

Some Omitted Items about George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower, violinist and his brother Frederick Bridgetower, violoncello.

Preface:

The story of a violinist of color, i.e. with African and Polish blood is intriguing in the 20th century as it was during the previous periods-Africa in European history. The name of this violinist, George Polgreen Bridgetower, surfaced in many published notices including newspaper announcements, word of mouth, diaries and the like. These tid-bits began to be gathered before his death in 1860.

First gathered, this biography was to show his unusual proficiency on the violin. As more articles began to appear in print each attempted give more detail since this violinist left no biography of his own. By the time of 20th century, it was still not completed and in 2014 new stories were invented each using different approaches¹. However, only a few of these new approaches can be considered biographically authoritative and worthy of real scholarship for their time period.

In putting forth Bridgetower's history, it is imperative that only the most important facts be considered. In the three cases mentioned in the footnote each writer attempted to write in their own genre and must be credited for their efforts. However, they cannot be considered historical or completely biographical.

*The last major article of importance was written by Josephine Wright who investigated the financial records of the royal household and printed in the **Musical Quarterly**². Since that time no other article has appeared in a music journal.*

After viewing these sources, this writer compressed this knowledge as follows and then added an addendum.

However, ideas of twentieth century vintage, thought to embellish the biography, introducing ideas about race, class, sexual

¹ Dieter Kuhn's 1990 novel: *Beethoven und der schwarze Geiger*, a fictional 1813 trip "that Beethoven takes to Africa in the company of a Black violinist;" and Rita Dove's 2009 poem "Sonata Mulattica" and Mike Phillips *Black Europeans*.

² "George Polgreen Bridgetower; An African prodigy in England" in *Musical Quarterly*, v67n1 (1980/I).

possibilities and blame as a new area of embellishing historical facts. We have used the spelling Bridgetower throughout.

In 1981 our personal idea was to first explore the entire summaries in which the Bridgetower facts have been assembled. It is again given below with critiques of equal importance in order to further fill in missing original research, neither fiction nor poetic. We hope our new information will clarify some of what is already known.

1778 – 1860 Historical Documentation Compared

The earliest dictionary entry concerning Bridgetower appeared during his life time: Sainsbury's *Dictionary of Music* (London, 1825). In a nine-line (9) tribute he referred to Bridgetower's so-called "Indian" ancestry which definition was continued in general use for fifty-odd years. By 1878, Sir George Grove (1820-1900), using new sources published during that interval, fashioned a new biographical sketch of some fifteen lines and gave a new ancestral beginning: "African." Presumably he was acquainted with newspaper references (see below).

Sir Grove in his article set the pace for documenting the life of Bridgetower (=Bridgtower =Bridgethauer, =Brishdower =Brischdower, etc.) then some eighteen years deceased. He noted his "first" appearance in London as having taken place in February 1790 at Drury Lane performing between "Acts" [sic] I and II of the Messiah. By 1904, his dictionary added only the exact date in February, the 18th, which some four years later, entered the sketch of F. G. Edwards (1853-1909) who had amassed considerable information concerning Bridgetower's earliest accomplishments.³ Edwards cited the April 11, 1789 appearance in Paris using as his source information found in *Le Mercure de Paris* [sic?] April 13, 1789 ("George P. Bridgetower and the Kreutzer Sonata," in *The Musical Times*, May 1, 1908, 302-308). In that review Bridgetower was called a "jeune Negre des Colonies" (underscored by Betty Matthews, "George Polgreen Bridgetower [N.B.]," *Music Review*, XXXIX, February, 1968, 21-26 and not 22 as in Wright, op. cit., 67; also

³ Edwards became editor of the *Musical Times* in 1897.

noted in Nicholas Slonimsky *Bakers Biographical Dictionary*, 1958). Not content with one citation, Edwards then names a second source, a benefit, announced for May 27, 1789 at the Salle du Pantheon.

Edwards does not tell us why he decided to look outside of the normal English sources for chance items about Bridgetower in foreign newspapers, however, he gives some clue mentioning having at hand a “transcript” of what appears to be the announcement(s). At page 308, he cites five people who aided him in securing information for his article which suggests the probability that one of these persons had clues which were passed on.

Edwards is on better grounds when he reported on Bridgetower’s activities after he crossed the channel. He tried to establish the first date for his appearance in England, November 25, 1789 at Bath which announcement appeared in the *Bath Morning Post* (item copied for him by J. D. Davis). He had undoubtedly been alerted to this item by the reference in the *London Times*, February 20, 1790 (see also in Wright, op. cit., 74, note 27A). Relying only on abstracts and not a complete combing of sources at Bath, Edwards reported those fragments as follows: December 3, 1789 (announcement of concert on December 5th); December 7, 1789 (review in *Bath Journal*); December 8, 1789 (review in *Morning Post* and a thank you notice from the father); December 24, 1789 (notice of his performance of “a concerto on the violin between the 2d and 3d Acts [sic] of a performance of the “Messiah” – a benefit for Rauzzini), December 18, 1789 (of his

performance at Bristol, as recorded in *Felix Farley's Journal*) and January 1, 1790 (at Bristol).

Matthews adds to this list of performances citing an earlier date for Bridgetower's appearance in England, October, 1789. She extends the documentation verifying the Papendiek statements that the October 13 performance did not take place at Windsor. Wright reports of two other concerts at Paris but gives no dates (see Constant Pierre's *Histoire du Concert Spirituel 1725-1790* (Paris: Société Française de Musicologie, Heugel et Cie, 1975, items 1254 and 1258). She noted four "public recitals in Bath during December, two already noted by Edwards (excluding his notice of a November program) and the repertory played between December 18 and January 1, 1790 including a concerto of the mulatto violinist, St. Georges, but without comment!

Continuing with Edwards, he then lists the London citation of Grove, February 19, 1790 between "parts" 1 and 2 of the Messiah given at Drury Lane (p. 304; Wright continues Grove's error using the word "Acts" instead of "parts"). Edwards further adds the remarks of William Parke taken from his *Musical Memoirs* (London, 1830), I, 263f; II, 241). Not content with only the words of this "gossiping" oboist, Edwards secures two notices from the *London Public Advertiser*, February 20, 1790 (which extolled the young prodigy as a "complete master of the violin") and the *London Chronicle* of the same date. In all three instances, the sources specifically refer to Bridgetower as the "son to the African Prince" (occasionally "son of"). These references certainly negate

those found in Sainsbury and renders his view of Bridgetower's birthplace useless unless he had inadvertently omitted the qualifying work "West."

Grove had noted the June 2nd performance with the young violinist, Franz Clement, to which Edwards added not only the place, Hanover Square Rooms, but additional comment from the well-known Abbe Vogler (1749-1814). Wright augments these findings by noting the six guest performances at Drury Lane, February 19 (Messiah), February 24 (selections from Handel), February 26 (Redemption), March 19 (Alexander's Feast), March 24 (selections from Handel again) and March 26 (the Redemption again). A seventh notice, March 1, 1790, listed Bridgetower's name among the performers but on the day of the performance left his name off. No explanation was given.

Edwards was unable to find much material for the season 1791 but managed to mention two items: the appearance at the Handel Commemoration of 1791 (May/June) held in Westminster Abbey where Bridgetower and Hummel pulled the stops for the organist Joah Bates (this item omitted in Wright) and as violinist at the Haydn-Salomon concerts. Wright correctly gives the date April 15

AT PLAY-HOUSE PRICES.
THEATRE-ROYAL, DRURY-LANE.
 THIS EVENING, February 19, 1790,
 Will be performed the CORONATION ANTHEM,
 GOD SAVE THE KING.
 After which the SACRED ORATORIO of
 THE MESSIAH.

The Principal Vocal Parts by
 Mrs. CROUCH, Miss HAGLEY,
 Mr. REINHOLD, Mr. KELLY,
 Mr. DIGNUM,

And Signora STORACE,
 Conducted by Doctor ARNOLD.

End of the Second Part, a Concerto on the Violin by
 Master BRIDGETOWER,
 Sent to the AFRICAN PRINCE.

And on WEDNESDAY, February 24, will be
 THE FIRST GRAND SELECTION
 From the Performances at the PANtheon and WESTMIN-
 STER-ABBEY.

Boxes 50 p. 25. full gallery 25. second gallery 15.
 Doors to be opened at Half past Five o'Clock, to begin at
 Half past Six. No money to be returned.

with Bridgetower playing a concerto with Haydn presiding at the continuo. Like Edwards, she mentions the May 28, 1792 performance at the benefit of Barthelemon where he played a concerto of Viotti but omits the February 20 and March 30, 1792 engagements at the Kings's Theatre under Lindley's management.

Whereas Edwards digressed from sources found in newspapers mentioning the lecture-demonstration of Charles Clagget whose description appeared in a volume *Night's Entertainment* (October 31, 1793), Matthews supplemented him by publishing two documents: the libretto and programme showing Bridgetower, Atwood,

jun. and others performing a Haydn quartet (in addition to

PROFESSIONAL CONCERT,
HANOVER SQUARE.

THE Committee most respectfully acquaint the
Nobility and Gentry, that their
FIFTH PERFORMANCE,
Will be on MONDAY next, the 15th Instant.

ACT I.

Overture, Rossetti—Song, Miss Cantelo—New Quartetto
for Two Violins, Tenor and Violoncello, by Messrs. Cramer,
Borghii, Blake, and Cervetto, Girovitz.—Scena, Signor Mar-
chese.—Concerto Violin, Master Bridgetower.

ACT II.

Symphony, Haydn.—Song, Signor Bianchi.—Concertante
for the Piano Forte, Hautboy, Violoncello, and Violin by
Messrs. Dance, Parke, Cervetto, and Cramer, Bach.—Duetto,
Signora Bianchi, and Miss Cantelo.—Overture, Double Or-
chestra, Bach.

Doors to be opened at Seven, and begin at Eight o'Clock.
Subscriptions received, and Tickets delivered, at Messrs.
Ransom, Moreland and Hammerley's, No. 57, Pall Mall.

The Ladies' Tickets are red, the Gentlemen's black, and
are transferable as usual, Ladies to Ladies, and Gentlemen's
to Gentlemen.

The Nobility and Gentry are particularly requested, to order
their Servants to set them down and take up with the horses
heads towards Hanover-Square.

the eleventh solo of Corelli . . . accompanied on the Royal Teleochordon mentioned in Edwards but not in Wright).

Wright is content to note the benefit of Barthelemon sponsored by the Prince of Wales on May 26, 1794 but Edwards limits himself noting that Bridgetower had probably settled down as an orchestral player since his name appeared in a hard to find Musical Directory for the Year 1794. Again Wright comes to the rescue by noting “As early as March 19, 1794 his name began to appear regularly in the local *Times and Chronicle* as a principal performer for the Covent Garden Lenten oratorios . . .” which appear in her chronology (available for anyone

desiring it, see fn. 4, 67) containing approximately fifty publicized concerts as a “soloist or a principal violinist, etc., etc. . . .”

If all this pre-century documentation were not original, Edwards extended his narrative to the next century by citing manuscript materials found in the British Museum, Add. MS. 27, 593 (fn. 109, 305) and added his own conclusions as follows:

From letters addressed to him there can be no question that in his prime Bridgetower occupied a good position in London musical circles. That he was on intimate terms with some of the leading musicians of the time is proved by him being addressed as ‘My dear George’ by Viotti (who held him in the highest esteem), Francois Cramer, Thomas Attwood and Dr. Charles Hague, Professor of Music at Cambridge University, at whose concerts the mulatto violinist often played. The letters addressed to him by Samuel Wesley and printed in the April of *The Musical Times* (p. 236) show that he was on friendly terms with that distinguished Bach-loving musician; moreover, it is interesting to find that Bridgetower’s name is in the list of subscribers to the first English edition, that of Wesley and Horn, of Bach’s *Das Wohltempeirte Clavier*, published between the years 1810 and 1813. And has not Wesley left the following appreciation of his friend?

“George Bridgetower, whom they used to denominate the African Prince, is justly to be ranked with the very first masters of the violin. He practised much with the celebrated Viotti, and imbibed largely of his bold and spirited style of execution. It was a rich treat for a lover of the instrument to hear him

perform the matchless and immortal solos of Sebastian Bach, all of which he perfectly retained in memory and executed with the utmost precision, and without a single error. Indeed, whatever the composition, or whoever the author whose music he undertook to perform, he treated in so perfect and masterly a manner as to yield entire and universal delight and satisfaction to every auditor.”

If Edwards tribute through Wesley were not enough, Wright further points out the Wesley-Bridgetower correspondence in the British Museum, Add. 593, fol. 193r and Add. 56, 411 but cites no memoir of particular significance other than that found in Edwards who had used materials from Samuel’s unfinished biography, (cited by John I. Schwarz, Jr. in “Samuel and Samuel Sebastian Wesley, The English Doppelmeister,” in *Musical Quarterly*, April, 1973, LIX, No. 2, 191) but he, like Wright failed to peruse the entire correspondence listed as Additional 11, 729, 35,012, 35, 013, 35,014 and 35, 015. Schwartz in his article specifically pointed out a Bridgetower reference found in Additional 35,015 dated August 18, 1813, f. 66 and which reads as follows:

I shall endeavor to coax Bridgetower (the violinist who first performed Beethoven “Kreutzer” Sonata) to bring forward his “Catguts & Horsehair” & scrape us out one of the old Humbug’s Country Dances. I think this will not be negated by any shew of Hands.

It then appears that more information may be found on Bridgetower in the Wesley correspondence than found in *The Musical Times* cited by Edwards or in the Bridgetower

biographical sketches of Edwards or Wright. Of the concerts given by Dr. Charles Hague, professor of music at Cambridge University, no specific information has come forth about those programs which certainly extends the biography.

The mention of Beethoven and the Kreutzer violin sonata, Op. 47, alerts us to the meat of the article written by Edwards. He notes the 1802/03 performances at Dresden, already cited in Grove, of July 24, 1803 and March 18, 1803. At this time Bridgetower had sought and received permission from his royal patron to visit his mother, then residing in that city. The program (see in Maude Cuney-Hare *Negro Musicians and Their Music* [Washington, D. C., 1936], 298 note 11) was under the direction of Schultz and included:

- No. I—Symphony, Mozart
- No. II—Violin Concerto
- No. III—Symphony, Viotti
- No. IV—Serenade, Viotti
- No. V—Symphonique Piece
- No. VI—Violin Variations

Hare also noted the program of the 18th of March as:

Part I

No. I--Symphony, Beethoven
No. II--(Song) Mlle. Grunwald
No. III-Violin concerto, Bridgetower
[N.B.]

Part II

No. I--Violoncello Concerto, Mr.
Bridgetower
No. II--(song) Mlle. Grunwald
No. III-Rondo for Violin

Mlle Grunwald, it appears, had contracted a cold and was unable to appear. With Mme. Eliot, the sponsoring patroness in both instances, other concerts took place one being noted on April 26.

After his satisfactory appearance in Dresden, Bridgetower, according to Hare (p. 299), applied for a license on May 9, 1803 at Vienna. However, none of this detailed information appeared in Grove, Matthews or in Wright (the latter who terminates her in-depth discussion with his London episodes omitting, however, Matthews coverage of the November 6, 1794 benefit of Joseph Corfe, cathedral organist, and the postponed concert in Winchester for the cathedral organist, George Chard (1765-1849) and the December 4, 1791 benefit for the lay vicar, Hill, at the George Inn, playing a concerto) and Hare could have been credited with a first if proven accurate.

Confusing, however, is Grove's statement about the Dresden concert on March 18, 1803 (verified in Hare) and the date of the letter given in Edwards, March 18, 1803 to the Baron Alexandre de Wezlar. The letter in translation appears in Edwards with the correct spelling given by Beethoven of Bridgetower's name, Brischdower, but is without the c in Thayer/Forbes. (p. 333) (see facsimile in *The Musical Times*, and again in Hare). Although Forbes made an error in the spelling of Bridgetower's name he did not err in giving the correct month, May, not March, 1803. In this letter, Beethoven has been impressed that Bridgetower had become intimate with two of his patrons, Prince Lobkowitz and Count Moritz to whom he had dedicated many of his compositions.

Grove's knowledge of Bridgetower's relationship with Beethoven had probably come through his acquaintance with Karl Friederich Pohl (1819-1887), who, as librarian of the *Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde*, translated Thayer's *Life of Beethoven* in two volumes (1875-1882). According to C. L. Graves in *Grove's Dictionary*, II (1906), p. 247, column 2, Grove had made a journey to Vienna in 1867 and "here also he laid the foundation for his long friendship with C. F. Pohl . . ." It is easily seen that Grove's knowledge was a direct result of this relationship. Edwards, too, was aided in his quest by Henry Edward Krehbiel (b. March 10, 1854) who had just begun to edit the English version of the Thayer volume.

With the date of Bridgetower's appearance in Vienna now secure, reference of Forbes (p. 331) that Beethoven had invited the young performer to take part in a program,

April 16, 1803, falls in place. Bridgetower, having applied for a passport after his performances in Dresden (the Hare reference to the police license date of May 9 should not be discounted) was in Vienna during the month of April. He had ample time to prepare several concerts and probably had since the reference to the concert at Schuppanzigh's, where the Count Prichowsky and Dr. John (Theodore) Held had been invited, bear witness to this fact. However, Forbes cannot claim to have made an original discovery. The first part of this "manuscript biography" of Held had already been cited in Hare (p. 301). After reading Edwards, Forbes' identification of Bridgetower as the "American ship captain who associated much with Beethoven" (taken from Schindler) is surely a calamus lapsus and needs to be retired.

Grove had postulated in his article that the performance of the Sonata, Op. 47, had taken place on one of two dates: the 17th or 24th of May. Edwards, too, could not give the exact date (Thayer/Forbes notes the postponement from the 22nd to the 24th). He further used materials given him by Krehbiel whose English edition contained materials from Ferdinand Ries (Notizen, p. 82). Edwards further discovered new information written by one John W. Thirwell (1809-1876), a violinist of repute, in the *Musical World* (London), of December 4, 1858 who reported a direct conversation with Bridgetower. These details are now part and parcel of articles and books about Beethoven.

Bringing us back to London by citing from Bridgetower's passport, item dated July 27, 1803, Edwards alerts us that Bridgetower lists his occupation as a "musician," and is a

native of Biala (Poland), age, twenty four years, medium height, clean shaven, swarthy complexion, dark brown hair, brown eyes, and straight, rather broad nose. However, Joseph Carl Rosenbaum had seen the young prodigy at the Esterhazy residence July 22-30, 1803 (“The Diaries of Joseph Carl Rosenbaum”: ed. Else Radant in *Haydn Year Book V* (1969), 109-111; see also in Wright, p. 70, fn. 17) previous to his return to England. Two years later the concert of May 23, 1805 was noted by Edwards. At this event, a “New Grand Symphony” by Beethoven was featured. (could this be the same “new grand symphony in D-sharp” which received its semi-public performance February 13, 1805 [*Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung* in Thayer/Forbes, 375] and first public performance April 7 with Beethoven conducting [ibid.]⁴ how (if it really occurred) this was managed is not revealed but if true certainly disputes facts found in Miles Birket Foster’s *The History of the Philharmonic Society of London* (London: John Lane, 1912, p. 12) that the “Eroica” was first heard (in England) on the Philharmonic’s 1814 series! This fact should further challenge the Beethoven experts that Bridgetower’s friendship with Beethoven or those close to him extended to more than being the first violinist to

⁴ See Alfred Einstein and others regarding pitch – “Just” and Tempered. *MQ* Vol. XXVII, No. 4, October, 1941, pp.415-421 , translated by Arthur Mendel.

NEW ROOMS, Hanover-square.—Under the Patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince of WALES.—Mr. BRIDGTOWER begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and his Friends, that his CONCERT will take place THIS EVENING, the 23d of May. Mrs. Billington and Mr. J. Cramer have kindly offered to play the same Duet as at Messrs. Cramer's Concert on Monday last.—Act I. Overture, *Zauberflöte*; Mozart. Song, Signor Morelli; *Cimarosa*. Concerto Violoncello, Mr. F. Bridgtower; *Romberg*. Song, Signor Viganoni; *Puer. Scetto* for Violin, Tenor, Violoncello, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Double Bass, by Messrs. Bridgtower, Shield, F. Bridgtower, Kramer, Rehn, Malsh, and Dragonetti; *Beethoven*. Song, Mrs. Ade. Concerto Violin, Mr. Bridgtower; *Bridgtower*.—Act II. New Grand Symphony; *Beethoven*. Scene, Miss Parke; *Guglielmi*. New Grand Duet for Two Piano-fortes, Mrs. Billington and Mr. Cramer; *Cramer*. Duet, Miss Parke and Signor Viganoni. Finale. Piano-forte, Mr. G. Smart.—Tickets, half-a-guinea each, to be had of Mr. Bridgtower, No. 4, Great Ryder-street, St. James's; Birchell's, New Bond-street; Monzani's, Old Bond-street; Clementi and Co. Cheapside; and Betts, Royal Exchange.

[May 23, 1805]

perform the so-called “Kreutzer” violin sonata. It likewise cements a relationship between Beethoven/Bridgtower which needs a greater inspection.

Edwards also noted a very important item in the May, 1805 notice but was either unaware of its importance or was unable to further elaborate upon: the London premiere of Bridgtower’s violin concerto! He was obviously not acquainted with Robert Eitner’s reference in his *Biographisch-Bibliographisches* , , , *Quellen-Lexicon* (Breitkopf & Haertel, Leipzig, 1900-1904, Zweite Band, 191): (“Bridgtower) Er was ein Schuler Giornovichis und in der Komposition von Atwood. Er schrieb Konzerte u. a. . .” Edwards did note, however, the presence of one F(rederick?) Bridgtower performing on the violincello

and whom he calls “brother” to George. Papendiek, too, had noted this unheralded brother of George but gave no additional information.

This black performer, Frederick II, has been found in (1805) performing a cello concerto of Romberg, the Septet [not sextet] of Beethoven and serving in the small orchestra of his brother playing the ‘new symphony’ by Beethoven in 1805. Various sources have mentioned him without additional comment. The known facts are he is reported to be the brother of George and, presumably, the son of Frederick I but has no genealogical birthplace but it is possible that he was born in Poland as was his brother. If he is the son of Frederick I we have not been able to trace Frederick to Dresden,

He must have moved to Dresden (Germany) and lived unrecognized in that city with his mother. After her death he probably moved to Liverpool. Records show that three other Bridgetowers, undoubtedly his sires, were born in that city. We have fashioned a tentative genealogical structure outlining what information we could uncover.

Birth:

Frederick I b.?
Mary Anne ?
George, 1778, Poland
Frederick II b. ?, Poland
James, April 1857, Lancashire
Catherine January 1859, Lancashire
Catherine b. 1818- d. 1861
James b. April 1857
John H. b. 1821, later committed to an asylum
Frederick b. 1840 but left for United States 1877

Marriage

Jane Guy 1868, Liverpool,
Lancashire
Catherine July 1882 West Derby,
Lancashire
Married James Gurney
Jane Guy
Married Thomas Bainbridge

Deaths

Frederick I ?
Mary Anne 1807
Frederick II 1859
Catherine, July 1856

Frederick II, July 1859
George, January 1860

Catherine, d. 1881

The censuses in England reveal one John H. Bridgetower, b. c. 1821, undoubtedly the son of Frederick II was committed to the lunatic asylum at Lancaster County about 1860 and one Catherine Bridgetower, b. 1837 either a niece of Frederick or daughter of John made her residence in Liverpool but there is a Fred b. 1840 who left for the United States in 1877 and has not been located as yet.

The question now remains about Frederick II. His training in music is unknown but judging only by his repertoire his training must have been fairly good for him to perform works by the eminent Romberg (see examples) and the Septet, Op. 20) by Beethoven in 1805. After this performance he seemingly disappears. A death notice and will was drawn up in 1859. In 1860 George's estate included of a violoncello, which, perhaps he lent to his brother.

Our inability to study the complete records in both England-Germany and Liverpool does not permit us to make further statements about this musician and therefore we concluding this narrative but not before giving him credit as the second black musician to perform a Beethoven's work especially during Beethoven's life time!

The musical samples will alert the reader to the level of difficulty this performer had technical training.

CONCERTO III.

Op.6.

(Andreas Romberg gewidmet.)

Erklärung der Zeichen.

- ∨ Herunterstrich. □ Finger liegen lassen.
- ∧ Hinaufstrich. Fr. Am Frosche des Bogens.
- (∩) Daumen auf die Saite legen. M. In der Mitte des Bogens.
- ∩ Daumen von den Saiten nehmen. Sp. An der Spitze des Bogens.

Allegro moderato.

Violoncello.

Tutti

mf cresc. f *dimin. - mf cresc. sf cresc.*

Solo

mf espress. ma poco marc. *dolce*

M. *f con grandezza* *p*

Sp. *sf* *p* *sf*

M. *cresc.* *f* *p*

cresc.

f *p*

poco calmand. - - - - - a tempo

p dolce

The musical score consists of ten staves. The first two staves are in bass clef, the next four in treble clef, and the last four in bass clef. The music is in a key with one sharp (F#) and a 3/4 time signature. The score includes various dynamic markings such as *p*, *fz*, *f*, *sempre f*, *dim.*, *mf cresc.*, *fp cresc.*, and *mf*. Performance instructions include *cresc.*, *gliss.*, *tr*, *M.*, *a poco*, *3^a 4^a Corda*, and *Tutti*. The notation features numerous slurs, ties, and fingerings (e.g., 1, 2, 3, 4, 1, 2, 3, 4). The piece concludes with a *ff* dynamic marking and a fermata.

Solo

p dolce

2^a.....

dimin.

M.

f

f

M.

p

cresc. poco

a

poco

f *fz* *fz* *fz*

pesante

sempre f

dimin. e culmand.

p

restez

ma espress.

f

p cresc.

f f brillante p

cresc. f

p cresc. pesante

f sempre f

ff p cresc.

f 3^a. sempre f

p cresc. f Tutti f sempre ff p

Solo
M. 1

f *poco almand.* *a tempo*

p dolce

gtiss. *p cresc.* *espress.*

2^a e 3^a Corda.....

M. 1

dimin. *p* *fz*

p *fz* *p cresc. poco*

poco

3^a e 4^a Corda.....

f *p* *fz*

p *fz* *p cresc.*

fz *sf* *fz*

f *fz* *fz*

2^a 2^a... 3^a 3^a... *sempre f*

Rondo pastorale.
Allegretto molto moderato.

p dolciss.

p *mf*

dimin.

Poco animato

p *f^{1a} energ.*

mf *fz*

mf *fz* *p cresc.*

f

ff *Tutti dim. e calmat.*

Solo tranquill.

p dol. *poco*

mf

fz *p dol.* *sempre p*

sempre p *sf*

3ª e 4ª Corda.....

sf *cresc: poco*

poco

f *2ª* *fz*

M. restez..... *tr* *V* *p*

fz *sempre f* *ff*

1ª *pp* *sf* *p*

Solo

M. 1 3

p

3

3 2 2

1 4 2 3

1 3 2

cresc.

1 2 4 4

mf

2 1 3 2

1

cresc.

quasi improvvisand. *a tempo*

ff rapid. *M.* *brillante* *p* *rallent.* *f*

cresc. *martell.* *p* *martell.* *f*

cresc. *ben stacc.* *sempre f* *tr.* *mf cresc.* *f con fuoco* *fz*

sempre f *cresc.* *Tutti* *ff*

Ihrer Majestat der Kaiserin Maria Theresia gewidmet

1

SEPTET

I.

L. van Beethoven, Op. 20.
1770-1827

Adagio. $\text{♩} = 72$

Klarinette in B.

Fagott.

Horn in Es.

Violine.

Viola.

Violoncell.

Kontrabaß.

Kl.

Fg.

Hr.

10

№ 12

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III.

Tempo di Menuetto. ♩ = 120

The musical score is arranged in two systems. The first system shows the instrumental introduction for Klavier (Kl.), Flöte (Fg.), and Horn (Hr.). The piano part consists of two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a forte (*p*) dynamic marking. The second system features vocal entries for Klavier (Kl.), Flöte (Fg.), and Horn (Hr.) with piano accompaniment. The vocal lines include the lyrics "cre - scen - do" and "do". The piano accompaniment is marked with *p* and *cresc.*. Dynamics include *f* (forte) and *ff* (fortissimo).

Since this program of Bridgetower's shows that F. Bridgetower (sic) is or was a capable performer, our attention should focus on the personality of Fredig mentioned in *Poulson's Philadelphia American Daily Advertiser*, January 15, 1828, 2/4 which quotes from an extract: "Fredig in Vienna was an expert performer on the violin and violoncello" (the writer having spoken of the musical capabilities of Blacks). More knowledge of Viennese musical life would help to unravel much of the mystery of this musical personality.

Between the years 1805 and 1811 Bridgetower's musical career had not been documented. True, he enrolled at the University of Cambridge "taking the degree of Bachelor of Music" (Edwards, 306, column 2) and at the graduation (1811) and his anthem (see complete text in *Gentlemen's Magazine*, 1811, 158) reproduced in our text and was performed by a full band at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, Sunday, June 30, 1811. However, little else about his musical activities has been presented. Of the performance of his anthem, the *London Times* of July 2, 1811 reported: "The composition was elaborate and rich; and highly accredited to the talents of the Graduate. The trio struck us, particularly, by its beauty; but Master Hawes was not equal to his solo parts."

That Bridgetower was still enjoying the favor of His Royal Highness, Edwards cites a letter from Dr. William Crotch, dated April 30, 1812 asking Bridgetower to "mention my Oratorio to H. R. H." but cautioned: "If that is disagreeable to you would you be so kind as to inform me what is the regular way of proceeding in such cases."

(Crotch's oratorio, April 21, 1812 had not included the presence of royalty.)

Matthews, when discussing this period, notes that the Henry ballad of Bridgetower, dedicated to the Princess of Wales (inscribed "with the Author's best regards to Miss Booth") is indicative that the mulatto violinist was still on good terms with the Prince some six years after the "Delicate Investigation." If her statement is a clue to some inner circle activity that was kept fairly quiet, she neglects to expand upon it in this publication. Evidence of Bridgetower's participation and relationship with the noted London Philharmonic Society the following year was introduced by Edwards who was careful to point out that Bridgetower was not counted as one of its original members. Among those original members was George Smart (later knighted by the Queen), who also accompanied Elizabeth T. Greenfield on her only appearance in England. Smart had known Bridgetower when the 'Eroica' symphony was given in 1805. As one of the founding members, he may have been most influential in pressing for Bridgetower's admittance as an "associate" shortly after its organization as was Robert Lindley.

ANTHEM,

Written by F. A. LAWSON, and composed by
G. H. B. BRIDGETOWER as an Exercise for
his Bachelor's degree in Music. Per-
formed at St. Mary's Church, CAMBRIDGE,
before the Chancellor.

RECITATIVE.

BY faith sublim'd her Passiflora steers
Her Pilgrimage along this vale of tears,
The hopes of Heaven alone her thoughts
employ.

Christ is her glory, and the Cross her joy.
As the deep organ sounds the hollow'd
strain,

With solemn step proceeds the pious train,
In polish'd censers wrought with wondrous
care

Three cherub boys the holy incense bear,
Three pious virgins form the holy train,
Join in her prayer, and weep the Lamb
that's slain:

With solemn step they tread the Master's
Seek his deep shade, and converse with
the tomb.

Hark! from the walls what sacred anthem
With hymns of praise the vaulted roof
resounds.

CHORUS.

He died, he died, the Saviour of mankind
To save our souls his spotless life resign'd,
Yes, how with boundless grace the ALL
mighty Son [he done]
Bow'd to the Cross, and cried " Thy will

AIR.

Astonish'd Nature trembled at the sight,
And veil'd the guilty land in shades of night,
In lofty mountains roll'd the mighty flood,
Earth op'd her bow, and drank his pre-
cious blood.

CHORUS.

"Redemption's ours!" re-echoed from
her caves; [Graves,
The dead are rous'd, and burst their silent
In hollow tones each from his vault replies,
"We slept in peace secure with God to
rise."

RECITATIVE.

Death, vanquis'd, fled and sought his fell
abode; [from God:
Sin blus'd with shame, and hid her face
long.

While Mercy, rising from the throne of grace,
Pronounc'd free pardon to a sinful race.

TRIO.

Oh may that Cross, on which our Saviour died,
Subdue our passions and our guilty pride;
That we amidst the general wreck shall rise
Preserv'd for purer worlds and brighter
skies:

CHORUS.

Mount the bless'd seats of harmony and
love, [God above!
Be crown'd with bliss, and live with

Edwards points out that Bridgetower (undoubtedly an associate at this time) performed on the fourth concert of the season, May 3, 1813, as leader (i.e., first violin) in Beethoven's Quintette. Assisting were François Cramer (second son of William), Joseph Moralt, H. Gattie and Robert Lindley. On their sixth concert, May 31, 1813, Bridgetower played second violin in a quartet of Mozart. However, Edwards did not trace Bridgetower's complete movements between 1813 to 1819 but pointed out that in 1819, Bridgetower applied for readmission to the Society which examined his forms on April 14. He was re-admitted November 6. Edwards also notes that Bridgetower was thought to have been connected with the short-lived Professional society (1815).

Having completed the purpose of this sketch, Edwards sought to extend his documentary coverage but only found fragments for future scholars. He noted, for example, that Bridgetower lived abroad from about 1820 to 1843 being at Rome in 1825 and 1827 “evidently in aristocratic circles” and again in London in August, 1843 (mentioned in a letter of the music publisher, Novello, “his much obliged old pupil and professional admirer”). He was at Vienna (1845) (“John Ella has recorded . . .”) and London in 1846. In 1848, letters in the collection of Edward Speyer indicate he was at St. Cloud, Paris.

The importance of the 1858 notice by Thirwall was significant enough to alert Edwards that the time of Bridgetower’s death could be found (Grove had thought he lived during the forties and fifties – Bibliographer Robert Eitner had suggested the forties). Edwards describes how he found the will (in the Register of Deaths, 6 & 7, W. IV., cap. 86) at the General Register Office, Somerset House, London, a copy of which he received a month before publishing his article (dated March 3, 1908). The cemetery of Kensal Green was discovered to be the place of burial and the will, dated September 10, 1859, proved on July 3, 1860, some five months after Bridgetower’s death, February 29, 1860. The whole of his property was bequeathed to a married sister of his late wife “whose maiden name was Drake”). Edwards does not mention a daughter living Italy (a la Grove).

Subsequent snooping by Edwards resulted in his publishing the announcement found in the *London Times*,

October 23, 1832, regarding the estate of Mary Ann Bridgetower (note the spelling):

Notice to Heirs and others – All persons who have any claim on or to Property, amounting to about 800 Saxon Dollars, left by the late Mary Ann Bridgetower, who died at Budissen on the 11th of September, 1807, are hereby directed to make known and prove the same by themselves, or their attornies, at the sittings of the magistrates of the said town, on or before the 12th of March, 1833, or they will forfeit all right and title to the said property – Dated at Budissen, in the kingdom of Saxony, 8th August, 1832. By order of the Sitting Magistrates.

In Edwards opinion, the Mary Ann Bridgetower was the mother of the violinist who died within four years of his visit in 1802/3. Wright, on the other hand, while accepting Edwards identification (that the Mary Ann Bridgetower in this announcement is the same mentioned in the accounts of the Prince of Wales) suggests that her death occurred ca. April, 1817 and supports her argument on the fact that the Prince continued payments to a certain person using the name Mary Ann Bridgetower. She does, not, however, give any documentation which categorically proved that the person receiving those payments was, indeed, the mother of our violinist, George. As to whether Edwards “erred” in identifying the year of her death, 1807, Wright implies that Edwards either copied the date wrongly from the news source or in some other way manipulated his source. This accusation cannot stand unchallenged for Edwards did quote the document accurately and if there was an error it was committed in the source itself. Edwards

statement must still stand unchallenged until the proof of death has been found and the entire matter put to rest.

One notes, through Wright, however, that the period of the Prince's premiums extending from May 2, 1792 to April, 1817 amounted to the sum of seven hundred and fifty pounds (750), nearly equaling the approximate eight hundred (800) Saxon dollars placed in the advertisement by the Budissen magistrates. If conclusions may be drawn from this inference they are: (1) there is no heir at Budissen; (2) the mysterious brother, T. or F., has moved his residence; (3) Bridgetower, himself, may possibly be in London or elsewhere traveling, etc. Such questions, however, are endless in the absence of substantial documentation.

Our cursory overview of major sources referring to the career of Bridgetower now nearly complete, it is easily seen that Edwards' work although fragmentary, remains the most solid document for a complete summary of Bridgetower's life. Matthews gives us the news that the Bridgetower copy of the Beethoven sonata survived and was recently sold (but could not know that the Beethoven letter and picture found in Hare are now in the United States) and further located reminisces of Mrs. Papendiek which document his first appearance at Windsor. Wright adds knowledge of the many performances before 1799 using newspaper sources and further bolsters her summary by citing documents contained in the Royal Archives. Her publishing of the relatively unknown Bridgetower portrait is noteworthy.

RIGHT HAND IN C. *And.* *Allegro*

Allegro

And.

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

LEFT HAND IN C. *Allegro*

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

AD PARNASSUS

However, other information about Bridgetower had been published which was not used in any of the above accounts greatly expanding and augmenting our knowledge of Bridgetower's early English period. For example, the following information in the *Dictionary of National Biography* could speak further on Bridgetower's musical reputation, although giving the wrong death date:

He was an excellent musician, but his playing was spoiled by too great a striving after effect. In person he was remarkably handsome, but of a melancholy and discontented disposition (see Czerny's remarks).

Most damaging, however, was its estimate of the father's worth:

His (Bridgetower's father) was a mysterious individual, who was well known in London society as the 'Abyssinian Prince,' [N.B. the continued reference in MGG] and according to some accounts as half-witted. The mother was a Pole, but nothing is known as to how the negro [sic] father (for such he seem to have been) came to be in Poland, and there is considerable doubt to whether the name he bore was not an assumed one . . .

The costume of his country may be interpreted as in the Papendiek source as being Turkish rather than West Indian or Indian.

However, the English press, always rather caustic in its estimation of those seeking public favor, had, indeed,

spoken of Frederick prior to the appearance at Drury Lane. This unreported information completely nullifies all other opinions regarding Bridgetower's entrance into English society and is summarized below.

When the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York returned to Windsor, September 20, 1789, Frederick undoubtedly approached the former with hopes of establishing his young son. His request was granted and on September 25th, George was presented to their Majesties.

The son of the African Prince performed on the violin with exquisite skill, before their Majesties and the Princesses at Windsor Lodge.

This Musical Phenomenon gave inexpressible delight to his Royal Auditory.

His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales was his recommendatory introducer to the access of his Royal Parents.

[*Gazeteer*, October 2, 1789; *Whitehall Evening Post*, October 3-6, 1789]

That H. R. H. was pleased with the novel performance of this young prodigy is partially underscored in the following hitherto unreported six-line poetic tribute:

On the MUSICAL PHENOMENON.

Whilst sable Afric's royal son
Through the sweet maze of music run,
And by his mingled powers of play,
Made Majesty, or grave(e), or gay;
The mighty Monarch was beguil'd,
And own'd a Master in a Child!

These notices confirm the statement of Frederick at Bath that he had performed before the royal couple. Further confirmation that no benefit was ever given the young violinist on October 13, (Matthews/Papendiek) is revealed in the following press notice:

The Black Prince and his son left Windsor on Thursday afternoon. They have not had a benefit concert.

His Majesty would not permit the Queen's Band to perform.

The King made the Prince a present of ten guineas, and the Queen added the same sum.

[*Gazetteer*, October 17, 1789]

Frederick Augustus, then at Windsor but now undecided as to what course he should pursue, went to London and by November had “fiddled himself into the good graces of Madame Schwellenberg,” obviously one in the “intimate” circle, who promised him an opportunity to play at the Queen's concerts at Buckingham House (=Palace) when they were resumed for the winter season. The monies which Frederick had received from the Papendiek affair, now dated October 14, 1789, could not sustain him for very long. He then took the boy on tour to Bath (see. p. 148, 167ff.) at the invitation of Rauzzini (Edwards), Bristol (p. 133) and probably other places where he could obtain new revenue (Edwards/Wright).

When father and son returned to London in January after successfully performing in the suburbs, Frederick decided to introduce the boy to the London public. He undoubtedly

persuaded Madam Schwellenberg and those of her circle to be the sponsoring patrons. However, the debut of the young prodigy may have been impressive in spite of the negative criticism directed at the father.

The Black Prince, father of the Violinist, by being too officious, has lost the countenance of most his benefactors, as his Concert shewed last Saturday (January 23) morning at the Lower Rooms – not fifty attended.

London Times, January 26, 1790]

This important notice missed by all writers not only disproves previous claims regarding Bridgetower's debut in London but raised the suspicion that other information in easily accessible sources had not been brought to bear upon this prodigy's history.

For example, the *Chronicle* of February 13-16, 1790 could note Frederick's appearance at the Pantheon Masquerade attended by the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York and Clarence, et al.:

“The African Prince, as he is styled, appeared as an advocate for the abolition of slavery; his character something of the Mungo stamp.”

This was not the only unfavorable notice of Frederick to appear in the press for the same paper (issue March 11-13, 1790) spoke of another incident more racial in tone:

Covent Gardens. (Messiah).

At the end of the Second Act, the Hallelujah chorus was encored; and here a scene ensued that had nearly thrown the audience and band into confusion. The African Prince, from one of the slip, insisted, in the most insolent manner, that the chorus should be repeated. Much as it was desired, yet John Bull was not to be dictated to by a sable son of the torrid zone [N.B.]. The principals and chorus in course left the orchestra. "Turn him out," was the general cry. After a violent struggle, this mighty Prince was turned out of the house. When order was restored, the principals and a part of the choir returned, and the chorus was repeated [!!!].

However, Frederick could often show enough charm to suit his purposes:

Pantheon Concert.

. . . at the conclusion of the Concert, the African Prince entered the great room (500 in attendance), and was wonderfully struck with the magnificent appearance of the company and the place, and in return was very much noticed by the ladies for his elegant and gentlemanlike deportment.

[*London Times*, February 13, 1790]

After now addressing the question of Bridgetower's entry into English society, the question of Frederick becomes paramount.

The above and other English sources now enable us to establish without a doubt the following facts: (1) the first appearance of Bridgetower in England was not at Bath

(Edwards) or London (Grove/Wright) but at the Brighthelmstone resort where the Prince of Wales had established a residence in 1787; (2) that the first sponsoring patron of Bridgetower was not the King but the Prince of Wales; (3) that Frederick was born in the West Indies, possibly Jamaica; (4) that the young prodigy made his English debut in January of 1790.

Having now cleared up certain particulars from the July (1789) to February (1790) period, later events not mentioned in Matthews or Wright command our attention. For example, the unreported appearance (Wright) at a benefit for Mr. Huttley at the Freemason's Hall, March 29, 1790 or Frederick's outrageous conduct at the performance of the Messiah (March 12, 1790) to which the London Times alludes to in its March 15th issue:

The Black Prince would do well, before he dare to
disturb the peace of the English audiences – to study
the old ballad – of

“There's a difference I sing,
“Twix a Beggar and a King.”

Within a week of the Huttley appearance, Frederick's antics were brought to the attention of the Prince (see references in Pappendiek) but even the press was observant:

The Prince of Wales has lately taken under his royal protection the young man who was so much the object of admiration at the late Oratorios at Drury-Lane (“Master Bridgetower, a young musical phenomenon, not yet ten years old who performed on

the violin with astonishing excellence” in the European Magazine, February, 1790, p. 14), for his performance on the violence [sic]. –His father stiles himself an African Prince, upon what authority, we will not pretend to say . . . He is at present in a state of insanity (!!!).

[*Gazetter*, April 9, 1790]

It is now easily seen that within an eight-month interval, the young prodigy’s father had made himself so obnoxious as to become unwanted but who else was there to protect the interests of the boy violinist? The Prince of Wales by his position in society obviously felt it his duty to be the principal instrument in breaking the family bond. Certainly one not in an official capacity could have achieved that success for the issues of slavery and involuntary servitude were still paramount in the debates of Parliament and the English courts.

As to Bridgetower’s father, it has been shown that in his eagerness to promote the boy he alienated much of the nobility most capable of securing for him the proper entrance into the proper society. The judgement “that it was he [Frederick] who utilized his charm and talent to open the hearts and purse strings of English audiences [=nobility] to this ten-year-old prodigy” [Wright] falls rather flat. It was probably for the protection of the boy’s potentials that the English society had patience with Frederick. Moreover, even if Frederick were prone to “excesses in wine and women” (?) [Wright] they were not enough grounds to legally remove the child from his proper custodians. Likewise, the boy’s own explanation

[Papendiek/Matthews] does not quite ring true as fact but imagination.

Most puzzling in Wright's review after being privy in examining records at Windsor is her failure to mention (if they were found) pertinent documents to show how the Prince of Wales was able to remove the ten-year old from the custody of both parents. Were there no documents in the Royal Archives pertaining to a legitimate custodial transfer?

That the Prince regent had shown great charity in providing for the boy (the Benefit at Hanover-Square) [Wright mentions payments to the boy beginning in 1792 two years after Frederick was removed as custodian] which surely required some official or legal sanction for young George was not even a citizen of that country! [See this writer's summary of the insanity charge against Blind Tom Bethune and the conclusions in *Free At Last: Legal Aspects of Blind Tom Bethune*, 1976].

In presenting these new items relative to Frederick's and George's early biographies, one must also look at the time period: after 1799. The first of two other overlooked items is revealed in a relatively late published source: *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Managers and Other Stage Personnel in London: 1660-1800* (Southern Illinois University Press, Carbondale and Edwardsville, copyright 1973, edited by Philip Highfill, Jr., et al.), II, ;. 332f., which gave sparse but new data:

- (a) that upon the recommendation of William Dance (1755-1840), July 5, 1807, Bridgetower gave his date of birth as October 11, 1778 on the application to become a member of the Royal Society of Musicians;
- (b) that he was elected a member of the above society on October 4, 1807;
- (c) he was called upon to give a formal explanation in June, 1808 for sending a ‘deputy’ to the May, 1808 performance at St. Paul;
- (d) he had other engagements with the Society in the years 1809, 1811 and 1813;
- (e) his marriage to spinster Marie Leach Leake (not Drake as in Edwards), March 9, 1816 at age thirty seven (37) (see further in registers of St. George Church, Hanover Square, marriage records 1810-1823);
- (f) on December 7, 1828, he asked the Royal Society to drop his name because he was going abroad;
- (g) the estate of less than 1,000 pounds was bequeathed to his wife’s sister, Clara Leach Leake Stuart of Scotland and was handled by a friend, Samuel Appleby.

A second item eluding the Bridgetower biographers may be found in James D. Brown’s (b. 1862-d. 1914) biographical sketch in his *Biographical Dictionary of Musicians; With a Bibliography of English Writing on Music* (Mitchell Library, Glasgow, Alexander Gardner, Paisley; and 12 Pater Noster Row, London, 1886, p. 116. Brown [only 24 years old!] obviously had access to Bridgetower’s compositions (is this Eitner’s *und ander.?*) mentioning in particular such works as a “Jubilee Quintet for strings, string duets, trios, and quartets, songs, etc.” He adds, with caution, “He [Bridgetower] was a good performer, but his compositions are not of any merit.”

With so many omissions and discrepancies now visible in all Bridgetower's biographical sketches it is apparent that what was once believed to have been an accurate and reflective study of his life and works has been but mere window dressing. No legitimate performer-musician-composer deserves so shabby a treatment.

Edwards' work was pioneering – he died a year later, unable to do more. Wright partially failed as a thorough investigator in her mission by omitting historical items and other important questions and both MGG and Grove (1979) show themselves to be mere copiers.

Edwards' article contained but three serious errors: (1) listing the *Mercure de Paris* (which becomes the *Journal de Paris* in Wright, fn.11) April 13, 1789 but which this writer found in *Mercure de France*, May 2, 1789; (2) the incorrect month on the letter to Baron Alexandre de Wezlar, and (3) a misreading of Bridgetower's mother's name, Drake instead of Leake.

On the other hand, Wright's article, still continuing somewhat Edwards' errors, containing a spelling error of Bridgetower's birthplace, Baila instead of Biala, a mis-reading of a program (March 11, 1790) which does not list Madam Mara, née Elizabeth Schmelling, who in spite of premature notices did not arrive for her 1790 appearance until April (see *London Times*, April 6, 1790) and having Bridgetower appear only at the first instead of all five of the Professional Concerts, March 15, 1790. Most serious is her assigning Viotti an age "four years older than the black violinist" when Viotti's birthdate in most

lexicons is given as 1745 making him some thirty-four (34) years older than Bridgetower. Perhaps some of Wright's errors were typographical but are certainly in need of correction as should errors found in Hare, MGG and Grove (1979), etc.

**INFORMATION FROM
FARLEY'S BRISTOL JOURNAL 1788-1790.**

January 9, 1790, p. 2/3

Bristol, January 2, 1790

January 1, 1790

Copy of letter from Venanzio Rauzzini from Bath, Jan. 1, 1790 to Mr Bridgetower, Bristol

“Sir,(copy)

The under-mentioned Gentlemen are engaged and will attend at your Concert this evening: Messrs. Mahon, Montford, Teby, Shell, Ashley, Perry, J. Ashley, Henrard, Whitehead.

As to Mr. Herschell, I am afraid he will not get leave from the Ball. I wish you good success, and am,

Your obedient servant
Venanzio Rauzzini.”

Dated Bristol, January 2, 1790

Most anxiously solicitous to prevent any misrepresentation of what passed last evening (January 1, 1790), at the Assembly-Room, between Mr. B. [Bridgetower] and myself, and from respect to those numerous and respectable friends, whose patronage I have been honoured with, I feel it a duty which I owe to them, to myself, and to the public to request their

attention to the following statement of facts, which occurred previous to that transaction.

Mr. X, my very warm-friend, kindly conducted the whole business for me; and on my going to Bath, I desired him to forward to me there, the particulars of my obligations to the GentlemenVirtuosi.

Mr. B charged Five Guineas...whereas Miss and Mr. Mahon only charged Five Guineas for joint services [2 ½ Guineas each].

Bridgetower had a bad night! He insisted upon leading the band which the sponsors denied. Mr. X's son had been asked to lead. He then attempted to reason with Mr. Bridgetower who was inflexible and further suggested accompanying him and to sit in the audience. Bridgetower was still "inexorable" resulting in Mr. X "addressing the Ladies and Gentlemen in the manner I did."

On the bill sent to Rauzzini it was noted that Mr. Herschell had charged Two Guineas and a Half Guineas which he discovered was entered without his consent. This resulted in Herschell leaving Bath to meet [me] at Bristol . . . observing that it was not his intention to take a shilling for his services.

The article was signed "BRIDGETOWER." [Was this an error on the printer's part or was something left out of this letter?]

This letter shows that Mr. Bridgetower was not opposed to falsifying the expense account!

New Conclusions:

Bridgetower, George Augustus Polgreen (1778-1860)
Violinist/composer.

Probably the earliest and best known prodigy of color, Bridgetower's story has never been satisfactorily completed. That such a prodigious career should have eluded even the best of scholars is not surprising. Nor have novelists penetrated a more exact story of his career. As a "musician of color" he left no biography and therefore our knowledge is limited to certain episodes in which he was a participant.

Does this music participant deserve a separate biography simply because of his association with Joseph Haydn and later Ludwig Beethoven? It would appear so according to most literature exploring his life. On the other hand almost nothing is mentioned about Bridgetower's personality, or how does he measured with other violinists of the period.

Modern scholarship is often bereft of dates based on factual sources. Many present day writers merely republished what has already been researched resulting in a regurgitation of the same nourishment over and over.

But let us not be fooled! Important facts and new documents now cry out for inclusion and the Bridgetower episodes are but one effort among hundreds of others.

The Family Genealogy.

The anglicized name Bridgetower for a black person of non-English birth could be better explained. For over the past 30 years (since 1981) his genealogy has been available and republished in a little known source which

set the record straight. However, American researchers deliberately boycotted this publication because of jealousy and seeking to minimize this scholars efforts. Chief among them was Eileen Southern and her cadre of writers. Others who hung onto her coattails maintained the same hostility. Southern's primary interest was not to do extensive research but to codify what had been published in previous years. She refused to use more up date published materials if one did not send her a free copy.

If Frederick's origins were in Jamaica prior to the announcement of 1789, is he really the same "Frederick Augustus the Moor," who [in Rosenbaum] married a Saxon [N.B.] woman and, according to Landon [see in Wright], died in the service of Nicholas in 1790? Is he further the same Frederic who, in the visitor's book of the Electorate Library in Dresden, stated that he came from the English colony of the Barbados? If so, how did he get from Jamaica to the Barbados to Poland to Hungary to France to England, etc., etc., without more legitimate credentials?

Retrenching still another moment, one looks at Thayer's remark that the elder Bridgetower was a "ship captain" one of the many circulating rumors about the father. It further raises a new question: Was he somehow connected with the household of Thomas Polgreen of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania who had been active in trade in the West Indies [viz. *American Weekly Mercury*, August 15-22, 1753] since the name Polgreen has never been explained in biographies on Bridgetower? The archives of Jamaica, Poland, Hungary, Dresden, Vienna and France have never been fully combed for relevant material.

After his mother's died at Budissen (September 11, 1807) he undoubtedly attended the funeral but further documentation has not been secured. There was no will.

Bridgetower's father's name appears in two forms: Joseph Frederick and Frederick Augustus.

Ancestry

The earliest Bridgetower story begins with information about his grandfather who was probably of African heritage [see page 41]. During the period in which the Dutch were active in the slave trade, the grandfather was committed to the care of a Dutch captain. This captain was reportedly given a large amount of diamonds and gold dust to provide for the boy's education in Europe.

The slavery period was never fully monitored and like other slaves of the period the Dutch captain was not trustworthy. After receiving the tribute to educate the young lad, he reportedly treated him cruelly and after tiring of this attention sold the lad as a slave to a planter on the island of Jamaica and left to experience whatever treatment the planter desired.

According to certain documents, his new Jamaican master gave him kind treatment and even allowed him the privilege of marriage to an African woman. To this union a son, Fredrick, was born and destined to become the father of the musical prodigy. He, too, incurred the favor of his Jamaican master who after the grandfather's demise, spent a large sum to have young Frederick instructed in "several languages." Frederick would have opportunity to use his language skills at a later time.

At age fifteen, Frederick was allowed to take a voyage in Africa, perhaps to visit his African relatives. Armed with proper documents he sailed from Jamaica to the African shores. However, fate intervened and the ship was wrecked and his documents lost. The fate of the shipwreck is unknown but Frederick was at this early age had to earn his livelihood which he did by acting as an interpreter to several “Potentates” then active in Europe. While secured at while at Biala/Viala, Poland he courted and married the daughter, Ann, of a Polish count (incorrectly given as 1788 in one source). To this union George and a Frederick were born. It is suspected that Frederick was the younger. George, in later documents gives his birth as October, 11, 1778.⁵ Thus between these years the young prodigy received his earliest impressions both in language and music of European music.

At some period between 1778 and 1788, he is reported to have been given instruction under Josef Haydn (dates) in Germany.

Important new facts concerning the question of his supposed “African” origins⁶

⁵ As reported in the AAMR I (1981), p. 174, Bridgetower gave his date of birth as October 11, 1778. We have inserted new material not found in AAMR I.

⁶ First published by this writer in *Black Musicians of and In the New World: The Exodus to Europe* (lecture for the American Musicological Society, Latin American Meeting, Washington, D. C., 1974) between pages 2 and 3 which was taken from the American publication *Human Rights*. This document gave the earliest published report on Frederick (passed on to Henry Schwartzchild, American Civil Liberties Union, New York, 1974).

EUROPEAN ACCOUNTS, BY THE LAST ARRIVALS.

LONDON, JULY 30,
AFRICAN GENIUS

The African Prince now at Brighthelmstone, has a son ten years old, possessed of amazing musical talents.

This extraordinary genius has been presented to the Prince of Wales, who intends to recommend him to the Professional Concert, as an acceptable novelty to the admirers and lovers of music.

He plays with exquisite *mastership* on the violin.

The grandfather of this extraordinary youth was committed to the care of a Dutch Captain, with diamonds to a great amount, and gold dust, to be carried to Europe and educated.

After experiencing much barbarous treatment from the avaricious Hollander, the unfortunate Prince was sold, as a slave, to a Jamaica planter.

The unhappy man met, however, with a kind master to alleviate his misfortunes, and married an African woman, by whom he had the father of this admirable boy.

At the grandfather's demise, the father was still higher in his master's favor, at whose expense he was instructed in several languages.

At the age of fifteen, he was permitted to take a voyage to Africa, with proper testimonials of his birth; but by a singular fatality was shipwrecked, and lost his documents.

Being conversant in several languages, he gained a subsistence by acting as interpreter to various foreign Potentates in Europe.

In this situation he lived till the year 1778. When he was on the confines of Poland he won the heart of a Polish Count's daughter, who was charmed with the "hair-breadth escapes," and adventures of this second *Othello*.

The Count gave him his daughter, who is the mother of our musical hero.

The father discovering in the child a very early attachment to music, placed him under the celebrated HAYDN in Germany, from whom he received his musical education. From such culture, we may reasonably presage perfection.

Fortunately, the above notice found in this American anti-slavery organ gave its source, the *Gazette of the United States*, October 7, 1789. A recheck of that source proved that the article, indeed, had been accurately transcribed, however, it provided no clue to the original London source other than "European Accounts, By the Last Arrivals, London, July 30, African Genius."

No English source of that date, July 30, seen by this writer at that time could confirm the London notice until the records at the Library Company of Philadelphia could supply the elusive item.

With this new and secure knowledge about the origins of the grandfather and father one proceeds to the next step of identification about his parentage.

Ostensibly one source writes:

Poland:—Great news- Ann has given birth to my first son! We have named him George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower. I vow that he will not pass his life in slavery. (Signed) John Frederick Bridgetower and dated 1778.

This would signal that young Bridgetower's mother's name was Ann.(Mary Ann Bridgetower, who died at Budissen on the 11th of September, 1807). Mary Ann's maiden name is never given thus frustrating genealogists! As was custom of the period the young boy's future was overseen by his father.

Omitted from this and other sources is any announcement of the birth of George's brother Frederick.

Again this source mentions young George ostensibly by his father in 1783 when he is only 5 years old!:

Poland.—My young son George is a bright intelligent boy who already has a great gift for music. I wonder if I can make use of my position as servant to Prince Estherházy of Hungary to help my son? (Signed John Frederick Bridgetower).

In still another notice two years later John Frederick, admitting poverty, seeks a way to further the career of this new novelty.

What eludes us at this point is the young boy's possible teachers. Was it Haydn who during these years was employed in Hungary or another violinist of talent.

The musical scenario beginning about 1750 was dominated by the successes of Haydn and Mozart. Handel's popularity had continued after his death in 1750 and Bach's popularity had just become known in England.

Haydn, during these years, was extremely active at the court of Esterhazy with the Mannheim school period. Mozart died December 5, 1791.

The first appearance of young Bridgetower as a musical genius was reported to be in France in 1787.

Paris:—I have just watched the debut performance of a young prodigy, George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower. His playing is perfect, with a clear good tone, spirit, pathos and good taste. And he is only nine years old! He will surely go far.
(Signed A Courtier)

Still another performance in Paris added to his reputation when he performed a St. George violin concerto (April 11, 1789) prior to the French Revolution but is swiftly taken by his Jamaican born father to the English shores.

Indeed, the *Bristol Journal* of August 22, 1789 had recorded Bridgetower at Brighthelmstone performing at the time of the Prince's birthday (August 14-15 notices).⁷

⁷ See further in the *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, July 28, 1789, 4/4. The July 30 date obviously signaled another publication two days later (the *Whitehall Evening Post* July 28-30) than that in the *Gazetteer* and a research of the *London Times* shows that the same item appeared in the June 11, 1789 issue but without the caption 'African Genius'.

The musical world is likely to be enriched by the greatest phaenomenon every heard—a youth of ten years old, pupil of the immortal Haydn; he performs the most difficult pieces on the violin, and goes through all the mazes of sound with wonderful spirit, execution and delicacy.—His name is Bridgetower, a sable plant of African growth.—Thus do we find that genius does not solely belong to the tincture of a skin.!

Having noted the success of this prodigy the Prince of Wales looking for novelties which might entertain the melancholy King (one must remember that the Revolutionary War had removed the American colonies from the jurisdiction of the English) had him presented before the King in Windsor (dates and source). So pleased were their Majesties that he was presented the sum of ten guineas by each. A six-line tribute of this affair appeared in the press:

On the MUSICAL PHENOMENON.

Whilst sable Afric's royal son
Through the sweet maze of music run,
And by his mingled powers of play,
Made Majesty, or grav(e), or gay;
The mighty Monarch was beguil'd,
And own'd a master in a Child!

An attempt at giving the prodigy a benefit was curtailed because the Queen's Band was engaged in litigation regarding their salaries and His Majesty was obliged not to pressure them. Therefore a proposed benefit could not take place.

Frederick, the father was probably in dire circumstances financially and had to make decisions regarding his and his young son's finances and decided to seek elsewhere to engage the boy and by using notices from London sought concerts at Bath (November),⁸ Bristol (December) and possibly at other places, unrecorded.

Notice December 3, 1789 (Bath Chronicle, French translation)

Les amateurs de la musique de cette ville ont profité samedi dans les nouvelles salles du plus merveilleux spectacle imaginable du Maître Bridgetower don't l'interprétation a été exquise, son touché et son interprétation au violon sont égales, peut-etre supérieur, au meilleur professeur actuel ou de tous les temps. Ceux qui ont eu ce bonheur ont été ravis par les capacités étonnantes de cet enfant merveilleux agé d'environ dix-ans. Il est un mulâtre et fils d'un prince africain.

ON SATURDAY Morning next,
the 5th of December, at the ASSEMBLY-
ROOMS in BATH, will be a CONCERT of
VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC,
FOR THE BENEFIT OF
Maister George Augustus Frederick Bridgtower,
A Youth of Ten Years old,
Pupil of the celebrated HAYDN; where Maister
BRIDGTOWER will devolope his talents on the
Violin. — Tickets 5s. each.

The Bath concert of December 5th was also advertised in the *Bristol Journal* [November 28] in hopes of attracting interested connoisseurs. It was then planned to present the young prodigy at Bristol and the local newspaper carried the following notice.

A review on December 8, 1789: (Bath Morning Post)

⁸ Check *Bath Morning Post* December 3-8, 1789. Also published in Farley's *Bristol Journal*, November 28, 1789.

The young African Prince, whose musical talents have been so much celebrated, had a more crowded and splendid concert on Sunday morning than has ever been known in this place. There were upwards of 550 persons present, and they were gratified by such skills on the violin as created general astonishment, as well as pleasure from the boy wonder. The father was in the gallery, and so affected by the applause bestowed on his son, that tears of pleasure and gratitude flowed in profusion.

A S S E M B L Y - R O O M,
PRINCE'S-STREET, BRISTOL.

BY PARTICULAR DESIRE of
the LADIES and GENTLEMEN of this opu-
lent City, who honoured

Master BRIDG TOWER

With their presence, on FRIDAY the 18th of Dec.
Instant, there will be

A GRAND CONCERT

Of Vocal and Instrumental MUSIC,

On FRIDAY next, the 1st of *January*, 1790;
Where Master BRIDG TOWER, a Youth of Ten
Years old, pupil of the celebrated *Huydn*, will
display his Talents on the VIOLIN.

TICKETS 5s. each, to be had at all the
Coffee-Houses; and at the Printing-Office in Small-
Street.

* To begin precisely at Seven o'Clock.

However, the January performance had to await another appearance in Bath on December 24th during a performance of Handel's oratorio.

NEW ASSEMBLY - ROOMS, BATH.

FOR the Benefit of Mr. *Rauzzini*,
on THURSDAY, next Dec 24th, 1789 (being
Christmas Eve) will be performed in the GREAT
ROOM

The Sacred Oratorio of The MESSIAH,

Principal VOCAL PERFORMERS.

Miss CANTELO, Miss MAHON, Mr. INCLE-
DON, Master TAYLOR, Mr. RUSSELL,
and Mr. HARRISON.

Principal INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMERS.

First Violin, Mr. BROOKS.

Violoncello, Mr. HERSCHELL.

Oboe, Mr. ASHLEY.

Clarinet, Mr. MAHON.

Basoon, Mr. HOLMES.

Organ, Mr. J. WARBROUGH:

And Piano-Forte, Mrs. MILES, (late Miss GUEST.)

Between the 1st and 2d act, a Concerto on the
Violin by Master BRIDG TOWER.—And between
the 2d and 3d act, a Concerto on the OBOE, by
Mr. HARRINGTON, (being his last appearance.)

With a FULL BAND and CHORUS.

Tickets 5s. each, to be had of Mr. *Rauzzini*, at
Mr. Birchall's, Queen-square; at the Pump-room,
York-house, Libraries, Coffee-houses, Lintern's
Music-shop, and the New Rooms.

BRISTOL, January 2, 1790.

MOST anxiously solicitous to prevent any misrepresentation of what passed last evening, at the Assembly-Room, between Mr. B. and myself, and from respect to those numerous and respectable friends, whose patronage I have been honoured with, I feel it a duty which I owe to them, to myself, and to the public, to request their attention to the following statement of facts, which occurred previous to that transaction.

The first time my Son's talent received the distinguished approbation of the Ladies and Gentlemen inhabitants and visitors of this opulent city, that worthy gentleman, Mr. ———, my very warm friend, kindly conducted the whole business for me; and on my going to Bath, I desired him to forward to me there, the particulars of my obligations to the GENTLEMEN VIRTUOSI. — On the following day, Mr. ——— favoured me with the bill of the expences, in which, to my very great astonishment, I observed the enormous charge of *Five Guineas* was made by Mr. B. and my surprize was not a little increased, when on looking further, I found that Miss and Mr. Mahon for their joint services, expected a gratuity of *only the same sum*; so great a disparity in the demand of the two parties, led me to think, that there might possibly be a mistake in the bill.—Desirous of informing myself more particularly on the subject, and meeting with Mr. Mahon at Mr. Rauzzini's Concert at Bath, on Christmas Eve, I invited that gentleman to breakfast with me the following morning, and he obligingly came. On my relating the circumstances to him, he delivered such sentiments as do him honor, and which he expell'd to me in the following terms:—"Mr. Bridgtower, I was so much hurt at seeing you had so bad a night at Bristol, that my feelings of humanity, would not suffer me to ask you more than *Five Guineas* for my sister and self;" on this, I presented that Gentleman with a Bank Note of Five Guineas, and requested his acceptance of One Guinea more, at the same time expressing my hopes, that if I had a second benefit at Bristol, to be favoured with his leading the band.—His modest reply was, "I should be very happy to serve Mr. Bridgtower, but at the same time, I would wish to avoid doing any thing that might wound Mr. B.'s feelings."—To this I replied, "that the difference I had experienced in the conduct of the two Gentlemen towards me, was such, that I should feel myself comforted, if he would grant me that favor, and that with respect to every other arrangement, I would myself, undertake the management."—On those terms I received the Gentleman's words in favor of my wishes, IN THE PRESENCE OF MR. ———.

On the day of the Concert, I had the honour of partaking of a New Year's Dinner at Mr. ———'s, and to my inexplicable surprize, a few minutes before it was time to go to the Rooms, Mr. ——— came to inform me, that Mr. B. was arrived, and insisted on leading the Band.—To which I replied,

"I have not invited Mr. B. as this letter (showing him Mr. Rauzzini's favor^d) will evince to you."—"Very well," said the Gentleman, "this letter very clearly decides the business."—Still however, determined, to prevent, if possible, any unpleasant altercation, I enquired of the Gentleman for Mr. B.'s lodgings, where I instantly went, and found that Gentleman dressing—On entering his room, I offer'd him the compliments of a happy New Year, expressing at the same time how very glad I was to see him, *although I was really unhappy*; but my confidence in his heart, full of humanity and the feelings of a tender father, will, I flatter myself plead in my favor, for what I am about to relate.

Mr. B. said to me, "I very much wonder that Mr. ——— has said nothing to me of this Concert, for I hope he is not ignorant that my intentions are to lead."—My reply was as follows: "My dear friend! this being the commencement of the New Year, my Son, in offering his filial duties to me this morning, expressed to me how much he should be flattered, if I would permit him to head the Concert on the beginning of the year.—Having, in consequence, promised the child, your appearance has distressed me exceedingly, and I am at a loss how to act in the affair.—I should not like to lose the boy's confidence in me, by not fulfilling my promise, and making him as happy as he desired and expected to be; therefore do you come and sit with me among the audience, and hear what the little fellow will be about."

Mr. B. replied, "Lead or not, *Five Guineas* I will have."—"That you shall have, (said I) but lead to night you cannot," and so saying I left him, and went to the Concert Room, where I had not been many minutes, before the Gentleman appear'd, and taking his violin, began putting the instrument in order.—On this, I went to the orchestra, and taking Mr. B. aside, intreated him not to be inflexible, but let the boy lead, (for I did not like to hurt his feelings, by telling him Mr. Mahon led.)—His last reply was, "Lead I will, you may do your best."—Then said I, "I must take a step which I would wish to avoid; be persuaded once more, I pray you."—Mr. B. was inexorable, and I was compelled to address the Ladies and Gentlemen in the manner I did.

I called on Mr. B. the next morning to apologise for the step which his conduct had forced me to take.—Thus have I stated the case, and on the word of a man, who holds Truth to be of that sacred nature, that no circumstance can render any deviation from it, otherwise than criminal.

I cannot conclude this statement, without expressing my obligations to Mr. Herichell, whose name appear'd in the bill of expences for the *First Concert*, as having charged me Two Guineas and a Half for his assistance, when, on scrutinizing the business, it was clearly ascertained, that no such charge was ever made by Mr. H. but that the same was made by Mr. B. in Mr. H.'s name, without his consent.—A circumstance which gave so much uneasiness to that Gentleman, that as soon as he heard it, he came from Bath to me at Bristol, purposely to explain; observing that it was not his intention to take a shilling for his services.

BRIDGTOWER.

"S: r, *(C O P Y.)
THE under-mentioned Gentlemen are engaged and will attend at your Concert this evening:
Messrs. Mahon, Montford, Teby, Shell, Ashley, Perry, J. Ashley, Henard, Whitehead.

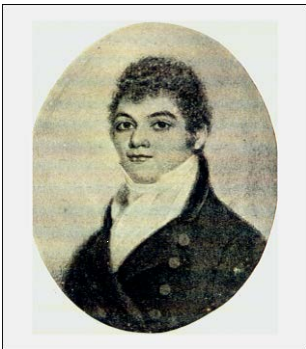
As to Mr. Herichell, I am afraid he will not get leave from the Ball. I wish you good success, and am,
Your obedient servant,

VENANZIO RAUZZINI."

Bath, Jan. 1, 1790.
Tobin, Bridgtower, Bristol.

Enjoying success at both Bath and Bristol there were some facts which surfaced regarding these appearance

NEW ASSEMBLY ROOMS. BATH.
 Mrs. M I L E S ' S
 (*Late Miss GUEST*)
 C O N C E R T
 O F
 Vocal and Instrumental MUSICK,
 W I L L B E
 On WEDNESDAY next, Jan. 6th, 1790.
 A C T I.
 OVERTURE—PLEYEL.
 SONG, Mr. INGLETON. *O' Cynthia*—RAUZZINI.
 SONG, Miss CANTELO—SARTI.
 CONCERTO BASSOON, Mr. HOLMES.
 SONG, Mr. HARRISON—PEROTTI.
 Concerto Oboe, Mr. FISCHER.
 A C T II.
 (*Selected from HANDEL's works.*)
 CONCERTO PIANO-FORTE, Mrs. MILES.
 OVERTURE—BERENICE.
 CHORUS, *The many rend the skies*—ALEXANDER'S
 FEAST.
 SONG. Mr. HARRISON.
 CONCERTO VIOLIN, Master BRIDGTOWER
 —JARNOWICK.
 SONG, Miss CANTELO, *O magnify the LORD*—
 ANTHEMS.
 CHORUS. *Fix'd in his everlasting seat*—SAMSON.
 To begin at half past six o'clock.
 Tickets, FIVE SHILLINGS each, to be had at the
 Pump-Room, New-Rooms, York-House, Librar-
 ies, Coffee-Houses, *Lintern's* musick-shop, and of
 Mrs. MILES, No. 34, Brock-street, Bath.



By January, 1790 it was decided to introduce the boy to the London public and Madam Schwellenberg and those of her circle were responsible. This event took place on January 23. It was not a success for fewer than fifty persons attended. The lack of publicity could have been a factor.

Meanwhile, the father was busy building up an image for himself as well as for the boy often appearing at various programs between January and February. He succeeded and on February 19, 1790 George was presented between

parts 1 and 2 of the performance of the “Messiah” given at Drury Lane. He continued in performances until March. Little is known about the period from March, 1790 to May/June, 1791 the time of the Handel Commemoration of 1791 at Westminster Abbey.

His father, meanwhile, had made himself obnoxious to the “genteel” English public, having once appeared at a function of the Prince of Wales advocating the abolition of slavery. In March, he was ejected from Covent Gardens for creating a disturbance at the end of the Second Act. By the end of the month, the Prince of Wales had the young virtuoso removed from his father’s custody and the father panicked (“in a state of insanity”).

[Note]

Brighton:—After years of hearing about the talents of George Bridgetower, I have finally taken him into my patronage. He will live in my Royal Pavillion in Brighton, teaching me music theory and playing in my personal band. This will mean taking the boy away from his parents, but I am sure he will understand the benefits of this; after all, who would turn down the fame and fortune of being the Prince Regent’s favourite? I will pay the father £25 to take over the care of his son.

[Signed The Prince Regent]

Thus from April to the following year, young Bridgetower was under the direct patronage of the Prince of Wales who provided for his musical studies and general schooling.

Little mentioned during the 1790 period are the activities of the Chevalier de Saint George who, like Bridgetower’s father, had fled France when the Revolution struck. The Chevalier had gone to London and where gave many performances as well as engaged in

many duels. Frederick may have renewed his acquaintance with St. George and thus the young Bridgetower may have received some initial coaching, perhaps even learning one of his violin concertos.

In 1792 young Bridgetower performed on February 20 (Kings Theatre), March 30 (Kings Theatre) April 15 (at the Salomon concerts featuring Haydn) and May 28 at a benefit of Barthelemon performing a concerto of Viotti. On October 31, 1793 he performed a Haydn quartet as well as the eleventh solo of Corelli.

By 1794, May 26, he is found again performing at a benefit for Barthelemon but also had been performing in the theatre orchestra in the Lenten oratorios at Covent Garden (Wright), a position he held for a number of years. Bridgetower was only sixteen years of age in 1794!⁹

With years still ahead of him for study with profit, he obviously continued his studies until well into the next century. However, it is not until he bids to visit his mother in 1802¹⁰ and gave concerts in Dresden July 24 and later March 18, 1803 that he began to obtain a greater celebrity. On the latter program he performed two violin concertos, violin variations and a rondo for violin. Also on that program was a violoncello concerto by Mr. [Frederick] Bridgetower, undoubtedly his brother.

On April 16, 1803 he was in Vienna where he was invited by Beethoven. During this interval he petitioned

⁹ George Bridgetower is listed in *A Musical Directory for the Year 1794* DOANE, Joseph. London. Published by R. H. Westley, Stationer, 201 Strand. Re-issued by the Royal College of Music, London, 1993. In 1794 he resided at 20, Eaton Street, Pimlico. In 1805 he resided at No. 4. Great Ryuder-street, St. James.

¹⁰ Notice: How wonderful to see my boy again, and how big he's grown. Quite the grand young gentleman too! He has been so in demand during his visit that I have barely snatched a few moments with him, but I could not be more proud. I am only sad that he must return again to England. With love.

[Signed Ann Bridgetower, 1802]

Beethoven to write something for his various recitals and on May 24 Beethoven had completed his sonata in A minor (now titled “Kreutzer” sonata, Op. 47). The last allegro had originally belonged to his first sonata, Op. 30 in A major and the first movement had not yet been finished. This was done by Beethoven’s copyist, Ferdinand Ries about 4:30 A.M. the morning of the concert. The piano part, however, still not written out and was consequently improvised by Beethoven from his notes.¹¹ The entire composition was, of course, dedicated to “Bridgetower.”¹² By July, he was seen at the Esterhazy residence prior to his return to England during the same month.

Little is recorded about his ventures between 1803 and 1805.¹³ In the latter year, May 23, he presented a concert under the patronage of HRH, the Prince of Wales. On this program was his brother, Frederick Bridgetower [sic] who performed the violoncello concerto of Romberg¹⁴ [dates]

¹¹ Vienna 1803:—My Sonata for Pianoforte and Violin in A, dedicated to George Bridgetower, is a success. I had barely finished it by the first performance, though, and so George had to read his part over my shoulder as I played at the piano. He even changed some parts, which I gratefully admit he improved. I have presented him with a gift – a tuning fork – as a token of my admiration.

[Signed Beethoven]

¹² Ostensibly from Beethoven in Vienna: I have just performed with a startling new talent George Bridgetower. A very capable virtuoso who has a complete command of his instrument. I must say, I feel so inspired by his skill that I may write some music especially for him.

¹³ Another note from Beethoven (1804) – That Bridgetower has no manners! At 26 a young man should know his place! He has dared to insult a woman with whom he knows I am in love. Will never speak to him again and I have already-renamed his sonata after another great violinist, Rudolphe Kreutzer.

[Signed Yours Beethoven]

¹⁴ The Rombergs were born in Dinklage, father, Anton and son, In 1789 while playing in the orchestra of the Prince Elector/Archbishop of Cologne, they met young Beethoven who had admiration for Bernard. However, it is reported that he had difficulty understanding some of Beethoven’s musical ideas and rejected Beethoven’s offer to write a cello concerto. Bernard was very innovative in cello

NEW ROOMS, Hanover-square.—Under the Patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince of WALES.—Mr. BRIDGETOWER begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry, and his Friends, that his CONCERT will take place **TUTh EVENING**, the 21d of May. Mrs. Billington and Mr. J. Cramer have kindly offered to play the same Duet as at Messrs. Cramer's Concert on Monday last.—Act I. Overture, Zauberflöte; Mozart. Song, Signor Morelli; Cimarosa. Concerto Violoncello, Mr. F. Bridgetower; Romberg. Song, Signor Viganoni; Puer. *Seretto* for Violin, Tenor, Violoncello, Clarinet, Horn, Bassoon, and Double Bass, by Messrs. Bridgetower, Shield, F. Bridgetower, Kroner, Rehn, Malsh, and Dragonetti; Beethoven. Song, Mrs. Ade. Concerto Violin, Mr. Bridgetower; Bridgetower.—Act II. New Grand Symphony; Beethoven. Scene, Miss Parke; Guglielmi. New Grand Duet for Two Piano-fortes, Mrs. Billington and Mr. Cramer; Cramer. Duet, Miss Parke and Signor Viganoni. Fugue. Piano-forte, Mr. G. Smart.—Tickets, half-a-guinea each, to be had of Mr. Bridgetower, No. 4, Great Ryder-street, St. James's; Birchall's, New Bond-street; Monzani's, Old Bond-street; Clement and Co, Cheap-side; and Betts, Royal Exchange.

and later joined in a Septet (not sextet) for violin, tenor, violoncello, clarinet, horn, bassoon and double bass (Op. 20) featuring George Bridgetower, Shield, F. Bridgetower, Kroner, Rehn, Malsh and Dragonetti by Beethoven. In addition, Bridgetower performed his own violin concerto.

In the second part, Act 11. Bridgetower-presented the “new Grand Symphony” of Beethoven. Whether this was the new “Eroica” (given its first performance April 7, 1805 with Beethoven conducting) must still be determined. If true, then this signals a continued relationship with Beethoven which needs some resolution.

On July 5, 1807, upon the recommendation of William Dance [1755-1840], Bridgetower’s application to become a member of the Royal Society of Musicians was received. He was elected on October 4, 1807¹⁵ nearly two

design including notation in only three clefs (Boccherini often used six. He often performed from memory. Bernard, born 1767, was active in Paris when fourteen years old. Bernard. He had toured in public at age of seven and toured with his cousin Andreas and was on tour during the French revolution in Italy, Spain and Portugal and especially in Madrid (Ferdinand II). With his cousin, Andreas, in late 1796, they gave a concert in which Beethoven performed.

¹⁵ Royal Society of Musicians: We have the pleasure of electing a new member to our ranks: George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower. At 28 he is young, but incredibly talented and has more experience in teaching and performance than most men twice his age. He is also recently married, and is highly respectable.

months after his mother had died at Budissen (September 11). Undoubtedly he attended the funeral but that documentation must be secured. Thus he was involved in the Society's performances during the entire year. However, in May, he sent a "deputy" in his place at a performance at St. Paul and in June was called upon to give a formal explanation for his absence. Continued engagements for the years 1809, 1811 and 1813 found him in faithful attendance.

Bridgetower registered at the University of Cambridge (ca. 1809/10) where he took the Bachelor of Music degree, graduating in 1811. This exercise was arranged to celebrate the election of HRH, the Duke of Gloucester, as Chancellor of the University. It was scripted so that the most celebrated vocal and instrumental performers would add their harmony to the scent. They included Messrs. Braham, Bellamy, Goss, Hawes, &c., Mesdames Catalani, Ashe, &c. Among the instrumental performers were Hague, Bridgetower, Ashley, Wagstass, Venuse, Marshal, Holmes, Gouve, Griffin, Jay, Nichols, Cole, Smith &c.¹⁶ At the commencement exercise, his anthem, based on a poem by F. A. Bawdon was performed by at full band at Great St. Mary's Church, June 30th.¹⁷

¹⁶ On Thursday, June 27th the annual meeting of the President and Governors took place at Great St. Mary's church where sacred music was presented. A concert, performed at the Senate House in the evening found many of the performers in attendance. *Morning Chronicle*, Saturday, June 29, 1811.

¹⁷ A review read: "and then followed an Anthem, composed by Mr. Bridgetower, the celebrated violinist, as an exercise for his Bachelor' degree in music. The composition was elaborate and rich; and highly accredited the talents of the Graduate. The trio, struck us, particularly, by its beauty; but Master Hawes was not equal to his solo parts." The Master of Music [who] at Cambridge could write: "Extraordinary! I have just marked George Bridgetower's examination paper for his Bachelor of Arts Degree. The anthem that was composed during the exam is highly accomplished. I have never seen the like! I will make sure that it is performed by an orchestra."

ANTHEM,

Written by F. A. RAWDON, and composed by G. H. P. BRIDGETOWER as an Exercise for his Bachelor's degree in Music. Performed at St. Mary's Church, CAMBRIDGE, before the Chancellor.

RECITATIVE.

BY faith sublime fair Passiflora steers
Her Pilgrimage along this vale of tears,
The hopes of Heaven alone her thoughts employ,
Christ is her glory, and the Cross her joy.
As the deep organ sounds the hallow'd strain,
With solemn step proceeds the pious train,
In polish'd censers wrought with wondrous care
Three cherub boys the holy incense bear,
Three pious virgins form the holy train,
Join in her prayer, and weep the Lamb that's slain; [gloom,
With solemn step they tread the cloister's Seek its deep shade, and converse with the tomb. [sounds!
Hark! from the walls what sacred anthem
With hymns of praise the vaulted roof

CHORUS.

He died, he died, the Saviour of mankind,
To save our souls his spotless life resign'd;
Yes, how with humble grace the Almighty's Son [be done!
Bow'd to the Cross, and cried "Thy will

AIR.

Astonish'd Nature trembled at the sight,
And veil'd the guilty land in shades of night.
In lofty mountains roll'd the mighty flood,
Earth op'd her jaws, and drank his precious blood.

CHORUS.

"Redemption's ours!" re-echoed from her caves; [graves.
The dead are rous'd, and burst their silent
In hollow tones each from his vault replies,
"We slept in peace secure with God to rise."

RECITATIVE.

Death, vanquish'd, fled and sought his fell abode. [from God:
Sin blush'd with shame, and hid her face

SONG.

While Mercy, rising from the throne of grace,
Pronounc'd free pardon to a sinful race.

TRIO.

Oh may that Cross, on which our Saviour died,
Subdue our passions and our guilty pride;
That we amidst the general wreck shall rise
Preserv'd for purer worlds and brighter skies:

CHORUS.

Mount the bless'd seats of harmony and love, [God above!
Be crown'd with bliss, and live with

During this interval, Bridgetower was still in touch with the Royal House and he dedicated his "Henry Ballad" to the Princess of Wales.¹⁸ In 1812 his "Diatonica Armonica" for the piano-forte was published by R. Birchall. In 1813, Samuel Wesley wrote a letter to a friend expressing his attempt to secure Bridgetower's services for a performance: "I shall endeavor to coax Bridgetower to bring forward his "Catguts & Horsehair" and scrape us out one of the old Humbug's [reference to Beethoven?] Country Dances." He added, regarding the playing of Bridgetower: "I think this will not be negatived by any shew of Hands." Edwards in his summary of Bridgetower

¹⁸ The Princess left England about 1806 and did not return until the coronation of George IV's in 1820. Why Bridgetower dedicated this work might shed some light during the "delicate investigaton" of 1806.

points out performances in 1813 with the Society in which Bridgetower was a participant [viz., May 3 and May 31] on which

Diatonica Armonica
FOR THE
PIANO-FORTE.
BY
BRIDGETOWER, M.B.
DEDICATED TO HIS PUPILS.
LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY R. BURCHALL, AT HIS CIRCULATING LIBRARY,
10, BOND STREET.
PRINTED BY W. BULMER AND CO. CLAPHAM-BROW, ST. JAMES.
1812.

programs were performed Beethoven's string quintette (Bridgetower on 1st violin) and a Mozart quartet (2nd violin).

Three years later he married the spinster, Marie Leach Leake on March 9, 1816 at the St. George Church, Hanover Square (we are not sure of any issue from this union)¹⁹ and from this period until about 1819 having been inactive with the Society he applied for readmission on April 14.

George Bridgetower is one of our greatest musical assets He is approaching 40 now, and is adored by his pupils, highly respected amongst other musicians and continues to play the violin and piano beautifully. We recommend that he is allowed permanent membership of the Philharmonic Society. [Secretary of the Philharmonic Society.]

On November 6th he was readmitted. Edwards suspected that sometime during this period Bridgetower had sought to connect himself with the short-lived Professional Society (ca. 1815). However, no other substantive documentation has been put forth. During this interval, Bridgetower may have been traveling periodically to other places such as Rome (1825 and 1827). On December 7, 1828 he asked the Society to drop his name for he was going abroad again. He was heard of again in London, August, 1843, at Vienna (1846) and St. Cloud, Paris (1848). He then drops out of sight.

In 1858, he has reputedly returned to England and is recorded in a conversation by John W. Thirwall (1809-76). He is obviously not a well person and takes out a will, dated September 10, 1859, in which he bequeaths the whole of his property to the sister of his wife living in

¹⁹ The censuses in England reveal one John H. Bridgetower, b. c. 1821, and committed to the lunatic asylum at Lancaster County about 1860 and one Catherine Bridgetower, b. 1837 and lived in Liverpool.

Scotland. He died after his brother²⁰ February 29, 1860 and the will was proved July 3, 1860. Bridgetower was buried in the cemetery of Kensal Green at Peckham.²¹

Bridgetower's claim to fame rests on circumstantial conclusions: (1) that he was a pupil of Haydn; (2) that he was intimate with Beethoven, enough to receive a high rating for his performance of the violin sonata; (3) he was proficient enough to perform in string quartets and quintets with the best talents in England; (4) he boasted an acquaintance with the works of Viotti, Mozart, Beethoven, Haydn, et al., and even the great Johann Sebastian Bach. A description of his performance of the latter and taken from the correspondence of Samuel Wesley reads: "George Bridgetower, whom they used to denominate the African Prince, is justly to be ranked with the very first masters of the violin. He practiced much with the celebrated Viotti, and imbibed largely of his bold and spirited style of execution. It was a rich treat for a lover of the instrument to hear him perform the matchless and immortal solos of Sebastian Bach, all of which he perfectly retained in memory and executed with the utmost precision, and without a single error . . ."

Further, to his credit, Bridgetower was one of the original subscribers to the first English edition of Bach's *Das Wohltemperiret Klavier*, published by his pupil,

²⁰ See earlier. 9.

²¹ *England Free BMD Death Index: 1837-1983*, vol. 1; his names is listed as George Polegreen Bridgetower. Likewise, in 1811 his name is spelled G. H. P. Bridgetower. Is the "H" for Henry? According to documents at Peckham: I have just buried a certain George Augustus Polgreen Bridgetower, age 81, in Kensall Green Cemetary. I knew him a little. He lived a quiet life in Peckham, but had the manners of a gentleman. Rumour has it that he was once a famous violinist, performing for the Prince Regent, and counting Beethoven as a close friend. I find that hard to believe; he seemed almost penniless, although he left £1000 to his sister-in-law. [Signed Mr. Mort]

Wesley, between the years 1810 and 1813. That he was a formidable violinist can no longer be doubted but certainly his biography should be made available in a larger form and his music published as a tribute!

It is unfortunate that his biography from 1828 to 1860 has not been tackled but after his prodigy years he entered the mainstream of performers who had to earn a living by teaching. Their accomplishments are seldom mentioned and therefore relatively undocumented!

Works:

(1) Anthem (1811)

(2) Diatonica Armonica (1812)

(3) a violin concerto

(4) Jubilee quintet for strings, string duets, trios, quartets, songs etc.

[Source: AAMR I, July-December, 1981, Number 1; see additionally Paul Nettl's *Beethoven Encyclopedia* 1956; 1967 ed. Frederick Ungar Publishing Company, New York; rep. as *Beethoven Handbook* (Greenwood Press, 1975)]

A Poetical Musing

In 2009 a new book called *Sonata Mulattica: A Life in Five Movements and a Short Play* appeared written by former poet laureate and Pulitzer price winner, Rita Dove, which seemingly embellishments Bridgetower's history but in poetical terms. Published by Norton Publishing Co. it has stirred controversy both positive and negative.

Ms Dove aka Mrs. Fred Viebahn, impressed by a Beethoven film, *Immortal Beloved* explains that the thought of a mixed-race intrigued her and thus wrote her book and thus Bridgetower's exploits with Beethoven wide-birth.

As a researcher we feel that we must have a say about her rendition.

At page 13 [unnumbered] she admits her book is a work of literature and all names are "veritable,," "philosophical musings are either full-blown figments of the author's imagination or are amalgams of truth and fantasy, transmuted in the poetic crucible." In other words she will write about a verifiable fact in her own terms which is another way she is going to using her own mix of fact and imagination.

With this in mind we first went to her table of contents. In her preface she gives Bridgetower only (1) "*fifteen minutes of fame*" postulating that (2) "he *might* have become one of the most revered *musical virtuosos of all time. . .*" {?} (3) "premiered it in Vienna to wide acclaim [?] "*ogled the object of Ludwig's affections,*[?] (4_ "principal players . . . black fiddler *Black Billy Waters* [?], (5) "Sally Hemings being *in the audience*" but

concluded that she claims “poetic license” in her subject matter.

We shall speak to each of these five considerations.

- (1) It has become fashionable in today's society to speak of one's worth in terms of 60 minutes (a complete circle) and therefore she allots him $\frac{1}{4}$ of an hour's time. .But perhaps his worth is less or more than 15 minutes. Who knows what the correct mathematical ratio should be?
- (2) Virtuoso of all times, according to our present knowledge does not mesh. It is only wishful thinking.
- (3) “ogled” connotes an act when you look at someone with love or desire in mind.
- (4) Black Billy Waters

Waters, William or Billy (17??-1823)

Fiddler who lived in London, England. Well known during his hey-day as a fiddler, he fell upon unfortunate circumstances and died in the workhouse in St. Giles, Friday, March 21, 1823. Reputed to have been born in America he lost his leg on the Ganymede (sloop of War commanded by Sir John Purvis). He served in the naval service and received a very small pension. Billy complained that the general public was less liberal after they had seen the production of “Tom and Jerry.” Shortly before his death he was elected King of a party of Beggars in St. Giles. He left a wife and one son at the time of his death. Shortly before his demise he was elected King of a party of Beggars in St. Giles. A poetic tribute by W. Reeves, June, 18232 read:



Peace to the names of
 Black Billy Waters,
 Well-known throughout
 the Town!

The reason that he left
 these quarters –
 Is plain—He was by
 Death one *brown*.

His life was one continu'd round
 Of pleasure and of glee;
 His fiddle caus'd the hearts to bound
 Of children as big as me.
Mags came thick, this made him merry;
 Fortune changes in a crack—
 Folks they went t'see Tom and Jerry,
 And on Billy turn'd their back.

Justice, at length, seiz'd on poor Bill,
Who quickly took his *peg* off;
So they didn't send him to the *Mill*,
'Cause why? He'd got a leg off.

His day was o'er he soon found out
Poverty with rapid stride
Follow'd him, and clamor's shout
Meant poor Billy to deride.

In vain he fiddl'd, danc'd and sung,
Until he was out of breath;
Starving he was, his bow unstrung,
Till he danc'd—*The Dance of Death*

Charles Hindley. *The Life and Times of James Catnach*,
Reeves & Turner, London), 1878 pp. 135-8; picture from
Life in London by Pierce Egan, (Methuen & Co.,
London), 1904, p. 272-273: “The black one-legged
fiddler is strumming away to enliven the party . . .;” see
another picture in Gillray's “The Union Club”]

- (5) It is doubtful that Jefferson's Sally Hemings could
have been in the audience of white auditors even
with “poetic license.”

Dove's recitation resulted in a phrase “But Beethoven
soon brings him down to size” (a snipe at Beethoven for
crossing Bridgetowers' name from his Sonata No. 9, Op.
47 because of a “reportedly” racial issue.) She invents a
metaphor that Beethoven's anger was because of the
remarks to a bar-maid of Beethoven's acquaintance
favoring his sexual prowess over Beethoven is titillating

but not true. Beethoven spoke of a gentlewoman not a barmaid. Her dissolutionment with Beethoven extends to blaming him that “rafts of black kids scratching out scales on their matchbox violins” demeans history by suggesting that black youths were poor and unable to afford a real instrument to play European music and is but *manufactured* poetry.

Such metaphors have received notices in various reviews writings about Bridgetower - “[How Beethoven Killed Black Classical Music \[The Root\]](#) “That is how the “Sonata Mulattica” became the “Kreutzer Sonata,” one of Beethoven’s most famous works. Through that one fit of jealous retribution, Beethoven wrote *Bridgetower out of history.*”

Dove’s style ranges from the street/ghetto metaphors no matter how poetically superb is her writing. [She merely ‘Walks the dog.’](#)

[Historical questions to which Dove conveniently sweeps under the rug is why no tribute to Bridgetower’s family? She mentions a non-member Billy Waters but nothing of Bridgetower’s brother which now proves that there were two black classical musicians active in good old England at this time.](#)

The
AFFLICTED AFRICAN,

a favorite

Cantata

Composed by

GEORGE GUEST,

Organist, Wisbech,

and late of His Majesty's Chapels Royal,

The words by Cowper.

Pr. 3s.

London

*Printed for the Author & Sold by Preston & Sons,
at their Wholesale Warehouses, N. 77. Strand.*

G. Guest

Viol. 1.

Viol. 2.

Viola.

Voice.

Bass:

Forc'd fr

Hope and all its pleasure, Argue's coast left forlorn, To increase a strangers treasure, O'er the

raging Billows borne, O'er the raging Billows borne. Men from

LEGATE

The musical score consists of five staves. The top four staves are for Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Voice. The bottom staff is for Bass. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo and expression marking is 'Larghetto con Espressione'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings (p, f, tr, sim). The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

f Recit Accomp:

Violino 1^o
 Violino 2^o
 Viola.
 Voice.
 Bass.

for. pia. for. pia. for. pia. for. pia.

Andante

for. pia. for. pia. for. pia.

for. for. for. pia.

Recit:

for. pia. for. pia. for. pia.

for. for. for. pia.

Recit:
 & there.

for. for. for. pia.

pia
 Largo Andante.

as you some-times tell us, Is there ONE who rules on high?

THE NEGRO'S COMPLAINT

by William Cowper

FORCED from home and all its pleasures
Afric's coast I left forlorn,
To increase a stranger's treasures
O'er the raging billows borne.
Men from England bought and sold me,
Paid my price in paltry gold;
But, though slave they have enrolled me,
Minds are never to be sold.

Still in thought as free as ever,
What are England's rights, I ask,
Me from my delights to sever,
Me to torture, me to task ?
Fleecy locks and black complexion
Cannot forfeit nature's claim;
Skins may differ, but affection
Dwells in white and black the same.

Why did all-creating nature
Make the plant for which we toil?
Sighs must fan it, tears must water,
Sweat of ours must dress the soil.
Think, ye masters iron-hearted,
Lolling at your jovial boards,
Think how many backs have smarted
For the sweets your cane affords.

Is there, as ye sometimes tell us,
Is there One who reigns on high?
Has He bid you buy and sell us,
Speaking from his throne, the sky?
Ask him, if your knotted scourges,

Matches, blood-extorting screws,
Are the means that duty urges
Agents of his will to use?

Hark! He answers!--Wild tornadoes
Strewing yonder sea with wrecks,
Wasting towns, plantations, meadows,
Are the voice with which he speaks.
He, foreseeing what vexations
Afric's sons should undergo,
Fixed their tyrants' habitations
Where his whirlwinds answer--"No."

By our blood in Afric wasted
Ere our necks received the chain;
By the miseries that we tasted,
Crossing in your barks the main;
By our sufferings, since ye brought us
To the man-degrading mart,
All sustained by patience, taught us
Only by a broken heart;

Deem our nation brutes no longer,
Till some reason ye shall find
Worthier of regard and stronger
Than the colour of our kind.
Slaves of gold, whose sordid dealings
Tarnish all your boasted powers,
Prove that you have human feelings,
Ere you proudly question ours!

DOCUMENTS

Liberty and Property, terms, till now, unheard of at Paris, are the *Watchwords*, which give a *Jaif-guand*, and a *passport* at this inverted metropolis.

The African Prince now at Bighelmsfont, has a son of ten years old—possessed of amazing musical talents,

This extraordinary genius has been presented to the PRINCE of WALES, who intends to recommend him to the *Professional Concert*, as an acceptable novelty to the Admirers and Lovers of Music.

He plays with exquisite *mastership* on the Violin.

The grandfather of this extraordinary youth was committed to the care of a Dutch Captain, with diamonds to a great amount, and gold dust, to be carried to Europe and educated.

After experiencing much barbarous treatment from the avaricious Hollander, the unfortunate Prince was sold, as a slave to a Jamaica planter.

The unhappy man met, however, with a kind master, to alleviate his misfortunes, and married an African woman, by whom he had the father of this admirable boy.

At the grandfather's demise, the father was still higher in his master's favour, and whose expense he was instructed in several languages.

At the age of fifteen, he was permitted to make a voyage to Africa, with proper testimonials of his birth; but by a singular fatality was shipwrecked, and lost his documents.

Being conversant in several languages, he gained a subsistence by acting as interpreter to various foreign Potentates in Europe.

In this situation he lived till the year 1778.

When he was on the confines of Poland, he won the heart of a Polish Count's daughter, who was charmed with the "hair-breadth escape" and adventures of this second *Orlando*.

The Count gave him his daughter, who is the mother of our musical hero.

The Father discovering in the Child a very early attachment to Music, placed him under the celebrated HAYDN in Germany, from whom he received his musical education. From such culture, we may reasonably presage, perfection.

There are now about thirty prisoners for trial at the ensuing Admiralty Sessions, for piracy, &c.; twenty of whom have been under confinement for near two years.

of concerts, London and provincial, from an early date; interesting manuscripts, &c. Catalogues on receipt of two stamps.

Musical Instruments.

MESSRS. PUTTICK and SIMPSON, auctioneers of literary property, will SELL by AUCTION, at their new and very spacious Premises, 47, Leicester-square, W.C. (formerly the Western Literary Institution), on Saturday, June 30, a collection of valuable **MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS**, consigned from various private hands; among which are the choice Cremona violins, violoncello by Forster, &c. of the late Thomas Turner, Esq., of Gloucester; two violins by Stradivarius, and others, the property of the late P. Bridgetower, Esq., of London and Paris; the superb violoncellos of the late W. Sloane Stanley, Esq., and others of very high character; together with numerous pianofortes by eminent modern makers, harps, &c. Catalogues on receipt of two stamps.

Entire and valuable Stock in Trade of Mr. Z. T. Purday, of 45, High Holborn.

MESSRS. PUTTICK and SIMPSON, auctioneers

Highly important Musical Properties.—Valuable Violins and Violoncellos.

MESSRS. PUTTICK and SIMPSON, auctioneers of literary property, will SELL by AUCTION, at their new and very spacious Premises, 47, Leicester-square, W.C. (formerly the Western Literary Institution), during the month of June:

A portion of the Musical Library of the late Sir Andrew Baskard, Knight.

The Musical Library of an Amateur.

The choice Musical Instruments (Cremona Violins, Violoncello by Forster, &c.) of the late Thomas Turner, Esq., of Gloucester.

The musical Instruments (two Violins by Stradivarius, &c.) of the late P. Bridgetower, Esq., of London and Paris.

The superb Violoncellos of the late W. Sloane Stanley, Esq.

Sales of music are held monthly during the season; for which occasions consignments of music or instruments, in large or small quantity, can at any time be received.

Catalogues sent on application.

Engravings and Drawings, Autograph Letters &c.

MESSRS. PUTTICK and SIMPSON, auc-

Aldergate-street.

Valuable Musical Instruments, from various private collections, superb Violoncellos by Guarnerius, &c.

MESSRS. PUTTICK and SIMPSON, auctioneers of literary property, will SELL by AUCTION, at their new and very spacious Premises, 47, Leicester-square, W.C. (formerly the Western Literary Institution), THIS DAY, June 30, an unusually extensive and valuable assemblage of MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS; comprising upwards of 30 pianofortes and harps, two chamber organs, also numerous violins and violoncellos of the highest quality, many of which are consigned for sale by order of executors, including examples by Guarnerius, Stradivarius, Amati, Forster, formerly in the possession of the late Blasco Stanley, Esq., the late P. Eridgetower, Esq., the late Thomas Turner, Esq., of Gloucester, with others from the collections of amateurs of distinction. Catalogues on application.

Substantial Building, lately occupied as a Chapel, Old Kent-road.

MR. GOVER will offer for SALE, at the Mart, on Wednesday, July 4, at 12 for 1 exact time, a commodious BUILDING, of recent erection, situate Arthur-street, Old Kent-road, near the Half-way-house, containing spacious lecture hall holding 300 persons, with noble covered stone staircase, committee rooms, and another large room holding 300 persons, with ground and offices in the rear. The whole eminently suited for a chapel, with school rooms and vestries, or for an institute, with lecture or concert hall, and readily convertible to other uses, let for the last nine years as a chapel at £50 per annum, and held for a long term at a low ground rent. May be viewed by applying to Mr. Tutt, next door to Arthur-street, and particulars had; also of Messrs. Jones and Wright, solicitors, 9, Laurence Pountney-hill; at the Mart; and of the auctioneer, J. Great Dover-

Guest curator, Mike Phillips, in his online BLACK EUROPEANS, using all of the above sources, adds nothing new to Bridgetower's biography. He even gives the wrong birth year, 1779 [1778]!

However, there has been a terrible omission in all the biographies of a very important issue – Bridgetower's personal instruments. Feeling sure that as a prodigy of the Prince, the latter would have purchased or help purchase Bridgetower's violins. This is a concern of most virtuoso violinists but obviously not important to the above writers. In all of the critiques about Bridgetower's playing, the name of the instrument are omitted!

After noting this omission we confirmed our assumption that they were disposed of after his death and were delightly surprised to find the above citations. His Stradiuarious and Amati violins were auctioned off in 1860.²²

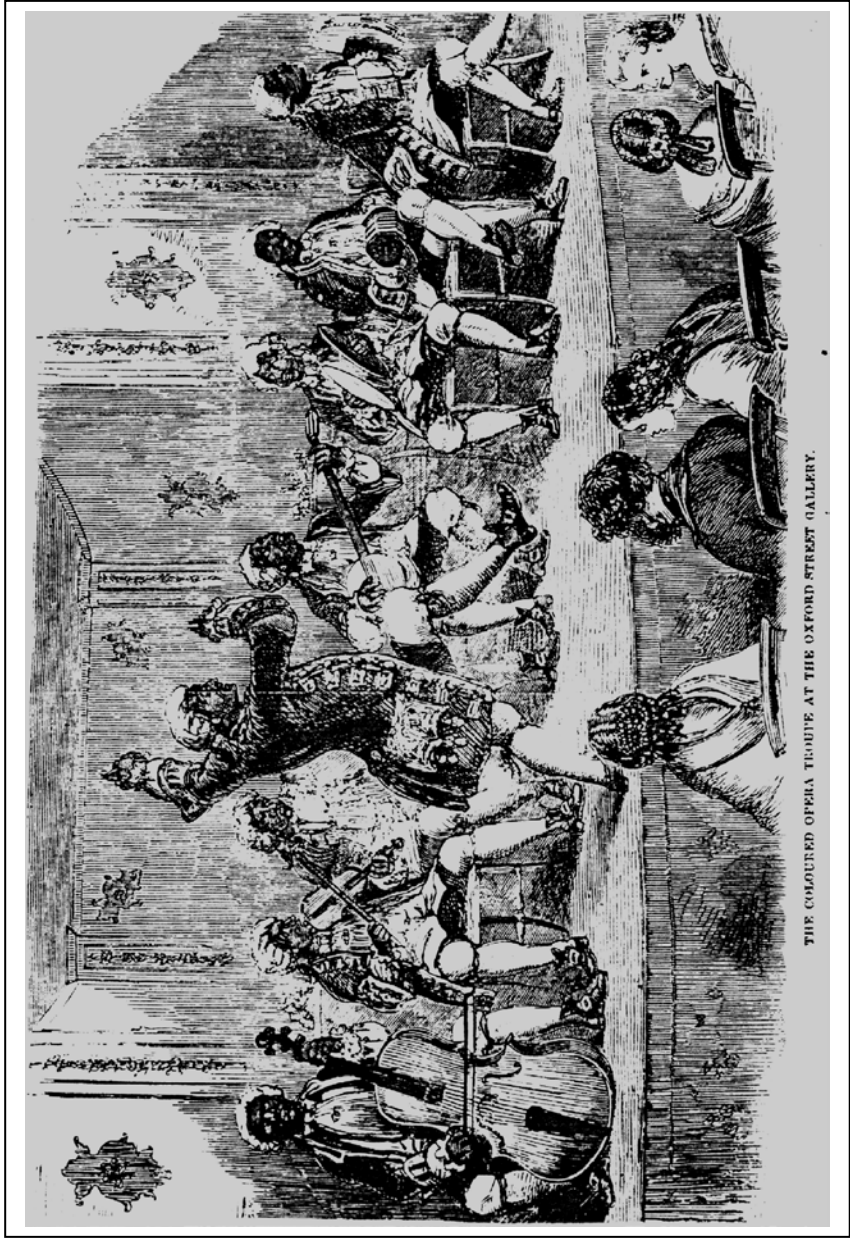
The unanswered question is whether Bridgetower acquired them while in the Prince's employ or later during his career. The spelling of the violin maker is important because after 1730, the Strad family used the letter"v" instead of the "u."

Where they are today is not known but as an antique would now be in the thousands of dollars. We hope some future reader will come forth with the correct information.

Another concern is are there any sources which published any eulogy pertaining to his history at the time

²² The 2860 auction list of Puttick and Simpson in the British Library reads: "The Property of the late G. T. Bridgetower, Esq., by order of the Executors. 143. A Violoncello, bow and case; 144 A tenor [that's a viola, of course] and case; 145 A box of Musical Glasses; 146 A mahogany Music Desk; 147 A very handsome Violin by Antonius Stradiuarus, 1715; 148 A painted violin case, and 2 bows; 149 A Violin by Antonius Stradiuarus, bow by Betts, and curiously shaped case.

of his death or would we be looking for a needle in a haystack?



THE COLOURED OPERA TROUPE AT THE OXFORD STREET GALLERY.

Sonata XI

Arcangelo Corelli
op. 5, No. 11

Preludio
Adagio

8 7 8 7 8 6 7 6

5 6 6 6 5 4 3# 6 6 6 6 5 6 # 6

7 6 7 3# 5 6 5 6 5 6 5 4 3 7 6 6

9 5 6 6 6 5 7 6 4 6 4 5

Allegro

First system of musical notation, measures 1-6. It consists of a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part includes fingerings: 6, 7, 4, 6, 9, 8, 6, 6.

Second system of musical notation, measures 7-12. It includes fingerings: 6, 5, 4, 6, 4, 6.

Third system of musical notation, measures 13-18. It includes fingerings: 6, 6, 6, 6.

Fourth system of musical notation, measures 19-24. It includes fingerings: 6, 7, 5, 6.

Fifth system of musical notation, measures 25-30. It includes fingerings: 6, 5, 6, 6, 5. The word *piano* is written above the vocal line, and *p* is written below the piano line.

Sonata XI

Preludio
Adagio

Arcangelo Corelli
op. 5, Nr. 11

Musical score for the Adagio section of the Preludio. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a measure containing a whole note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The second staff starts at measure 4 and features a trill (tr) on G4. The third staff starts at measure 7 and includes a fermata (V) over a half note G4. The fourth staff starts at measure 10 and continues with a similar melodic line. The fifth staff starts at measure 13 and concludes with a trill (tr) on G4.

Allegro

Musical score for the Allegro section of the Preludio. The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a common time signature (C). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff begins with a quarter note G4, followed by eighth notes A4, B4, and C5. The second staff starts at measure 5 and features a continuous eighth-note pattern. The third staff starts at measure 7 and continues with the eighth-note pattern. The fourth staff starts at measure 10 and includes a fermata (V) over a half note G4. The fifth staff starts at measure 14 and concludes with a trill (tr) on G4.

19

21

23

25

27

29

31

34

37

forte

piano

p

Adagio

5

Detailed description: This page of a musical score is written in D major (two sharps) and 3/2 time. It contains ten staves of music. The first nine staves (measures 19-37) consist of a continuous series of sixteenth-note runs. The first staff (19) has a repeat sign and includes a triplet of eighth notes. The second staff (21) also features a triplet. The third staff (23) includes a triplet of eighth notes and a fermata. The fourth staff (25) continues the sixteenth-note pattern. The fifth staff (27) ends with the instruction *piano*. The sixth staff (29) continues the pattern. The seventh staff (31) begins with the instruction *forte* and includes a fermata and a first ending bracket. The eighth staff (34) includes a first ending bracket and a triplet. The ninth staff (37) includes a trill (*tr*) and a piano (*p*) dynamic marking. The tenth staff (measure 5) is a new section marked *Adagio* in 3/2 time, featuring a slower tempo and a first ending bracket with a trill (*tr*).

Vivace

7

17

25

34

42

51

59

Gavotta
Allegro

5

8

12

piano

