Purcell Studies

edited by

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King Arthur's journey into the eighteenth century

ELLEN T. HARRIS

Dryden and Purcell's *King Arthur* ranks as one of the greatest and best-known 'Dramatick Operas'. First performed in 1691, it continued to be produced throughout the decade. At its first major revival in 1736, the work remained largely unchanged. In contrast, a Dublin performance in 1763 included a significant number of alterations. David Garrick and Thomas Arne made a much more extensive revision in 1770; performed over three seasons, this version was revived in 1781. Then, in 1784 it was greatly shortened and compressed by John Kemble and Thomas Linley into a two-act afterpiece entitled *Arthur and Emmeline*, which was performed until 1791. Many of the practices of revision revealed in this history of *King Arthur* are presaged in Restoration revisions of Shakespeare, especially of *The Tempest*, on which Dryden's *King Arthur* appears to have been modelled, and paralleled in the eighteenth-century revisions of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*. In this essay, therefore, the eighteenth-century adaptations of *King Arthur* will be examined, not only to analyse the transformation of a single work, but also to study the process of revision as it relates to other operatic adaptations.

*KING ARTHUR AND SHAKESPEARE*

Although the only one of Purcell's large dramatic works for the professional stage that is not an adaptation from an earlier play, *King Arthur* nevertheless bears a close relationship to Shakespeare's *Tempest*, especially Restoration versions. For example, the characters closely parallel one another.¹ In both a good magician (Prospero/Merlin) works with a good 'airy spirit' (Ariel/Philidel) to overcome the usurper or invader (Alonzo/Oswald) and unite the leading young man (Ferdinand/Arthur) with the innocent young woman

(Miranda/Emmeline) who has ‘never seen a man’, with the difference that Emmeline is actually blind. In both cases, the good characters must contend with an earth-bound evil spirit (Caliban/Grimbald) who in *King Arthur* takes orders from an evil magician (Osmond).

There are also parallels in action, such as when the airy spirits use song to lead the confused leading men: Ariel sings ‘Come unto these yellow sands’ and ‘Full-fathom five’ to Ferdinand, and Philidel sings ‘Hither this way’ and ‘Come follow me’ to Arthur. Smaller points of comparison include the acting out of events only referred to in Shakespeare. For example, in *The Tempest*, Prospero accuses Caliban of having sought ‘to violate the honour of my child’, but in *King Arthur* Osmond is openly depicted attempting to ravish Emmeline. Further, in *The Tempest* Prospero describes finding Ariel imprisoned in a tree where Sycorax, Caliban’s mother, had placed him twelve years before; hearing his moans, Prospero had released him. In *King Arthur*, when Arthur acts to destroy the enchanted forest by cutting down the ‘queen of all the grove’, he is deluded into believing that Emmeline is imprisoned in the tree, and her illusion moans and shrieks when the tree is hit.

*King Arthur* reveals especially close connections with *The Tempest* of 1670, which is not surprising given that Dryden had a major hand in that production. He gave Miranda a sister (Dorinda) who also has never seen a man. The two discuss what a man must be like (end of Act 1). Similarly, in *King Arthur*, Emmeline talks to her attendant Matilda about what she thinks men must be like (Act 2, scene 5). Even more closely parallel, Emmeline and Dorinda both compare holding their lovers’ hands to holding their fathers’:

EMMELINE . . . When my father clasps my hand in his,
That’s cold, and I can feel it hard and wrinkled,
But when you grasp it, then I sigh and pant,
And something presses to my heart. (1, 2)

DORINDA I’ve touched my Father’s and my Sister’s hands
And felt no pain; but now, alas! there’s something,
When I touch yours, which makes me sigh . . . (2)

Finally, *King Arthur* also exhibits affinity with the 1674 operatic adaptation of *The Tempest*, with which Shadwell has been credited (or, rather accused) but which Dryden must have known well, perhaps as a participant. Especially

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2 *The Tempest, or the Enchanted Island. A Comedy*. This adaptation, published in 1670, was first acted in 1667.

3 The 1670 version was based in part on the work of Charles Davenant. The musical revision of this text in 1674 has sometimes been attributed to Thomas Shadwell. The settings long thought to be by Purcell were probably composed after 1710 by John Weldon. See Margaret Laurie, ‘Did Purcell Set *The Tempest*?’, *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 90 (1963–4), 43–57.
striking is the similarity between the closing masques. In the 1674 *Tempest* when all is resolved, Prospero entertains the assembled group with a masque that includes Neptune, Amphitrite, Oceanus and Tethys with attendant sea-gods and sea-goddesses. Neptune calls upon Aeolus to calm the winds, and Aeolus responds:

> You I'll obey, who at one stroke can make,  
> With your dread Trident, the whole Earth to quake.  
> Come down, my Blusterers, swell no more,  
> Your stormy rage give o'er.  
> Let all black Tempests cease—  
> And let the troubled Ocean rest:  
> Let all the Sea enjoy as calm a peace,  
> As where the Halycon builds her quiet Nest.

The chorus then sings, “Sound a calm’. In *King Arthur* the final masque begins with Aeolus, who sings:

> Ye Blust'ring Brethren of the Skies,  
> Whose Breath has ruffl'd all the Watry Plain,  
> Retire, and let Britannia Rise,  
> In Triumph o'er the Main.

Followed by:

> Serene and Calm, and void of fear,  
> The Queen of Islands must appear.

Beyond this direct parallel, however, the additions, revisions and cuts throughout the 1674 musical version of *The Tempest* anticipate the kinds of alterations made in the first one hundred years of *King Arthur*.

**THE 1770 REVIVAL OF KING ARTHUR**

The 1770 revision of *King Arthur* by Garrick and Arne⁴ and the anonymous 1774 adaptation of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*⁵ both reflect a growing interest in England of the music of the past. The Academy of Ancient Music, which sponsored revivals of *Dido* in 1774 and 1787, was flourishing; in the 1768 book of repertory entitled *The Words of Such pieces as are most usually performed by the Academy of Ancient Music*, 2nd edn, Purcell’s works are given special emphasis. Also during this period, the Handel Commemoration Festival of 1784

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⁴ *King Arthur; or, the British Worthy... the Music by Purcell and Dr. Arne* (London, 1770).
included the greatest number of musicians known at that time to have been assembled, and Dr Samuel Arnold began but did not complete the first collected edition of the music of Handel between 1787 and 1797. In 1789 Charles Burney published A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period.6

Garrick, who is particularly remembered for his Shakespearean revivals and the realism of his acting, was himself an important part of the revivalist tradition. Arne was among the leading composers in England. They collaborated on a number of ventures, and part of their correspondence concerning King Arthur survives.

In the first extant letter, Arne expresses his judgement of Purcell’s score and outlines his plans for the adaptation:

David Garrick, Esq. Sir, - A due attention to your Commission having gone hand in hand with what fancy and judgment I may be thought to possess in my profession, I thought it necessary to lay before you a true state of the merits and demerits of the Musical Performance, you are about to exhibit in King Arthur. To attain a certain rectitude, in judging of this matter, I have not only, with the utmost care and candor inspected the Score of Purcell’s composition; but attended two rehearsals of it...7

As it happens, Arne’s judgement was contemptuous and his plans for revision extensive. He writes of the first act that the ‘long’ sacrifice scene (‘Woden first to thee’) is ‘necessary to be deliver’d in’ music; if performed as written, it ‘may have a solemn and noble effect’, provided the following air (‘I call you all to Woden’s Hall’) ‘be perform’d as I have new compos’d it’. He argues that Purcell’s version (for countertenor) ‘is entirely out of Mrs. [Sophia] Baddeley’s compass, very indifferent, and no way proper for a woman, where a troop of warriors are assembled, to brile their idols for success in battle’. Arne writes that his version of ‘I call you all’ for the bass Samuel Champness (who according to the 1770 playbook played Aeculus), ‘being highly spirited, will carry off with an éclat, an (otherwise) dull, tedious, antiquated suite of Chorus’. This substitution was not included in the final version. Arne


concludes his discussion of Act 1 with a request that the final song and chorus, 'Come if you dare, our trumpets sound', also be replaced; Purcell's version is 'tolerable, but so very short of that Intrepity and Spirited defiance pointed at by Dryden's words and sentiments, that, I think, you have only to hear what I have compos'd on the occasion, to make you immediately reject the other'. Again, Arne's version was not chosen; like Purcell's, it would have been sung by tenor Joseph Vernon, who was assigned the role of Honour.  

Arne writes of the second number in Act 2, 'Let not a moonborn elf mislead you', as sung by Grimbald, that 'after the two first bars of Purcell [it is] very bad, and out of Mr. Champnes' [sic] compass of voice. – Hear mine'. Like the previous suggestions, however, this was not enacted.

At this point, Arne simply summarizes his critique of Purcell and his plans for adaptation as follows:

All the other Solo Songs of Purcell are infamously bad; so very bad, that they are privately the objects of sneer and ridicule to the musicians, but, I have not meddled with any, that are not to come from the mouths of your principal Performers. I wish you wou'd only give me leave to Doctor this performance, I would certainly make it pleasing to the Public, which otherwise, may have an obstruction to the success of the Revival. It is not now my intention to new set many things, mention'd in our original plan; but to put it in the power of your principal performers to make a proper figure, by opening and adorning the most entertaining points of view, wherein they are to appear ...

*King Arthur* does not crop up again in his correspondence until 1775 when Arne complains to Garrick that he has been of late 'neglected'. Garrick responds that Arne seems 'more inclined to the theatre of Covent-Garden than that of [Garrick's] Drury-Lane', and gives as evidence Arne's music for *Elfrida* (written in 1772 for Covent Garden). Arne's rebuttal, which concerns *King Arthur*, deserves quotation in full:

I must beg your permission to assure you that you are greatly mistaken in two points. First, when you imagine that I have the least partiality either in favour of the other theatre or its patentees: next in saying that the music in 'Elfrida' is much superior to the music I composed for you in 'King Arthur'. The principal songs, which for air and mashtership I have never excelled,

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8 Arne identifies the intended singer in a letter to Garrick of 24 August 1775. See Langley, *Arne*, p. 80.
9 According to the 1770 playbook and the printed score, Grimbald was sung and acted by Charles Bannister. It is not clear if the singer was changed during rehearsal or whether Arne was simply mistaken, since both Bannister and Champness were basses.
10 As quoted in Langley, *Arne*, p. 69.
have not been performed. They were written for the late Mrs. Arne (Mrs Michael Arne, née Elizabeth Wright), and fashioned to her sweet voice, and glaring abilities. Mr. Arne expected, from the music and her performances of it, that they would be productive of the highest pleasure, that a judicious audience ever received from either of our endeavours, and several eminent masters thought as he did: but when those coups de maître came out of the mouths of persons who could neither sing in time nor tune, nor turn out one jeu de la voix in them, the result was much the same as if an approved author had written a fine part for __________ . . . Champness’s songs, the chorus in the first scene of Mr. Vernon’s ‘Come, if you dare’, and several other things that employed my utmost efforts, were laid aside, in favour of Purcell’s music, which (though excellent in its kind) was Cathedral, and not to the taste of a modern theatrical audience. But never was my surprise greater than when I perceived that a drama so fertile of invention and elegant in poetry . . . should . . . fail in making that impression on the public, which the managers had an undoubted right to expect.13

The Arne and Garrick correspondence reveals tensions over the extent to which *King Arthur* was to be revised. Apparently Arne’s ‘original plan’ was ‘to new set many things’ (letter of 1770), but this was rejected. If Arne actually wrote many pieces specifically for Mrs Arne, who died on 1 May 1769, then the planning for the production must have started no later than early in 1769, and perhaps as early as 1768. Possibly her death delayed the first performance on 13 December 1770. Even after the production was in rehearsal, however, Arne continued to urge changes that Garrick declined to accept. In his 1770 letter, Arne, after hearing two rehearsals, describes the effect of various pieces, difficulties singers were having with range and style, and the privately shared negative attitude of the musicians. On the evidence of the printed score, Garrick remained unyielding to Arne’s entreaties.

However, the printed score and libretto illustrate that this *King Arthur* was far from pristine Purcell. Not only are there musical changes, but Dryden’s text is altered as well. Thus, it is hard to tell what caused the supposed failure of the 1770 production.14 Perhaps Garrick made too many changes, or Arne

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13 3 September 1775: Langley, *Arne*, pp. 79–80; Boaden, *Correspondence*, vol. II, 85. See also Richard Luckett, ‘‘Or rather our musical Shakspeare’’: Charles Burney’s Purcell’, in *Music in Eighteenth-Century England*, ed. Christopher Hogwood and Richard Luckett (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 59–77, for a detailed discussion of eighteenth-century views of Purcell. Note especially, as regards Arne’s comment that Purcell’s music is ‘Cathedral’, that Thomas Gray wrote of the 1736 revival of *King Arthur* that ‘the songs are all Church-musick’ (pp. 68–9).

14 According to *The London Stage* 1660–1800, Part 4: 1747–1776, ed. George Winchester Store, Jr. (Carbondale, 1962), vol. III, 1518E. *King Arthur* received nineteen performances in 1770–71 season, none in the 1771–72 season (it was scheduled twice and deferred due to illness) and four in the 1772–73 season. The first season was hardly shameful, but neither was it record-breaking. Richard Cumberland’s *The West Indian*, another Garrick première of 1770–71, saw twenty-eight performances (*The London Stage*, Part 4, vol. III, 1496).
was right in arguing that contemporary taste demanded even more changes or, as Arne also argued, the substitution of Mrs Baddeley as the principal female singer after the premature death of the inestimable Mrs Arne significantly weakened the performance of his own music. It may be indicative, given Arne’s concerns about Mrs Baddeley’s singing of ‘I call you all to Woden’s Hall’, that according to the 1770 playbook this was performed by Mr Vernon and in the published score it is given to a Mr Kear; the apparent reassigning of this piece to three different singers indicates some difficulty in finding a performer who could do justice to Purcell’s setting. After the deaths of Arne in 1778 and Garrick in 1779, King Arthur was revived in 1781, and Vernon may have been the only principal singer retained. Shortly thereafter, King Arthur was further adapted by Kemble and Linley as a two-act entertainment entitled Arthur and Emmeline that played from 1784 to 1791 as an afterpiece in thirty-one performances with twenty-four different plays. A study of these various adaptations reveals a continuing tradition of methods of revision and much about late eighteenth-century taste.

GARRICK’S ADAPTATION OF DRYDEN

Arne’s deprecation of Purcell closely parallels the low opinion in which Dryden was held at the same time. For example, in a 1761 pamphlet addressed to Garrick and intended to encourage the revival and performance of the plays of Philip Massinger, Dryden is heavily criticized:

16 Roger Fiske, English Theatre Music in the Eighteenth Century, 2nd edn (London, 1986), p. 616, describes Mrs Baddeley’s voice as particularly appropriate to the ‘slow pathetic song’. If this is the case, then the coloratura written for Mrs Arne would certainly have been inappropriate for her voice. Furthermore, Fiske (p. 638) describes Vernon’s voice as ‘unappealing in quality’. As if this did not bode badly enough, there were apparently problems with the acting as well; the Hopkins Diary records of the first performance (15 December 1770) that ‘Miss Hayward play’d Emmeline very bad’, as quoted in The London Stage, Part 4, vol. III, 1518.
17 King Arthur: or, the British Worthy . . . by David Garrick, Esq . . . the Music by Purcell and Dr. Arne (London, 1781). The playbook gives Vernon in the case list, but The London Stage, Part 5: 1776–1800, ed. Charles Beecher Hogan (Carbondale, 1968), vol. II, 468, states that by this time Vernon had left the stage and suggests that this role was probably taken by Charles Dubellamy, a singer of ‘much merit’ (ABiographical Dictionary, vol. IV, 478–80). Bamister retained the speaking role of Grimbald but probably did not sing. Also, Mrs Wrighten, who played one of the attendant spirits and one of the sirens in 1770, substituted in 1781 at the last minute, apparently in a subsidiary vocal role.
Indeed the Heroick Nonsense, which overruns the Theatrical Productions of Dryden . . . must nauseate the most indulgent Spectator. [Footnote:] Nobody can have a truer Veneration for the Poetical Genius of Dryden, than the Writer of these Reflections; but surely that Genius is no where so much obscured, notwithstanding some transient Gleams, as in his Plays; of which He had Himself no great Opinion.\footnote{[George Colman], *Critical Reflections on the Old English Dramatick Writers* (London, 1761), pp. 16–17.}

Not surprisingly, Garrick's changes to Dryden's text of *King Arthur* are extensive. These include transposition of scenes, elimination of text, addition of text and substitutions.

These methods were, of course, long common to adapters of musical-theatrical works, including Dryden himself, and often made for the same reasons. Perhaps, given that *King Arthur* resembles Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, especially in Dryden's version (and the operatic revision of 1674), there is some poetic justice in Garrick's revamping of Dryden. For example, transposition of material to create spectacular endings is common. In the 1674 *Tempest*, the scenes of Act 2 are transposed so that the first, which concludes with a masque of devils, could end the act, and this revision was enabled by moving one of the second act scenes to the beginning of Act 3. Thus what in 1670 was a sequence of four scenes became in 1674 the following sequence: Act 2 (1670) scenes 3–4–1; Act 3, scene 2 (and continuing). The earliest revision of *Dido and Aeneas*, when the opera was incorporated into Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* in 1700, also illustrates the same tendency towards transposition with the same result. The two scenes of the second act of the first known production of 1689 were reversed, thus placing the spectacular scene with the witches at the end rather than the beginning of the act. And in the late eighteenth-century scores this effect is maintained despite a return to the original order, simply by appending the witches' scene to the end of Act 1. Similarly, the mythological prologue of 1689 was in 1700 removed to the end, thus providing a celebratory concluding musical masque to *Measure for Measure*, much as 'The Masque of Neptune and Amphitrite' is added to the end of the 1674 *Tempest*.\footnote{See Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, for a more detailed discussion of the revisions to this opera. See also Price, *Henry Purcell and the London Stage* and Eric Walter White, 'New Light on *Dido and Aeneas*', in *Henry Purcell (1659–1695): Essays on his Music*, ed. Imogen Holst (London, 1959).}

Garrick similarly begins his revision of *King Arthur* by eliminating the 1691 spoken prologue and transposing the action in Act 1 so that the work begins in an operatic fashion with the musical scene of sacrifice for the Saxons, only then followed by Dryden's original first scene in which the
history and background to the story of Arthur and Emmeline is recounted in spoken dialogue. This history is capped with an abbreviated version of Dryden’s original ending to Act 1, the song ‘Come if you dare’. Thus in Garrick’s operatic version, King Arthur begins in music, and both scenes of the first act end with a song and chorus, the first with ‘I call you all to Woden’s Hall’ and the second with ‘Come if you dare’.

In Dryden’s Act 1 the pantomime battle between Oswald’s Saxons and Arthur’s Britons separates the sacrifice scene and the victory song, ‘Come if you dare’. In Garrick’s version, these musical numbers are already separated by a spoken scene, and Garrick reinterprets ‘Come if you dare’ as the Britons’ battle preparation, parallel in function to the Saxons’ sacrifice. Thus the fighting is transposed to the opening of Act 2, providing, as in Act 1, for a spectacular stage scene rather than spoken text at the opening of the act. Arne’s march ‘for the Entry of the Warriors’ printed at the end of the 1770 score was probably used at this point.

Dryden’s opening speech of Act 2, ‘Alas, for pity, of this bloody field’, is then slightly altered and set by Arne as recitative, followed by the air ‘O peace descend’ to a text newly written by Garrick. Thus, even after the battle was transposed to begin the second act, Garrick still made revisions so as to begin the ‘spoken’ part of the act with song. Then follows Dryden’s unaltered text, including the spoken dialogue between Merlin and Philidel, the scene in which Arthur is led through the woods (with the Purcell settings of ‘Hither this way’ and ‘Let not a moon-born elf’, and Arne’s revision of ‘Come follow me’), and the concluding pastoral masque with Arne’s wholly new setting of ‘How best are shepherds’ and Purcell’s original ‘Shepherds leave decoying’. The final text of this masque, ‘Come, shepherds, lead up a lively measure’, is given by Garrick but not included in the 1770 score. It is not clear whether Purcell’s setting was performed, but one may assume that a

21 John Buttrey has recently argued (Purcell Conference at Oxford, September 1993) that the first two scenes of King Arthur are incorrectly reversed in the 1691 playbook. If so, then the 1770 version is a ‘correction’ rather than a ‘revision’. However, all intervening playbooks maintain the 1691 ordering until 1770.

22 The Songs, Airs, Duets & Choruses in the Masque of King Arthur . . . Compos’d by Purcell and Dr. Arne (London, n.d.).

23 O Peace, sweet Peace, descend,
Of human woes the friend,
O charm to rest this troubled isle,
And o’er the land propitious smile;
Thy smile can chase these clouds away,
From darkest night bring forth the day.
O peace, sweet peace, appear,
And plant thy olive here.

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new setting was not contributed, as that certainly would have been published. The text appears in the 1781 playbook but is eliminated from the later condensed version *Arthur and Emmeline* (1784 and 1786).  

Act 3 begins as in Dryden with a scene in which the Britons are rebuffed by the magic charms of the Saxons. There is no known music for this scene either by Purcell or Arne, but it is possible that some music accompanied it in both versions. In the second scene of Act 3, Arthur goes with Merlin and Philidel to restore the sight of Emmeline. She and her handmaiden Matilda are now prisoners of the Saxon chief Oswald. In Dryden's text this scene contains three significant musical numbers: two airs for Philidel ("We must work, we must haste" and "Thy I infuse") and an extended scene for airy spirits beginning "O sight, the mother of desires". No setting by Purcell survives for any of these texts, and the 1770 score contains newly written compositions for each by Arne. In addition, Garrick follows the 'recitative' for Philidel, 'We must work', with a new song, 'To virtue with rapture', also set by Arne.  

Act 3 concludes with Osmond's magical presentation for the newly sighted Emmeline of the Frost scene as in Dryden, although Garrick omits the final air by Cupid, 'Sound a parley'. Dryden gives an indication for a dance at the end of this act, and in Purcell's version the third act tune is a hornpipe. In the Arne publication, a 'Country Dance' by Charles Dibdin given at the end of the score is cued for the 'end of the 3d. Act'.  

Act 4 begins with a short scene between Osmond, who is hoping to satisfy his lust for Emmeline, and Grimbal, who warns him that Merlin's magic is overpowering them. The body of the act, however, depicts Arthur's foray into the enchanted forest with the intent of destroying the magic spell. His

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24 The inclusion of this piece in a manuscript now in the Folger Shakespeare Library (Washington, D.C.), entitled 'Musick in King Arthur, omitted in Dr. Arne’s publication', lends credence to the possibility that this music was not performed even though the text is included in the 1770 playbook. This manuscript bears the book-stamp 'W Watts 1789', which provides a *terminus post quem* and places the copy within the general time period of the performances. Of course, as the inscription of the manuscript indicates, it includes music not in Arne's *publication*, and thus may not reflect the performances at all; see also note 53.

25 'To virtue with rapture I bear
The balsam to heal, the cordial to cheer,
When vice is oppressing,
Pursuing, distressing,
Just Heav'n with virtue takes part;
For sorrow and sadness,
Bring comfort and gladness,
To close ev'ry wound of the heart.'
determination is tested first by two syrens and then by woodland nymphs and sylvans, all of whom sing their temptations. Garrick omits the text for the first air sung by one of the syrens, ‘O pass not on’. Since there is no surviving music by Purcell, it may never have been set. There seems to have been some confusion over what would be included of the following scene for the nymphs and sylvans. Garrick includes ‘How happy the lover’, ‘For love every creature’, ‘No joys are above’, and omits ‘In vain are our graces’, but the Arne score includes only ‘How happy the lover’ and ‘In vain are our graces’; this discrepancy is discussed below. After this scene, Dryden calls for a pantomime showing Arthur breaking the magic spell. Garrick follows this with a victory song for Philidel and chorus, again providing a way to end the act with sung music; although this text is not set in Arne’s score, it remains in the published texts of every subsequent revival (1781, 1784 and 1786).²⁶

Dryden’s fifth and last act concludes with a masque in praise of Britain. Garrick shortens or eliminates most of this. The opening air sung by Aeolus, ‘Ye blustering brethren of the skies’, is retained, but the following text beginning ‘Serene and calm’ is cut from nine to two lines, thus matching that portion set by Purcell (according to the surviving sources). The following texts are then cut completely: ‘Round thy coast’, ‘For folded flocks’ and ‘Your hay it is mow’d’. ‘Fairest isle’ is retained (in Purcell’s setting); then ‘You say, ’tis love creates the pain’ is cut. The final text, ‘St George, the patron of our isle’, is newly set by Arne to conclude the masque.

ARNE’S REVISION OF PURCELL

Arne’s contribution, thus, was not minimal. Unlike Garrick’s adaptation, which involved both cuts and additions (but little alteration of remaining Dryden text), Arne took the opportunity to revise Purcell’s score and clearly proposed more changes than Garrick could accept. He added a solo to ‘Come follow me’ (Act 2), newly set ‘How blest are shepherds’ (Act 2) and ‘St George, the patron of our isle’ (Act 5), and composed a new overture and two hornpipes (one of which probably served as an act tune for Act 4) to replace Purcell’s instrumental music. He also added settings for texts by Dryden for which no Purcell setting survives: ‘Alas the horror’ (originally ‘Alas, the pity’) (Act 2), ‘We must work’ (Act 3), ‘Thus I infuse’ (Act 3), ‘O sight, the mother of desires’ (Act 3) and contributed settings for newly added texts by Garrick: ‘O

²⁶ PHILIDEL: Victory! victory! Vice is in chains, Victory! victory! Virtue reigns!
CHORUS: Victory! victory!
peace descend' (Act 2) and 'To virtue with rapture' (Act 3). He may also have set Garrick's 'Victory' at the end of Act 4, as the text is retained in later versions even though it does not appear in the 1770 score. Beyond all of these revised and added settings, however, Arne is undoubtedly also responsible for the extensive cuts to 'Come if you dare' (Act 1), 'Come follow me' (Act 2) and 'How happy the lover' (Act 4), as well as for the small editorial changes in many of the other pieces.\footnote{As with Mozart and Mendelssohn, Arne's musical contributions to posterity are better judged in his original work than in his revisions. See Jane H. Adas, 'Arne's Progress: An English Composer in Eighteenth-Century London', Ph.D. thesis, Rutgers University (1993), for a reappraisal of Arne's original compositions.}

The small changes parallel those made in *Dido and Aeneas* four years later and can be discussed in specific categories.\footnote{See Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, pp. 124–47. The revisions in *King Arthur* are far less extensive.} In both works, rhythms are simplified:

Ex. 12.1 'Let not a moonborn elf'

Short–long rhythms on the beat are frequently eliminated (even though Arne himself uses them in his own compositions):

Ex. 12.2 'Let not a moonborn elf'

Ex. 12.3 'No part of my dominion'

And regular groups of notes in short–short–long patterns are reversed to long–short–short:

Ex. 12.4 'The lot is cast'

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Ex. 12.5  'The lot is cast'

Underlay is altered so that words are set on, rather than ahead of, the beat:

Ex. 12.6  'Let not a moonborn elf'

And melismas are shortened:

Ex. 12.7  'What ho'

Ex. 12.8  'No part of my dominion'

Among the more extensive revisions, Arne added a solo to 'Come follow me' based on Purcell's chorus. Arne models his setting on Purcell's melody for the most part, but his harmonies are more closely restricted to the tonic and dominant. Also, the harmonic rhythm is much slower. Arne thus reinterprets many of Purcell's melody notes as non-harmonic tones, and the ornamental nature of the melody is strengthened by added graces and lengthy coloratura runs.

In the first line of Arne's 'Come follow me', where the melody is borrowed intact, Arne not only adds appoggiaturas in two places but re-conceives a number of the scale tones as passing notes in a phrase that extends the dominant over two bars before cadencing to the tonic (D major). In Purcell's setting, there is harmonic change on every melody note, also leading to the tonic.
Ex. 12.9  ‘Come follow me’

In the second line, Arne also alters the melody, to which he again adds appoggiaturas, and sets the line to a series of alternating tonic and dominant chords, again cadencing to the tonic. Purcell once more changes the harmony on every melody note, this time directing the line towards arrival in E major, a secondary dominant.

Ex. 12.10  ‘Come follow me’

Arne then adds a vocal melisma on ‘follow’ that effects a modulation to the dominant (A major) and cadences to the dominant of that key (E major).
Ex. 12.11 ‘Come follow me’

The dominant is confirmed in the next phrase, a repetition of the second line of text, which ends the first part of the song. In Purcell’s chorus, this section ends on the tonic.

Purcell begins the second section in the tonic. The words ‘No goblin or elf shall dare to offend ye’ are at first presented by the bass alone. When the full chorus enters, there is a modulation to the dominant, after which an instrumental interlude returns to the tonic. The setting of the last section, beginning ‘We brethren of air’, offers a dramatic contrast to the previous text in its presentation by treble voices only. It moves successively through the supertonic, submediant, dominant, supertonic, subdominant, dominant and tonic (D major).

In his version for soprano solo, Arne combines these texts (without an instrumental interlude), gives them a consistent dotted rhythm borrowed from Purcell’s ‘No goblin’ setting and maintains the dominant key (A major) with references also to its minor tonic and major dominant.

Ex. 12.12 ‘Come follow me’

Once again, Arne prepares the final cadence of this section with a long melisma.
Ex. 12.13  ‘Come follow me’

The entire text is then repeated, the second phrase returning to the tonic, which is then maintained throughout. Arne provided further coloratura runs for Mrs Baddeley on the words ‘bear’ (twice) and ‘kind’. The last two of these conclude on high A, as did the melisma on ‘attend’ given above.

Ex. 12.14  ‘Come follow me’

Arne’s solo adaptation of Purcell’s chorus is in ‘slow-movement sonata form’.²⁹ ‘Come follow me and greensward all your way shall be’ is set in the tonic. A vocal run on ‘follow’ moves to the dominant, and a final phrase confirms the modulation with a cadence in the dominant. The second section or theme sets the words ‘No goblin or elf shall dare to offend; we brethren of air you heroes will bear to the kind and the fair that attend’. Again the cadence to this section is confirmed with a long vocal run that leads to the close in the dominant. Without an intervening development section, there is a quick return to the tonic and the two thematic areas are immediately recapitulated in that key. The extensive coloratura additionally relates this section formally (but not harmonically) to an ornamented da capo repetition.

²⁹ Charles Rosen, The Classical Style (New York, 1972), p. 306, n. 2, where the term is used to describe ‘Là, ci darem la mano’ from Don Giovanni.
In Purcell’s setting, the opening melody of a downward octave scale and the points of arrival in various keys depict the sense of ‘Come follow me’. Furthermore, the distinct and varied vocal ranges of ‘No goblin’ and ‘We brethren of air’ not only represent the relative regions in which these beings reside but also represent the spirit rising from the abyss into the light. Arne’s setting eliminates both the tonal variety and distinctive ranges of the Purcell, but also represents the sense of ‘Come follow me’ primarily through vocal pyrotechnics and large-scale form. Arne follows this solo with a significantly shortened version of Purcell’s chorus, concluding with the first four bars of the instrumental interlude cadencing in the tonic – a contraction that is musically sensible given the changes in the air.

‘Come if you dare’, to take a different example, seems to have been cut for dramatic reasons. In 1691, Dryden prefaced this song with the following stage direction: ‘A Battle supposed to be given behind the Scenes, with Drums, Trumpets, and Military Shouts and Excursions: After which, the Britons, expressing their Joy for the Victory, sing this Song of Triumph.’ In 1770, Garrick uses a shortened version of ‘Come if you dare’ as a rallying song to conclude the first act. The second act begins with the battle, followed not by a song of victory as in Dryden, rather by a prayer for peace; Garrick only gives the Britons a victory chorus at the end of Act 4 when they have truly won. Thus Purcell’s battle music is eliminated (bars 81–115), as is all that follows: the third strophe tells how ‘The fainting Saxons quit their ground’ and the fourth celebrates ‘Now the victory’s won’. The truncated chorus thus ends with the setting of ‘And pity mankind that will perish for gold’, providing less than half of Purcell’s original. The textual adjustment is also made in the 1770 playbook.

In the fourth act, Purcell’s lengthy passacaglia ‘How happy the lover’, depicting Arthur’s temptation by the woodland nymphs (after he successfully resists the sea nymphs), is extensively cut. Dryden’s stage direction reads: ‘As he is going forward, Nymphs and Sylvans come out from behind the Tree, Base [sic] and two Trebles sing the following song to a Minuet.’ There follow two nine-line strophes, with the refrain, ‘No joys are above / The pleasures of love’. Dryden adds before the first strophe: ‘Dance with the Song, all with Branches in their Hands’, and following it: ‘The Dance continues with the same Measure play’d alone.’ Purcell’s setting opens with a fifty-six-bar instrumental prelude with fourteen repetitions of the four-bar passacaglia, which is heard in different registers, varied, and in inversion. Arne reduces this to the first four repetitions during which the bass remains unchanged. Arne then provides Purcell’s solo and chorus setting of the first five lines of
the first strophe. At this point Purcell includes another long ritornello (bars 90–134). Arne gives only the last nine bars of this (two repetitions of the bass and a cadence to the tonic). He skips the setting of the final four lines of the strophe (bars 135–97), but includes the setting of the entire second strophe, 'In vain are our graces' (bars 198–242 in Purcell). Arne thus preserves less than half of Purcell's lengthy original and apparently cuts both dances.

In the 1770 playbook there are no directions for dance during the passacaglia, and the song text is cut, but not in the same manner as in the score. The first strophe is given completely, and the second strophe not at all. Seemingly, then, the revision was not made for dramatic reasons, as in 'Come if you dare', but rather simply to shorten this long entertainment unified by the ostinato bass. 'Oft she visits' in the 1774 *Dido and Aeneas*, an entertainment for the hunting party sung by the Second Woman over a recurring bass, was similarly truncated. That these changes seem to represent a late eighteenth-century English impatience with dance-oriented operatic tableaux built on repeating basses in the style of the great chaconnes of Lully's operas is confirmed by Charles Burney:

> The composing songs on a *ground-base*, was an exercise of ingenuity, in which Purcell seems to have much delighted; but though it was as much a fashion in his time . . . yet the practice was Gothic, and an unworthy employment for men possessed of such genius and original resources.

In Act 2 Arne completely resets 'How blest are shepherds'. The six-line text has the rhyme scheme *ababcc*. Like Purcell, Arne breaks the text after the first (unrhymed) couplet, dividing the song into two parts, but Arne only sets the first four lines. The second section of Purcell's setting is therefore twice as long as the first, with an intermediary cadence in E minor, whereas in Arne's setting the two sections balance exactly. Both composers set the song in G major. Although in similar metres (Purcell 3/4; Arne 6/4), the two settings display different accent patterns in relation to the text. Whereas Purcell follows the dactylic metre of the poem, Arne chooses instead to accent the strong word in each of the first two lines. Purcell stresses these words with pitch.

> How blest are Shepherds how happy their Lasses,  
> While Drums & Trumpets are sounding Alarms!

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30 See Harris, *Henry Purcell's Dido and Aeneas*, pp. 140–4, for an analysis of this revision.
32 Not only is the full text of the first strophe printed in the 1770 playbook, but the complete second strophe is printed in both the playbook and the published score. In both strophes, however, the musical setting can only be of the opening quatrains.
33 In the Arne score, 'How blest are shepherds' is published with the incorrect key signature of two sharps.
Ex. 12.15  ‘How blest are shepherds’

Purcell

How blest are shepherds, how happy their las-ses while drums and
trumpets are sound-ing a-lams

Arne

How blest are shepherds, how happy their las-ses while drums and trumpets are
sound-ing a-lams

Purcell’s setting, which conforms to the metric accent and still emphasizes the appropriate words, is more lilting and less plodding than Arne’s which is hardly a ‘correction’. Rather it is a simplification of rhythm, metre, form and harmony. Compare in Ex. 12.15 the different rhythmic settings of ‘their’, and the text painting that Purcell indulges in for the phrase ‘while drums and trumpets’ and the word ‘sounding’. In addition to truncating the text, Arne also eliminates Purcell’s choral repetition.

The final set of strophes sung by Honour are also newly composed by Arne. In Dryden’s text, this song is preceded by a stage direction for ‘a Warlike Consort’, which Purcell supplies, followed by ‘A full Chorus of the whole Song: After which the Grand Dance’. The two surviving settings of the first strophe attributed to Purcell are doubtful, but both are solos in the treble clef. The second and third strophes, a complete chorus with full orchestra and two obbligato trumpets in binary form with cadences throughout to C major, are probably authentic. In contrast, Arne provides a straightforward, strophic setting with each solo line followed immediately by a choral response; it too is accompanied by full orchestra and two obbligato trumpets. Perhaps the lack of an original Purcell setting of the first strophe encouraged Arne to replace this number. At any rate, once the first strophe was newly composed, this setting and not Purcell’s was used for the remaining two strophes as well.

34 Fiske, English Theatre Music, p. 360, gives text-setting as the reason for Arne’s resetting, implying that Arne sought to correct Purcell.
In a number of cases Arne supplies music where there is no Purcell setting, or at least no surviving setting. At the beginning of Act 2, for example, the text 'Alas, for pity' is re-conceived as a recitative (with its text altered to 'Alas the horrors') and followed by Garrick's new air 'O peace descend'. In the 1691 playbook there is nothing to suggest that 'Alas, for pity' was sung. In decasyllabic blank verse, these verses are not set off nor in italic as are the sung texts. This is also true in the 1770 playbook where, however, 'O peace descend' in rhymed couplets of mixed length is called 'A Song', indented and set in italic. Because in the published score the text of 'Alas, for pity' differs slightly from the 1770 playbook (which follows Dryden's 1691 text in content, typography and layout), the textual alteration and musical adaptation was probably Arne's idea. Perhaps Garrick's new song text led him to consider setting the previous text as recitative; indeed, something similar occurs in Act 3. There is no reason to believe that Purcell ever set 'Alas, for pity', nor was the recitative-song pair performed after the 1770 performance and 1781 revival. In the *Arthur and Emmeline* revisions of 1784 and 1786, the new air is omitted and the preceding text is cut in half and undoubtedly spoken, not sung.

The accompanied recitative, for Mrs Baddeley in the role of Philidel, is unremarkable. With a four-bar instrumental introduction largely in unison and beginning in C minor, it comes to rest briefly on Bb major in the second bar and cadences in G minor. For the first two bars the dynamics alternate *forte* and *piano* every half bar, after which the introduction dies away to *pianissimo*. The accompaniment is of little interest once the singer enters, and the voice depicts neither the sense nor the rhythm of the text:

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36 Dryden/Garrick version:

Alas, for pity, of this bloody field!  
Piteous it needs must be when I, a spirit,  
Can have so soft a sense of human woes!  
Ah! for so many souls, as but this morn  
Were cloath'd with flesh, and warm'd with vital blood,  
But naked now, or shirted but with air.

Arne version (original spelling and punctuation):

Alas, the Horrors of this bloody Field  
Horrid it needs must be. When I, a Spirit,  
can have so soft a sense of Human woees.  
Ah. For so many Souls as but this Day,  
were cloath'd with Flesh, and warm'd with Vital Blood.  
But naked now. Or Shirted but with Air.
Ex. 12.16 ‘Alas the horrors’

The setting largely depends on a dotted quaver – semiquaver pattern with static accompaniment:

Ex. 12.17 ‘Alas, the horrors’

The following song, ‘O peace descend’, for Philidel was undoubtedly also sung by Mrs Baddeley. It is set in binary form in Eb major, with the first statement of text moving from the tonic to the dominant. The second setting of the text is truncated and moves from the dominant back to the tonic. Appropriately for this sombre text, there is little in the way of coloratura.

In Act 3, Arne sets a second recitative-aria pair; again the recitative text, ‘We must work’, is derived from Dryden and the air, ‘To virtue with rapture’, newly written by Garrick. In this case the recitative is indicated in the 1691 playbook as sung text; in rhyming seven-syllable lines, it is indented and set in italic type. However, there survives no Purcell setting of this or either of the other original song texts from the scene in which Emmeline’s sight is magically restored. ‘Thus I infuse’ is set as a self-standing recitative for Mrs Baddeley, and ‘O sight, the mother of desires’ (shortened text) is set as a recitative-aria pair for the ‘Attendant Spirit’, Mrs Wrighten. This repeated
effort to create recitative–aria pairs also occurs in the 1774 *Dido and Aeneas*, where previously single pieces are divided and retitled as recitative and aria.\(^\text{37}\)

Like the other revisions to harmony and rhythm in both works, this restructuring illustrates a tendency to regularize and simplify.

Arne's setting of 'We must work' as recitative shows some of the same characteristics of 'Alas, the horrors': it lacks harmonic interest, and the text setting falls into regular patterns of dotted rhythms. Here, however, there is some text painting in the orchestral accompaniment. Note in Ex. 12.18 the orchestral response to 'sprite', 'glimmer' and 'run'.

Ex. 12.18  'We must work'

![Sheet music](image)

'To virtue with rapture' is set, like 'Come follow me', as a highly ornamented air in slow-movement sonata form. The text is divided into two unequal sections, the first consisting of the first two lines. This is set simply in B♭ major. The text is then broken up into smaller bits modulating to the dominant and leading into a long vocal run on 'bear' that is played out over a dominant in the new key (F major). The second section (or theme) is based on the remaining six lines of text. This remains largely in F major and culminates with a long vocal run on the word 'heart'. There immediately follows a recapitulation of the first and second sections in the tonic. After the 1781 revival of the 1770 production, this recitative–aria pair, including Dryden's original spoken text, was cut.

After Emmeline's sight is restored and she sees her attendant Matilda and her lover Arthur for the first time, Philidel calls forth 'Airy forms' to

'congratulate' Emmeline on her 'new-born eyes' and to show her what she has gained 'by sight restor'd' ('O sight, the mother of desires'). In 1691, Dryden included the stage direction, 'Airy Spirits appear in the Shapes of Men and Women'. The first eight lines of text are cued 'Man sings', with a choral repetition of the last four lines. Then a 'Woman sings' the next ten lines with a choral repetition of the last four lines. Finally, a 'Man sings' the last six lines, which are repeated by a 'Chor. of all Men & Women'.

In Garrick's version, this text is shortened and redistributed; the last six lines are eliminated, and the first two sections of text are simply 'Sung by Mrs. Wrighten'. A choral entry is signalled on the last (newly written) line, but since the stage direction is altered to 'Airy Spirits appear in the shape of Women', a women's chorus must have been intended rather than the mixed chorus called for in Dryden's text. In Arne's setting, however, there is no chorus and the first two sections of text are set respectively in recitative and song.

The song is set as a binary form without large-scale textual repetition. The first section comprises the first six lines, modulating from the tonic (G major) to the dominant; the second section sets the last four lines modulating back to the tonic. There are long vocal runs on 'light', 'love' and especially on 'eyes'.

Ex. 12.19 'O sight, the mother'

The reasons for Arne's revisions, deletions and additions to Purcell's score are apparent. In some cases they directly follow Garrick's revisions, such as the restructuring of scenes in Acts 1 and 2. More often, however, there is an attempt to bring Purcell's score up to date. This is done through small stylistic revisions to melody and rhythm, slowing down the harmonic rhythm, truncation of a long and varied scene unified by a passacaglia bass, and the attempt to create recitative-aria pairs whenever possible, either with new text or by re-conceiving Dryden's, or both. In short, Arne attempts and often succeeds in transforming Purcell's seventeenth-century baroque score into an example of the classical style.
THE LATER VERSIONS

In 1784 *King Arthur* was revised yet again, being greatly shortened and compressed into a two-act afterpiece entitled *Arthur and Emmeline*. John Philip Kemble, who played Arthur in all of the performances over the next seven years, is credited with the adaptation, and Thomas Linley made the necessary musical adjustments.

At Drury Lane a great deal of pains had been taken with a masque called Arthur and Emmeline, an alteration of Dryden’s King Arthur, or the British Worthy. Miss Farren was the heroine, and her innocent blindness interested in a very high degree. Kemble sustained Arthur in a most chivalrous style, and the Grimbald and Philidel of Bannister and Miss Field (not to speak it profanely) formed no despicable stage companion to the magic of the Tempest. Linley made some tasteful additions to the divine music of Purcell.38

The 1784 and 1786 playbooks indicate that this version remained relatively stable.39

The opening sacrifice scene is shortened by the omission of ‘The white horse neigh’d’ and ‘The lot is cast’. (In 1786, however, ‘The white horse neigh’d’ re-appears in the playbook.) ‘I call you all to Woden’s Hall’ is also eliminated, so that the sacrifice scene ends with ‘Brave souls’. The Britons’ ‘Come if you dare’ is given in the shortened form created by Arne. After the battle, the text of ‘Alas, for pity’ is shortened by half; this clearly reverted to speech, as half of Arne’s music would make no sense, and the following new text by Garrick for the aria ‘O peace descend’ is omitted. The entire pastoral masque is cut (‘How blest are shepherds’, etc.) and in its place is a new song, ‘Come away from shades and cool fountains’ for Philidel and chorus,40 which ends the first act.

39 According to *The London Stage*, Part 5, there were thirty-one performances of *Arthur and Emmeline* over six seasons, the last being 1790–91.
40 PHILIDEL. Come away,
   From shades and cool fountains,
   Bright Spirits of Day,
   Who gild the high mountains.
   
   CHO. We come, we obey,
   With delight we attend thee.
   
   PHILIDEL. To fair Emmeline bear
   Your heav’n born treasure,
   
   CHO. Come away, we obey!
   
   PHILIDEL. With fair Emmeline share
   Your pure light, love, and pleasure.
   
   CHO. Lead on, point the way,
   With delight we attend thee,
   Lead on, point the way,
   Love to light shall befriend thee.

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The second act begins with the infusion scene. ‘We must work’ is omitted, and the scene begins with a spirit singing ‘O sight, the mother of desires’. As the text is the shortened version of Arne’s setting, this is undoubtedly what was sung. The infusion itself is still marked with the text ‘Thus I infuse’, but the following Frost scene is omitted completely. Similarly, the temptation scene for Arthur is emasculated. There are no songs for the sirens and only ‘How happy the lover’ remains for the nymphs and sylvans. However, Garrick’s victory chorus, for which no music survives, is retained, and a new song for Philidel precedes it, ‘Iopeans fill the sky’. This and ‘Come away from shades and cool fountains’ were probably written by Kemble and set by Linley. The final masque of Britain follows exactly from the Arne and Garrick version.

The version of *Arthur and Emmeline* that appears in the 1798 edition of the dramatic works of David Garrick honours these changes by and large, but it also eliminates the only remaining section of the passacaglia, completing a process begun in 1770. ‘Serene and calm’ is also omitted following ‘Ye blust’ring brethren’. It is hard to know, however, whether or not these additional cuts reflect the stage version after 1786. If so, then from 1770 to 1798 the process of cutting continued with few reprieves, and new additions were as likely to receive the axe as Dryden and Purcell’s originals. By 1798, Arne’s settings of ‘Alas the horrors’, ‘O peace descend’, ‘How blest are shepherds’, ‘We must work’ and ‘To virtue with rapture’ had all been cut. ‘Come follow me’, ‘O sight, the mother of desires’ and ‘St George’ probably remained as Arne had set them. ‘Thus I infuse’ may not have been sung: in the 1798 edition it is clearly not indicated as a song.

Of course, in the absence of a score, much rests on educated guesswork. To take a single example, one copy of ‘Fairest isle’ that survives in an eighteenth-century songbook preserves the tune not in Purcell’s original triple metre, but in duple cut time. Whether this represents a version ever performed on the stage or simply an odd private variant, perhaps for instruction, is impossible to tell.

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41 Iopeans fill the skies,
The monster is in chains;
Beneath my feet he lies,
Virtue triumphant reigns!

42 See Boaden, *Kemble*, vol. I, 225. Kemble also revived *The Tempest* in 1789 retaining Dryden’s addition of Dorinda from 1670 and the masque of Neptune and Amphitrite from the 1674 operatic version, as well as adding new songs of his own.


44 Yale University, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Osborn Shelves Music Ms. 25: ‘anonymous collection of English songs, melodies, and solfege exercises.’
Ex. 12.20 ‘Fairest isle’

Fair-est isle all isles excel-ling Seat of plea-sures and of loves

Ve-nus here will choose her dwell-ing and for-sake her Cyp-rian groves

Cu-pid from his fa-vorite na-tion care and en-vy will re-move

Je-a-lous-y that poi-son pas-sion and des-pair that dies for love

THE INTERIM YEARS

Arne’s extensive contributions to the important scene in which Emmeline’s sight is restored and the lack of any Purcell settings for it raises many questions that go beyond the history of the 1770 revision. Did Purcell ever set the songs in this scene? Could he not have wanted to use music for this magical restoration? If Purcell did set these songs, when and how were they lost? Could Arne’s settings be based on Purcell’s originals, as is ‘Come follow me’? Although none of these questions can be answered definitively, an examination of the interim revivals and a glance at the sources of Purcell’s music provide some clues.

King Arthur was a popular work that saw a number of important revivals between the première in 1691 and the Arne/Garrick revision of 1770. The major revivals of 1695 and 1736, as determined by surviving playbooks, closely follow the original in all details. The 1736 production differs primarily in its title: Merlin: or, The British Inchanter and King Arthur, The British Worthy, which emphasizes the magical rather than the historical and heroic elements of the story. Not surprisingly, given the title, this production emphasized new and spectacular scenic effects that were widely praised. Like

45 The Giffard who produced this revival is variously identified as Henry or William. For the record, Arne in his letter of 3 September 1775 attributes the production to Henry (Harry). (A Biographical Dictionary, vol. VI, 201–3, attributes the revival to William.)
the 1695 revival, however, it seems to have stuck closely to the original text and score.

The first important revision of *King Arthur* was for Dublin in 1763. Arne apparently refers to this production and the earlier performances of 1736 in a letter of 3 September 1775 in which he defends his hand in the 1770 adaptation:

But never was my surprise greater than when I perceived that a drama so fertile of invention and elegant in poetry, which brought so much to Harry Gifford [in 1736], and lately in Dublin should (though strongly performed at a vast expense at Drury-lane) fail in making that impression on the public, which the managers had an undoubted right to expect.

Text changes in the 1763 version seem to presage the Arne/Garrick adaptation. The 1763 text adds new songs to Acts 1, 2 and 5, thus setting a precedent for Garrick’s additions in 1770. In Act 1, a song for a priestess, sung by Signora Christina Passerini, follows ‘I call you all’ before the battle. In Act 2, after ‘Let not a moon-born elf’ and before the reprise of ‘Hither this way’, the song ‘This way turn’ is added, also for Passerini. And in Act 5, a new recitative and duet are added for ‘Signora and Master Passerini’ after ‘Fairest isle’.

None of these songs is maintained in later revivals.

46 *King Arthur: or, The British Worthy. A Dramatick Opera* . . . By Mr. Dryden (Dublin: James Hoey, 1763): exemplar in British Library. A second, slightly different, version of this performance is preserved in an alternative printing from the same year: *King Arthur: or, The British Worthy. A Masque . . . Altered from Dryden. The Music by Purcell* (Dublin: J. Potts, 1763). The Potts version appears to pre-date the Hoey, in which all the changes are integrated into the text; Potts indicates deletions with virgule (‘Such passages as were tiresome to the Auditor are therefore marked thus ’ and omitted in the Representation’) and the additions are given on an extra page at the end: exemplar in Regenstein Library. The University of Chicago; the exemplar in the British Library is lacking the added page.


48 Passerini was a leading soprano who came to England in 1751 and sang frequently in Handel’s oratorios; see Winton Dean, ‘Passerini’ in *The New Grove*, vol. XIV, 275.

49 This song appears only in the Hoey playbook (see n. 46):

Paw’s, who take a dreadful Pleasure,
In the Steel-form’d Array of Fight;
Trumps that sound their warlike Measure,
Rout and Ruin, Fear and Flight!

To our wonted Fame restore us!
Give the British Host to yield;
Cause their Squares to sink before us;
Their the Flight, and ours the Field!

50 This way turn, the Fiends avoiding,
Or in Bogs and Pits you’ll fall,
Once decoy’d in,
There destroy’d in,
*Merlin* can’t your Doom recall.

51 There is also an added recitative that precedes this duet:

**DUET:** By Signora and Master Passerini.

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The 1763 version shows significant cuts as well. In Act 3, for example, ‘We must work’, ‘O sight, the mother’ and ‘Sound a parley’ are left out. Each of these movements is also altered or deleted in the Garrick/Arne version: ‘We must work’ is newly set by Arne as recitative, ‘O sight, the mother’ is shortened and completely set anew and ‘Sound a parley’ is omitted. Similarly, in 1763 as in the Garrick/Arne version, ‘O pass not on’ is omitted from Act 4, and in Act 5 ‘Serene and calm’ is shortened and ‘Round they coast’, ‘For folded flocks’, ‘Your hay it is mow’d and ‘You say ’tis love’ omitted. Thus the 1763 version may have played a major part in both Garrick’s and Arne’s choices for 1770.

The three songs in the infusion scene missing from Purcell’s setting are particularly vexing. Arne’s recitative settings of ‘We must work’ and ‘Thus I infuse’ and his alteration of ‘O sight, the mother of desires’ into a recitative–aria pair in contrast to the longer text and alternating choral format described by Dryden are unlikely to have been based on Purcell settings, as is, for example, Arne’s revision of ‘Come follow me’. However, the Folger manuscript in which are compiled Purcell’s settings which Arne shortened, eliminated or replaced includes no settings of these pieces. The elimination of two of these three songs in the Dublin performance also tends to confirm a lack of surviving musical settings by Purcell at least by this time. The text of the third song, ‘Thus I infuse’, is included in the 1763 playbook no doubt because it describes the moment of the magical restoration, but it probably was declaimed in speech rather than sung.

| HE             | Love and Beauty when united,               |
|                | Rule supreme in ev’ry Heart;              |
| SHE            | You’re forgot, and I am slighted,         |
|                | Pow’less both, when once we part,         |
| HE             | For you, with me,                        |
| SHE            | For I, with you:                         |
| BOTH           | With you, with you                      |
|                | The Subjected World Subdue,              |
|                | Gods and Mortals we keep under           |
|                | Never, therefore, let us sunder.          |

52 Not in Hoey; in Potts the deletion is indicated by virgole.

53 This manuscript contains ‘Come follow me – We brethren of air’, ‘Symphony – How blest are shepherds’, ‘Shepherds leave decoying’ and ‘Come shepherds lead up’ from Act 2, ‘Sound a parley’ from Act 3, ‘Two daughters of this aged stream’, and ‘How happy the lover – For love every creature – No joys are above – In vain are our graces – Then use the sweet blessing’ from Act 4, and ‘Round thy coast’, ‘For folded flocks’, ‘You say ’tis love’ and ‘St George’ (based on the following) and ‘Our nations not alone appear’ from Act 5. That the complete ‘Come if you dare’ does not appear from Act 1 may mean that part of the beginning of this manuscript is lost, but there is no reason to suppose that the songs from the infusion scene in Act 3 would not have been included had they existed.
King Arthur's journey into the eighteenth century

Anonymous eighteenth-century settings of all three songs are preserved in a Gresham College Library manuscript of King Arthur, which preserves most of Purcell's original; but these stylistically modern compositions, with written-out keyboard accompaniments, seem to offer yet another indication that Purcell settings for these songs were lacking. Unfortunately, this manuscript cannot be associated with a specific performance and is only generally datable to the late eighteenth century.\(^{54}\) The Gresham settings were certainly not used in the Garrick/Arne version, and since 'We must work' was cut in the performances of Arthur and Emmeline and two of the three songs were cut in the 1763 Dublin version, the Gresham settings cannot relate to these performances either.\(^{55}\)

That these three song texts were not exclusively associated with Purcell's King Arthur can be adduced from their use in other works. The first such borrowing occurs in the operatic version of Shakespeare's A Midsummer Night's Dream. Entitled The Fairies, it was composed by John Christopher Smith and produced by Garrick at Drury Lane, first on 3 February 1755. In the last act of the opera, as Oberon drops a magic potion in the eyes of Titania in order to free her from her 'blind' love of a 'patch'd fool', the libretto gives him these words:\(^{56}\)

This, this I'll infuse
Whose sovereign dews
Shall clear each film that cloud her sight;
And you her crystal humours bright,
From noxious vapours purg'd and free,
Shall be as you were wont to be.

The different dramatic context explains the few changes from Dryden's original text:

\(^{54}\) The Works of Henry Purcell, vol. XXVI, rev. A. M. Laurie, xi. This manuscript is now housed in the Guildhall Library, London.

\(^{55}\) The Gresham College manuscript, quite apart from the three songs in the infusion scene, does not relate to any of the playbooks from 1763 and later. The music is revised throughout, but the alterations include no wholesale omissions, substitutions or additions. Thus, the manuscript may be considered an attempt at authenticity, at least compared to Garrick and Arne's version. Because both 'Come if you dare' and 'O sight, the mother of desires' adhere to the shortened versions of Garrick's text, and 'O sight, the mother of desires' is written as a solo song, as cued in Garrick, this manuscript can safely be dated after 1770. Further, the stylistic changes so closely parallel those made in the 1774 Dido and Aeneas that its origin within the Academy of Ancient Music at about the same time seems probable.

Thus, thus I infuse
These Soveraign Dews.
Fly back, ye Films, that cloud her sight,
And you, ye Crystal Humours bright,
Your Noxious Vapours purg’d away,
Recover, and admit the Day.
Now cast your Eyes abroad, and see
All but me.

In the libretto of *The Fairies* this text is not given as a song, and in the 1755 published score there is no setting.\(^{57}\) Once again, as in the 1763 Dublin performance of *King Arthur*, the evidence seems to point to this text being spoken rather than sung as an air or even accompanied recitative.

Apparentely the success of *The Fairies* led quickly to another Shakespearean opera, for a year later Garrick produced Smith’s *Tempest* at Drury Lane; it opened on 11 February. In the first act, as Prospero discusses his plans with Ariel, he sings ‘We must work, we must haste’. Here Dryden’s text is largely preserved intact, the only significant change coming in the last line: ‘Osmond will be here anon’ (Dryden); ‘Naples will be here anon’ (Smith).\(^{58}\) In this case, Smith provides an elaborate setting for soloist and full orchestra, including strings, with violins doubled by oboes, two horns and two bassoons. The aria is a so-called ‘modified da capo’: the first A section cadences in the dominant, the B section is modulatory and cadences on the dominant and the second A section (not a repetition of A1) is the tonic throughout.\(^{59}\) The text setting, vacillation between major and minor, harmonic rhythm, orchestration and form confirm Smith’s rather than Purcell’s authorship (see Ex. 12.21).

Of the various surviving eighteenth-century settings of the three songs in the infusion scene, none seem to derive from an original Purcell setting. ‘We must haste’ was set most often. ‘Thus I infuse’ survives in two settings (Gresham and Arne), but perhaps even more interesting are three other cases in which these verses were not given heightened musical settings: in the 1756 operatic version of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream (The Fairies)* by Smith, in the Dublin 1763 performance and in the 1798 edition of Garrick’s works.

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\(^{59}\) This form is sometimes described as deriving from the curtailment of the traditional five-part *da capo* that occurs by placing the B section in between the two written-out statements of A and foregoing the signed *da capo*, a process that occurs in some of Handel’s scores. For a discussion, see Eric Weimer, *Opera seria* and the Evolution of Classical Style: 1755–1772 (Ann Arbor, 1984), pp. 16–17 and 27. For discussion of modified *da capo* arias in Handel’s *Belshazzar*, see David Hurley, ‘Handel’s Compositional Process: A Study of Selected Oratorios’, Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago (1991), pp. 322–6.
Obviously, 'O sight, the mother of desires' was intended for song, as is evident from Dryden's explicit directions for men's and women's choirs and soloists. Arne's version sets a shorter text in a completely different way and, because this text is given in all following playbooks up to 1798, it is likely that Arne's version was used. The Gresham College setting is also a solo song based on this shorter text and does not likely derive from a putative Purcell setting. Although it is possible to imagine that Purcell might never have set 'We must haste' or 'Thus I infuse' it is less easy to imagine that he would
ignore the large-scale potential of ‘O sight, the mother’. Still no Purcellian setting of these three songs survives in any of the manuscript sources for *King Arthur*, the earliest of which has been dated 1699. Therefore, one has to assume that if original Purcell settings were lost, they were lost early on when *King Arthur* was being frequently performed and well before the extensive revisions discussed above. There is a parallel with *Dido and Aeneas*, for which there is no Purcell setting of the witches’ chorus that ends the second act. In this case, however, the earliest surviving source dates from after 1777, and there are no substitute settings for the eighteenth-century productions nor is the text found in other works.

*King Arthur* saw many transformations during the eighteenth century. In 1736 it was revived seemingly intact. The 1763 Dublin performance, by contrast, contained significant alterations, including both extensive cuts and additions of new songs for the lead soprano. These alterations in turn served as a model for Garrick and Arne’s thorough-going revision of *King Arthur* in 1770, although more generally their textual alterations follow methods of revision familiar since Dryden’s day and their musical revisions follow a pattern of late eighteenth-century improvements that can also be seen in *Dido and Aeneas* from 1774. Furthermore, Garrick’s productions of John Christopher Smith’s *Fairies* and *Tempest* not only relate historically to such operatic adaptations of Shakespeare as the Restoration operatic version of *The Tempest*, which directly influenced the original *King Arthur*, but both of Smith’s operas also contain added text from *King Arthur*. Moreover, Garrick and Arne’s *King Arthur* of 1770 did not end this series of adaptations. First it was revived in 1781, after its adapters’ deaths, but then it too was subject to extensive revision by yet another pair of adapters: in 1784 John Philip Kemble and Thomas Linley continued the process begun at least by 1763. Their version, *Arthur and Emmeline*, sustains more cuts, not only of Dryden and Purcell, but also of Garrick and Arne, and contains additions by Kemble and Linley.

It may seem ironic that a classicizing tradition at the end of the eighteenth century would lead to revivals and revisions rather than to reconstruction, but indeed, this is only one side of the story. The Folger Library manuscript, containing all of Purcell’s music omitted by Arne, and the Gresham College manuscript with its complete, albeit stylistically revised, version of *King Arthur*, illustrate a competing trend in the other direction. Such ‘revisionist’ and ‘authentic’ trends have continued to exist side by side, and their separate proponents typically argue their methods on the same grounds: the preservation

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Harris, *Henry Purcell’s Dido and Aeneas*, p. 45, n. 2.
of the original work. As we have seen in the 1770 revival of *King Arthur*, Garrick and Arne themselves disagreed as to the extent of necessary revisions, with Arne stating that it needed significant alteration to make it ‘pleasing to the Public’. In an era more attuned to ‘authentic’ readings, it may seem tempting to pillory Arne for his treatment of Purcell’s score, but he was no more or less abusive to Purcell than Mozart was to Handel or, some years later, Mendelssohn to Bach. Indeed, throughout the nineteenth century, the dual trends of modernization and authenticity continued with near equal strength, the first largely in performance and the second especially in the great monumental editions, including the Purcell Society Edition begun in 1878.

In this century it has sometimes seemed that the authenticity movement has finally prevailed, but in opera the compromise between modernization and authenticity has achieved widespread popularity and notoriety. Peter Sellars’s stagings of operas by Handel, Mozart, Wagner and Sullivan offer only one obvious example of a trend that may have a distant forebear in the spectacular 1736 production of *King Arthur* that used original text and music. The ‘improved’ Purcell of the late eighteenth century is clearly of historical interest and, like Mozart’s revisions of Handel, not without musical interest as well. Just as the authenticity movement of this century depends on historical reconstruction but also reveals much about the taste and culture of our times,61 so *King Arthur’s* eighteenth-century journey reveals a methodology of revision that links this work theatrically through Dryden and Garrick to late seventeenth-century revisions of Elizabethan drama and musically through Arne and others to late eighteenth-century taste.

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