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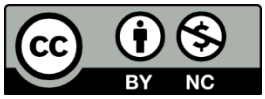

Three Burneys in the Crewe White Album

ELAINE BANDER

ABSTRACT: Charles Burney, patriarch of the Burney family, wrote hundreds of occasional poems during his long lifetime. While many of these verses celebrate intimate family occasions, others were tactical advances in Burney's lifelong professional and social upward striving, which reached its apex in the first years of the nineteenth century when three generations of Burney gentlemen – Charles Burney Sr., Charles Burney Jr., and Charles Parr Burney – inscribed their verses into the White Album at Crewe Hall, thereby joining a scribal society of social, political, and cultural elites in offering tribute to their hostess Frances Greville Crewe, a great beauty, wit, aristocratic Whig hostess, and lifelong friend and patroness of Burney. (A misattribution of one of those poems is corrected.)

Charles Burney, the patriarch of the Burney family, wrote hundreds of occasional poems during his long lifetime, although small attention has been paid to them.[1] The occasions were many and various: births, marriages, deaths (both elegies and epitaphs), holidays, anniversaries, social gatherings, royal milestones, tributes to patrons, charades, mottoes, verses to accompany (or to offer thanks for) gifts. While many of these verses celebrate intimate family occasions, others were tactical advances in Burney's lifelong professional and social upward striving. As this essay will argue, Burney's strategic campaign reached its apex when three generations of Burney gentlemen inscribed their verses into the Crewe White Album.

Burney also composed longer poems that were more ambitious than occasional: the holograph *The Trial of Midas the Second, or Congress of Musicians. A Poem in three Cantos written 1777. by Charles Burney, Mus. Doct.* is fair-copied to look like a printed book and appears to have been written

in hope of eventual publication; unlike Burney's equally ambitious but ill-fated twelve-canto *Astronomy*, it has survived intact.[2] His longer poems, however, are few. The vast majority of Burney's poems, apart from his translations, were light occasional verses, often self-proclaimed "doggrel." Some were part of transactional gift exchanges in which the poem may have been more valued than the gift. "To M^rs. Thrale on receiving from her a Gold Pen (1777)," for example, which survives in several manuscript and print versions, was only one of a series of poetical exchanges related to that particular gift.[3] Burney took his light verse seriously, fair-copying most of his poems into a two-volume *Poetical Notebook* complete with an index, although after his death his daughter Frances Burney destroyed many of his surviving poetic manuscripts.[4]

Several of Burney's occasional verses were written for Frances Anne Crewe's renowned White Album at Crewe Hall in Cheshire, a task that appears to have been both daunting and triumphant for Burney. On the one hand, scribal publication in the album offered tangible evidence to anyone visiting Crewe Hall that the former apprentice was accepted into this aristocratic coterie. As such, the album was a valuable instrument in Burney's long campaign to raise his family's status. On the other hand, it forced the verse-maker to rise to the poetic company and occasion. Expectations were high, and performance would be both immediately public and enduringly trans-generational.

By the late 17th century, the term "white album" (a redundancy derived from the Latin *album*, meaning "white" or "blank slate") was applied to blank books employed as commonplace books or as scrapbooks for scribal collections of autographs, sketches, literary fancies, charades, mottoes, and other textual souvenirs fashionable in the Georgian country houses of people of rank. Mrs. Crewe's White Album was just such a scribal collection of occasional verse composed by distinguished visitors to Crewe Hall in tribute to their brilliant hostess. Burney's making his mark, as he called it, in the Crewe Album along with the greatest aristocrats and wits of the age was a source

of pride in his last decade. In time, Dr. Charles Burney, Jr., like his father, also visited at Crewe Hall and contributed to the album, while Burney Jr.'s young son Charles Parr Burney, during a Christmas visit in 1801, not only made his own contribution but also transcribed many Crewe Album poems, including those written by his father and grandfather, into his *Commonplace Book*. The Burney family's robust engagement with the Crewe Album illustrates how, even as the new century began, the aristocratic culture of coterie scribal album publication remained an instrument of social and literary advancement not only in the social moment as a manuscript gift but also, as scribal culture gave way to industrial print culture, across the decades and generations.

Samantha Matthews's recent *Album Verses and Romantic Literary Culture* explores the paradox that "while [album] poems originated as unique autograph texts, they most reliably survived as printed texts in newspapers, magazines, anthologies, and poetry collections" (4). As "albo-mania" grew in the nineteenth century, Matthews explains, "'Written in an Album' became a familiar title in periodicals" (5). Moreover "such selections implicitly based their appeal on the album verses' exclusive and authentic manuscript origins, rather than their contributors' fame or literary craft," thus offering strategic gateways for obscure poets (130-31).

Like most of the aristocratic country-house white albums in Georgian Britain, the Crewe Album has been lost, but remnants and echoes remain in print and in archives. Notably in 1856 Edward Hinchliffe, a Cheshire clergyman related to the Crewe family, mentions "an old album, at Crewe Hall, the first date in which is 1774" (311). Hinchliffe, granted permission by Hungerford Crewe, the third Baron (Mrs. Crewe's grandson) to copy several poems from the Crewe White Album, includes "Doggrel Dialogue" by "Dr. Charles Burney," thus associating Burney over four decades after his death with the glittering life of Crewe Hall and the famous men and women who left their verses in the album: "The most eminent of the 'Talents' were often there," writes Hinchliffe. "Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Dr. Charles Burney . . . Sir Joshua Reynolds, Sir Thomas

Lawrence, Canning, . . . at once intellectual, sparkling, and agreeable" (307). Visitors whom Hinchliffe also mentions but whose verses he does not copy include George Napier, Lord Macartney, Lord Erskine, and Lord Palmerston. Other Crewe Album contributions survive in manuscript transcriptions made by those with access to the album, such as Charles Parr Burney for his *Commonplace Book*,[5] or in the occasional appearance of one of the poems in the *Gentleman's Magazine* and elsewhere.[6]

The presence of Dr. Burney, Mus. Doc., in the Crewe Album is not surprising given Burney's long relationship with the Crewe and Greville families. Burney had known Frances Anne Crewe her entire life, for she was the daughter of his earliest patron Fulke Greville and Greville's wife, Frances Macartney, whom Burney called "beautiful, charming & accomplished" (Klima 79 n. 8). The younger daughter of a wealthy Irish landowner, she was a well-known *vers de societé* scribal poet: Walpole and Garrick, among others, wrote famous verses to her charm and beauty. When Greville romantically but quite unnecessarily eloped with his bride early in 1748, young Burney assisted his master in the elopement and was the chief attendant at their wedding. He remained a bound apprentice in the Greville household. Frances Anne Greville, born near the end of 1748, became Burney's first musical pupil (Klima 83-84).

One of the great beauties of the age, Miss Greville married rising Whig politician John Crewe in 1766 when she was eighteen. Like her friend Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, she became a famous Whig hostess and campaigner for (and rumored mistress of) Charles James Fox, who left a number of poems in her praise in the Crewe Album. Renowned for her vivacity, charm, and wit as well as beauty, she filled Crewe Hall with distinguished visitors.[7] Despite her Whig affinities, Mrs. Crewe remained a loyal and generous patron of Burney, himself a staunch Tory and bitter anti-Foxite. Their intimate correspondence endured until his death in 1814. Mrs. Crewe, who became Lady Crewe in 1806 when her husband was created Baron Crewe (largely, it was thought, on account

of his brilliant wife), died in 1818, only four years after Burney and just a year after Burney's son Charles. At the beginning of the new century, however, Frances Anne Crewe was very much alive: caring for her three surviving children; presiding over Whig salons; entertaining politicians and canonical authors and artists; and, with the encouragement and tutelage of Doctor Burney, pursuing astronomical studies along with her sister-in-law Mrs. Henry Greville and her friend Elizabeth Upton, the Dowager Lady Templetown.

It is natural therefore that Hinchliffe's sampling of verses from the Crewe album should include Dr. Charles Burney's "Doggrel Dialogue." In addition to this print version, a second five-page manuscript copy of this poem, almost identical to Hinchliffe's transcription but with a few corrections indicating that it is probably a draft, survives in the Osborn Collection at the Beinecke Manuscript and Rare Book Library at Yale, where it is catalogued as a holograph manuscript by "Burney, Charles, Mus. D." A third manuscript copy exists in Charles Parr Burney's *Commonplace Book* in Charles Parr's hand. The top left corner of the first page of the Osborn manuscript reads: "More stuff from/the Parlour for/the Gallery Circle." Below the verses is the signature "C. Burney," with "Rheumaticus" written beneath the name along with the date "Crewe Hall. December 29, 1801."

Charles Burney, Sr., however, could not have written the "Doggrel Dialogue."[8] In the very last days of 1801, he was seventy-five years old, suffering from rheumatism and bronchitis, still mourning the death of his beloved daughter Susanna, and burdened with the task he had just assumed of writing the musical entries for Rees's *Cyclopaedia*. In December 1801 he was at home in his rooms at Chelsea Hospital to which he was physically confined during the winter months. Shortly after Christmas Day 1801 his daughter Frances Burney wrote to her father in some alarm because her husband d'Arblay, who had just returned from visiting Burney at Chelsea the previous day, had reported that Dr. Burney had a sore throat (*LJ* 5: 104-05). A month later Burney

complained to his friend Malone that his "corporeal instrument has been very much out of tune, and greatly below consort-pitch for near a fortnight . . . after keeping off the foul fiends, rheumatism & cough, till X^{mas} . . . " (To Edmond Malone, 23 January 1802).[9] Clearly Burney was at home on December 29th, the date affixed to the surviving manuscripts of "Doggerel Dialogue."

But his son, Dr. Charles Burney, Jr., *was* at Crewe Hall that Christmas, along with Charles Jr.'s teenaged son Charles Parr Burney. Earlier in December the elder Burney had written to Charles Jr. quoting a letter he had just received from Mrs. Crewe: "'pray tell D^{r} Ch. Burney, we all build on giving him a *mince pye*. . . . We expect . . . the Templetown Ladies too, and hope that what with one and another who will join us, we shall pass a merry X^{mas}, whether we get a happy new year or no'" (5 December 1801, ALS, Osborn). About two months later, on 3 February 1802, in a joint letter from Frances Burney d'Arblay and her brother Charles to their sister Mrs. Broome (the former Charlotte Burney), Charles Jr. told Charlotte that Charles Parr had "spent his Christmas with me, in Cheshire, at M^{r} Crewe's, where our time passed away very pleasantly" (*JL* 5: 144).

Visitors to Crewe knew to arrive prepared to display their poetic ingenuity, aware that their efforts would be perused and possibly copied by future visitors. In describing this exigent aristocratic scribal culture, Matthews cites Lady Frances Jerningham's rules for album entries: "an <u>album</u> which means a white Book, where every Body writes their name, & some verses or Prose, of their own making or quoted from some author, in any Language" (61). Lady Frances adds that contributors should write their names and the date at the bottom of the entry (62), and that the entries must be composed neatly on good paper, without errors (62-63), which suggests that contributions were submitted as fair copies to be pasted into the album. Mrs. Crewe may not have been quite as demanding as Lady Frances, but her guests certainly felt obliged to be witty and amusing in their tributes.

Indeed, Frances Anne Crewe expected her guests to contribute to the general amusement. "At Christmas," Hinchliffe recounts, "games and plays served to wile away the dreary hours, and to draw out any cleverness a person might possess. . . " (307-08). To give an idea of the scale of those festivities, just a year after the date of the "Doggrel Dialogue," in January 1803, the Crewes entertained nearly a hundred guests to a Twelfth Night Ball followed by a sit-down supper in the Great Hall. On the following night all of the guests from the Ball were invited back to view amateur theatricals in the Picture Gallery off the first floor landing (*Gentleman's Magazine*).

Charles Burney Jr. and Charles Parr were enlisted to do their part in such games and plays during their 1801 Christmas visit, social obligations that included inscribing verses in the album. Joyce Hemlow notes that young Charles Parr, in a letter home to his ailing mother during this Christmas visit, "gives some idea of the exertions expected of the guests by the Lady of the Hall." Young Charles was up half the night learning "nearly 200 Lines" for the two parts that he was to play: "'I hardly ever was more tired in my life,'" he complained, anticipating poor Mr. Rushworth at Mansfield Park. In Hemlow's words, "Having had to turn poet as well as actor, CPB composed the verses normally solicited for the White Album . . . and urged, conjecturally by his father, he took copies of many of the verses in the Album, copies now in the Osborn collection" (*JL* 5: 144 n. 2).

Hemlow is referring to Charles Parr's *Commonplace Book* with its generous selection of Crewe Album verses. While Charles Parr's own contribution to the Crewe Album is not explicitly identified in his *Commonplace Book*, it is almost certainly the otherwise unattributed poem titled "Verses written in the Album, at Crewe Hall, January 7th, 1802," an offering which would not have disgraced his father and grandfather:

When on Sunday I came, quite a Stranger to Crewe,
All to me appear'd charming, because all was new;
But soon I discover'd, that good-humour'd Ease,

Was join'd with the Wish and the pow'r to please:
And much Elegance, Taste, and Refinement reign'd there,
That they soon drove away all my fears and my care:
Each day was to me, but a scene of new charms,
Devoid of all stiffness, all pains, or alarms.
And the Guests were so pleasing, so easy, and gay,
That my Love and Respect were increas'd ev'ry day.
I foolishly thought, that not mere human hands
Had cast a spell round us, with magical wands;
So I foolishly thought, while every one knew,
That the whole was produc'd by the Graces of "Crewe"!

(*Commonplace Book* 270)

Charles Parr was thus the third generation of Burney gentlemen to contribute to the Crewe Album. The Burneys were inscribing themselves into the aristocratic coterie of Crewe Hall.

The first of the Crewe Album entries that Charles Parr copied that Christmas visit, however, was his father's contribution to the Album, "Doggrel Dialogue," which Charles Parr ascribes to "[C.B.]", his usual way of identifying his father's authorship in his *Commonplace Book*. His grandfather's verses, in contrast, he distinguishes as "[C.B.sen]". Charles Parr's heading for the poem differs slightly from both the Osborn manuscript and Hinchliffe's transcription from the album. Charles Parr's version reads: "Dialogue between D^{r} Charles Burney, in solitary confinement with the Rheumatism, and himself.—Crewe Hall. Dec. 29. 1801" (244). The next line adds: "(More stuff, from the parlour, for the Gallery circle!)"

Rhetorically "Doggrel Dialogue" takes the ancient form of a dialogue – that is, a debate or disputation between "Self" and "the Doctor": between the rheumatic Self's desire for rest and

retreat and the Doctor's challenge to compose the requisite verses even as he yearns to join in the lively activities of Crewe Hall. The Doctor is confined to "the Parlour," presumably the carved oak Jacobean parlour on the ground floor (Hinchliffe 333), where he is writing verses to amuse others in "the Gallery Circle," the great picture gallery on the first floor where entertainments took place. The poem laments the Doctor's loss of poetic powers in stanzas that describe his enfeebled state even as he pays gracious compliments to the intellectual and artistic life of Crewe, singling out Mrs. Crewe in the end for particular praise, thus echoing familiar tropes and themes found in earlier contributions.

In the opening stanza "Self" exhorts "the Doctor" to "lay thy pen aside."

Self.

The Grub Street Bard, in days of yore,
Sought for his Muse the attic floor.
He felt Parnassus in the height,
And nobly scorn'd a midway flight.
So, Doctor, lay thy pen aside;
And, though thy patience may be tried,
Hope not relief from Song divine!
Ground floors will suit a Muse like thine. (1-8)

The Doctor replies:

Lay down the pen! ---- What, nothing more?---
We shall not quarrel, on that score.
The task is easy, to be freed
From writing, what none e're will read.
But here confin'd, I must complain;
And thou must patience preach in vain. (9-14)

To which Self responds:

> To ME, confinement's rest from pain. (15)

Confinement, then, is a blessing for Self but a curse for the Doctor: relief for the body, frustration for the mind.

In these verses Charles Burney Jr. also describes the pleasures and accomplishments of that Christmas party at Crewe Hall, pleasures from which his infirmities exclude him: Lady Templetown's brilliant conversation, her daughter the Honourable Miss Caroline Upton's delicate harp-playing and exquisite silhouette-cutting, Mrs. Henry Greville's informed star-gazing, Miss Emma Crewe's performance of duets with the Honourable Miss Sophia Upton. The "Doctor" regrets his inability to do justice to these pleasures: "Some chosen Bard, whom Genius warms, Must tell your pow'rs, and sing your charms" (88-89). His ultimate complaint, however, is of mortality that too soon will separate him from Mrs. Crewe.[10] The Doctor's last lines are a lament: "'The days are sinking fast from view / While I might sit and think with CREWE!'" (96-97). To that impending loss, Self has no answer. The poem concludes with Self's concession:

> Enough, enough!—I quit the field:
> To this last grievance I must yield.
> My words alas! are far too faint
> To heal so serious a complaint. (98-101)

Burney's "Doctor" thus hands the expected compliment to his hostess Mrs. Crewe: among all his other complaints, only the impending loss of Mrs. Crewe's company silences "Self."

This concluding compliment to Mrs. Crewe echoes another, earlier poem in the album, one transcribed both by Charles Parr in his *Commonplace Book* and by Hester Lynch Piozzi in her marginalia. According to Piozzi, it was written by Charles James Fox.[11] "The Pleiades," one of many verses that Fox inscribed in the Crewe Album, catalogues the comparative charms of the Duchess of

Devonshire, Lady Jersey, Lady Melbourne, Mrs. [Harriet] Bouverie, and Anne Seymour Damer, concluding with the ritual compliment to the keeper of the album, Mrs. Crewe:

THE PLEIADES

With Devon's girl so blithe and gay,
I well could like to sport and play;
With Jersey would the time beguile,
With Melbourne titter, sneer and smile,
With Bouverie one would wish to sin,
With Damer I could only grin:
But to them all I'd bid adieu,
To pass my life and think with Crewe. (Piozzi 81)

In transcribing "The Pleiades" into his *Commonplace Book* Charles Parr discreetly indicated proper names by an initial and a dash, adding an emphasis to the last line: "To pass my life, and think with 'Crewe!'" (274). His father was clearly inspired by that line.

In addition to this line of Fox's, Charles Burney Jr.'s contribution to the Crewe Album repeats many of the tropes of earlier entries. One of those earlier entries was contributed by his father Charles Burney Sr., who was also aware that in the Crewe Album he would be adding his poem to those of some of the greatest wits and published poets of the age, and that in turn his lines would be read and possibly copied by those same wits. The task was intimidating. While a frequent versifier and translator of verse, and nurturing deep poetic ambitions, Burney publicly deprecated his poetic ability and privately expressed doubts about his versification (Bander 261, 267). Burney's earliest known contribution to the Crewe Album, "On the Requisition for the readers of this Book to make some additions to its contents.—Crewe Hall—Aug: 5th, 1797," addresses the challenge of

being witty on demand and display while paying tribute to the generous, inclusive hospitality – the "Social joys" – of the Crewes:

Whoe'er is at Crewe
Will enough have to do
Without paying his court to the Muses,
E'en son's of Apollo
Such blessings would follow
As Jove to their tribe oft refuses.

For the Bards, who want bread,
Would here be well fed;--
Here's amusement for all sorts of Weather;
On the water,--the Bark,--
In the house,--in the Park,--
Social joys set their horses together:--

Hospitality reigns,
Ev'ry spot shews the brains,
Of the Lord and the Lady, who own it.
You here need no wit,
But in quiet may sit,
And admire the good folks, who have shown it

The final stanza celebrates the "levelling" tendencies of Crewe Hall:

Here distinction of rank

> Is almost a mere blank,
>
> All are levell'd like Sisters & Brothers,
>
> What Wealth can afford,
>
> To the Lady or Lord,
>
> Is not for themselves,--but for <u>others</u>!—
>
> (*Commonplace Book* 253-55)

Burney thus paid his tribute to both the talent and the unsnobbish generosity of Mr. and Mrs. Crewe.

Burney was particularly sensitive to "distinction of rank." He was proud and grateful that under Mrs. Crewe's patronage the Crewe family accepted him as a social equal. In a long letter to his old friend Rev. Thomas Twining dated 1 October 1799, Burney described a recent visit to the Crewes in Dover, where John Crewe, Colonel of the 2nd Royal Cheshires, had taken a house while quartered with his regiment at Hithe: "M^{rs} Crewe being acquainted with *all the gentils* at this time in Dover & its vicinity, was visited by great Numbers. & in returning these visits, I was always of the Party," he boasted. The Duke of Portland was also visiting, and Burney gleefully warned his friend,

> if you read in the News-papers that the Duke of P. went to Deal to see the last Embarkation, & had Lord *Cavan* in the Chaise with him—say "'tis a lie!—upon my soul, a lie!"—&, for L^{d} Cavan, read D^{r} B. the *Organer*—I was glad of the mistake, however—had my name appeared at such a time & wth such people—how sh^{d} I have been hated & Ministers abused—even by those who talk of *equality* as a good thing. Well, it was pleasant enough, I must own, to the old—I beg pardon, the *young Doctor*. . . .

A few days later other friends came to dine with the Crewes at Dover, among them William Pitt, George Canning, and Henry Dundas. Burney gleefully described the occasion to Twining:

> M^r^ Crewe being with his Regiment, I was in a manner his locum tenens—Now pray be decent, & keep your countenance, if you can—When the Ladies retired from table, I was called up and put in *the Chair* w^ch^ M^rs^ C. had left—stop bottle as I am—to put the bottle ab^t^—I had heard that M^r^ Pitt drank a good deal of wine—& Tocktor Purney took gare not to *stop the Pottle*—for I watched the great man's glass, & the moment it was empty, tipt him the stuff—Well, but *only think!* Take out your pencil & make a drawing for a print to please the lovers of Equality—Burney, on a level, between the first L^d^ of the Treasury & a Secretary of State—putting the bottle about!

With the Crewes, for whom "distinction of rank" mattered less than distinction of wit, the former apprentice, organist, and music master turned man-of-letters was received as a gentleman who sat among dukes and cabinet ministers.

But to pass the bottle was one thing; to compose a poem worthy of the White Album was quite another. Hinchliffe includes several Crewe Album poems about this pressure to perform, verses which probably influenced the Burney family contributions. On the first page of the Crewe Album Hinchliffe recognizes the handwriting of his own grandfather "who lays down this rule:--'Whoever diverts him or herself with reading this book must either make some poetical additions, or write their names'" (311). In one of the earliest entries, on page three, dated "August, 1774," a woman (not identified) laments:

> To write one's name, and so confess
> Oneself the Queen of stupidness,
> Why that's the very Devil;
> T'attempt to Rhyme and bring to light
> One's inability to write,
> Like Hinchliffe, Crewe, or Greville:

In either case be brought to shame.

Dear Mrs. Crewe you're much to blame

For having such a book;

'Twould serve to line your christening cakes,

To singe a fowl, envelop steaks;

Pray send it to the cook. (311)

Hinchliffe also transcribes two entries written in "a trembling hand" by Mrs. Crewe's aging mother, Mrs. Frances Greville, the famous scribal poet. Her verses play upon her fear that she has lost the poetic powers required to contribute to her beloved daughter's album. One begins:

With mod'rate Genius, much impair'd by age,

Must I attempt the blotting of a page,

And leave a proof of these defects at Crewe,

And take in stupid rhyme my last adieu; (313)

The other, dated March 19, 1785, follows the same theme:

Time was when many a cheerful thought,

If not with wit, with fancy fraught,

Had rush'd into my mind,

Had my lov'd Fanny giv'n a look,

That seem'd a wish, in her 'white book,'

Some trace of me to find.

But now, alas! Those days are done,

My pipe is broke, my muse is flown;

And fancy fades away;
Time's heavy hand, with all his trains
Of sickly discontent and pain,
Have seized me for their prey;

Can I then write, as erst, with ease,
And hope my partial Friend to please,
Who always lov'd my lays?
Yes! To her kind, indulgent ear,
My tuneless notes will still appear,
Like those of former days. (313)

Charles Parr copied this poem along with several others by Mrs. Greville into his *Commonplace Book* (270), no doubt relieved that his own poem had been safely inscribed. Albums belonging to aristocratic hostesses, as Matthews recounts, "show writers negotiating the complex social and poetic conventions of occasional writing: guests were expected to express gratitude and admiration, but with artistry and grace, not crude flattery" (59). Little wonder that the Burney gentlemen worked so hard at their light contributions.

A letter that Dr. Burney Sr. wrote in 1806 to Mrs. Waddington (Frances Burney's protégée, Mrs. Delany's grand-niece, the former Georgiana Mary Ann Port) suggests that he was in the habit of preparing his occasional verses well in advance of the occasion. He encloses two poems for Mrs. Waddington that he had written to honor Mrs. Crewe's recent elevation to the peerage. She had long been promised a peerage by Fox, so years earlier (probably around 1798) Burney had "scribbled" some rhymes in anticipation of that happy event, "'supposing," he writes, "that being enobled would add little to her celebrity . . .'" (Paston 34; *JL* 6: 571 n.8). "'But now the deed is done,'" Burney

continues, "'I have hitched into rhyme the same thought in a different measure . . . and given it to Miss Crewe to put in the Album at Crewe Hall, where I have already *made my mark*; and where there are verses and mottoes by all the wits of fashion that have visited Crewe Hall for more than twenty years. . .'" (Paston 34). In his *Sidelights on the Georgian Period* Paston supplies one set of these verses, presumably the 1806 version that made it into the Crewe Album:

> By Beauty lifted high in youth,
> In riper years by faith and truth;
> By love Parental next we see
> Her title to Nobility.
> And of another step secure,
> From Friendship warm, sincere and pure,
> By Nature kindly thus endowed,
> Exalted far above the crowd,
> Possessed of virtues of the mind,
> And all that captivates mankind;
> His Majesty (God bless him) ne'er
> Had less to do to deck the fair:
> With such ingredients well prepared
> All regal influence might spared;
> Her virtues only had to wait
> His fiat to consolidate,
> And tell the world what friends well knew,
> That honours long had been her due. (Paston 35-36)

As Burney explains to Mrs. Waddington, both the lines that he had prepared years earlier and those that he eventually sent to the newly-ennobled Lady Crewe for her album developed the same theme: that the King's honors could add little to her luster. He did not need to add that his scribal gift also served to burnish the luster of Burney and his socially precarious family.

Thus three generations of Burney men rose to the challenge of Mrs. Crewe's White Album, making their marks and marking their places not only within the distinguished milieu of Crewe Hall but also, in print and for posterity, among the scribal wits of the age.

NOTES

[1] See Barbara Hopkinson, *The Occasional Verses of Dr. Charles Burney: A Selection by Barbara Hopkinson*, McGill University Masters Thesis, 1979. The thesis was supervised by Prof. Slava Klima whose notes now in the Rare Books and Special Collections of the McLennan Library, McGill University, suggest that he might have been preparing a study of Burney's poems. See also Elaine Bander, "'The Astronomic Muse': Charles Burney and Astronomy," *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 44, 3 (2021), 259-276.

[2] *Midas*, 52 pages long, is in the Osborn Collection of the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library at Yale University. The fate of *Astronomy* is discussed in Lonsdale, 381-406, and Bander.

[3] The ms. of the poem survives in Burney's *Poetical Notebook*, p. 117. A rough draft is in the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library, and Thrale Piozzi includes a version in *Thraliana*, i. 216.

[4] She heavily mutilated the volumes of the *Poetical Notebook* while she was working on her *Memoirs of Dr. Burney*.

[5] He copied album verses by Humphrey Repton and Sarah Siddons in addition to those of the "worthies" cited in Hinchliffe's account, including his father and grandfather as well as Fox and Mrs. Greville.

[6] E.g. "Lord Palmerston's 1788 entry in the Crewe Hall album was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1799 and reprinted in 1823 as "Lines in an Album," *The Mirror of Literature, Amusement, and Instruction*, 27 Dec. 1823, 520." (Matthews, 130 n. 11). I will be discussing Hester Thrale Piozzi's transcriptions below.

[7] Even the servants were distinguished: Charles Dickens's paternal grandparents were in service at Crewe Hall at this time; his grandfather, the butler, was encouraged to use the library at Crewe.

[8] In an earlier version of this paper delivered to the Burney Society (UK) Conference in London, 13 June 2022, I argued (rather ingeniously) that "Doggrel Dialogue" was indeed by Charles Burney, Mus. D., as the Beinecke catalogue claims and as Hinchliffe assumed, despite his non-presence at Crewe that Christmas, but I was wrong. I thank both Stewart Cooke for first pointing this out to me, although I resisted his wise counsel, and Lorna Clark for later urging me to reconsider the attribution of the poem. I also thank Matthew Rowe and the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library who provided scans of CPB's *Commonplace Book* which provides cogent evidence, discussed below, that the "Dr. Burney" who authored the poem was "D.D." not "Mus. D."

[9] I am grateful to Stewart Cooke for generously sharing his manuscript transcriptions of CB Sr.'s letters, as published in Vol. III (2023) and forthcoming in Vol. IV of *The Letters of Dr. Charles Burney (1751-1814)* (Oxford) under the General Editorship of Peter Sabor.

[10] This sentiment seems strange coming from Charles Jr., who was younger than Mrs. Crewe—another reason why I had originally believed the poem to be by his aging father. CB Jr., however, was, like his father, a sufferer from rheumatism, and indeed he died in 1817, just three years after his father and a year before Lady Crewe.

[11] Piozzi transcribes two poems from the Crewe Album in her marginalia as a gloss on Wraxall's comments about distinguished Georgian women. The first poem, according to Piozzi, was "Said to be written by Charles Fox"; Haywood (the 1861 editor) adds, "In the Album at Crewe Hall" (81). Charles Parr Burney does not attribute the poem, but it was copied into his *Commonplace Book* amid a cluster of other verses attributed to Fox.

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