

DART'S DATED DRUMS DROPPED

Crispian Steele-Perkins

The first occasion upon which timpani appear to have been orchestrally used in Westminster Abbey was the coronation of George II in 1727, when *Zadok the Priest*, *The King Shall Rejoice* and *My Heart is Inditing* were first heard. Although Sandford's Illustration of the 1685 coronation of James II for example depicts a pair of small timpani with twelve state (fanfare) trumpeters, no English church music by Purcell, Blow, or Croft has drum parts, nor do Greene's until the 1740's. Hindsight is sometimes of dangerous and dubious benefit to musical historians; theories propounded by a single commentator, however well-intentioned, may be taken up by others and repeated so often, both on paper and in performance, that they become not theory, but supposed fact. I sometimes suspect that the requirement to improvise at the keyboard has also encouraged some distinguished musicologists to improvise with history. No more striking an example can be found than the obtrusive timpani parts inserted by the late Thurston Dart into the March and Canzona composed by Henry Purcell for the funeral of Queen Mary II.

Dart's imaginative concepts need to be reassessed, particularly since we now have accurate reconstructions of brass instruments of Purcell's time, which produce a surprisingly more gentle sound than we had previously expected. Furthermore, the fact that two of Purcell's manuscript scores¹ contain parts for timpani (and wonderfully written they are, too) does not entitle us to assume that musically illiterate drummers were habitually let loose at the rear of the orchestra to improvise parts in other works; on the contrary, drum improvisation was not the province of art music, but of equestrian ballet and the country dance. Posthumously added drum parts invariably sound unconvincing, even in the most skillful hands, and undermine Purcell's unusual treatment of the trumpet as a melodic instrument, imposing Handelian concepts upon this elegant music.

Misunderstanding stems from a misplaced assumption of the integration among the various departments of Royal Household musicians, which was no more the general practice in 1695 than it is today.² Purcell's eminent trumpeter, John Shore (1662-1753), came from a family of military trumpet players. His name appears briefly in the Lord Chamberlain's accounts as a ceremonial (household) trumpeter-in-ordinary³ and later as Sargeant (administrator) of the trumpeters⁴ (1707-1753). Simultaneously he was appointed as musical instrument maker (Feb. 7, 1688) and lutenist (Jan. 18, 1696), to which role he devoted most of his career. He was clearly a man of diverse talents, and known to have been closely associated with Purcell, who employed his trumpeting skills to great effect during the last five years of that composer's short life.

Detailed study of the sequence of Purcell's compositions including trumpets and timpani reveals that the St. Cecilia's Day Ode (Nov. 22, 1692) was not only the second and

last occasion for which he wrote for timpani,⁵ but with two fleeting exceptions,⁶ it ends his use of a pair of trumpets in thematic dialogue, which had characterized his previous scoring for that instrument. The works are as follows:

Date	Composition	Remarks
(1687, Oct. 14)	(Welcome Song [James II's birthday])	(2 tpts in D) ¹
1690, Mar. 27	Yorkshire Feast Song	2 tpts in D
1690, Apr. 30	Arise My Muse (ode)	2 tpts in D
?	<i>Dioclesian</i> (semi-opera)	2 tpts in C and D
1691, Apr. 30	Welcome Glorious Morn (ode)	2 tpts in C
?	King Arthur (semi-opera)	2 tpts in D and C in Act I, 1 tpt in C in Act IV
1692	The Fairy Queen (semi-opera)	2 tpts in D and C. Timpani in Act IV
1692, Nov. 22	Ode, Hail, Bright Cecilia	2 tpts in D and timpani
1693, Apr. 30	Ode, Celebrate this Festival	1 tpt in C
1694, Apr. 30	Ode, Come, Ye Sons of Art	Overture, 1 tpt in D; chorus, 2 tpts in D
1694	Don Quixote (incidental music)	1 tpt in C
1694	Timon of Athens (incidental music)	1 tpt in D
1694, Nov. 22	Te Deum and Jubilate	2 tpts in D
1694?	Trumpet Sonata ²	1 tpt in D
1695, March 5	Funeral Music	4 flat tpts
1695	Revival of The Libertine (semi-opera)	4 flat (slide) tpts. 1 solo tpt in C
1695, July 24	Who can from Joy Refrain? (ode)	1 tpt in C
1695	Bonduca (incidental music)	1 tpt in C
1695	Indian Queen (semi-opera)	1 tpt in C and D

Table I
Purcell's Compositions with Trumpets and Timpani

Notes for Table 1

1. These parts were added later and are not by Purcell.
2. Discovered in 1951 in York Minster Library. Thought to be the Overture to a lost ode, *Light of the World*.

The sudden disappearance of the timpani and second trumpet from Purcell's scores⁷ but the retention of a prominent solo trumpeter must be significant. If one of the elderly Shores' performance was not up to scratch, he could have been replaced by one of a number of players active in the London theaters (such as the Dutchman Henrick [Henry] Davent [de Vant] who performed up until 1716 after his appointment to James II's court in 1685)—or could it have been embarrassing or undiplomatic to employ another when Matthias Shore as Sargeant-Trumpeter monopolized the distribution of performing licenses?

In the "Funeral Music," the misleading name "flat trumpet" caused Dart to envisage the brazen tone of the modern orchestral trumpet or rasping fanfare instruments, whereas excellent and accurate reconstructions of these trombone-like hybrids give a soft "mournful" quality of sound manifestly inappropriate to be accompanied by thunderous timpani or massed drums. Using a rather cumbersome rear slide, the "flat trumpets" can play almost chromatically in the trumpet register, but not with the agility of either the trumpet or the trombone. Purcell also uses these symbolically funereal instruments in the 1695 revival of *The Libertine*, where their simple sequence of chords is doubled by the strings (not accompanied by Timpani). However, when playing at Queen Mary's funeral a few weeks earlier, they enhanced the solemnity of the occasion playing a similar March totally unaccompanied. The instruments played are vividly described by James Talbot,⁸ and the music was subsequently transcribed by Charles Tudway, who had been a chorister at the ceremony; neither mentions percussive accompaniment, either to the March played as the coffin arrived in Westminster Abbey, or to the Canzona sounded later in the service. It has not been possible to establish the precise number of drummers who accompanied the funeral bier along Whitehall: the Lord Chamberlain's records account for at least one pair of timpani, twenty-five drums and five drum cases to be covered with mourning (black) baize cloth. If Queen Anne's funeral twenty years later was comparable, 120 regimental footguard drummers were in attendance as well. Therefore, it is not surprising that if, as some would have us believe, the flat trumpets sounded the March proceeding along Whitehall, no eyewitness accounts observed or recorded hearing them, however muted or muffled the drums were.

Practical experience in recordings and performance endorses the view that flat trumpets symbolize death and mourning; they play without embellishment as the trombones do in Beethoven's *Egualé*. Timpani enhance the sound of ceremony and triumph with the fanfare trumpets; side drums punctuate the marching fifes and soldiery; attempts to mix these elements transform the character of their music and overlook the symbolism of the sight and sound of each of them.

Finally, it may be borne in mind that although much of Purcell's theater music was re-scored after his death, often for very practical reasons, and additional music composed by others, he perceived the trumpet as a symbolic but melodic instrument, not as an adjunct to the (non-existent) drum section. Unfortunately, the limitations of the trumpet's harmonic series enable not-necessarily-skillful hands to add simplistic timpani parts where they were not envisaged and where they are not appropriate. This practice cannot be justified if one is seeking honest reconstructions of Purcellian performances. To perpetuate this

misconception by adding parts not written by Purcell is like daubing a pair of spectacles upon a portrait of his much loved queen, excusing the outrage with the words, "well, they had spectacles in those days." Such desecration is made all the worse when perpetrated not by pranksters, but by those trusted as authoritative.

Crispian Steele-Perkins is a performer who specializes on natural trumpet and English slide trumpet, on which instruments he has made numerous recordings. He is also a leading authority on English trumpet music.

NOTES

1. The 1692 *Ode to St. Cecilia's Day*, and Act IV of the *Fairy Queen* (also 1692).
2. I would not expect to encounter a trumpeter from the Household Cavalry in a recording session for Robert King or Andrew Parrott.
3. Appointed March 30, 1688; later attended King William III in Holland Jan. 1-Apr. 13, 1691, at 5s per day (£25-15-10).
4. A lucrative non-playing appointment.
5. The first having been in Act IV of the *Fairy Queen*, produced only a few months earlier in 1692.
6. Two later parts occur for a second trumpet in (a) *Te Deum and Jubilate* (Nov. 22, 1694), an inexacting part, and (b) the chorus "Come, come ye Sons of Art" on either side of the alto duet "Sound the Trumpet" in *Come ye Sons of Art* (April 30, 1694) in which the famous pun occurs "till the listening Shores re-Sound," the trumpeters both being of the Shore family (John and either his father Matthias or Uncle William). Please note that the second trumpet and timpani part of the final chorus in Robert Pindar's 1765 edition (RCM MS, 993) are discounted.
7. These parts were added later and are not by Purcell.
8. Discovered in 1951 in York Minster Library. Thought to be the Overture to a lost ode, *Light of the World*.
9. They reappear shortly after Purcell's death in music by his brother Daniel (1663-1717), John Eccles (1668-1735), and others. Many later editions give the second oboe part to a second trumpet, but these give notes to the instrument that are unobtainable on the "natural" trumpet used at the time.
10. Talbot ("Notes on Musical Instruments," *Galpin Society Journal* I [1948]: 9 ff.) gives detailed measurements of the flat trumpets; he makes no mention of them playing with timpani or drums, which would have been unusual, memorable, and noteworthy had it taken place.

Postscript

I am bound to draw readers' attention to the fact that Dr. Bruce Wood's fictionalized recreation of Queen Mary's Funeral Service, which has received considerable publicity, has created a new mythology which many respected scholars (such as Dr. Curtis Price, Dr. Richard Luckett, Dr. Maurice Byrne, and Robert King—the English one!) regard as equally bogus.

Timpani are again obtrusively imposed upon Purcell's Canzona despite the evidence of both other known canzonae (in *Fairy Queen*, Act 4 Overture and *Hail, Bright Cecilia*, Overture) in works employing Timpani, omitting them from these sections, intended to be played "in the singing style."

His use of the British Infantry march rhythm (notated in the 1630's for the first time since drummers, like State-Trumpeters of the time, were not musically literate) reduced in speed to suit a slow march, to which the Oboe Band he surmises processed playing Tollet and Paisible's "The Queen's Farewell," and the Flat-Trumpets played (in subzero temperature) all along Whitehall from the Palace to the Abbey in front of the hearse (accompanied by the thirty playing drummers!). Of Purcell's "March" Dr. Wood writes: "But at the Funeral it was undoubtedly heard with military drums. And what the drummers played can be taken for granted: *The Old English March*." May I take this opportunity of stating that no such thing can be taken for granted, and that I doubt very much that such a breach of ceremonial royal etiquette as these suppositions infer ever took place.