

The Cooper : notes for the curious

It is perhaps unlikely that this adaptation will ever be performed other than by the group for which it was written, but if it should come into other hands perhaps a few notes may be of interest.

For some years, I have been singing with an informal group which meets every two months or so at the house of whichever of its members has issued the invitation for the day. We normally congregate for coffee at around 1100, sing from 1130 until perhaps 1300, break off for a buffet lunch, resume in the afternoon, and then sing until teatime. The ladies bring contributions to the lunch or the tea, the gentlemen bring bottles of wine, and the singing tends to be appreciably better after lunch than it was before. We are normally about fifteen strong and our staple fare is the Elizabethan-Jacobean madrigal repertory though many other things are grist to our mill. Yes, of course madrigals should be sung with one voice to a part and there is no more enjoyable way of singing, but not every singer who enjoys madrigals has the ability, and more importantly the confidence, to take an unfamiliar piece and sing his or her part at sight without support; the small group has a definite role to play in madrigal singing.

Last year (2001) I suggested that we might try something a little different and sing our way through Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. I had done this with another group some twenty years earlier, with a string quartet, a small harpsichord, and a choir of a dozen singers including the soloists, and I still had the parts and the vocal scores. The upshot was a suggestion that we repeat the exercise, and research in the excellent musical collection of the Hertfordshire County Libraries (thank you!) quickly identified *The Cooper* as a suitable piece. There is a modern edition of this (Horovitz 1956, Schott edition 10591), but I am afraid that my examination of the contemporary copy of the music in the British Library rapidly decided me that we needed to prepare our own edition; either Horovitz had used some other source, or his editing was somewhat more extensive than his rather disarming introduction might lead the reader to infer. But for all this, I must start by recording my sincere appreciation of his work. "The music contains such charm and beauty of vocal line that it is difficult to understand the neglect that even the individual songs have suffered," he writes. I entirely agree, and had he not published his edition of *The Cooper* I would in all probability have remained ignorant of its virtues.

I know of no surviving manuscript of the music, and the only contemporary printed copy I know is that which was published by W. Napier around the time of first performance and is in the British Library with shelfmark D.261.(3.). The British Library also holds two printed copies of the libretto, 161.d.74 (the earlier) and 1344.c.11. The music as published by Napier appears at first sight to be just a reduced version for home use, consisting in general of no more than voice and violin parts with figured bass, but examination of other Arne scores suggests that with the possible exception of the overture (of which more below) this was quite probably all that there was. He seems rarely to have written in more than two or three parts, leaving the keyboard player to supply anything else that might be needed, and even where a viola is present it rarely does more than reinforce somebody else's line. To take an extreme and perhaps unexpected example, the Musica Britannica score of *Alfred* shows that even in the original scoring of "Rule Britannia", where the orchestra is strengthened by oboes, bassoon, trumpets, and timps, there are places where the only wind or stringed instruments in action are doubling the tune or the bass and it is left to the keyboard to provide the rest of the harmony. So I have treated D.261.(3.) as having contained all that existed, and have set the music for an orchestra of no more than two violins, cello, and keyboard.

The present version is therefore based on what I hope is an accurate transcription of D.261.(3.), though the transcription has not been independently checked and the possibility of occasional error cannot be excluded. There is however one fundamental change in the scoring. Arne was a practical musician writing for the theatre, so the vocal line is normally doubled by the first violins and not infrequently by the second violins as well. But what is right in a large and possibly noisy theatre is quite wrong for chamber music, where the orchestra is reduced to one instrument per part and the doubling of a competent singer's line is neither necessary nor desirable. I have therefore taken out this doubling except in a couple of cases where the violin is an octave above the voice and is doing something more than merely reinforcing the tune. Where both violins doubled the voice, we now have a straightforward solo song with basso continuo, and the violins can be suppressed altogether and the orchestral introduction and interludes given to the keyboard if this is desired; where just the first violin doubled the voice, I have moved the second violin part to the first violin and have left the second violin silent (though I have put the parts together on the same sheet and the players can decide for themselves which of them actually plays it). There are of course sections where both Arne's violin parts are independent of the voice, and these have been left unchanged.

The arrangements of various sections for SATB chorus are wholly editorial. They have been made (a) to spread the jam around (we are essentially a group of singers rather than of listeners) and (b) to

insert some variety into strophic airs (a theatrical performance can offer action and even stage business to hold the audience's interest through two or three verses, but a non-theatrical performance cannot and there is a case for changing the musical treatment at each reprise). But it is a simple matter to revert to a version without this chorus if a different group of performers so wishes. In most cases, the chorus repeats music that has already been sung, and its removal is just a matter of giving the tune back to the soloist and reinstating the previous accompaniment; exceptions are (a) "Work away, Cooper" in the penultimate number, where the tune should be sung by Fanny with basso continuo accompaniment (no violins), and (b) the grand finale, where Arne puts Fanny and Colin on the tune and Martin on the bass line, and the part to be sung by Jarvis is not specified (the violin parts here are Arne's, in the version as used in verse 3). The realization of the choruses has involved some editorial writing of inner parts and I have sometimes felt it appropriate to simplify the vocal line, but comparison with the previous solo setting should make the changes clear. The altos usually have the original second violin part where one exists, and I have sometimes left the music in three parts with the tenors merely reinforcing the basses (mirroring Arne's use of the violas in some of his other works).

I have also altered the treatment of the finale. As written, it consists of verses sung in turn by Martin, Jarvis, Fanny, and Colin, each followed by the same chorus, but this soon becomes tedious and I am afraid that some of the words given to Fanny and Colin merely demonstrate the well-known tendency of morally uplifting sentiment to generate trite verse. To shorten things and to give a change in texture, I have conflated the last two verses, splicing the better halves together and letting Fanny and Colin sing the result as a culminating duet. This seems to me to make sense both musically and dramatically. Colin sings the notes which the violin played to accompany Martin's and Jarvis's verses, and I have left the performers to decide for themselves at which octave they will sound best.

These rearrangements have caused me to reconsider the linking passages between verses. Arne gives a two-bar orchestral link between the verses of "Chloe", but it seems to me that the change to and from keyboardless chorus gives a sufficient difference in texture and that an orchestral interruption is now better avoided, and in the finale I have held back Arne's coda until the last verse and have inserted a short editorial link between earlier verses. I have also taken out some linking arpeggios which seem inappropriate in the new context. Arne repeats only the second part of "Fly, Time", but I don't think the ladies of our chorus would have forgiven me had I not allowed them to sing both halves of one of Arne's most attractive melodies.

One item in D.261.(3.) presents a particular problem. The book starts with three instrumental pieces, "Overture", "Andantino", and "Minuet", with no indication as to where they are to occur in the action, and the so-called overture in its present form is a bravura piece for solo keyboard so idiomatically written that there is little reason to believe it was ever an orchestral piece at all. It is certainly not orchestrateable using the forces which I have employed for the rest of the work. I have included a transcription of it in the interests of completeness and the keyboard player may well enjoy playing it either at the start or elsewhere, but in setting out the main flow of the work I have followed Horovitz and have omitted it, using the Minuet as introductory music and the Andantino as an interlude to indicate the passage of time while the workshop is empty.

There are two items in the present adaptation which are not in D.261.(3.). The first is Martin's song to the bottle after Colin's storming departure towards the end of Act 1. The words of this are in the libretti and it forms part of the main thread of the action, but any setting Arne may have written has been lost. Horovitz repeats the music of Fanny's "Chloe" song with minor adaptations, but I didn't want to repeat something we had already sung if I could find a suitable alternative, and eventually I settled on the air from the end of Arne's *Thomas and Sally*, British Library G.321.b.(2.), transposed down a major third. I have had to take out the upbeats at the start of the last five lines and I have slightly simplified the phrase at the end of line 4, but the general flow of the music suits the verse and the dotted crotchets and quavers of line 7 are just right for "See, I pant". But neither solution is perfect (my changes to the *Thomas and Sally* air, although minor, may distress those who know it in its original form) and some may think Horovitz's the better choice.

The second addition concerns the drunken Farmer Twig, whose inopportune arrival on the scene precipitates the final action. This must have been a peach of a part to play; one can imagine him being shooed away, staggering back, and so on about six times, to the hilarious delight of the audience and the increasing desperation of Fanny and Colin. But he doesn't sing, at least not in any coherent manner, and in the present edition we are replacing the action by a narrator and concentrating on the music. Horovitz, who likewise concentrates on the music, edits him out altogether, and uses another device to wake Martin and bring him down to disrupt the proceedings. I have decided on the opposite approach, providing him with two companions and giving them a drinking song which they can fool about with,

and since most of Arne's own essays in this line appeared to be rather more sophisticated that was appropriate to drunken farmers my first thought was to pinch "Your hay it is mowed" from Purcell's *King Arthur* (here let me acknowledge the late Roy Terry, Head of Music at St George's School, Harpenden, whose staging of *King Arthur* in the early 1970s first introduced me to this delightful work). This robustly flexible piece can be fitted into the present context by changing "your" to "our", and the practice of interpolating numbers by other composers into musical comedies seems to have been as common in the eighteenth century as it was to become in the twentieth. But then I found "Beer-drinking Britons can never be beat" from Arne's *Harlequin Mercury*, and all that remained was to set it as a trio and to create a reason for them to barge in and start singing it. I have taken words, tune, and bass from British Library G.314.(30.), with a few octave transpositions in the bass; the third part is editorial, but in truth Arne's figuring leaves very little for the editor to do (the unison sections at the ends of lines are Arne's). In passing, I examined all the catches by Arne in the Warren collections (British Library E.200 and E.200.b, index E.200.a currently available in facsimile on open shelves), and while none proved suitable for present purposes they might prove very suitable indeed for others.

A minor editorial problem is presented by the small notes representing grace notes and appoggiaturas. Examination of the music suggests that no single interpretation is always appropriate: sometimes the need seems to be for a grace note, sometimes for an appoggiatura, and at one point the music seems to flow best if the ornament is suppressed altogether (the eighteenth century sometimes inserted ornaments where modern taste prefers a smooth line, and the performer may be well advised to omit them unless he or she can perform them with utter naturalness). In the overture, which is written for a solo performer, I have reproduced the small notes as I have found them, and the player can decide for himself how best to realise them. Elsewhere, I have thought it more helpful to take a view, converting appoggiaturas to ordinary full-size notes so that all remaining small notes can be interpreted as grace notes, but I have bracketed the resulting changes in the bass figures so that most such alterations are immediately identifiable and performers with different views can adjust my treatment. The following alterations are not so identifiable because there are no bass figures: (a) page 5, line 3, bar 2, all parts, notes 1-2; (b) page 6, line 3, bar 1, violin 1, notes 1-2, 5-6, and 9-10; (c) page 7, line 1, bar 3, both parts, notes 4-5; (d) page 40, line 1, bar 2, both parts, notes 2-3 (violin) and 3-4 (voice); (e) same page, line 3, bar 2, both parts, notes 3-4; (f) page 57, line 2, bar 1, violin 1, notes 1-2 and 5-6 (violin 2 at this point is editorial anyway); (g) page 58, line 1, bar 2, voice, notes 1-2, echoed in notes 2-3 of the bass part. Additionally, I have suppressed the ornament on page 30, line 4, bar 4, voice, note 4, and similarly in the final bar on page 34 (both parts). Interestingly, we may note that the appoggiatura in bar 2 of page 8 is explicitly not echoed when the violin repeats the phrase in the next bar, though I thought an echo appropriate when I gave the violin parts to the chorus in the later verses.

The parts of Martin and Fanny are generally comfortable for baritone and mezzo, but some tenors may find the tessitura of Colin's two arias a little high. Horovitz alters a few notes in each to reduce the demands, but I think changes like this should be matters for the performer; what a composer wrote for one singer may not be practicable for another and I am all in favour of a performer's right to replace the written notes by something he can cope with, but the editor should not make the decision for him. Instead, I have reproduced the arias as they stand but have also offered alternative settings where they are transposed down a tone. There appears to be no particular key sequence to the work - Arne doubtless felt that the intervening passages of spoken action would have destroyed any lingering feelings of tonality in the audience, and pitched each aria so as best to suit the singer who originally performed it - and the offering of a lower option seems to me to be legitimate. I have also indicated possible alternatives to Martin's three high Fs and Fanny's two solo Gs (I haven't worried about her Gs and her A flat in trio or choral sections where her note is well supported). These alternatives weaken the music and the singers will take the high notes if they can, but the parts do not normally go above E flat and F respectively and it would be a pity if otherwise suitable singers were to be deterred from taking them on by just a few notes; better to sing lower alternatives where necessary and to enjoy the rest of the piece. The alternative endings to the verse section of the finale are Arne's.

There is one change in the other direction which performers may wish to consider. In the chase scene, Horovitz puts Colin's final "Goodbye" on an F and a ringing top B flat, reducing Arne's E flat and D to the rank of an optional alternative. Stylistically, this is surely wrong (the surviving evidence suggests that while eighteenth-century singers were no more immune to the temptations of vulgar display than their modern counterparts, they tended to impress by flashy technique rather than by brute force), but dramatically it is entirely correct and even a tenor who normally regards a solo top B flat as outside his range may be tempted to give it a go. There is plenty going on below, and the vowel can be opened to "Goodbah" without anybody being likely to notice.

There is also scope for some intelligent high-note conjecture by the violinists. The parts as we have

them are sometimes awkwardly bent so as not to go above high D, but what is not clear is whether they were originally written like this or whether they were bent in the course of keyboard reduction. Could composers expect theatre violinists in the 1770s to play above third position? Arne's major works of the 1740s, *Comus*, *The Judgement of Paris*, and *Alfred*, do not normally take the violins above D (*Alfred* has a few Es), but by 1792 Haydn was expecting London orchestral violinists to play G and even the seconds to reach E, and a major theatre will presumably have been able to call on most of the leading professional players of the day. As a matter of caution, I have reproduced the parts as I have found them, but I have indicated a few conjectural alternatives which seem to me to be worth considering, and if players who are happy in high positions consider that there are other places where the original parts have been distorted to fit a four-octave C-D harpsichord they should not hesitate to back their judgement.

As regards routine editorial detail, little need be said. The narrator's script is of course wholly editorial, and can be freely adapted as the narrator wishes. The libretto presents the material in two acts with the finish of Act I immediately after Martin's bottle song, but a performance in the present form is shorter and it seems most natural to play the instrumental interlude when Martin has gone upstairs and the stage is empty. There are a few differences in the text of the songs as between 161.d.74 and D.261.(3.), and in each case I have taken a view; it might seem automatic to prefer the version which accompanies the music, but in some cases that in the libretto strikes me as the better. I have taken it upon myself to change line 3 of the second verse of Fanny's "Jealous cooper" song (the agreement of libretto and music is normally impeccable, but this line is a little awkward), and to assist comprehension I have made the narrator refer to Colin as Martin's "assistant" and not as his "shopman". These changes apart, the printed verses at the start of each item should reflect the spelling and punctuation of 161.d.74 exactly and the printed layout reasonably closely, but again the transcription has not been independently checked and the possibility of error cannot be excluded. The manuscript underlay was initially intended to present the words with modern punctuation, but I soon realised that any merit this might have would be reduced by its lack of clarity (my apologies to singers, but I transcribed the notes first and then fitted in the words as best I could). In the hope of reducing the problem, I have tried to repeat the words in print at the top of each page where the printed verse at the start of the song is no longer visible, though it remains to be seen whether I have had to go so near to the edge as to defeat the copying machine. The sources underlay only the first verses of strophic airs, and my repetition of the line "Stop, Chloe, stop" in the later verses of Fanny's "Chloe" song is without any authority beyond the fact that it seems the most natural way to fit the words to the music. There is a curious point in the chase scene, where Martin sings "Away, sirrah, hie" in parallel with Colin and Colin is given the words "Away [gap] hie" instead of his usual "Good bye, Good bye". Intention, or engraver's error? I suspect the latter, but "Away I hie" fits so well that I have inserted it.

Musically, I have converted to modern notation, but dynamics and other performance indications are Arne's unless the contrary is obvious from the context. Editorial insertions and suggested alternatives are indicated by dotted lines or square brackets, and can be altered or omitted as the performers wish. It is in the nature of keyboard reduction that markings which were originally applied to both violin parts now appear once only, and players should use their judgement and make the second violin conform to the first wherever it seems appropriate for it to do so. A few obvious errors in the source material have been silently corrected. My order of work was (a) to make a transcription of the sources (not included here), (b) to prepare the vocal score, (c) to write out the transposed versions of Colin's two arias, and (d) to copy out the instrumental parts, and any inconsistencies should be resolved by assuming the version made earlier to be the correct one. In the course of copying out the instrumental parts, I spotted and corrected several errors in the vocal score; no doubt there are others which escaped notice, but I hope there aren't too many. There is an inconsistency in the source at the first "See, see" in Martin's intruder scene, where the change from *forte* to *piano* occurs after two semiquavers in the violin parts and after two quavers in the bass; I take this to be an engraver's error, and I have resolved it in favour of the violins. (There are no dynamic markings when a similar phrase occurs four bars later, so it is up to the performers to decide whether they should implicitly repeat this treatment or perform the second occurrence quietly throughout; both seem to me to be defensible.) And I have not written out a realization of the figured bass, but have given the keyboard player a blank right-hand stave on which he may put such written-out passages or jotted aide-mémoires as he wishes.