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Vauxhall Gardens:

The provision of music in Bath's pleasure gardens and walks, and the development of 'Grand Gala Concerts', a combination of pleasures 'after the manner of Vauxhall'.

Matthew Spring

Fig. 1: **Detail of J.C. Nattes, 'Sydney Gardens and rear of Sydney House', showing the balcony on which the band played - Bath in Time, no. 11422**

On 10th August 1786, the *Bath Chronicle* carried on its third page two adjacent advertisements for grand garden concerts, both to be held on the evening of 12th August, and both to honour the birthday of the Prince of Wales. On the left the Villa Gardens concert offered a full band of twenty-three vocal and instrumental performers, illuminations and fireworks, and a new pastoral *Acasto and Thrysus* by Benjamin Milgrove; on the right the Spring Gardens event also listed the music and performers, illuminations and fireworks, but went on to list some of the paintings to be exhibited in some detail. This advertisement ended by taking a swipe at the other event: 'As to

VILLA GARDENS.

In HONOUR of his ROYAL HIGHNESS,
The PRINCE of WALES'S BIRTH-DAY.
On SATURDAY next, the 12th Instant, will be

A GRAND CONCERT of MUSIC.

Principal Vocal Performers, a Young Lady of extraordinary Musical Abilities (being her first appearance at the Gardens) Masters Shell, Cook, Mr. Stillman, Mr. Palmer, &c. &c.

First Violin and Concerto Mr. Crew.

The ILLUMINATIONS will this Night be peculiarly brilliant and superb; and the FIRE-WORKS on so magnificent and enlarged a Scale, that the Proprietor challenges all Competition; having neither spared pains or expense to render the whole worthy the patronage of the Nobility and Gentry, and of the Festival that he means to celebrate.

N. B. The Report so industriously propagated, that Mr. Martine could not procure Musicians for this Night, is groundless; he begs leave to assure the Public, that his Band will consist of TWENTY THREE VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMERS, selected by Mr. MILGROVE—who has set to Music for the occasion A New Pastoral, entitled

A CASTO and THYRSIS.

Addressed to the PRINCE of WALES;

Written by a GENTLEMAN of this City, Author of many admired Pieces of Poetry.

Also, a LOYAL SONG and CHORUS, on the late providential Escape of His Most Sacred MAJESTY.

Books of the Concert, to be had at the Gardens.

(*) The Villa will be highly decorated with delightful natural Views, &c.

[7834]

WILTS.

THE ANNUAL VENISON MEETINGS for Trowbridge and Bradford, will be at the George Inn, at Trowbridge, on Thursday the 17th; and at the Bear Inn, at Devizes, on Friday the 18th of August instant.

[7827]

WANTED, a steady sober Man-Servant, in or out of livery, where a coachman and footman are kept. He must be perfect master of the business of a sideboard, and not under thirty, nor above fifty years of age. None need apply but such as can be exceedingly well recommended. Wages 20l. a year without livery. Enquire this day or to-morrow of the printer.

LANDS DOWN.

ON Friday the 11th Instant, at one o'Clock, a SILVER CUP, to be run for by Horses, who never ran for a King's plate or fities; not less than four horses to start.—Half-a-guinea entrance each; the best of three two-mile heats.

The same day a Match for FIFTY POUNDS. Gentlemen to ride their own horses.

[7838]

MRS. PULLEINE finding from many Friends, that her Advertisement has been mistaken, thinks it necessary to acquaint them, that it is Mrs. Mainwaring, (not herself) that is quitting the School; and that she never intended, nor ever

SPRING-GARDENS VAUXHALL.

ON SATURDAY next, the 12th of AUGUST,
Being the BIRTH-DAY of
His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales,

WILL BE

An Extraordinary GRAND ETE,
Consisting of Vocal and Instrumental MUSIC, by the best Performers;—ILLUMINATIONS,—and

FIREWORKS, on an enlarged Scale,

Such as have never been exhibited before.

Principal Vocal Performers, Master Gray, Misses Howell, Shepard, Ruffell, Gye, Woolley, Mains, and Master Biggs.

First Violin Mr. Brooks, Oboe Mr. Abley.

Act I. Overture. Song, Mr. Howell. Catch, To the King of Great-Britain. Symphony. Glee, Hark! the Lark. Song and Chorus, Mr. Howell. The British Fair.

Act II. Overture. Song, Master Gray. Glee, Lovely Nymphs and Jovial Swains. Concerto Violin, Mr. Brooks. Spring-Garden Echo Catch. Coronation Anthem.

Act III. Overture. Song, Mr. Sheppard. Concerto Oboe, Mr. Ashley. Song, Master Gray. Glee, With a jolly full Bottle, DUET and Grand CHORUS, in honour of the PRINCE of WALES, composed and set to Music for the occasion.

Amongst the Paintings will be exhibited,

A Landscape, after the manner of —	Rock Scene
Salvator Rosa	Snow Piece
Moonlight	Bald Relief of Cupid
Romantic View in Ortheite	Gale of Wind
Landscape	Ditto
Ditto	Dead Calms
Landscape	Sea View
Village	Ship on Fire

Water-fall With a great many more, too tedious to enumerate. The effects intended to be produced by these can only be seen, not described.

At the termination of the lucid arched walks, will be fixed a grand Transparency of His Royal Highness, in the character of Henry the VIII.

The fronts of the Boxes will be likewise decorated with shields, medallions, &c. in imitation of stucco; and the Illuminations so improved in point of number and situation, as cannot fail of producing the utmost approbation, if not admiration.

The Fire-Works have been particularly attended to; and tho' an opponent has challenged all competition, the publick may be assured that an equality, if not a decisive superiority, will be produced at the Gardens.—Between the 2d and 3d acts, Line Rockets, and Water Fountains, will be exhibited on the Canal;—at the end of the last act, will be really a GRAND DISPLAY. Amongst a variety of new pieces, will be a most brilliant Regulating Piece, and a grand Illuminator, or Artificial Day.

As to the Band, though the proprietor cannot promise twenty-three performers, yet he has Three equal to three-and-twenty, though not selected by Mr. Milgrove!

[7834]

Fig. 2: *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1786), p. 3c & d

the Band, though the proprietor cannot promise twenty-three performers, he has Three equal to the three-and-twenty though *not* selected by Mr. Milgrove' (see fig. 2).¹

The Villa Gardens concerts were under the musical supervision of Benjamin Milgrove and those of Spring Gardens under James Brooks, and it was evident that there was friction between the rival enterprises. That Bath in the 1780s should have been able to sustain two sets of pleasure gardens, both

1 *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1786), p.3c & d.

offering an ongoing weekly programme of breakfasts and teas, dancing and music from May to August, interspersed by a series of three or four grand gala events, is proof of the commercial success of the gardens. It led directly to the construction of the Sydney Gardens, which quickly supplanted and replaced both the Spring and Villa Gardens, and later the short-lived Grosvenor Gardens.

The rivalry between the two sets of gardens had been intense all through the summer of 1786. On 6th July, the third page of the *Bath Chronicle* included advertisements for both enterprises. Spring Gardens offered a *Grand Fete* on the Tuesday, 11th July, divided into three acts (as normal):

Between the first and second acts a "GRAND DISPLAY of FIRE-WORKS," to begin at 6.30 pm—particulars in the bills of the day. Tickets 1s to be had at the Gate of the Gardens, and Mr. Pritchard, Parade coffee-house. N.B. Public Tea on Saturday next, and every Saturday as usual, attended with French-Horns and Clarionets.²

The Purdie family had run the gardens from 1759. The lessee from 1783 was Mrs Purdie, the widow of Joseph Purdie, who had built up the musical entertainments in the gardens.³ Meshach Pritchard was Mrs Purdie's son-in-law; he would take over the running of the Spring Gardens in 1790, but may have already been organizing events at this time.⁴ Further down the page, the Villa Gardens offered: 'On Saturday 8th instant, will be a Public Afternoon Tea, attended with French-Horns, Clarionets, Etc. and will continue every Saturday during the season, as usual. And on MONDAY next will be a CONCERT, with additional vocal and instrumental musick, illuminations, and Fireworks.'⁵

These galas were advertised for different days; however, the advertisements for 3rd August show that both organisations had the coming birthday of the Prince of Wales on Saturday 12th August in their sights. The Villa Gardens advertisement for 3rd August ended with a postscript: '*Particulars of the Grand ENTERTAINMENT of New Music, Singers Etc, which they have been preparing for some considerable time, in Honour of the Prince of Wales's*

2 *Bath Chronicle* (6th July 1786), p.3c.

3 Trevor Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd - Amusements, Recreations and Gambling at the 18-Century Spa* (Bath: Ruton, 1998), p.60.

4 *Ibid.* p.60.

5 *Bath Chronicle* (6th July 1786), p.3d.

Birth-Day, will be published as soon as possible'.⁶ Immediately opposite it, Spring Gardens had a bigger advertisement for their 4th August *Grand Fete*. It too had a postscript:

PRINCE of WALES's Birth-Day. The nobility and Gentry are respectfully informed that Spring-Gardens will be opened that evening decorated in an elegant and superior stile, for which great preparations are now making. The Paintings for the Boxes etc., in the manner of Vauxhall, London. — the illuminations will be considerably increased and FIREWORKS on a grand scale, such as have never been exhibited in Bath. The proprietor pledges himself to the public, that no assiduity or expense shall be wanting, to give general satisfaction.⁷

The summer season was drawing to a close and the Prince's birthday on 12 September, like the King's on 4 June, was traditionally celebrated with a gala event. The Villa Garden's advertisement for 10 August indicates that Mrs Purdie had tried to spread unhelpful rumours about Joseph Marrett's Villa Gardens preparations⁸:

N.B. The report so industriously propagated, that Mr. Marrot could not procure Musicians for the Night is groundless: he begs leave to assure the Public that his band will consist of TWENTY THREE vocal and performers, selected by Mr Milgrove — who has set to music for the Occasion a New Pastoral, entitled '*Acasto and Thyrsis*', addressed to the Prince of Wales, written by a gentleman of this city, author of many admired pieces of Poetry, also a loyal song and chorus on the late providential escape of his most sacred majesty. The Villa will be highly decorated with delightful natural views.⁹

This last comment is aimed at the Spring Gardens venture which listed 'among the many paintings exhibited' several Teniers, a Poussin and a Claude and several landscape views — and as paintings these landscape views were not the 'natural' views of the countryside that The Villa offered. The concert programme is listed in some detail. There was to be a grand 'Transparency of his royal highness, in the character of Henry Fifth'. The fireworks are listed and commented upon, as are the decorations and illuminations. At the close of

6 *Bath Chronicle* (4th August 1786), p.3c.

7 *Bath Chronicle* (4th August 1786), p.3d.

8 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.60.

9 *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1786), p.3c.

1
36

THE ROSE HAD BEEN WASH'D,
as Sung with very great Applause by
MISS QUARMAN, at the VILLA GARDENS BATH,
On his Royal Highness
The PRINCE of WALES's BIRTH DAY
Set by Benjⁿ Milgrove

Entered at Stationers Hall

Published for the Author at Bath, and sold by most of the Music Shops
in Town & Country. Price 1*s*.

Price 15

Fig. 3: Benjamin Milgrove, *The Rose had been wash'd* (Bath, 1786)

the advertisement the proprietor comments that he 'cannot promise twenty-three performers' (which would have been almost double the size of usual garden band and approximately the size of London's Vauxhall Garden band), yet he promises three that are so good that they equal Milgrove's three-and-

twenty.¹⁰ The three were probably the principal performers leading a band of a more modest size.

The advertisements for two sets of gardens highlighted different attractions. The Villa Gardens concert included a list of soloists and among the principal vocal performers, ‘a Young Lady of extraordinary Musical Abilities (being her first appearance at the Gardens)’. This must be a reference to Miss Quarman, one of Milgrove’s protégés, who was advertised as ‘a pupil of Mr Milgrove’ and performed in his concerts at Villa Gardens in 1786.¹¹ For her he wrote, ‘The Rose had been washed’ to words by Cowley, the title of which suggests it was performed at the Villa Gardens 10th August concert (see fig. 3). This elaborate pleasure garden song is comparable to the operatic Vauxhall songs of J. C. Bach and is notable for the elaborate runs and considerable two-octave range asked of the soprano singer.¹² Spring Gardens countered with paintings and special care over the decorations, illuminations and fireworks. While Villa Gardens lists the new Milgrove pastoral, Spring Gardens lists not only singers but also the players (Mr Brooks, violin and Mr Ashley, oboe), and gives an outline of the contents of each act.

Bath galas were usually divided into three acts, though some at the later Grosvenor Gardens adopted the two-act format of London’s Vauxhall garden concerts. Each act started with an orchestral piece as an overture, usually a symphony movement or opera overture, and ended with a full piece (on this evening ‘The British Fair’, ‘Coronation Anthem’, and ‘The Grand CHORUS in honour of the PRINCE of WALES, composed and set to Music for the occasion’).¹³ In-between were a mix of popular songs, glees and catches (including Herschel’s ever-popular *Echo Catch*) and concertos by Ashley and Brooks. The fireworks were normally programmed between the final two acts, so that it was sufficiently late in the evening for it to be dark.

The tradition of summer Grand Gala Concerts in Bath’s pleasure gardens

10 *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1786), p.3c.

11 See Edward James, ‘Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Bath’, DPhil thesis, 2 Vols., University of London, ii, pp.828-9.

12 Jonathan Conlin, (ed.), *The Pleasure Garden from Vauxhall to Coney Island* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), pp.115-7; Benjamin Milgrove, *The Rose had been Wash'd, as sung with very great applause by Miss Quarman, at the Villa Gardens Bath, On his Royal Highness, The Prince of Wales's Birth Day* (Bath, 1786), p.1.

13 *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1786), p.3c & d.

developed in the twenty years leading up to 1786, and continued throughout the Georgian period and the nineteenth century. They developed out of the desire to use the gardens to continue the normal round of music-making that went on indoors during the Season proper, and had many of the trappings of the assembly-room subscription concerts — but with extra features, usually illuminations and fireworks. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century the quality of their musical content was relatively high and details of the programme contents were prominent in newspaper advertisements. After the first decade of the nineteenth century, however, music of a more serious kind was increasingly disregarded and musical novelty acts were more common.

Bath's pleasure gardens combined both health and leisure. Though the Season gradually extended across the year over the Georgian period, Bath was traditionally an autumn and spring resort. Public breakfasts after the cure had been an established part of the regime from the early eighteenth century. What could be more apt in the months from May to August, than to finish off the day's bathing and taking the waters than a breakfast and walks in the gardens? Though musical events, both ad hoc and planned, certainly took place in the Bath's green spaces in the first half of the century, it was during the thirty years from 1750 that the musical activities in the pleasure gardens really developed. In the summer months they took over from the assembly rooms as the city's principal music venues, catering for medium- and large-scale public music events, with a programme of public breakfasts and teas, concerts, assemblies and special gala concerts with fireworks. Of the 631 eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century London gardens, Rachel Cowgill mentions that thirty-eight had music in some form.¹⁴ However Bath's gardens differed as all were in close proximity to each other; all, apart from the Sydney Gardens, made a feature of the river Avon; and daytime activities (centred on breakfasting and walking as part of the cure) were more central to their activities than the larger London gardens of Marylebone, Ranelagh and Vauxhall.

Bath's first purpose-built assembly rooms were constructed in 1709 on the Terrace Walks near the Abbey and river. These rooms, which survived until 1820, were first referred to as Harrison's or, after 1745, Simpkins'; later still they were known as Gyde's and then finally as the old or Lower rooms after the New Assembly Rooms were built in 1771. A second, shorter-lived set of assembly rooms, known as Lindsey's or Wiltshire's, was completed opposite

14 Conlin, (ed.), *The Pleasure Garden*, p.102.

the first in 1729. The Lower rooms had attached grounds, ‘walks by the river with a summerhouse, and were also used for music, breakfast concerts in particular,¹⁵ but also more elaborate musical events with fireworks.¹⁶ Music was also played in Orange Grove outside the Abbey from the early eighteenth century by the City Waits (established formally in 1733) and in the walks along the river that complemented the two lower assembly rooms. These walks were venues for occasional outside music events throughout the century and constituted Bath’s first garden venue. Bath’s tradition of breakfasting started here, either inside in the rooms, or from late April or May outside, as the weather allowed. The *Bath Chronicle* for 24th May 1780 mentions that the annual Breakfast benefit concert for the wind band that provided the twice-weekly breakfast concerts would take place in the walks that year and not in Spring Gardens.

The Band of Clarionets and Horns most respectfully inform the Nobility, Gentry and public in general, that their Annual BREAKFAST CONCERT, of Vocal and Instrumental MUSIC, which used to be at the Spring-Gardens, will this year (by particular desire of several Ladies and Gentlemen) be at Mr Gyde’s Garden, Walks and Rooms, tomorrow the 25th. The Concert will be performed in the Garden, where an Orchestra will be erected for that purpose. Particulars of the performance will be expressed in the bills of the day. Horns and Clarinets during the Breakfast in the Walks at 10.00; the concert at half past eleven. Tickets at 3s 6d each, breakfast included ... N.B Those Ladies and Gentlemen who choose to dance Cotillon, &c a band will be provided for that purpose.¹⁷

The orchestra ‘erected for the purpose’ would have been a raised wooden structure, decorated for the event, that would have allowed the sound to travel throughout the gardens. At this benefit concert 3s. 6d. purchased the liberty of the gardens (from around 10 a.m., giving concert-goers time to have taken the cure first), with horns and clarinets performing in the walks. A breakfast, followed by a concert at 11:30 and dancing, would last until around 2 p.m. It may be that the musicians who were the horns and clarinets would later transform themselves into the string band that provided music for dancing. Benjamin Milgrove for instance, who directed the music at Villa Gardens, could play horn, clarinet and strings at a professional level, and

15 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain’d*, p.58.

16 Fireworks were used in the stage event in 1749. Fawcett, *Bath Entertain’d*, p.58.

17 *Bath Chronicle* (24th May 1780), p.3c.

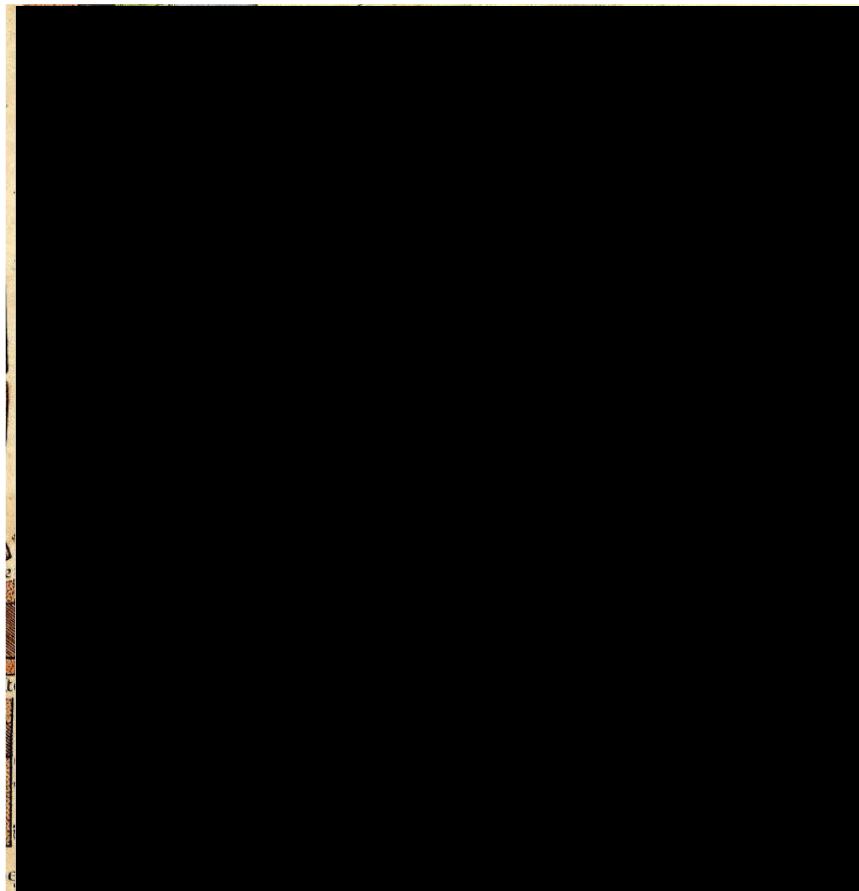


Fig. 4: Spring Gardens in detail of 1783 map sold by W. Taylor and W. Meyler - Bath in Time, no. 51135

several other instruments besides.¹⁸

The city's first purpose-built pleasure gardens, 'The Spring Gardens' appeared in Wood's plan of 1735 on the other side of the river (now the Recreation Ground, home of Bath Rugby). The Gardens were in operation by the 1740s and gathered pace during the 1750s. The gardens were modeled on London's Vauxhall Gardens (indeed the London Gardens under Tyers were renamed and

¹⁸ Matthew Spring, 'Benjamin Milgrove, the musical 'Toy man' and the 'guittar' in Bath 1757-1790', *Early Music*, Vol. 41, 2 (2013), pp.317-29.

re-opened as 'The New Spring Gardens', on 7th June 1732). Spring Gardens in Bath were the longest surviving of the six eighteenth-century commercial gardens, finally closing in 1799 after operating for some sixty years. They provided music for public breakfasts in a purpose-built breakfast room (see **fig. 4**). John Wood mentions concert breakfasts at the assembly rooms after a visit to the pump rooms and baths as early as the 1740s.¹⁹ But, as Spring Gardens expanded its activities, it took up this commercial activity, as well as providing outdoor dancing. Under a Mr Edmondson's period of tenure (1742–59) the gardens developed formal walks, water features and buildings for music, eating and dancing,²⁰ but it was William Purdie who took over the lease in 1759 who really expanded the programme of entertainments in the spring and summer months.²¹ In 1766 the Reverend John Penrose was ferried across the river for a Spring Gardens' public breakfast with dancing that continued until 2 p.m.:

We ... were ferried across the Avon from Orange Grove. Spring Gardens lie along the opposite side of the River. The Passage Boat would hold thirty people, covered over the Head and Sides The Gardens are a most delightful Spot, laid out with Gravel Walks, some straight, other serpentine, with a fine Canal in one Place, and a fine Pond in another, with the greatest Variety of Shrubs. In these Gardens is a large handsome Building, wherein is a Breakfast Room capacious enough to hold many sets of Company, having six windows in the side, (so you see it must be long) and proportionally wide.²²

Spring Gardens were only accessible by ferry until Pulteney Bridge was completed in 1774. Indeed, the ferry ride was part of the experience (Purdie also held rights in the ferryboat service). Normal admission to the gardens was 6d. (or 2s. 6d. for a season ticket) and subscribers were provided with copper or silver discs by way of a ticket. This compares with the normal charge of 1s. for London's New Spring Gardens (Vauxhall); however, Bath's garden breakfasts with music on Mondays and Thursdays cost more at 1s. 6d. Penrose's diary account of a breakfast party in Spring Gardens is closely corroborated in Christopher Anstey's satire, *The New Bath Guide*, first

19 John Wood, *An Essay towards A Description of the City of Bath*, Vol. 2, (Bath, 1742), pp.437-8.

20 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.58.

21 Wood, *A Description*, pp.437-8.

22 John Penrose, *Letters from Bath, 1766-1767*, ed. B. Mitchell and H. Penrose (Gloucester: Sutton Publishing Ltd, 1983), p.70.

published in the same year. Here, Lord Ragamuffin on meeting the Barnard family, invites them to his private breakfast party at Spring Gardens. He suggests to Simkin Barnard: 'it would greatly our pleasure promote, If we all for *Spring-Gardens* set out in a boat'.²³ Later, at the breakfast table:

The company made a most brilliant appearance,
And ate bread and butter with great perseverance;
All the chocolate too, that my Lord set before 'em,
The ladies dispatched with utmost decorum,
Soft musical numbers were heard all around,
The horns and the clarionets echoing sound:
Sweet were the strains, as od'rous gales that blow
O'er fragrant banks, where pinks and roses grow.²⁴

Somewhat later, his Lordship attempts the courtship of Lady Bunbutter:

while she ate up his rolls and applauded his wit:
For they tell me that men of true taste when they treat,
Should talk a great deal, but they never should eat:
And if that be the fashion I never will give
Any grand entertainment as long as I live:
For I'm of opinion 'tis proper to cheer
The stomach and bowels as well as the ear,
Nor me did the charming concerto of Abel:
Regale like the breakfast I saw on the table:
I freely will own I the muffins preferr'd
To all the genteel conversation I heard.²⁵

Mention of Carl Frederick Abel is interesting, as he was a great favourite in Bath from his first visit in 1760 and returned regularly to play his own music, principally on the viol, in the card rooms of the lower assembly rooms. He was a prolific composer and leader of the Bach/Abel concerts that led one section of London's musical elite.²⁶ The younger company of Lord Ragamuffin's Spring Gardens breakfast party then proceed to dancing, after much gossiping conversation, again with reference to 'Horns tickling the ear' during the meal:

But those who knew better their time how to spend,

23 Richard Anstey, *The New Bath Guide, or Memoirs of the B-N-R-D Family* (London, 1766), p.120.

24 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, p.122.

25 *Ibid.* p.124.

26 James, 'Concert Life', ii, pp.539-41.

The fiddling and dancing
all chose to attend.
Miss CLUNCH and
Sir TOBY perform'd a
Cotillon,
Just the same as our
SUSAN and BOB the
postillion;
All the while her mamma
was expressing her joy,
That her daughter the
morning so well could
employ.²⁷

Lord Ragamuffin produces a climax to the breakfast festivities: 'In handing the Lady Bumfidget and daughter, this obsequious Lord tumbled into the water.'²⁸ Here we have horns and clarinets playing outside in gardens while the breakfast is eaten, followed later by violins to play for the dancing. Numerous advertisements throughout the 1760s to the early 1790s indicate that horns and clarinets were indeed the normal music of Spring Gardens for public and private breakfasts, though they might also be a feature of indoor breakfasts.²⁹

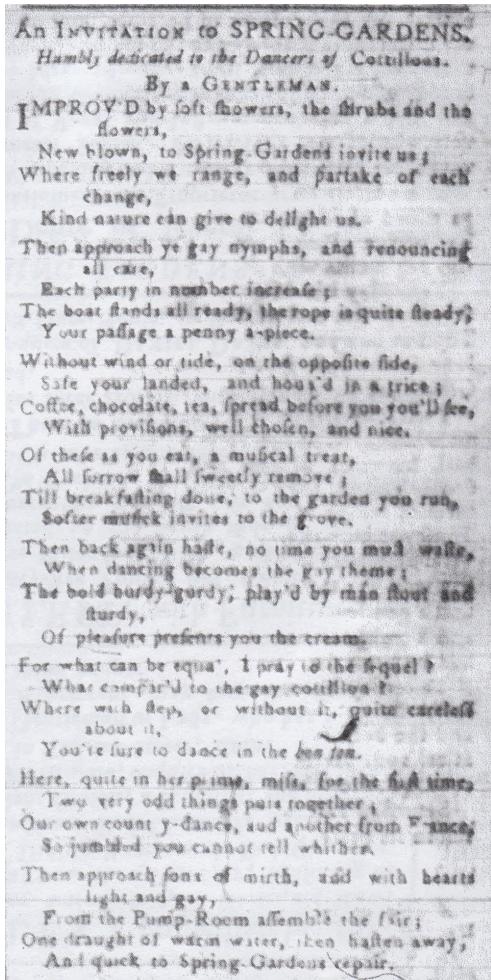


Fig. 5: 'An Invitation to SPRING-GARDENS'
***Bath Chronicle* (7th May 1767), p.1c**

27 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, p.127.

28 Anstey, *New Bath Guide*, p.128.

29 A typical advert announces: 'The Spring Gardens 'are now open for the season, with Breakfasting and Afternoon Tea, as usual. A PUBLIC BREAKFAST every Monday and Thursday during the season, attended by Horns, Clarionets, etc. Tickets 1s 6d to be had at the Gate of the Garden, Subscriptions for Ladies and Gentlemen walking in the Gardens at 3s for the season.' *Bath Chronicle* (7th May 1767), p.1c.

Further details of the music for public breakfasts is found in the newspaper poem, 'An Invitation to SPRING-GARDENS, Humbly dedicated to the Dancers of Cottillions. By a GENTLEMAN'.³⁰ This is little more than an advertisement paid for, or at the behest of, Purdie to advertise the start of the season for breakfasts at the beginning of May (see fig. 5). From it we learn that the boat passage cost a penny, that the company assembled at the Pump-rooms after the cure, that both French and English tunes were used for the cotillions and that several sorts of music were provided. Whereas Anstey's breakfast party danced to fiddles, the 'Invitation' suggests a single hurdy-gurdy man provided the music for the dancing. Unspecified music accompanies the breakfast, after which 'Softer music invites to the grove': presumably horns and clarinets.³¹

In the summer of 1767 William Herschel (1738-1822), the great astronomer, introduced more formal outdoor concerts to Spring Gardens.³² Herschel had arrived in Bath in late 1766 to take up the newly-created post of organist at the Octagon Chapel. He had experimented with garden concerts in Newcastle and came from a German family of military musicians familiar with wind instruments and outdoor music. In May 1779 Alexander Herschel (William's younger brother) played a clarinet concerto in William's Spring Garden concert.³³ Indeed, in his early years in Bath, Alexander was probably the town's leading clarinettist, though he also played the cello, violin and oboe. As military musicians, all three Herschel brothers — Jacob, William and Alexander — could play the clarinet. Herschel's garden concerts in Bath were a success and he developed larger evening gala events, announced as 'Grand concerts for important occasions', in the 1770s. He also instituted a Wednesday evening garden subscription concert series from 1778, the concerts were in three acts 'with Illuminations, after the manner of Vauxhall'. Herschel himself directed and the teenage James Brooks (1760-1809), who would go on to direct the garden events after Herschel became director of the New Assembly Rooms' concert orchestra in 1780, was a leading violinist.³⁴

30 *Bath Chronicle* (7th May 1767), p.1c.

31 *Ibid.*

32 *Bath Chronicle* (25th June 1767), p.3c. This advertisement gives notice of the start of public teas and evening concerts of vocal and instrumental music on Wednesdays from 5 to 9 pm.

33 *Bath Chronicle* (27th May 1779), p.3c.

34 Jenny Burchill, *Polite or Commercial Concerts, Concert Management and Orchestral Repertoire in Edinburgh, Bath, Oxford, Manchester and Newcastle 1730-1799* (Guilford: Routledge, 1996), p.151. For example, *Bath Chronicle* (9th July 1778), p.3c. advertised the fourth concert of the series of twelve.

Brooks's association with the gardens was close: on 18th May 1780 he had his first benefit concert there, aged only twenty.³⁵ There were also evening and breakfast benefit concerts in the pleasure gardens. The ordinary music (horns and clarinets) always had an annual benefit, along with the City Waits, with 'Vauxhall entertainments — vocal and instrument music and illuminations' Spring Gardens declined after 1792, with the opening of Grosvenor Gardens, and collapsed after 1796, with the opening of Sydney Gardens.

A mile or so from the centre of Bath, and therefore a longer river-boat journey away, was the Bagatelle at Lyncombe Spa.³⁶ These pleasure grounds had been developed around a spring in the early eighteenth century, but had fallen into disuse and were only revived in the 1750s. Penrose visited Lyncombe in May 1766 and mentions, 'Messrs Charles, the French-Horn Masters, with a Band of Musick are to perform a concert at Breakfast upon a Variety of Instruments'.³⁷ By 1772, under James Wicksteed, the garden was promoting musical breakfasts and dancing twice a week, plus evening entertainments that included a lamplit waterfall.³⁸ The Bagatelle gardens declined after 1777, after the launch, higher up Lyncombe Vale, of the gardens attached to Lyncombe House. These gardens, also known as King James's Palace, operated as a commercial garden and held occasional events, such as fireworks and music, into the nineteenth century.³⁹ While Lyncombe House grounds were used until 1793 for breakfasts, dinners and twice weekly musical band performances especially when there were fireworks,⁴⁰ as for instance the 'public night' that was advertised as postponed in the *Bath Chronicle* of 31st May 1792.⁴¹

There were three further gardens developments in Bath in the 1780s and 1790s, all within the Bathwick Estate: Bathwick Villa Gardens, 1783–90; Grosvenor Hotel and Gardens, 1791–1802; and Sydney Gardens, from 1796 onwards. As the Bath newspapers show, during the 1780s Spring Gardens met with serious musical competition from Villa Gardens up the river. Attached to Bathwick Villa these gardens were opened in 1783 and continued for about a decade until

35 'On Thursday, the 18th May will be a breakfast concert for Mr Brooks, jun. The vocal parts by Mrs Ward, Miss Cantelo, Mr Stevens and Mr Griffin. Breakfast at 10.00 with horns and clarionets as usual. The Concert to begin at half past eleven'. *Bath Chronicle* (18th May 1780), p.3b.

36 Conlin, ed., *The Pleasure Garden*, p.54; Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.59.

37 See Burchill, *Polite or Commercial*, p.116.

38 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.59.

39 Conlin, ed., *The Pleasure Garden* p.54. Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.57—62.

40 Burchill, *Polite or Commercial*, p.116.

41 *Bath Chronicle* (31st May 1792), p.3d.

Grosvenor Gardens opened. Under Milgrove their musical entertainments were extensively advertised, and like Spring Gardens, they included a number of gala events with music and fireworks as part of their summer season.

Grosvenor Gardens, along the London Road, were started in 1790 and completed in 1792. They too were approached by river and had all the usual features — Merlin swings, fishponds and two bowling greens — but they also had an archery field and pleasure boats on the river.⁴² They were beset by financial problems after the crash of 1793 and, like Bath's other pleasure gardens, were gradually put out of business by the new-style Sydney Gardens, which were started in 1795 and but not properly opened until 1797 when the bushes and shrubs had grown sufficiently. Outdoor music featured in Grosvenor Gardens in the usual way, led by David Richards. For a while the tradition of programmed gala concerts in three acts was also continued. For instance a Gala at Grosvenor Gardens on 19th July 1798 lists the following:

Singers: Miss Tebay, master Gray, messrs Shell, Doyle, Sheppard and 'a young lady':

Act 1: Overture – Pleyel; glee; song – Mr Sheppard; Song – Master Gray; Song – Miss Tebay; song – Mister Doyle; Overture.

Act 2: Overture – Haydn; Glee; Song – Miss Tebay; Duet – Messrs Shell & Sheppard; Song by a young lady; Full Piece; Comic Song – a gentleman; Song – Mr Sheppard; Overture.

Act 3: Overture; Glee; Song – Master Gray; Comic Song – A Gentleman; Song – Mr Sheppard; song – a Lady; to conclude with God Save the King, verse and chorus.⁴³

Though the varied format of the programme is clear, most of the details of the items are absent, allowing flexibility for the performers. One element not listed here is a concerto, or concerto movement, by one of the principal players who, unlike the singers, are not listed. Along with overtures by Pleyel and Hadyn, the 'overtures' at the end of each act were probably 'full pieces' that had not been decided upon at the time of going to press. The final pieces in each act were frequently poorly attended, as many concert-goers left well before the end to avoid the crush.

42 Fawcett, *Bath Entertain'd*, p.61.

43 *Bath Chronicle* (12th July 1798), p.2e.

Far more is known about Sydney Gardens than all its predecessors and — uniquely among Britain's pleasure gardens — it is still extant, though much altered and diminished. Its more natural landscaping and thus 'romantic' arrangement of its many paths and features were markedly different to the formal planning of the gravel walkways of Bath's earlier gardens. At Sydney Gardens the tradition of organised public breakfasts and teas with music continued well into the nineteenth century. Food was available from the hotel on demand and was served as required in booths that fanned out from the sides of the building. From the first, music was played from the balcony above the loggia at the back of the Sydney Hotel (see **fig. 1** on the title page of article). In 1798 James Brooks's initial musical leadership was replaced by that of David Richards, though Herschel's brother Alexander continued to perform in the concerts until 1810.

The tradition of three or four grand gala summer concerts, some to celebrate royal birthdays (that of the King on 4th June and of the Prince of Wales on 12th August) continued well into the next century. During the long years of the Napoleonic wars, the galas were often themed around topical events such as a recent naval success or battles. An advertisement for 4th June 1800 details a grand gala for the King's birthday in which Richards 'will perform an ode on the providential escape of the King from assassination, which he wrote himself'.⁴⁴ By June 1809 the direction of the orchestra had passed to the young John (David) Loder (Richards' nephew and pupil). That the 'Military band' mentioned in the advertisement was to 'play in the new octagon orchestra in the centre of the garden' highlights the increasing importance and frequency of uniformed bands playing in what was effectively a bandstand, and the start of the movement of the music away from the central balcony of the hotel to the interior of the garden.⁴⁵ At the close of the Napoleonic wars in August 1815 there was a 'grand gala fete to celebrate the regent's b'day', with the concert directed by Mr Patton. The entertainment included:

a grand martial piece, composed by Logiere, and got up by Mr G Pitman for this purpose, expressive of the battle of Waterloo, and characteristic of every horror attendant on such a bloody scene, the characters appearing in transparencies as the battle advances.⁴⁶

44 *Bath Chronicle* (29th May 1800), p.3c.

45 Gala on the 4 July 1809. *Bath Chronicle* (29th June 1809), p.3d; Sarah Jane Downing, *The English Pleasure Garden, 1660-1860* (Oxford: Shire, 2009), p.48.

46 *Bath Chronicle* (10th August 1815), p.3b.

The musical standard of Bath's gala concerts probably reached its peak around 1800 and declined thereafter, with orchestral bands of mixed strings, wind and brass, being replaced by military bands and novelty acts, such the bird imitator 'ROSSIGNOL. Jun.' who appeared in the gala of 18th June 1799, or the 'Pandeans', a uniformed band of panpipes and assorted percussion instruments that first performed in September 1812.⁴⁷ The tradition of listing the actual pieces that formed the programme seems to have died out quickly at Sydney Gardens, the last being for the June 18th 1799 gala. Singers and principal players continued to be listed. Large-scale summer gala events

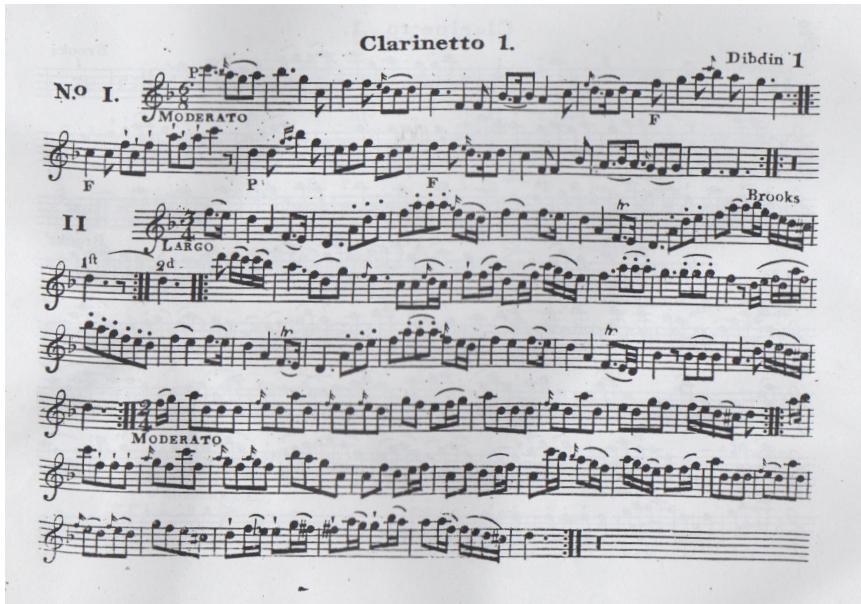


Fig. 6: First Page of Clarinet 1 part from James Brooks *Thirty Six Select Pieces for Military Band* (London, 1796)

with music went on until the mid-nineteenth century, as did the tradition of evening promenades with the music of horn and clarinets. Pierce Egan's *Walks through Bath* of 1819 describes the scene: 'Upon gala nights, the music, singing, cascades, and superb illuminations, render these gardens very similar to Vauxhall.'⁴⁸

47 *Bath Chronicle* (13th June 1799), p.3d; *Bath Chronicle* (24th September, 1812).

48 Pierce Egan, *Walks through Bath, describing every thing worthy of interest* (Bath, 1819), p.182.

Conclusion

A movable band of pairs of clarinets and horns provided the ‘ordinary music’ for Bath’s gardens, mainly promenading, breakfasts, and teas, from as early as the 1760s and well into the next century. James Brooks’s *Thirty Six Select Pieces for Military Band* of 1796 consists of music, mostly by Brooks but also by Charles Dibdin and Ignaz Pleyel, for the garden bands in the 1790s that developed into the Band of Bath Volunteers (see **fig. 6**). It includes a wide variety of popular genres, both marches and prestos, but also music appropriate for outdoor dancing. These published pieces include a bass part for bassoon and the very uneven distribution of articulation and dynamic markings among the pieces suggests that the set was put together from separate working manuscript collections. It is our best indication of the music of Bath’s gardens and is unique as a collection of published eighteenth-century garden music outside of London. Though gala events continued throughout the nineteenth century, advertisements suggest that more serious music (symphony movements, concertos and elaborate full pieces), became less and less a feature, and that the exotic novelty and effects more important. The leading performers are less frequently mentioned and the actual details of the musical programme seldom appear after 1800.

Bath and the other spa towns in general developed the idea of the garden breakfast concert out of the ‘normal’ garden music that was an adjunct to the serious business of health and the cure. Combining the rustic setting, fresh air and opportunities for healthy eating, walks and sports, with seasonal musical entertainment was perhaps a new development. The breakfast and teatime concerts, and gala events, provided useful employment for musicians out of season. The breakfast concerts in particular seem to have been more a feature of Bath’s garden music than elsewhere. Some of the music survives and the band-accompanied songs are an important part of the development of popular song in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. The decades that are most interesting for music and for which the most information can be gathered are the 1780s and 1790s, when the often overlapping activities of Villa Gardens, Spring Gardens, Grosvenor Gardens and Sydney Gardens show that pleasure-garden musical activity was intense and competitive.

About the Author

Dr Matthew Spring is currently Reader in Music at Bath Spa University. Following his completion of a DPhil at Magdalen College, Oxford, Matthew taught at London Guildhall, De Montfort and Birmingham universities. He has a very active career as a performer on early musical instruments, including the lute, the subject of his first book, published by Oxford University Press in 2001. *The Lute in Britain: A History of the Lute and its Music* won the international Bessaraboff prize from The American Musical Instrument Society. Since working in Bath he has developed an interest in the music of Georgian Bath. Matthew directs a number of professional and student ensembles and has performing experience in world and folk music.