

Part One
Genre and Performance

Chapter I. The Canzonet

An Encounter on the First Page of *The Sun*

On June 3, 1794, London's daily newspaper *The Sun* advertised on its first page the newly available English canzonettas by Haydn:

DR. HAYDN
Just published,
Six original canzonettas, with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte,
price 7s 6d, to be had at the Author's, No. 1, Bury-street, St. James's
and at Messrs. Corri, Dussek, and Co.

On the same page appeared a testimony, asserting the efficacy of "Rymer's Cardiac Tincture and Pills," billed as a treatment for "flying gout" in the stomach and bowels, "spasms, wind, and constipation":

TO THE PUBLIC.
The following is the copy of a Letter from the late eminent Surgeon,
John Hunter, Esq. to Mr. Rymer; the original of which is in his
possession:

SIR,
Being acquainted with the merits of your Medicine, I shall be one
of the first to recommend it. It is immaterial whether any one knows
the composition of it or not, if he knows its effects, which is all that is
necessary to be known. Whenever I have an opportunity of giving it a
preference to other medicines, or when I think a trial of it should be
made, I shall have not the least objection because it passes as a quack
Medicine, more especially as I know its composition. – Your Book is so
many proofs of its efficacy.

I wish you all success in your pursuits.

I am, Sir, your most obedient servant,

JOHN HUNTER.

Leicester-square, March 22d, 1792.

The "eminent surgeon" had died on October 16, 1793, nine months before Haydn's songs and Rymer's medication shared space on the front page of *The Sun*. Yet, as the latter advertisement makes clear, John Hunter's prestige

continued to be keenly felt even after his death -- so powerful was his reputation that he ultimately came to be viewed as the architect of modern surgery and an English national hero.¹ As my starting point for this study, I consider the influence of John Hunter, and more generally of late 18th-century medical and scientific discourse -- not on the marketing success of Rymer's medicine, but rather on the composition and reception of Haydn's first set of canzonettas. For, although no mention is made in *The Sun*, the songs' texts were in fact written by, and the collection dedicated to, John Hunter's wife, Anne.

Definitions and Reception

In the monographs and textbooks of music history, the term "canzonet" or "canzonetta" is primarily used to denote a type of vocal piece that was popular first in Italy, and later in Germany and England, in the 16th and 17th centuries. Its characteristic features include multiple voices in homophony mixed with occasional simple imitative texture, and text-painting of the first stanza. Among the most commonly cited examples are Vecchi's *Canzonette* of 1580 written for four voices, with lines rhymed in pairs and musical stanzas exhibiting the form AABB or AABCC. Thereafter, the term was employed for any three-, four-, five-, and six-voice pieces of stanzaic or through-composed form. Texts typically range from madrigalian hunting and courting themes, to the edifying and moralizing themes of *canzonetti spirituali*. The label "canzonet" made its way to England via Morley's translations of Italian *canzonette* and his original English canzonets for two to six voices, which

¹ C. Frederick Kittle, "John Hunter, 1728-1793," *Bulletin of the American College of Surgeons* 61 (1976).

James Haar calls “madrigals in all but name.”² The broad application of the term probably derived from the fact that “canzonetta” is a diminutive of the word “canzona,” or song.

In discussing the canzonet after the 17th century, present-day reference sources are non-committal, often allocating only a final sentence or two, appended without transition to the end of the entry. According to *Das Neue Lexikon der Musik*, “Die Bz. K. wurde noch im späten 18. und bis ins 19. Jh verwendet, war jedoch nicht mehr an eine bestimmte musikalische Form oder Gattung gebunden (The label Kanzonette was still used in the late 18th and even into the 19th centuries, but was no longer attached to a specific musical form or genre).”³ The *New Harvard Dictionary* is similarly cursory; immediately after treating the canzonets of Morley, the article concludes: “later the term came to mean, in England and Germany, a strophic solo song.”⁴ Likewise the *Riemann Musik Lexikon*: “In England nahm sich vor allem Th. Morley der K an (3st. Canzonets, 1594, 1631) die sich dort um 1600 zum Ayre entwickelte. Im 18. Jh. erscheinen vereinzelt Sololieder (anfangs mit Generalbaß, später mit Klavierbegleitung) unter der Bezeichnung K. (In England primarily Thomas Morley adopted *Kanzonette*, which developed there around 1600 into the Air. In the 18th century, solo lieder appeared sporadically, at first with thorough-bass and later with keyboard accompaniment).”⁵ The *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, in apparent contrast, hints at a continuity in the meaning of the term from 16th to

² James Haar, “Canzonet, Canzonetta,” in *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 138.

³ R. Di Benedetto, “Kanzonette,” in *Das Neue Lexikon Der Musik*, ed. Ralf Noltensmeier (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1996), 660.

⁴ Haar, “Canzonet, Canzonetta,” 138.

⁵ Hugo Riemann, “Kanzonette,” in *Riemann Musik Lexikon* (Mainz: B. Schott’s Söhne, 1959), 445-46.

18th centuries in its opening: “A title given to a light secular vocal piece, particularly in the Italian style, from the late 16th-century to the late 18th” -- but upon arriving at the 18th century in the course of the chronologically-arranged article, the author (Ruth I. DeFord) concludes, “In late 18th-century England the canzonetta was a musical setting of a strophic poem for solo voice with keyboard accompaniment; the music too was usually strophic, but sometimes modified strophic or through-composed.” She then cites as an example, as most reference sources do, the Haydn canzonettas.⁶ Indeed it seems that the 18th-century canzonet is treated in these articles only in order to account, albeit briefly, for Haydn’s use of the term. The resulting suggestion is that the late 18th-century canzonet as Haydn would have known it was a genre essentially unrelated to the Italian canzonet. In this vein, H. C. Robbins Landon enumerates the improvements of Haydn’s canzonets over his German lieder, as if the two are essentially the same type of work in different languages.⁷ Likewise, the modern edition printed by G. Henle Verlag is titled *Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Klaviers*, whereas other song volumes are titled “Gesänge.”⁸

This study treats (and in its appendix, catalogs) over one hundred sets of English canzonets dating from the late 18th-century. Its earliest example is William Jackson’s *Twelve Canzonets, Opera Nona* for two voices from 1770; the majority of sets considered, however, consist of songs for solo voice.⁹ The

⁶ Ruth I. DeFord, “Canzonetta,” in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001), 2:79, 81.

⁷ H. C. Robbins Landon, *Haydn in England 1791-1795*, vol. 3, *Haydn: Chronicle and Works* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1976), 377-78.

⁸ Paul Mies, ed., *Lieder für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Klaviers*, Ser. 29 Bd. 1, *Joseph Haydn Werke* (München: G. Henle Verlag, 1960). Score.

⁹ Jackson’s set predates by seven years Hook’s Op. 18 which both *New Grove* and A. Peter Brown credit as the original example of the type. See A. Peter Brown, “Musical Settings of Anne Hunter’s Poetry: From National Song to Canzonetta,” *Journal of the American*

works on which I focus are not marked “canzonet” simply as an indication that they are “songlike,” as in Mozart’s “Voi che sapete” from *Le Nozze di Figaro*.¹⁰ Nor are they the same as the “duetto notturno,” a vocal duet in binary form (even though, in keeping with its wide and imprecise application, “canzonet” was sometimes used as an alternative term for the duetto notturno).¹¹ But neither are they, *pace* Landon, *lieder* in English. The late 18th-century English canzonet is best understood as related to earlier, Italian canzonets, especially in terms of types and sources of texts. The familiar 16th- and 17th-century canzone (and its diminutive, canzonet or canzonetta) was often a lyric poem of Dante and Petrarch suitable for musical setting; the 18th-century English sung canzonet also took up Petrarchian love themes. In the first half of the 18th century, Metastasio followed Petrarch in writing seven *canzonetti* with titles such as “La Primavera,” “La Libertà,” “Il Palinodia,” and “La Partenza.” These in turn engaged countless poets, both skilled and amateur, in translation and imitation. This is the vein in which Anne Hunter and hundreds of others wrote, a vein which lent itself to musical setting in collections of canzonets.

When sung canzonets began appearing in English after Jackson’s 1770 set, they sometimes also included Italian versions of their texts. Sets were issued in a variety of formats: with vocal lines equivalent to the right hand, or above the two staves of the accompaniment, or even, in a cleverly versatile arrangement, between the left and right hands in order to allow for two levels

Musical Society 47, no. 1 (1994): 52 n.26; DeFord, “Canzonetta,” 81. Hook’s Op. 18 set is for two voices, not solo voice as these references suggest.

¹⁰ James Haar, “Canzone,” in *New Harvard Dictionary of Music*, ed. Don Michael Randel (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 138.

¹¹ Harrison James Wignall, “Duetto Notturmo,” in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove’s Dictionaries, 2001), 7:645-46; id., “Mozart and the ‘Duetto Notturmo’ Tradition,” *Mozart-Jahrbuch* (1993).

of keyboard-playing ability. Keyboard-only sections were occasionally marked with some variant of “rit^o” or “sym,” indicating ritornello or its synonym, symphony. The melody, possibly with some amount of embellishment, was sometimes printed at the end in the transposition appropriate for an optional accompaniment by (German) flute. But even with these variations, canzonets retained a connection to older Italian songs by virtue of their texts.

Unlike canzonets of the Vecchi variety, though, late 18th-century English canzonets are largely belittled or dismissed by present-day critics. Stanley Sadie, in his thought-going overview chapter, “Music in the Home,” in the *Blackwell History of Music in Britain*, claims that composers “rarely went beyond prettiness and gallant elegance” in this genre -- and that emotional content was “excised” on account of the brevity of the form and the limited abilities of the performers.¹² Sadie’s interest is grudging (the most favorable comment he can summon is that Stephen Storace’s canzonets were “neatly written and not without originality”) and colored by a tacit equivalency between music that is “difficult” and music that is “interesting.” Having thereby bracketed any reason for attention to the genre, Sadie concludes his chapter defensively. The contemporary popularity of music for “amateurs to amuse themselves and one another,” he asserts, should not be seen as “a commentary on any debasement in British taste -- which at its best gave rise to the late symphonies and (indirectly) the late oratorios of Haydn, and the finest music of Clementi and other immigrants or visitors -- but rather as symptomatic of the rapid changes taking place in what was at the time the

¹² Stanley Sadie, “Music in the Home 2,” in *Music in Britain: The Eighteenth Century*, ed. H. Diack Johnstone and Roger Fiske, *The Blackwell History of Music in Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), 353.

social crucible of Europe.”¹³ Having harshly dismissed music that was not only popular but also very often heard, Sadie appends this concluding comment in an effort to protect the English reputation.

By downplaying the English canzonet genre, critics weave a colorless background tapestry against which Haydn’s contribution is thereby made to shine like gold thread. Especially effusive is Arthur Jacobs, who leaps from panegyric (calling Haydn’s “Spirit’s Song,” a stand-alone canzonet separate from the composer’s two sets of six, a “masterpiece of atmosphere”), to hyperbole (claiming that Haydn construed his keyboard accompaniments in orchestral terms, an idea that, he notes, traces to Karl Geiringer), to specious claim, namely:

[T]he point of great historical importance was that Haydn set down these piano accompaniments with fully-written-out right-hand parts: and these must have been among the first songs published in England to do so. [...] The change from this two-stave song-writing to the three-stave plan, with full right-hand parts for the accompanist, was a necessary condition for the development of song as we understand it in its expressive nineteenth- and twentieth-century sense. Among the composers who followed Haydn’s example was Thomas Attwood (1765-1838) who had been a pupil of Mozart in Vienna. Attwood’s settings of verses from Sir Walter Scott’s “The Lady of the Lake” constitute perhaps the first important songs in this new sense by an English composer. Particular interest lies in his setting of “Ellen’s Song” or “Ave Maria,” since this anticipates Schubert’s by some fifteen years. Attwood gave this song a really pianistic accompaniment, fairly bold harmonies, and setting which varied the melody according to the changed poetic meaning of each verse -- a device now almost inevitably labeled Schubertian.¹⁴

Given that Jacobs began his discussion of the canzonets by using adjectives like “silly” and “insipid,” his breakneck narrative bridging Haydn to Schubert

¹³ Ibid., 354.

¹⁴ Arthur Jacobs, “The British Isles,” in *A History of Song*, ed. Denis Stevens (London: Hutchinson, 1960), 147.

is especially remarkable; in any case, three-stave printing formats of domestic song were not uncommon in England before Haydn's arrival.

Lynchpins in the rhetoric surrounding the Haydn canzonets are a supposed "proto-Schubertian" quality as well as any possibility of their conception as a "cycle." Landon quotes H. E. Jacob in stating that the piano prelude of "Despair" (the fourth of the first set) "clearly indicated the line that Schubert was to resume twenty years later."¹⁵ "Fidelity" (the sixth of the first set), likewise, is Haydn's "greatest achievement in the song form to date and a real link to the enchanted world of Franz Schubert."¹⁶ A. Peter Brown's 1994 article on musical settings of Anne Hunter's poetry, a prominent, rare example of recent writing on the canzonet, argues that Haydn's first set of canzonets is cyclical on multiple levels.¹⁷ They are a "coherent unit," with "larger plans," first in terms of texts, which he believes serve as a narrative of the poet's biography, but also in terms of the music.¹⁸ Specifically, with reference to style, Brown argues that Haydn offers a specimen book of sorts in his varied approaches to "accommodating the expressive restrictions of solo song," for example by presenting different points of view in keyboard and voice, by signaling double meaning with figuration, and by pairing songs: two elegiac, two pastoral, and two about the sea.¹⁹ Tonally the set is unified, he argues, by relationships to F major and minor: the dominant for the first song, the mediant for the third, and keys a step below and above for the fourth and fifth songs, respectively. Formal unity lies in the departure from strophic form for numbers four and five, which exhibit texts of less positive moods, and extra

¹⁵ Landon, *Haydn in England 1791-1795*, 381.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 385.

¹⁷ Brown, "Musical Settings of Anne Hunter's Poetry," 55-67.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: 65.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*: 59, 65.

length for “Fidelity,” number six, which “makes it an appropriate conclusion not only for itself, but also for the cycle as a whole.”²⁰ But Brown’s insistence on multiple markers of the set’s unity are not entirely convincing. The features of style he points to are in fact attributes of variety rather than unity, a requisite of any collection of (typically, six) pieces since the Baroque era. His tonal examples of unity are equally precarious: when keys are limited to those relatively accessible for performers, almost any given combination of six can be found to demonstrate some pattern of close relationship, parallel relationship, or symmetrical interval of distance.²¹ Closing a set with a piece of greater gravity or “weight” was also extremely common, even expected. Brown’s obvious investment in the unity of the set is symptomatic of the formalist approach characteristic of mid 20th-century musicology, which took the working together of parts to create an inseparable whole as the main criterion of artistic value. To this way of thinking, the history of culture is largely progressive, a single trajectory of improvement over time. In his analysis, Brown is able to connect Haydn to the great song-cycle composers of the decades to come.

In contrast, Gretchen Wheelock, writing four years earlier in the *Journal of Musicology*, called for scholars’ rejection of anachronistic values in their approaches to the canzonet, albeit canzonets of a different sort, namely the popular practice of arranging themes of Haydn’s instrumental works and adding pre-existent texts to create songs.²² Her study takes this “impulse to

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ On skepticism regarding “tonal planning” in this era, see John Platoff, “Myths and Realities About Tonal Planning in Mozart’s Operas,” *Cambridge Opera Journal* 8, no. 1 (1996); Nicholas Temperley, *Haydn: The Creation*, ed. Julian Rushton, *Cambridge Music Handbooks* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 49-51.

²² Gretchen A. Wheelock, “Marriage à la Mode: Haydn’s Instrumental Works “Englished” for Voice and Piano,” *Journal of Musicology* 8, no. 3 (1990).

refashion instrumental music in elegant dress” seriously on contemporary terms: the practice esteemed accessibility, fostered the familiarity and popularity of Haydn’s music, and celebrated music-making of a participatory, rather than passively consumed, variety.²³ Present-day critics’ discomfort with what they perceive as a lack of generic integrity or fidelity to the musical “text” results, then, from a misguided approach. “The lens that is trained exclusively on authentic editions and public events will have a restricted view, one that is inadequate,” she concludes, calling instead for attention to contemporary concerns and “historical messages,” such as the interaction between private and public domains of music-making, between connoisseur and amateur, and the “intersecting meanings, historically understood, of the popular and the familiar.”²⁴

To date, Wheelock’s call has not been heeded in scholarly circles with regard to the late 18th-century English canzonet. A notable exception exists among performers, however, in the person of Timothy Roberts, director of the English period ensemble Invocation.²⁵ Roberts writes with an enthusiasm unconstrained by musicology’s potential prejudices. “The Curfew” from Storace’s set is to Roberts “a fine achievement: its simple music both effectively paints the scene described in the famous opening of Gray’s ‘Elegy in a Country Churchyard,’ and also through its lament-like quality suggests the deeper meaning of Gray’s lines.” Roberts’s contribution, though limited

²³ Ibid.: 395.

²⁴ Ibid.: 397.

²⁵ Roberts’s recordings include Invocation, *Enchanting Harmonist: A Soirée with the Linleys of Bath* (London: Hyperion, 1994), Compact Disc; Invocation, *The Romantic Muse: English Music in the Time of Beethoven* (London: Hyperion, 1994), Compact Disc; Emma Kirkby et al., *O Tuneful Voice: Songs and Duets from Late 18th-Century England* (London: Hyperion, 1991), Compact Disc. In the spirit of the music’s “accessibility,” he has also assembled the anthology *O Tuneful Voice: 25 Classical English Songs with Accompaniments for Piano, Harpsichord, or Harp* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), Score.

by the scope of liner notes, lies in his contextualization of the music in contemporary trends: love of the melodramatic and exotic, the Gothic revival, the Celtic revival, “cultivated artlessness,” and “atmospheric effects” in instrumental writing and painting. Invocation’s recordings capture compelling performances and exhibit a delightfully imaginative approach to programming; they are themselves a valuable contribution to, and inspiration for, work in the area of domestic song in general.²⁶

I agree with Roberts that much of this repertoire -- not only the contribution of Haydn but of many others as well -- is appealing and expressive and I hope with my project to reintroduce it to 21st-century ears. But more broadly speaking, I take up Wheelock’s call for research that gives due attention to the contexts that gave English canzonets meaning. To Wheelock’s contextual dyads of public and private, connoisseur and amateur, I add the tensions and intersections of the masculine and feminine, and I focus in particular on contemporary efforts to define femininity as belonging to the private sphere.

Contemporary References: Authenticity and Domesticity

Morley’s English canzonets from 1593 exhibit generic use of the term, for his title reads, “Canzonets, or little short Songs to three Voyces”; likewise his *Plaine and Easie Introduction to Practicall Musicke* refers to “canzonets, that is

²⁶ His open-mindedness and obvious circumspection notwithstanding, Roberts’ notes suggest that he does subscribe to a version of the master-composer view of history described above with respect to Haydn’s ostensible foreshadowing of Schubert. To Roberts, Pinto’s canzonet “The Distress’d Mother” “may seem to anticipate the mood of Schubert’s *Erlkönig*.” See the liner notes for Invocation, *The Romantic Muse: English Music in the Time of Beethoven*. Further subscription to conventional wisdom is apparent in his description of the canzonet tradition as “moribund” until Haydn; see Kirkby et al., *O Tuneful Voice: Songs and Duets from Late 18th-Century England*.

little shorte songs.”²⁷ The anonymous *Short Explication of Such Foreign Words as are Made Use of in Musick Books* of 1724 refers to the canzonetta as “a little song, or Tune, Cantata, or Sonata.”²⁸ Samuel Johnson’s dictionary provides a brief definition: “a little song,” appending this quotation from Henry Peacham’s *Compleat Gentleman* (1661): “Vecchi was most pleasing of all others, for his conceit and variety, as well as his madrigals and canzonets.” James Grassineau’s translation of Sébastien de Broussard’s musical dictionary takes a similar approach; it predates the 1770 Jackson set of English canzonets by one year.²⁹ “Canzonet” does not appear in Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s musical dictionary at all. Thomas Busby, who (it is believed) reviewed sets of English canzonets (such as those under consideration in this study) for publications such as the *Monthly Magazine*, *The European Magazine*, and *The Analytical Review*, nevertheless also continued to focus on the more madrigalian-type Italian canzonet in his *Complete Dictionary of Music* (1786) in that he attached the term primarily to songs in two or three parts, “canzonets” being diminutive versions of “canzone” exhibiting “passages of fuge and imitation.”³⁰ Even as late as the second decade of the 19th century, neither Rees’s nor Pilkington’s dictionaries defined canzonet with reference to English

²⁷ R. Alec Harman, ed., *Thomas Morley: A Plain and Easy Introduction to Practical Music* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1953), 295; Thomas Morley, *Canzonets, or Little Short Songs to Three Voyces*, vol. 93, *Performers’ Facsimiles* (New York: Performers’ Facsimiles, 1989).

²⁸ *A Short Explication of Such Foreign Words, as Are Made Use of in Musick Books*, (London: J. Brotherton, 1724).

²⁹ Sébastien de Broussard, *A Musical Dictionary: Containing a Full Explanation of All the Terms Made Use of in the Historical, Theoretical, and Practical Parts of Music: Also Explanations of the Doctrines of Ancient Music, and Mathematical and Philosophical Inquiries into the Nature of Sound with Regard to Intervals, Concords, and Discords: Together with a Full Description of All the Various Kinds of Musical Instruments (Not Contained in Any Other Dictionary) the Whole Carefully Abstracted from the Best Authors in the Greek, Latin, Italian, French and English Languages* by James Grassineau. (London: J. Robson, 1769).

³⁰ Thomas Busby, *A Complete Dictionary of Music. To Which Is Prefixed, a Familiar Introduction to the First Principles of That Science*. (London: R. Phillips, 1786).

solo song (in fact Pilkington's text relies heavily on Busby).³¹ The absence of the later canzonet from contemporary dictionaries suggests that the genre was not distinct in a prominent enough way from the Italian version to warrant its own entry.

Busby's anonymous reviews of canzonets for periodicals make sense in terms of the connection of English to Italian canzonets, but they go further to reveal the new values that were associated with the English version. First, Busby evaluates sets largely in terms of style: "sweetness" and "grace" are prized, as is an "attractive," "charming" and "polished" manner. These qualities derive from simplicity or naturalness, for often praised are the "easy, natural, and expressive," and the "sweetly simple." Censure is leveled at tunes "void of air" or "barren of melody" or accompaniments "so busy and elaborate as to spoil its simplicity and expression" or "encumbered with extraneous and unnecessary sharps and flats." Second, Busby values a close kinship between text and music: the "sense of the words is well consulted" or the work "conveys an impressive idea of the poet's sentiments." Third, lack of innovation comes under attack, as in the "not strikingly novel" or the "production of labour not genius." Busby's reviews are directed to the amateur musicians who were the typical consumers of printed canzonets, for he construes part of his role as critic to be providing warning of infelicities to the otherwise unaware or unsuspecting dilettante, such as when the first and second line of text both end on the tonic pitch, syllables are unnaturally emphasized, the bass line is "untheoretical" (a criticism which typically goes without explanation), or errors were made by the printer. Busby sometimes

³¹ H. W. Pilkington, *A Musical Dictionary Comprising the Etymology and Different Meanings of All the Terms That Most Frequently Occur in Modern Composition* (Boston: Watson and Bangs, 1812); Abraham Rees, *The Cyclopaedia, or, Universal Dictionary of Arts, Sciences, and Literature* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, Orme, and Brown, 1819-1820).

predicts, and thereby probably to some extent determines, whether a given set will become popular.³²

Because he was a prolific and influential reviewer, Busby provides a good sense of features that were expected and valued in a canzonet. These values also appear, and indeed are revealingly magnified, in contemporary poetry and literature. Different genres of music were understood to carry specific associations, as James Hurdis describes:

But who shall tell in simple strain like mine
The many shapes that Music, Proteus-like,
Puts on, with grateful change of subject, time,
Contrivance, mood, soothing the captive ear,
And filling the rapt soul with fare so sweet
That still it feeds and hungers. Mortal voice
Shall ill relate with what harmonious art
She fashions pleasure to the various mind.
What wonder then the sulky wheels of time
Fly glibly round, the drowsy pendulum
Foregoes his old vexatious click unheeded,
And the shrill-sounding bell proclaims apace
The brief accomplish'd hours. By Music won,
Decrepit Time forgets his annual gout,
Renews his dance, and with a noiseless foot
Hies speedily away.³³

While music has many shapes, shifting according to “grateful change,” the various genres have their own *a priori* associations:

And oft we feel the soul-subduing power
Of vocal harmony, breath'd softly forth
And gently swell'd accordant, without aid
Of quaint embellishment, save only such
As Nature dictates, and without design
Lets fall with ease in her impassion'd mood.

³² Sample reviews from which these quotes were taken include: *Monthly Magazine* 1 (February-June 1796): 229; 2 (July-December 1796): 491, 654, 736, 814; 3 (January-June 1797): 61, 226; 4 (July-December 1797): 59, 393, 469. Two surveys of 18th-century English-language music criticism include: Carole Grabo, “The Practical Aesthetics of Thomas Busby’s Music Reviews,” *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 25 (1966); G. R. Seaman, “Eighteenth-Century English Periodicals and Music,” *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 7 (1984).

³³ James Hurdis, *The Village Curate* (London: J. Johnson, 1788), ll. 2252-67.

Then serious glee and elegy delight,
 Or pious anthem, such as Croft inspires,
 Or graver Purcel [sic] or endearing Clark.
 The noble harmonies of Brewer, Este,
 Webbe, Baidon, Ravenscroft, we hear
 With ever new delight. Brisk canzonet
 Then pleases, gay duet, or Highland air
 Divinely warbled, and with cadence sweet
 And tender pause prolong'd by one we love,
 Spontaneous and unask'd.³⁴

Most apparent in reference to the canzonet are connotations of serenity and concord. Words like “soft,” “gentle,” “pleasing,” “easy,” and “tender,” attest to canzonets’ ability subdue or pacify the soul. This is music that tricks anxious Time -- time that had been “vexatious” or “shrill” -- into forgetting his complaint. The “brisk canzonet” is specifically connected to naturalness, for not only is it warbled like a bird of nature, but its rhythms are unaffected; they are “spontaneous and unasked.”

This naturalness is not experienced in solitude, but in shared human contact in domestic space. The social experience of the canzonet may be romantic, between lovers, as in the case of Hurdis’s poem, or familial, as in George Colman’s *The Surrender of Calais* (1792). In this play, canzonets have domesticating properties that are powerful enough to transform even the most unlikely spaces, such as the encampment of a battalion:

Madelon. Why I could have followed you to the camp.

La Gloire. And wouldst thou follow me then?

Madelon. Ay surely, La Gloire: I could follow him I love all over the world.

La Gloire. And bear the fatigue of a campaign, Madelon?

Madelon. Any thing with you, La Gloire. I warrant us, we should be happy enough. Ay, and I could be useful too. I could pack your knapsack; sing canzonets with you, to make us merry on a day’s march; mix in the soldier’s dance upon occasion; and, at sun-set, I would dress

³⁴ Ibid., ll. 2230-45.

up our little tent, as neat as any captain's in the field: then at supper, La Gloire, we should be as cheerful!³⁵

It is then no surprise that for Mr. and Mrs. Neville of Mary Hays's *The Victim of Prejudice* (1799), canzonet singing provides the capstone of a typical day, because this couple represents a veritable paragon of domestic harmony lived close to nature:

By admirable order, attention, and dexterity, this amiable pair, upon an annual income of sixty pounds, contrived to preserve even an air of liberality. It is true, the product of a well-planted garden, and the profits of a few acres of land, cultivated by the labour of the worthy curate, added something to their yearly store. The morning, lengthened by early rising, was devoted to business, in which equal skill and perseverance were displayed. In the after-part of the day, literature, music, the instruction of their children, a ramble among the neighbouring hamlets, (to the sick and infirm of which they were benevolent friends,) a walk on the sea-beach, through the meadows, or on the downs, divided their time. Not an hour passed unimproved or vacant: when confined by inclement seasons to their tranquil home, Mrs. Neville employed herself with her needle in preparing simple vestments for her household, while her husband read aloud selected passages from a small collection of books, which was annually increased by an appropriated sum. Music frequently concluded the evening: Mrs. Neville touched the piano-forte with more feeling than skill, and accompanied by her voice (sweet, but without compass) simple canzonets, impassioned airs, or plaintive ballads.³⁶

Music and measured labor make up the twin book-ends of the Nevilles' waking hours; both activities, as well as the instruction and exercise that fill the intervening hours, suggest earnestness and "true" or "genuine" living. Canzonets are a pleasing way to pass the time, just as Hurdis would have it, but more than that they also fortify the day's complete dedication to moral development, for "not an hour passed unimproved or vacant." Hays sums up: "Through this happy family, perfect harmony and tenderness reigned," and indeed, the metaphor of perfect harmony is only reinforced by the

³⁵ George Colman, *The Surrender of Calais: A Play in Three Acts as Performed at the Theatre Royal, Haymarket* (London: Longman, Hurst, Rees, and Orme, 1792), 32.

³⁶ Mary Hays, *The Victim of Prejudice* (London: J. Johnson, 1799), 109-11.

presence of actual harmony in keyboard and voice. The contrast to the world outside is stark:

Happiness, coy and fair fugitive, who shunnest the gaudy pageants of courts and cities, the crowded haunts of vanity, the restless cares of ambition, the insatiable pursuits of avarice, the revels of voluptuousness, and the riot of giddy mirth, who turnest alike from fastidious refinement and brutal ignorance, if, indeed, thou art not a phantom that mockest our research, thou art only to be found in the real solid pleasures of nature and social affection.³⁷

In this pastoral idyll, the solidity of a day concluded by canzonet singing contrasts directly with the gaping emptiness and ephemeral, “phantom,” “fugitive” happiness of courts and cities, with their attendant greed and lust. Hurdis, Colman, and Hays share Busby’s sense of the canzonet as ideally simple and natural and opposed to that which is fake or phony; indeed for Hays, canzonets make up a portion of the mechanism that drives the “real” and the “solid”: nature and social affection. Canzonets affiliate with domestic space where both naturalness and authenticity -- what is “real” -- are believed to reign, and the songs reinforce and perpetuate those qualities as well.

By the same token, however, the canzonet’s powerful properties of signification make the genre an easy victim for appropriation by those who would use it to pretend to be what they are not. This is not to say that the canzonet carries two opposing significations, the authentically true and the inauthentic or fake, but rather related ones: authenticity and the need to appear authentic. For indeed, the logic goes, those who are genuine would need to advertise themselves thus only in the face of some reason why that quality deserved to be questioned. Hannah Cowley’s *A Bold Stroke for a Husband* (1784) features one Don Vincentio, who is mad about music: “He ought to be married to a viol de Gamba” suggests Olivia, whom the Don

³⁷ Ibid., 112.

considers taking as his bride.³⁸ But Vincentio is inauthentic, a pretender to musical sophistication. He is a silly poseur, more in love with his reputation than with his would-be wife, and he wields musical fashion in an effort to project the standing he wishes for himself. The result is nonsense. To Olivia's father Caesar he demands:

Vin. Presto, presto Signor! Where is the Olivia? ---not a moment to spare. I left off in all the fury of composition; minims and crotchets have been battling it through my head the whole day, and trying a semibreve in G sharp, has made me as flat as double F.³⁹

Sensing that he has impressed his future father-in-law, Vincentio presses further, and inadvertently reveals that the goal of his musical posturing resides in his lust for acclaim:

Vin. I compos'd a thing to-day in all the gusto of Sachini and the sweetness of Gluck. But this recreant finger fails me in composing a passage in E, octave: if it does not gain more elastic vigour in a week, I shall be tempted to have it amputated, and supply the shake with a spring.

Caes. Mercy! Amputate a finger to supply a shake!

Vin. Oh, that's a trifle in the road to reputation --- to be talk'd of is the summum bonum of this life. A young man of rank shou'd not glide through the world without a distinguished rage [...]⁴⁰

Clever Olivia, who does not want to marry Vincentio, wisely seeks to beat the snobbish Don at his own game. First, she appeals to his conceit, claiming, "I wou'd not resemble the rest of the world in any thing" (to which her silly suitor replies, "My taste to the fiftieth part of a crotchet!"). Then she hones in on the specific guise of that conceit:

Oliv. Music, did you say! Music! I am passionately fond of that! [...]

Vin. You enchant me! I have the finest band in Madrid -- My first violin draws a longer bow than Giardini; my clarinets, my viol de gamba---oh you shall have such concerts!

³⁸ Hannah Cowley, *A Bold Stroke for a Husband: A Comedy* (London: M. Scott, 1784), 16.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 27.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Oliv. Concerts! Pardon me there --- My passion is a single instrument.

Vin. That's carrying singularity very far indeed! I love a crash; so does everybody of taste.

Oliv. But my taste isn't like every body's -- my nerves are so particularly fine, that more than one instrument overpowers them.

Vin. Pray tell me the name of that one: I am sure it must be the most elegant and captivating in the world. I am impatient to know it. We'll have no other instrument in Spain, and I will study to become its master, that I may woo you with its music. Charming Olivia! Tell me, is it a harpsichord? A piano forte? A pentachord? A harp?

Oliv. You have it -- you have it -- a harp -- yes, a Jew's harp, is to me the only instrument. Are you not charm'd with the delightful h--u--m of its base! Running on the ear like the distant rumble of a stage coach? It presents the idea of vastness and importance to the mind. The moment you are its master -- I'll give you my hand.

Vin. Da capo, Madam, da capo! A Jew's harp!!

Oliv. Bless me, Sir, don't I tell you so? Violins chill me -- clarinets by sympathy hurt my lungs; and, instead of maintaining a band under my roof, I wou'd not keep a servant who knew a bassoon from a flute, or could tell whether he heard a jig or a canzonetta.⁴¹

Vincenzio, not only unable to conceive of such undiscerning, goes a step further and allies himself directly with the canzonet, for he later breathlessly recounts his close escape to friends: "why she's ignorant of music! Prefers a jig to a canzonetta, and a Jew's harp to a pentachord." The canzonet is a prop in Vincenzio's projection of himself, a prop which Olivia identifies and uses to reach her own ends -- for she knows that when the Don goes on about music, appearances are foremost on his mind. When her trick is revealed at the end of the play, she compliments Vincenzio's musical abilities and flatters him with a wish to hear his band. His response confirms that she was quite correct about his priorities: "You cou'd not have pleas'd me so well," he concludes, "if you had married me." To receive acknowledgement of his musicianship is his fondest wish, profoundly so because he doesn't actually have any real claim to it. The canzonet is mentioned in order to signal that he wants to be, even misbelieves himself to be, musically discerning. But it also exposes the fact

⁴¹ Ibid., 31-2.

that Vincentio is not a genuine lover of music and is incapable of such discerning. He uses music in his construction of a reputation that is “talked of.”

Don Vincentio, with his madness for music, would have been despised by the poet Anthony Pasquin, who is alarmed at, in his words, “that musical mania, which tortures the times.” Pasquin criticizes the canzonet in terms of a deficiency of authenticity in this passage from *The Children of Thespis* (1789):

Oh! I'm sick to the soul, to see Music alone,
Stretch her negligent length on the Drama's gay throne;
Where Muses more honor'd by Wisdom should sit,
To adorn the heart's mirror, and fashion our wit.
Let the Wench have her place, as a Wench worth respecting,
But to wound her old sisters, is base and affecting:
As all the high orders of Science deplore,
That their use is neglected, and influence is o'er. --
Tho' obedient Shields charms the ear by his skill,
He exalts his meek name, by resigning his will.
And Linley pens canzonets Pleasure holds dear,
Tho' Pensiveness dims every note with a tear.⁴²

Here, fashion is a culprit: according to Pasquin, the canzonet composers William Shield and Thomas Linley merely follow fashion; “meek,” “obedient,” and “resigned,” they subvert their own judgement and resign their will to the dictates of fashion. (The quality of judgement is later in the poem applied to Handel, so apparently it is possible in exceptional cases for the Muse of Music to be “honored by Wisdom” in Pasquin’s mind.) As a result, they are impotent in the face of “Public Taste [which] is a despot which sports with the mind, / As inconstant as chaff that’s impell’d by the wind.”⁴³ Lacking wisdom and authentic judgement, lives devoted to such a pastime are themselves wasteful:

⁴² Anthony Pasquin, “The Children of Thespis, a Poem,” in *Poems* (Edinburgh: W. Creech, 1789), ll. 629-40.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, ll. 647-48.

But our weaknesses shoot in each progressive season,
 As our lives are at best -- a reproach to our reason;
 And we painfully think at each revolving sun,
 Of the little we did, and the much to be done.⁴⁴

This admonition stands in stark contrast to the happy picture of the Nevilles' family life, in which not a moment is wasted, even in the singing of canzonets. As a counterpart to the canzonet's dual associations, as real or as counterfeit, the genre is something of a lightning rod in debate about the use and misuse of time. (The canzonet's relationship to changing notions of time is explored in Part Three.)

The canzonet's signifying potential persisted into the 19th century. Sir Walter Scott, in his review of *Evan's Old Ballads* (1810), gets at the canzonet's dual meanings when he frets about the shoddy poetry that has made its way into domestic song. To "those who admire music" the esteemed collection under review offers "a means of escaping from the too general pollution."

The marriage between harmony and "immortal verse" has, like fashionable wedlock, frequently made some very ill-matched pairs; and we suspect that poetry must soon sue for a separate maintenance. The ladies, who ought, in common charity, to feel for her situation, are those who aggravate her hardship; for it is rare to hear a fair songstress utter the words of the song which she quavers forth. But where taste and feeling for poetry happen to be united with a sweet and flexible voice, it is scarcely possible to mention a higher power of imparting and heightening social pleasure. We have heard Dr. Aikin's simple ballad, "It was a winter's evening, and fast came down the snow," set by Dr. Clarke, sung with such beautiful simplicity as to draw tears even from the eyes of reviewers. But the consideration of modern song opens to the critic a stronger ground of complaint, from the degeneracy of the compositions which have been popular under that name. Surely it is time to make some stand against the deluge of nonsense and indecency which as of late supplanted, in the higher circles, the songs of our best poets. We say nothing of the "Nancies of the hills and vales." Peace to all such! -- let the miller and apprentice have their ballad, and have it such as they can understand. Let the seaman have his "tight main-decker," and the countess her tinsel'd canzonet. But

⁴⁴ Ibid., ll. 655-58.

when we hear words which convey to every man, and we fear to most of the women in society, a sense beyond what effrontery itself would venture to avow; when we hear such flowing from the lips, or addressed to the ears of unsuspecting innocence, we can barely suppress our execration.⁴⁵

Scott states his case first in terms of the mismatch of text and music, which he likens to a fashionable wedlock, or a marriage undertaken for reasons other than real love. The genuine “marriage” of good words and good singing Scott commends, but he does so to the extent that such instances exhibit real or unspoiled qualities: “beautiful simplicity” and “taste and feeling,” in contrast to nonsensical “flowing from the lips.” Scott takes pains to make clear that his complaint is not against popular songs *per se*. He praises Dr. Aiken’s simple ballad; he allows that the seaman, miller, and apprentice sing songs appropriate to their station. Likewise the countess of “higher circles” marks her position in life by singing her “tinsel canzonet.” The test lies in the words: do they make for an “ill-matched pair,” “nonsense and indecency,” “effrontery to every man”? The rarefied tinsel that bedecks the countess’s canzonet may shimmer intangibly, whereas true, genuine “taste and feeling” elicits real, palpable tears. As with the examples of the previous two decades, naturalness and genuineness are at home in shared human experience: of song well sung Scott claims it is “scarcely possible to mention a higher power of imparting and heightening social pleasure.”

It is likewise a valuing of sincerity that characterizes Lord Byron’s apparently cryptic reference to “canzonettas for Vauxhall.” Upon being urged to continue his autobiographical poem *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* he fervently protested in a letter to his friend and counselor Robert Charles Dallas:

⁴⁵ Sir Walter Scott, “Article 6: Evans’s Old Ballads,” in *The Prose Works of Sir Walter Scott* (London: Robert Cadell and Whittaker & Co., 1835), 135-36.

I feel honoured by the wish of such men that the poem should be continued, but to do that I must return to Greece and Asia; I must have a warm sun, a blue sky; I cannot describe scenes so dear to me by a sea-coal fire. I had projected an additional canto when I was in the Troad and Constantinople, and if I saw them again, it would go on; but under existing circumstances and “sensations,” I have neither harp, “heart, nor voice” to proceed, I feel that “you are all right” as to the metaphysical part; but I also feel that I am sincere, and that if I am only to write “ad captandum vulgus,” I might as well edit a magazine at once, or spin canzonettas for Vauxhall.⁴⁶

Byron equates writing from actual experience (as opposed to describing far-away lands from memory or imagination) with sincerity: the experience described must be a genuine one. “I also feel that I am sincere” seems to mean that to write to reach the “masses” who read magazines or sing canzonets would be a waste of sincerity, an implication that perhaps recalls Pasquin’s admonition against wasted time. Byron mentions canzonets in order to confirm his own sincerity or truthfulness. (Open to the public at large, the pleasure gardens of Vauxhall were a destination not only for royalty but also middle- and upper-class artists and intellectuals, so in his dismissal of the canzonet, Byron positions himself above even the highest echelon of society.)

By the time George Eliot wrote *Middlemarch* in 1871-72, the canzonets of Haydn were the primary surviving representatives of the genre, and with the intervening decades since their conception they had gained an aura of “classic” or high art, as opposed to popular song. When the character Rosamond sings canzonets, she demonstrates the breadth of her abilities:

Rosamond played admirably. Her master at Mrs. Lemon’s school (close to a county town with a memorable history that had its relics in church and castle) was one of those excellent musicians here and there to be found in our provinces, worthy to compare with many a noted Kapellmeister in a country which offers more plentiful conditions of musical celebrity. Rosamond, with the executant’s instinct, had

⁴⁶ George Gordon Lord Byron, *The Works of Lord Byron with His Letters and Journals, and His Life by Thomas Moore, Edited with an Introduction by Richard Henry Stoddard* (New York: Bigelow, Brown & Co., 1900), 11:415 (Sept. 7, 1811).

seized his manner of playing, and gave forth his large rendering of noble music with the precision of an echo. It was almost startling, heard for the first time. [...]

Her singing was less remarkable, but also well trained, and sweet to hear as a chime perfectly in tune. It is true she sang "Meet me by moonlight," and "I've been roaming;" for mortals must share the fashions of their time, and none but the ancients can be always classical. But Rosamond could also sing "Black-eyed Susan" with effect, or Haydn's canzonets, or "Voi che sapete," or "Batti, batti" -- she only wanted to know what her audience liked.⁴⁷

Not only her singing but her social graces and manners are "perfectly in tune" with society's ideals for a young, moneyed woman of marriageable age. Her conversational skills also "precisely echo" an ideal:

Certainly, small feet and perfectly turned shoulders aid the impression of refined manners, and the right thing said seems quite astonishingly right when it is accompanied with exquisite curves of lip and eyelid. And Rosamond could say the right things; for she was clever with that sort of cleverness which catches every tone except the humorous. Happily she never attempted to joke, and this perhaps was the most decisive mark of her cleverness.⁴⁸

Rosamond's qualities are not innocent and naïve. Hers are shrewd capabilities, deployed strategically. Upon being asked to describe to her future suitor, Lydgate, what she saw on a recent trip to London, she responds,

"Very little." (A more naïve girl would have said, "Oh, everything!" But Rosamond knew better.) "A few of the ordinary sights, such as raw country girls are always taken to."

"Do you call yourself a raw country girl?" said Lydgate, looking at her with an involuntary emphasis of admiration, which made Rosamond blush with pleasure. But she remained simply serious, turned her long neck a little, and put up her hand to touch her wondrous hair-plaits -- an habitual gesture with her as pretty as any movements of a kitten's paw. Not that Rosamond was in the least like a kitten: she was sylph caught young and educated at Mrs. Lemon's.⁴⁹

Ultimately Rosamond's chameleon-like ability to adapt to -- and indeed perfectly fit -- circumstances allows her to manipulate her way into a marriage

⁴⁷ George Eliot, *Middlemarch: A Study of Provincial Life*, New one volume ed. (Edinburgh, London: William Blackwood and Sons, 1874), 117.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 115.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 116.

with Lydgate, which she believes, incorrectly, will assure her an opulent lifestyle, and for which both parties are ill-suited. Each spouse is ultimately disappointed by the union, and Eliot makes the comparison of their marriage to those of others', which are based on true love and realistic expectations, a central theme of the book. Rosamond and Lydgate's is an inauthentic, phony, mismatched marriage -- "fashionable wedlock" to which Scott refers. And canzonets are, in part, to blame for its inauthenticity.

Exactly because they communicate what is genuine, and do so in the space reserved for genuine relations, canzonets are also available to be purloined as the means by which one pretends to be something one is not. The genre's claims to authenticity and naturalness will prove to be precisely what makes it a fitting bearer of ideological claims about the women who sing canzonets. There is perhaps no more straightforward way to obscure the "constructedness" of a belief than to communicate that belief through a means itself understood to be the opposite of constructed -- authentically "true" and natural.

Gendering the Genre

Elegy IV: To His Friend Written Under the Confinement of a Long Indisposition

While calm you sit beneath your secret Shade,
And lose in pleasing Thought the Summer Day,
Or tempt the Wish of some unpractis'd Maid,
Whose Heart at once inclines and fears to stray:

The sprightly Vigour of my Youth is fled,
Lonely and sick on Death is all my Thought,
Oh spare, Persephone, this guiltless Head,
Love, too much Love, is all thy Suppliant's Fault.

No Virgin's easy Faith I e'er betray'd
 My Tongue ne'er boasted of a feign'd Embrace,
 No Poisons in the Cup have I convey'd,
 Nor veil'd Destruction with a friendly Face:

No secret Horrors gnaw this quiet Breast,
 This pious Hand ne'er rob'd the sacred Fane,
 I ne'er disturb'd the God's eternal Rest
 With Curses loud, -- but oft have pray'd in vain.

No Stealth of Time has thinn'd my flowing Hair,
 Nor Age yet bent me with his iron Hand;
 Ah why so soon the tender Blossom tear?
 E'er Autumn yet the ripen'd Fruit demand.

Ye Gods, whoe'er, in gloomy Shades below,
 Now slowly tread your melancholy Round,
 Now wand'ring view the baleful Rivers flow,
 And musing hearken to their solemn Sound:

Oh let me still enjoy the chearful Day,
 Till many Years unheeded o'er me roll'd,
 Pleas'd in my Age I trifle Life away,
 And tell how much we lov'd e'er I grew old.

But you who now with festive Garlands crown'd
 In chase of Pleasure the gay Moments spend,
 By quick Enjoyment heal Love's pleasing Wound,
 And grieve for nothing, but your absent Friend.

James Hammond
Love Elegies (1732)⁵⁰

According to Samuel Johnson, the poet James Hammond was the son of a turkey merchant and rose to distinction in the Prince of Wales's court, "till love of a lady, whose name was Dashwood, for a time disordered his understanding." Johnson summed up: "He was unextinguishably amorous, and his mistress inexorably cruel." Hammond's *Love Elegies*, published after his death with a glowing preface by Lord Chesterfield, brought him distinction and earned him coverage in Johnson's *The Lives of the English Poets*,

⁵⁰ James Hammond, *Love Elegies*, 3 ed. (London: G. Hawkins, 1752), 10-11.

though accompanied by harsh assessment: “the truth is, these elegies have neither passion, nature, nor manners.”⁵¹ But the elegies were popular, and remained so, even to the point of citation in the 1910 edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica*. There, the genre of elegy is defined as a “short poem of lamentation or regret, called forth by the decease of a beloved or revered person, or by a general sense of the pathos of mortality,” and Hammond is credited with introducing the “erotic elegy” after the manner of Ovid and Tibullus (an experiment which “took no hold of English literature, but was welcomed in France...”).⁵²

In the fourth elegy, a male protagonist lies dying though he is still young; the cause of his untimely demise is “love, too much love” and the effect undeserved, for he is, he claims, guilty of no betrayal or deception. Herein lies a pitiable irony, for the addressee of the poem, a male friend, embodies the seductive swain whom the protagonist never stooped to be: he tempts the “unpractis’d” maid and chases after pleasure. But when in the penultimate verse the protagonist pleads with the gods of death to spare him and let him live, the life he aspires to continue sounds suspiciously like that which he swore he never led: enjoyment, trifles, heedless time, and tales shared with his friend about “how much we loved.” In his pleading, the protagonist betrays his true wish: a life of “quick Enjoyment.”

Eighteen years later, in 1770, William Jackson borrowed the fifth and seventh verses from Hammond’s fourth elegy for his first canzonet, “Time Has Not Thinn’d My Flowing Hair” in his *Twelve Canzonets*, Op. 9. The sentiments of a man of leisure become, in the canzonet version, embodied in

⁵¹ Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the English Poets by Samuel Johnson with Introduction by Arthur Waugh*, vol. 2, *The World’s Classics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 91-93.

⁵² “Elegy,” in *Encyclopedia Britannica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1910), 252-53.

the sung voices of a woman and man, with the woman taking the lead -- or even a duet of two women. Jackson accounts for this change in terms of a publishing custom dictated by marketplace pressure. Couched in humility, his introductory words downplay the merit of the set:

As the greatest Part of these Canzonets were extemporary Productions, and performed almost as soon as composed, I should scarce have ventured to publish them, if they had not met with more Approbation than appeared to me due to their Merit. Perhaps the Ease with which such familiar Airs may be sung, went farther to recommend them, than a Stile that needs to be studied before it can be liked. As Trifles only they are offered to the Public, and as Trifles they will doubtless be received. It is possible they may be found useful to those who teach to sing, yet they would have been more so, had they continued in their first Form. They were composed for a Treble and a Tenor, but in Compliance with Custom, both Parts are made Trebles; in the doing which, many Passages are hurted which could but ill afford to be worse. The second Canzonet I had not Ingenuity enough to alter, so that the Underpart stands as it did, writ only in the Treble instead of the Tenor Clef; by which means it appears now and then as the upper part. This is hurtful to the Eye of the Connoisseur, who is desired to read the Notes in their proper Places, and to excuse an Impropriety which the author was obliged to commit, lest he might prevent the Sale of his Book.

By striking this modest tone, Jackson accomplishes a number of things with his preface. He describes the contents in terms of ease and accessibility while implicitly preserving his own reputation as one who can both write and appreciate greater (that is, more difficult and complicated) works. Though his work is self-published, he partakes of a venerable tradition reserved for dedicated sets, in which the author deprecates the merits of the work and magnifies the generosity of those who urged him to publish. Moreover, Jackson also clearly locates the origin of his compositions in the private sphere: they are “extemporary productions, and performed almost as soon as composed” presumably for the entertainment of his own friends and family. But he also turns the private/public distinction to his own benefit. That the

set was not originally intended for the public eye amounts to an endorsement. The songs are at once too good to be restricted to narrow audience, and too private to really fit in the public arena. Postured abashment and censure go a long way in making the publication attractive, and Jackson at once distances himself from, and acquiesces to, the demands of the public.

One might say that the set is “publicly private,” a notion that will be taken up at greater length below. But especially pertinent to the history of gendered associations of the canzonet is Jackson’s admission that the set was originally composed for a male and female to sing together, but was rewritten (at times crudely so, he emphasizes) in two treble clefs rather than treble and tenor. This adaptation was undertaken “in Compliance with Custom,” or even more to the point, in order that the book might be saleable. The history of “Time Has Not Thinn’d,” then, is one of increasing stages of feminization: a poem in masculine voice became an unpublished song for private-sphere entertainment for males and females together, which in turn finally became a publication that enabled singing by female voices only. This trajectory parallels the transformation of the material from entertainment for a small circle of friends to saleable product, which Jackson describes. Although ultimately aimed for consumption in private-sphere settings, the work is finally offered to the “public.”

It is easy today to speak of English canzonets sheerly in terms of their being a genre for women. For one thing, as Stanley Sadie points out, “the repertoire was always presented as if sung by a soprano or high mezzo.”⁵³ For another, canzonets are relatively simple: Landon introduces Haydn’s first set of canzonettas as “technically easy songs which could be sung at sight by any

⁵³ Sadie, “Music in the Home 2,” 353.

educated music-lover and played on the piano *a prima vista* by the average lady of musical inclination."⁵⁴ Third, the connection fits iconographic evidence. Richard Leppert's thorough-going studies of music-making in visual culture, especially portraiture, establish that the realm of domestic music-making was a female-dominated one.⁵⁵ But at the same time, we know too that Haydn himself played and sang his own canzonets. When invited to meet George III and his family in 1795, "Haydn, by desire of the Queen, sat down to the piano-forte, and, surrounded by Her Majesty and her royal and accomplished daughters, sung, and accompanied himself admirably in several of his *Canzonets*."⁵⁶ Caecilia Maria Barthelemon wrote this annotation on the title page of her manuscript copy of a Haydn aria: "Mio caro Maestro Haydn gave me this Song when I was Caecilia Maria Barthelemon (now Hinchcliffe) often have I sat with him when he play'd his Sweet Canzonetts [...]."⁵⁷ The fact that Haydn was playing his own compositions, and was doing so in impromptu performances for specific female listeners, indeed for those who likely played the pieces themselves, goes a long way toward accounting for his performance of a "feminine" genre, indeed even toward keeping the canzonet within the female realm. The same might also be said of boy sopranos who rendered more popular canzonets at public concerts (such as Steven Storace's *Captivity* at Knyvett's Concerts; later the score was sold with the annotation "sung by Signora Storace").⁵⁸

⁵⁴ Landon, *Haydn in England 1791-1795*, 377. Landon certainly exaggerates the Haydn canzonets' technical simplicity.

⁵⁵ See especially Richard Leppert, *Music and Image: Domesticity, Ideology and Socio-Cultural Formation in Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988). Leppert also documents the counterpart rhetoric that mocked men as non-musical, especially in Chapter 2.

⁵⁶ Landon, *Haydn in England 1791-1795*, 284, quoting Parke's Memoirs.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 169.

⁵⁸ Margaret Foley and Kathleen Fletcher, eds., *Georgian Songs, 1714-1830*, vol. 13, *Library Research News* (Hamilton, Ontario, Canada: McMaster University Library Press, 1989), 68.

But the preface to the Jackson canzonets complicates any exclusive association of canzonets and women. Jackson acknowledges male participation in canzonet singing in the private sphere, and indeed he makes possible the “feminization” of his productions with a specific purpose in mind: that they might better succeed in publication. Similarly, in the lower margin of the sixth of Timothy Essex’s *Eight English Canzonets* (1799) there appears an instruction that relates to Jackson’s preface : “N. B. The words of this Song were originally intended for a Gentleman to sing, the lower line of words is therefore added to accommodate a Lady.” The alternate texts simply replace “fair Laura” with “gentle Colin” such that the first stanzas read:

Where is my Laura lovely Fair
 She’s gone and left me to despair
 Sure some mishap has her betray’d
 Or from my arms she ne’er had stray’d

[Alternate verse]
 Where is my Colin gentle Youth
 So known for Honour Love and Truth
 Some sad mishap has him betray’d
 Or he’d not leave his blue-eyed maid

In the fourth song of his second set, *Six English Canzonets, the Words from the Poems of the Late Mrs. Robinson* (1802), Essex directs that “N. B. if the second Voice Part is Sung by a Tenor Voice, instead of a Soprano; it is requested that the small notes be sung in preference to the lower ones.” These instructions indicate that, even after canzonets saw their greatest popularity in the 1790s, what was generally directed to female participation was in practice sometimes rendered by men. As late as 1807, Johann Peter Salomon titled his *Second Set of English Canzonets* “for a / treble, or tenor voice / and / Piano-Forte.” It was unusual to indicate any voice type on the title page; probably not doing so left open the possibility of wider appeal for the publication. Moreover, canzonets

directed only implicitly to women would have been less problematically rendered by men than canzonets directed to women explicitly and boldly on their title page.⁵⁹

The transformation of Hammond's elegy into Jackson's canzonet divulges more than just an insight into the dictates of the contemporary marketplace which Jackson cites. It also offers a glimpse of the cultural work in which canzonets participated.⁶⁰ While we cannot know to what extent the original poem, in masculine voice, was present in the minds of the composer's family and friends as they sang from his manuscript, we can see that its traces fade in the published version. Nowhere in the preface is Hammond cited or referred to, even though his texts are the sources for five of the set's twelve canzonets. Only the fifth and seventh stanzas of the original eight are set, and as a result their original context is significantly changed or lost. No longer is the protagonist a dying man who (if we can read through his protests) has with many lovers loved "too much." Instead the female speaker seems to address a single beloved: "how much we lov'd" becomes, in the new context, a love between herself and one other. She would, if allowed to reach old age, be able to tell of a lifetime of devotion solely to him. Another difference results from the impression left by the opening stanza, especially the opening line and what becomes the title of the song. In the sung version, the texts open with immediate reference to the singer's own body and appearance,

⁵⁹ By 1847 "canzonet" still had potential recognition as a song form that could be sung by a male. Lord Tennyson's poem "The Princess" refers to an untrue male lover: "I had a maid of honour once; She wept her true eyes blind for such a one, / A rogue of canzonets and serenades." The canzonets in question appear to be of the solo variety rather than the earlier (Italian) ensemble sort.

⁶⁰ Scholars have found Jane Tompkins's concept of "cultural work" especially productive in studies of popular forms of expression. The term applies to the ability of a cultural product such as a song to articulate an aspect of society's perception of itself, including its problems and proposed solutions. See Jane Tompkins, *Sensational Designs: The Cultural Work of American Fiction, 1790-1860* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

specifically her “flowing hair.” It then turns to natural metaphors for her life, first as a “blossom,” then a “ripen’d fruit,” both objects affected by the passage of time. What was an (albeit longer) narrative, complete with the descriptions, memories, and pleas of a man whose dalliances have been many, becomes in the female voice a concentrated paean to chaste devotion. In terms of the “authenticity” so integral to the definition of the canzonet as described above, one might say that through the excerpting of the text, he who was an untrue lover now becomes a “she” who is utterly, genuinely devoted; yet, this transformation parallels a change in format, one which the composer himself apologizes for on account of its capitulation to demands other than his own. Whereas the protagonist gains genuineness (for the claims expressed become sincere), the publication loses it (for it yields to outside demands). The devices by which the female protagonist becomes devoted, as I will argue further in Part Two and Part Three, include an increased emphasis on the physicality of the singing and the singer herself, and a connection between her and the concept of time. Jackson’s canzonet thus not only discloses a variety of actual performance practices, but also captures three themes that will be central to the canzonet tradition over the next three decades.

Ultimately, the connection of women and canzonets may be best understood not as an established given, but as a process, one that was already under way when Jackson published his canzonets in 1770. And though the connection may have increased throughout the lifespan of the genre, it was never an iron-clad rule. Indeed my argument implies that iconographical sources of the sort Richard Leppert interprets are likewise part of an official, “public-directed” rhetoric, communicating messages that may have had to be made precisely because they did *not* reflect a consistent reality. In the

following chapters I construe this feminization as an ideological project rather than a consistent or reliable practice. My interest lies in the gendered associations and the ideological motivations for canzonets' transformation.⁶¹ Canzonets, I argue, were *about* women as much as *for* them, and their study must address both the convergence and divergence of ideology and practice.

⁶¹ Jeffrey Kallberg investigates the ways in which the 19th-century nocturne was "engendered in contrary ways." Following Ruth Solie on Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* songs, he emphasizes that both masculine and feminine associations of the genre were the constructs of men, and they should not be assumed to reflect women's responses to the genre. Of course, examples of women's responses are hard to come by, given that published musical criticism was largely the domain of men. Kallberg is able instead to begin to map out some preliminary ideas about how women understood the nocturne by examining contemporary feminist writing and by analyzing nocturnes by Fanny Mendelssohn and Clara Wieck Schumann. The recovery of women's responses to canzonets may be even more elusive on that count, given the paucity of women's compositional efforts in the genre. However, women were often involved in writing the texts that were later set by men, as was the case with Anne Hunter and Joseph Haydn. The creation of meaning in canzonets therefore involved a multiplicity of actors from the start, and their multiple messages must not be assumed to be univocal. See Jeffrey Kallberg, *Chopin at the Boundaries*, ed. Edward Said, *Convergences: Inventories of the Present* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 1996), 45-61; Ruth Solie, "Whose Life? The Gendered Self in Schumann's *Frauenliebe* Songs," in *Music and Text: Critical Inquiries*, ed. Steven Paul Scher (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).