Inn Fields, Rich's house, where from its debut on 29 January 1728 it made theatre history and an overnight star of its seventeen-year-old lead Lavinia Fenton. The notoriously stingy Cibber then hired his own seventeen-year-old soprano, Clive, paying her five shillings more than Fenton had reportedly earned.<sup>6</sup>

Chetwood tells us that Clive's first stage appearance was in the April 1728 revival of Nathaniel Lee's seventeenth-century tragedy *Mithridates*.<sup>7</sup> Dressed 'in Boy's Cloaths', Clive played a page whose sole function was to sing 'One

<sup>3</sup> Patrick J. Crean has studied the public records of Kilkenny and Wessex, tracing Clive's lineage back to the Rafterys of Kilkenny. Clive's father practised law in New Ross, Wessex. Crean, 'The Life and Times of Kitty Clive', pp. 1–2. Evidence of Chetwood's links to Kilkenny lies in his poem, *Kilkenny: Or, the Old Man's Wish* (Dublin, Printed for the Author, 1748), where he records his youthful haunts. Ann Tierney, the honorary librarian of the Kilkenny Archaeological Society, Rothe House, Kilkenny, notes that 'William Chetwood seems to have spent some time in Kilkenny, judging by his remarks on St Canice's, published in his 1748 *Tour of Ireland*.' Ann Tierney, personal message to author, 30 December 2016. I am grateful to Ann Tierney and Mary Flood for their research into the Chetwood family on my behalf.

<sup>4</sup> Colley Cibber, Thomas Dogget and Robert Wilks managed Drury Lane from 1710 on behalf of the ageing patent holder, Richard Steele. At first, Wilks trained the actors, Doggett supervised finances, and Cibber programmed and selected new plays. In 1714, Barton Booth replaced Dogget in this 'triumvirate', as it was known. Cibber's power grew as Wilks aged and Booth fell ill, finally retiring in 1728. Helene Koon, *Colley Cibber: A Biography* (Lexington, KY, 1986), pp. 112–26. Details of Cibber's managerial duties are known through a statement he gave on 16 February 1728 as part of a lawsuit. *Ibid.*, pp. 118–19. See also Robert D. Hume, 'John Rich as Manager and Entrepreneur', *The Stage's Glory*, pp. 38–42.

<sup>5</sup> John Fuller, 'Introduction', *John Gay: Dramatic Works*, vol. 1 (Oxford, 1983), p. 44. Gay finished writing *The Beggar's Opera* by 22 October 1727. Gay's patron, the Duchess of Queensberry, may have intervened to get Rich to stage the work.

<sup>6</sup> Impressed with Fenton's performance as Cherry in *The Beaux' Stratagem* at the New Haymarket Theatre, John Rich is said to have hired her 'by the tempting offer of fifteen shillings per week'. William Cooke, *Memoirs of Charles Macklin, Comedian* (London, 1804), p. 44.

<sup>7</sup> 'Her first Appearance was in the Play of *Mithridates King of Pontus* ... [as] the Page ... where a Song proper to the Circumstances of the Scene was introduced.' Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage*, p. 127. Notices for *Mithridates* do not carry Miss Raftor's name in cast lists.

Night when all the Village slept' whose melody, a common tune like those that filled *The Beggar's Opera*, had circulated since 1678.<sup>8</sup> After Clive earned 'extraordinary Applause' for her song,<sup>9</sup> Colley Cibber set about launching his own brand of ballad opera with Clive at the cast's helm. In coming seasons Cibber would continue to promote Clive in both serious and comic sung parts, at the same time and with equal vigour. Cibber's creation of parallel and opposed stage lines for Clive gave Carey the chance not just to compose for his pupil, but to realize his long-cherished dream of uniting, in one voice, serious and comic English song.

### The Ambitions of Henry Carey

Henry Carey did more than any other single person to get Clive's career under-way. He was a polymath, writing and composing for the stage, and criticizing stage productions. Today he figures only marginally in histories, whether of music, theatre, or Clive. Yet he helped create Clive's singing voice, was the first to write expressly for her, and composed some of her most celebrated songs, including 'The Life of a Beau'.<sup>10</sup> A champion, unusually for his time, of women's rights, Carey broke with stage formulae and wrote strong-willed characters for Clive to play. Their friendship led Carey to name his daughter after Clive.<sup>11</sup> But Carey was dogged by misfortune: despite the praise he earned for his writings and compositions, he never secured sustained patronage or a permanent appointment. His greatest stage successes were designed for Clive, but managers mounted them without her. Carey never got to see Clive finally lead, in 1747, the epoch-making *Dragon of Wantley* he had written for her ten

<sup>8</sup> 'One Night when all the Village slept' took its name from the song verses that Sir Carr Scrope supplied for Lee's tragedy of 1678. Carey's biographer Joseph Gillespie wrongly attributes the song to Carey. Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, p. 85. A 'wretched' setting of the melody by Louis Grabu appeared in 1681, and the tune and verses turned up in broadsides, collections, and ballad operas from the late seventeenth century onwards. Claude Simpson, *The British Broadside Ballad and its Music* (New Brunswick, 1966), pp. 557–59.

<sup>9</sup> Chetwood, *A General History of the Stage*, p. 127.

<sup>10</sup> 'The roles of Arethusa in *The Contrivances* (1729) ... and ... in ... *Cephalus and Procris* (1730) were specially written for her, as were numerous songs and cantatas bearing her name in their titles.' Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, p. 84. In his analyses of Carey's high-style music, Gillespie notes the talents of Clive for which Carey was writing: on *Love in a Riddle*, pp. 84–87; on *The Contrivances* and his Italianate and burlesque cantatas, pp. 94–97; on operatic burlesque, Lampe's *Opera of Operas*, and Carey's songs for Clive in the *Colombine Courtesan*, pp. 115–21; on *The Dragon of Wantley* and the celebrated Clive songs in Carey's collections, pp. 130–35.

<sup>11</sup> The child was 'Catherine-Clive Carey'. Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, p. 84. Discussing evidence for their collaboration, Gillespie, *ibid.*, observes that 'she remained his loyal friend and supporter, and their names are often associated together in theatre records'.

years earlier, because on 5 October 1743 he had hanged himself, apparently out of despair over his debts and the death of his infant son.<sup>12</sup>

When he trained Clive in the 1720s, Carey's prospects looked brighter than they had for years. In 1717 he had misguidedly composed 'a merry Tune for Joy' for the 'Liberty' of the treasonous Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford. This indiscretion cost Carey all three of his posts: as parish clerk at the chapel of Lincoln's Inn, as 'keeper of the library' at the Middle Temple, and as composer at Drury Lane, where he had worked from c.1714.<sup>13</sup> In 1723, however, he again began to provide music for the house, beginning with the spectacularly successful *Harlequin Dr Faustus*.<sup>14</sup> In 1724 his series of cantatas, modelled after those of John Hughes, began to appear. In 1726, Carey's song 'Mocking is Catching, or a Pastoral Lamentation for the Loss of a Man and no Man', which skewered devotees of the Italian castrato singer Senesino, became a favourite.<sup>15</sup>

Carey therefore had reason to hope he could fully recover from the taint of his link to Harley. Clive was his dream pupil, capable of realizing on stage the aims he had long espoused. In his 1729 poem 'Blundrella: Or, the Impertinent. A Tale', there is a character, 'Belinda', who seems clearly to have been inspired by Clive.<sup>16</sup> A gifted singer, Belinda has been constrained by her hostess Blundrella from performing English-language songs at a social gathering – but does it anyway:

At length, unwilling to appear  
Affected, peevish, or severe,  
The lovely Virgin tun'd her Voice,  
More out of Complaisance than Choice:  
While all were with her Musick pleas'd,  
But she [Blundrella] who had the Charmer teaz'd;  
Who, rude, unmanner'd, and abrupt,  
Did thus BELINDA interrupt.<sup>17</sup>

<sup>12</sup> The deaths of Henry Carey and his son Charles Colborn Carey, born 23 May 1743, are entered in the register of St James Clerkenwell on the same day, 5 October 1743. Gillespie notes that 'Carey's death was reported in almost all the daily and weekly newspapers'. Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, pp. 150–51.

<sup>13</sup> Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, pp. 61–62; the quotation is from the *Weekly Journal* of 13 July 1717.

<sup>14</sup> Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, pp. 69–70.

<sup>15</sup> The history of Carey's 'Mocking is Catching', known later as 'The Ladies Lamentation for the loss of Senesino', is convoluted. According to Gillespie, 'it was first published without music ... but Carey updated [it] to coincide with Senesino's second departure from England in 1736 [when he] set the poem to music. A second revision followed in 1737 when Carey adapted the lyric to Farinelli ... Mrs Roberts performed the song at Covent Garden on 14 April 1737'. Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 2, pp. 17–18.

<sup>16</sup> Henry Carey, *Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1729), p. 12.

<sup>17</sup> Carey, *Poems on Several Occasions*, p. 14. The earliest advertisement for the sale of the volume was in the *Daily Post*, 11 July 1729.

'Blundrella: Or, the Impertinent' captures Carey's aims as a composer of vocal music: to deflate pretension and supplant Italian repertory with English. Carey tried to realize these goals in his music, wordbooks, song verses, and commentary, in which he often condemns followers of Italian opera.<sup>18</sup> Clive had the voice and musicianship to help Carey both realize his aims and popularize his oeuvre.

Before Carey and Clive went public, they developed between them the distinctive vocal technique discussed in Chapter 1. Singing ballads, Clive was as bracing as a street crier; singing sophisticated airs, her refinement was exquisite. The first technique had the frisson of power, as well as novelty. Around 1700, the lawyer and musical amateur Roger North had written admiringly of 'the crys and ballad singers – some weomen singing in the streets with a loudness that downs all other noise, and yet firme and steddý'. By contrast, North complained, 'come into the theater or musick-meeting, and you shall have a woman sing like a mouse in a cheese, scarce to be heard, and for the most part her teeth shutt'.<sup>19</sup> The difference lay in the mastery of breath by those whose livelihood depended on a 'loudness that downs all other noise'.<sup>20</sup> Yet in Clive's day this brash, embodied loudness was considered anathema to any performance of femininity.

Emboldened by Carey, Clive integrated the 'loudness' of street singers into her ballad singing on stage. Near the end of her career, Christopher Smart wrote an epilogue for Clive to speak after *The Apprentice* (1756), Arthur Murphy's farce about so-called spouting clubs, at meetings of which apprentices would learn to imitate celebrity actors. In Smart's epilogue, Clive celebrates her own powers, citing as proof two of the ballads she had sung in *The Beggar's*

<sup>18</sup> 'Carey became the spokesman on the state of the English musical stage during the 1720s. It was not the quality of the Italian music presented of which he complained, but the antics of the fashionable society who patronised it, both in their pretentiousness and attitude toward the singers at the opera, and their distaste for anything English.' Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, p. 179. Carey expressed his resentment in airs, cantatas, stage burlesques, commentary and satirical poems: see *ibid.*, esp. pp. 96–99, 132–37, and on his satirical poems and commentary, pp. 179–205.

<sup>19</sup> 'Of English Singing', John Wilson, ed., *Roger North on Music: Being a Selection from his Essays written during the Years c.1695–1728* (London, 1959), p. 215. Wilson notes that this passage is from North's rough notes written between 1695 and 1700. I am grateful to Jeremy Barlow for bringing this quotation to my attention.

<sup>20</sup> Wilson, ed., *Roger North on Music*, p. 215. Such street cries were, as David Garrioch notes, a feature across eighteenth-century urban Europe: 'street sellers ... developed appropriate vocal techniques, using pitch, projection and repetition to achieve a high level of audibility'. He quotes the Viennese writer Johann Pezzl who, in his 'Sketch of Vienna' (1786–90) observed that the 'voices of most of the market-women seem half-hoarse, but very sharp withal, attacking one's eardrums with piercing insistence'. David Garrioch, 'Sounds of the City: the Soundscape of Early Modern European Towns', *Urban History*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2003), p. 8.



*Opera* and recalling her 'Voice like London Cries'.<sup>21</sup> In the 1720s Clive and Carey had helped render such rawness acceptable, and make it a means of reaching out to audiences. Her 'Cries', were heard as candour, and her voice as a vox populi. Yet Clive also transported listeners with her serious airs. She was the first London stage player to found her acclaim on the adoption of plural vocal personae. John Beard, her later singing partner, would be the second. Carey, whose youngest son would later make a career of reproducing celebrity voices,<sup>22</sup> trained Clive to control her vocal identity.

At the start of her career, that identity was serious. On 2 January 1729, in her first stage appearance of any substance, Clive played Dorinda, the sister of Miranda, in *The Tempest*. The part had been invented by John Dryden and William Davenant for their 1667 adaptation of Shakespeare's play, which was still a staple. As Dorinda she sang a favourite air, 'Dear pretty Youth', then thought to be by Henry Purcell, but in fact probably by John Weldon.<sup>23</sup> Such was her appeal that she not only retained her part, but eventually received separate billing for her air. Five days later, on 7 January, Clive stepped out in her first bespoke part: Phillida, in Drury Lane's inaugural ballad opera, *Love in a Riddle*. The work was written by Cibber himself to compete with *The Beggar's Opera*, with music arranged or composed by Carey, whom he had not employed in nearly four years.<sup>24</sup> Cibber's decision to take Carey back likely hinged on his casting of Clive. She was to be Drury Lane's attraction to rival Lavinia Fenton of *The Beggar's Opera*, around whom a media craze had raged during the first half of 1728.

<sup>21</sup> [Smart], 'EPILOGUE written by a FRIEND, spoken by Mrs. CLIVE. In this epilogue, Clive invokes the parts for which she is either infamous or celebrated: the 'scold' who thinks herself capable of playing the tragic Zara, the defiant 'daughter' who sings 'O Ponder well – and *Cherry Chase*' and fancies herself as Ophelia, a cousin who 'Acts Lady Townly – thus – in all her Glory'. Clive's speech is supposed to be about matching male spouters with female ones, but these all turn out to be manifestations of her. See also Nussbaum, 'The Economics of Celebrity', *Rival Queens*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>22</sup> Born the year his father died, George Saville Carey (1743–1807) had no chance to learn from him. He lectured publicly on mimicry, touring Britain to reproduce for audiences outside London the sound of celebrated actors and singers with ranges from soprano to bass. As David Brewer notes, George Saville Carey's mimicry attests to the ways which past performances bled into the reader's understanding of character in a drama. David A. Brewer, *The Afterlife of Character, 1726–1825* (Philadelphia, 2005), pp. 2–15. Henry Carey's daughter Anne was mother to the legendary Shakespearean actor Edmund Kean.

<sup>23</sup> Margaret Laurie argues persuasively for Weldon's authorship in Margaret Laurie, 'Did Purcell set *The Tempest*?', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 90th Sess. (1963–64), pp. 43–57.

<sup>24</sup> Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 1, pp. 68–84. The last full score Carey had provided was for the pantomime *Apollo and Daphne*, or *Harlequin Mercury*, which opened on 20 February 1725. Before the 1729 *Love in a Riddle*, Carey also supplied two songs for the January 1728 Drury Lane production of Sir John Vanbrugh's *The Provoked Husband*.

### Lavinia Fenton, Stardom, and Ballad Opera

Colley Cibber had looked on for many months as *The Beggar's Opera*, which he had rejected, shattered theatrical conventions and box-office records. John Gay had written a musical stage work unlike any other. Building on the notoriety of the thief Jack Sheppard, Gay turned Sheppard's exploits and hanging into an 'Opera' that both satirized Town taste and exploded the conceits of sentimental comedy. The commonness of the tunes Gay chose mocked the fashion for Italian arias. Polite audience members, including first minister Robert Walpole at one performance, saw their conduct likened to that of criminals and bawds. The unprecedented first run of sixty-two nights, the flood of publicity, merchandise and commentary, the profits with which John Rich built Covent Garden theatre in 1732, and the many ballad operas written in imitation were all part of the storied impact of *The Beggar's Opera*.

As *The Beggar's Opera* took the Town by storm, the seventeen-year-old Fenton catapulted to stardom as the female lead, Polly Peachum. This perplexed even Gay, who came to wonder 'whether her fame does not surpass that of the Opera itself'.<sup>25</sup> A former coffee-bar maid, Fenton would quickly come to represent all that was wonderful, and wicked, about this new entertainment of Gay's. In print commentary and ephemera of all kinds, one question dominated: how did this easy-virtue girl come to command Town taste? Much lay in Fenton's style of delivery.

In the playbook, Polly defies her parents to marry the man she loves, the highwayman Macheath, but then devolves into a rancorous jade, fighting with a rival over the title of wife to her bigamous husband. Gay even has Polly declare that 'I know as well as any of the fine Ladies how to make the most of myself [in the sexual marketplace] and my Man too'.<sup>26</sup> In performance, however, Fenton's Polly was sweetly sentimental, her singing a foil to the cynicism of the text. Songs in *The Beggar's Opera*, conceived as isolated points which halted the action, allowed Fenton to make Polly's voice her own. According to an anecdote passed down by James Boswell, a latter-day fan of the work, Fenton's performance of Air 12, 'Oh ponder well', transformed an initially dubious first-night audience into enthusiasts 'much affected by the innocent looks of Polly'.<sup>27</sup> Supporting Boswell's report is surviving publicity around the song: on a c.1730 broadsheet, *The Whole Life of Polly Peachum ... Shewing how she jump*

<sup>25</sup> Chester F. Burgess, ed., *The Letters of John Gay* (Oxford, 1966), pp. 72–73.

<sup>26</sup> John Fuller, ed., *The Beggar's Opera, John Gay: Dramatic Works*, vol. 2 (Oxford, 1983), pp. 11, 17.

<sup>27</sup> See the entry for Tuesday, 18 April 1775 in R. W. Chapman ed., rev. J. D. Fleeman, with a new introduction by Pat Rogers, *Life of Johnson by Boswell* (Oxford, 1980), p. 630. I would like to thank Jeremy Barlow for calling my attention to this passage. The numbering and title of the air are taken from Jeremy Barlow, *The Music of John Gay's The Beggar's Opera* (Oxford, 1990), p. 28.



**Fig. 2.1** John Faber the younger after John Ellys, *Miss Fenton*, 1728.  
Mezzotint. © Trustees of the British Museum. Museum number: 1902,1011.1422.

*from an Orange Girl ... to be a Lady of Fortune*,<sup>28</sup> 'O Ponder Well' is printed just below Fenton's portrait. Fenton's Polly came to be seen as 'a *natural, innocent* Girl, forming Sentiment from her own Heart'.<sup>29</sup> Her personal story was held to mirror that of Polly. A fake memoir gave out that Fenton's mother had sold her daughter's maidenhood to a Portuguese nobleman, to whom Fenton

<sup>28</sup> *The Whole Life of Polly Peachum ... Written by one of her Companions* (London, [1730?]).

<sup>29</sup> *Daily Journal*, issue 5842 (13 November 1736). This opinion was given out during what became known as the Polly Row, discussed in Chapter 6, when critics described Fenton's interpretation and argued that it was definitive.

remained loyal. Writers hotly debated whether Fenton was ‘really’ a heroine, or a whore.<sup>30</sup>

Fenton’s unschooled singing was quickly extolled in print as a touchstone for her sincerity. This was the first time an untrained voice had excited large-scale critical admiration among playgoers. Fenton and her song went on to be celebrated in her mezzotint portrait, engraved by John Faber after an oil by John Ellys, and issued by 20 March 1728 (Fig. 2.1).<sup>31</sup> The image proliferated wildly; Alexander Pope remarked on it being ‘engraved and sold in great numbers,’<sup>32</sup> and Henry Carey noted its inescapability for those hurrying by London’s print shops and coffee houses: ‘& as we paß, in Frame & Glass, / We see her Mezzo=tint=o.’<sup>33</sup> One author raged against ‘the Prints of Captain Macheath and Polly Peachum’ for ‘hanging in the Windows with those of the

<sup>30</sup> Berta Joncus, “‘The Assemblage of every female Folly’: Lavinia Fenton, Kitty Clive and the Genesis of Ballad Opera,” *Women of Fashion*, pp. 25–34.

<sup>31</sup> A close friend of William Hogarth’s and also of the actor and manager Robert Wilks, Ellys was anonymously commissioned to paint Fenton’s portrait. Ellys was later, from 1736, the Prince of Wales’s principal painter and was hired by Robert Walpole to help amass his painting collection, which became renowned. Ellys had friends among theatre personnel, and from 1732 until 1735 owned the actor Robert Wilks’ former share of the Drury Lane patent. He also painted Wilks, and Hester Booth. Writing to Jonathan Swift, Gay noted: ‘There is a mezzotinto print published to-day of Polly, the heroine of the Beggar’s Opera.’ Letter of 20 March 1728, cited in William E. Schultz, *Gay’s Beggar’s Opera: Its Content, History, and Influence* (New Haven, 1923), p. 7.

<sup>32</sup> Pope noted that the fame of *The Beggar’s Opera* ‘was not confin’d to the author only; the ladies carry’d about with ’em the favourite songs of it in fans; and houses were furnish’d with it in screens. The person who acted Polly, till then obscure, became all at once the favourite of the town; her *pictures* were engraved and sold in great numbers, her *life* written; books of letters and verses to her publish’d; and pamphlets made even of her *sayings* and *jests*’. Annotation in *The Dunciad* (Book iii, l.330), cited in Schultz, *Gay’s Beggar’s Opera*, p. 8. Although not error- or bias-free, Charles E. Pearce’s collation of contemporary commentary about Fenton is useful. Charles E. Pearce, “Polly Peachum.” *Being the Story of Lavinia Fenton (Duchess of Bolton) and “The Beggar’s Opera”* (London, 1913).

<sup>33</sup> Henry Carey, ‘Polly Peachum, to the Tune of Sally in our Alley’ in *Six Ballads on the Humours of the Town* (London, 1728). Carey’s song was reprinted in editions of *The Beggar’s Opera* from its ‘third edition’ onwards and in Carey’s *Poems on Several Occasions* of 1729. The mezzotint process was perfected by the engraver John Smith; its innovation lay in reproducing the effects of an oil painting – chiaroscuro, nuanced contouring, and precision – in a print medium. Mezzotints varied in size, with formats from quarto to large folio. They often cost about a shilling, and were sold at booksellers, printers, and other retailers, where they were displayed. For an account of Smith’s career and a chronology of his plates, see Antony Griffiths, ‘Early Mezzotint Publishing in England – I. John Smith,’ *Print Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 3 (1989), pp. 243–57. On the transformative impact of Smith’s mezzotints, see Amanda-Nicole Ridel, ‘Modification of Market: John Smith and the Mezzotint Print in Eighteenth-Century England’ (MA diss., Univ. of California, Riverside, 2011). On the print-sellers who sold pictures, see Timothy Clayton, *The English Print 1688–1802* (New Haven, 1997), pp. 3–13.

first Quality of both Sexes', that is, for occupying spaces formerly the preserve of the privileged.<sup>34</sup>

In her 'Mezzo=tint=o', the wigless Fenton wears a front-tassled bodice and kerchief head-dress (Fig. 2.1). These are plainer clothes than she wore as Polly,<sup>35</sup> and redolent of the plain dress of Quakers. Below her portrait, verses were added:

'Miss Fenton'  
While Crowds attentive sit to Pollys Voice,  
And in their native Harmony rejoyce;  
Th'admiring Throng no vain Subscription draws  
Nor Affectation prompts a false Applause.  
Nature untaught, each Pleasing Strain supply's,  
Artleß as her unbidden Blushes rise,  
And Charming as the Mischief in her Eyes.

Pastoral conceits serve a double function here. While Fenton's 'voice' and 'Nature untaught' are held to be the ideal conduit for 'native Harmony' and 'Pleasing Strain[s]', her artlessness signals also her potential sexual adventurism, witnessed by her 'Blushes' and the 'Mischief in her Eyes'. In the picture Fenton herself appears aloof, in plain dress and with a doe-eyed sideways glance distancing her from the spectator. Critics and theatre personnel were quick to exploit the cognitive dissonance between Fenton's dress in the Faber mezzotint and her burgeoning reputation. Thomas Walker, who had played Macheath in *The Beggar's Opera* opposite Fenton, went on to write and lead *The Quaker's Opera*, whose action unfolds in a bordello and apes that of *The Beggar's Opera*.<sup>36</sup> In a similar vein, the satiric 'Dialogue between POLLY and PUNCH WILLIAM, in the Quaker's Dialect' had Fenton pretending piety to justify 'the Comforts of carnal Copulation'.<sup>37</sup>

Fenton's mezzotint verses recall at once her looks and her singing. Plain dress and plain voice conjoin as signs of an 'untaught' nature, which corrects the kind of musical 'Affectation' beloved by opera supporters – that is, the purchasers of a 'vain Subscription'. In an early salvo in the long battle between art song and popular song which continues to this day, Fenton's singing is here

<sup>34</sup> *Thievery A-la-mode: Or, the Fatal Encouragement* (London, 1728), p. 13.

<sup>35</sup> William Hogarth's five authenticated oils of the final scene of *The Beggar's Opera* show Fenton wearing a cap of lace, ribbon, and pendant lappets, a frilled chemise, swagged sleeves, and a choker. For details about Hogarth's oil of this scene, see note oo.

<sup>36</sup> Thomas Walker, *The Quaker's Opera* (London, 1728). The ballad opera ran as a summer booth entertainment during 1728, and sale of its playbook was announced on 22 June 1728. Berta Joncus and Vanessa Rogers, 'Beyond The Beggar's Opera: John Rich and English Ballad Opera', *"The Stage's Glory"*, p. 188 and note 43.

<sup>37</sup> *Polly Peachum on Fire, The Beggars Opera Blown Up, and Capt. Mackheath Entangled in his Bazzle-Strings* (London, 1728), pp. 21–29, esp. p. 25.



portrayed as a window into her private, convention-free inner life.<sup>38</sup> It clearly bewitched audience members, not least the Duke of Bolton, who, after watching Fenton onstage multiple times – William Hogarth famously painted the Duke's besotted gaze in several versions<sup>39</sup> – made her his mistress, and eventually his wife.

Admiration for Fenton came to stand either for the 'triumph' of the lower orders' 'deprav'd' taste,<sup>40</sup> or as a deliverance from suffocating Town artifice. As factions formed over whether Fenton was a notorious slut or a beguiling innocent, their debates unfurled across an unprecedented volume and variety of media: prints, ballads, broadsides, and an avalanche of commentary. Her detractors claimed that she owed her success solely to Town folly and to her manipulation of lovers; her defenders praised her charms, graces, generosity, and songs. She was treated as both a celebrity and a star: vilified for success not earned but rather conferred, lionized for possessing qualities which made her audiences 'rejoyce'. She was also a synecdoche for a broader collective introspection triggered by *The Beggar's Opera* over whether playhouse entertainments should be regulated by elite taste or by common consent.

The greater volume of commentary about Fenton was scurrilous. For instance, 'Polly's Description of a Terrible HAIRY MONSTER' is a 42-stanza verse riddle adapted from the publican Ned Ward's *The Dutch Riddle* (1708).<sup>41</sup> One reads here of Polly's allegedly commodious genitalia: 'Two white *Herculean* Pillars prop / The tufted *Gin*, the tempting Snare: / When they divide, then

<sup>38</sup> The seeming revelation of personality through voice is a tenet routinely probed in popular music studies. Summing up the contrast between the classical and the popular singer's relationship to the performed work, Simon Frith famously observed: 'As listeners we assume that we can hear someone's life in their voice – a life that's there despite and not because of the singers' craft.' Simon Frith, 'The Voice,' *Performing Rites: on the Value of Popular Music* (Cambridge, MA, 1996), pp. 185–86.

<sup>39</sup> Hogarth drew his scene 'directly from the stage in 1728' and painted five versions; a sixth version earlier attributed to Hogarth was dismissed in 1997. The chronology and variants between the five accepted versions are analysed in Robin Simon, 'Hogarth and Rich: Gesture and Expression in *The Beggar's Opera*,' *"The Stage's Glory"*, pp. 253–65.

<sup>40</sup> 'Yesterday I was at the Rehearsal of the New Opera Composed by Handel[.] I like it extremely, but the taste of the Town is so deprav'd that nothing will be approved of but Burlesque. The Beggar's Opera, intirely triumphs over the Italian one.' Letter from Mary Pendarves to Anne Granville, 15 February 1728, in Donald Burrows et al., ed., *George Frideric Handel Collected Documents: Volume 2 1725–1734* (Cambridge, 2015), p. 194. See also the *London Journal*, issue 451 (23 March 1728): '[T]here is nothing which surprizes all true Lovers of Musick more, than the Neglect into which the Italian Operas are at present fallen ... *The Beggar's Opera* I take to be a Touch-stone to try the British Taste on ... Our English Audience have been for some Time returning to their Cattish Nature; of which some particular Sounds of late from the Gallery have given us sufficient Warning.'

<sup>41</sup> [Edward Ward], *The Riddle. Or, a Paradoxical Character of a Hairy Monster often found in Holland* (London, 1706).

in we pop, / Before we well know where we are.’<sup>42</sup> Nicholas Amhurst, writing under the pseudonym Caleb D’Anvers, was the fiercest slanderer of Fenton: in his *Twickenham Hotch-Potch* he called her a ‘A Jew-trump Girl’,<sup>43</sup> and elaborated on attacks he had published earlier in *The Craftsman*.<sup>44</sup> No fewer than twenty ballads about Fenton appeared in London between January and June of 1728. Writers often set verses to the tune ‘Pretty Parrot say’, sung by Macheath in *The Beggar’s Opera* as he probes Polly’s fidelity: ‘Pretty Polly, say, / When I was away, / Did your Fancy never stray / To some newer Lover.’<sup>45</sup>

Standing as it did for female promiscuity, the tune ‘Pretty Parrot’ invited audiences to reflect on Fenton’s imputed concupiscence. A *New Ballad, Inscrib’d to Polly Peachum. To the Tune of Pretty Parrot say* accused Fenton of sluttish opportunism, keeping a stable of lovers, and sexually servicing John Rich in order to be cast as Polly. Even a rebuttal to this ballad, *An Answer to Polly Peachum’s Ballad*, while hailing Fenton’s talent, elaborated on her allegedly easy virtue. Amhurst spitefully paraphrased the first stanza of *A New Ballad* to preface the *Twickenham Hotch-Potch*, playing with the word ‘Stitch’ – a cant term for ‘lying with a woman’<sup>46</sup> – to imply that she owed her success to a targeted application of her skills as a prostitute: ‘Yet, dear Poll, you may / Suffer J[ohn]y G[a]y / For to S[titc]h you for his Play, / Which has rais’d your Grandeur; / Before which / You would S[titc]h / Near Fleet-Ditch ... Then don’t you vaunt it over all, / Tho’ you are pretty Poll.’<sup>47</sup> Fenton reportedly loved Jews for their ‘Generosity’, and was said to have had borne one Jewish lover a son, whose name was given as a mock-Hebrew amalgam of her supposed lovers.<sup>48</sup> A counterfeit memoir of Fenton took what passed for the middle ground in this discussion, representing her as a stereotypical good-natured harlot.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>42</sup> ‘Polly’s Description of a Terrible Hairy Monster, lately discovered by her and Sir R— F—’, *Polly Peachum on Fire*, p. 17.

<sup>43</sup> ‘Caleb D’Anvers’ [Nicholas Amhurst], *The Twickenham Hotch-Potch ... a Sequel to the Beggars Opera* (London, 1728), p. 37.

<sup>44</sup> Reviewing D’Anvers’ criticism of *The Beggar’s Opera* in *The Craftsman*, the leading anti-Walpole political journal of its time, Bertrand Goldgar contends that Amhurst and other Opposition writers were merely pretending: ‘It is clear, I think, that the moral and aesthetic arguments against Gay’s opera ... were a mask for objections that were primarily political.’ Bertrand A. Goldgar, *Walpole and the Wits: The Relation of Politics to Literature, 1722–1742* (Lincoln, 1976), p. 72. I disagree with Goldgar’s reading.

<sup>45</sup> Air 14 in Barlow, *The Music of John Gay’s The Beggar’s Opera*, p. 30.

<sup>46</sup> [James Caulfield], *Blackguardiana: Or, a Dictionary of Rogues, Bawds, Pimps, Whores ...* (London, 1793), pages unnumbered.

<sup>47</sup> [Amhurst], *The Twickenham Hotch-Potch*, p. 17.

<sup>48</sup> Her son’s name was said ‘to be a Compound of Hebrew and English Anagram thus; Rich-Red-Gay-Fraw-Hub-Stan-Fag’. *The Case between the Proprietors of News-Papers ... To which is annex’d ... Polly Peachum’s Child; its Name, Father, &c.* (London, [1729]), pp. 20–21.

<sup>49</sup> ‘Good-natured harlot’ is a term applied by Cheryl Wanko, who analyses Fenton’s reception in light of her ‘memoir’ *The Life of Lavinia Beswick alias Fenton, alias Polly Peachum* (London, 1728) in Wanko, *Roles of Authority*, pp. 51–62, esp. p. 60; on *The Life of Lavinia*



At least for some audience members, Fenton's sentimental performance of Polly eclipsed this scandalous public construct. A poem in *Mist's Weekly Journal* of 2 March 1728 held that Polly 'charms the present Age', such that the 'Autumnal' actress Anne Oldfield 'broils with Rage'.<sup>50</sup> Another poetaster in *The Craftsman* of 9 March 1728 enthused how 'Ev'n thy own Sex thy shining Charms extol, / And, young or old, acknowledge pretty Poll'.<sup>51</sup> Elsewhere Fenton was extolled for the 'Grace and Arts' by which she 'conquers Hearts' and 'vindicate[s] her Cause'.<sup>52</sup> The author of the 'Epistle Dedicatory to Miss Peachum' in *Polly Peachum's Jest*s hails the 'bright Nymph' who defies her 'humble State'.<sup>53</sup> The author of her counterfeit memoir, after describing her early prostitution to the Portuguese nobleman, argues that her loyalty to him marked her as 'the most humble, the most affable, and the least conceited of any Woman'.<sup>54</sup>

Several writers blended the two perspectives, holding that Fenton's artless singing evidenced an agreeableness which sometimes, as in her mezzotint, could be sexual. For instance, her 'tuneful warbling Throat, / With native, tho' sweet harmonious Voice' is said to make her 'every Lover's Choice'.<sup>55</sup> According to another report, 'The House Rings, / When she Sings' as Fenton 'out-shines them all'.<sup>56</sup> In *Polly Peachum: A New Ballad*, set to a favourite tune by Carey, 'Sally in our Alley', Polly overwhelms not only English but also Italian rivals: 'Compar'd with her, how flat appears Cuzzoni or Faustina?' cries the poet.<sup>57</sup> In this ballad, jealous 'Partizans of Handel' are blamed for sullyng Fenton's reputation.<sup>58</sup>

That Fenton was an unprecedented and divisive media sensation is clear. The intensity of the debate around her is startling, with practically all materials

---

Beswick, see also Nussbaum, 'Actresses' Memoirs: Exceptional Virtue', *Rival Queens*, pp. 97–100.

<sup>50</sup> *Mist's Weekly Journal*, issue 150 (2 March 1728): 'On Miss POLLY in the Beggar's Opera. / WHILE Polly charms the present Age, / And Venus' Train the Fair surrounds. / Autumnal O—f—ld broils with Rage, / And rugged P[o]rt[er] grimly frowns.'

<sup>51</sup> *Country Journal or The Craftsman*, issue 88 (9 March 1728): 'To Miss POLLY PEACHUM. / A TOWN PASTORAL'

<sup>52</sup> *An Answer to Polly Peachum's Ballad* (London, 1728). This publication is a broadside; that is, a sheet of paper printed on one side only.

<sup>53</sup> 'Epistle Dedicatory to Miss Peachum', *Polly Peachum's Jest*s (London, 1728), pages unnumbered.

<sup>54</sup> *The Life of Lavinia Beswick*, pp. 43–44.

<sup>55</sup> *A Letter to Polly. To one of her own Tunes* (London, 1728), p. 6.

<sup>56</sup> "The House Rings, / When she Sings, / Must such Things / Vanish in a Vapour, / No, she out-shines them all' *An Answer to Polly Peachum's Ballad*.

<sup>57</sup> 'POLLY PEACHUM: A new Ballad. To the Tune of, *Of all the Girls that are so smart*', *Country Journal or The Craftsman*, issue 93 (13 April 1728). On the provenance and settings of this tune – some by Carey himself – see the catalogue no. 275 in Gillespie, 'The Life and Work of Henry Carey', vol. 2, pp. 72–73.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*