Current Research Projects

1. *The Italian Opera Aria on the London Stage 1705–1801*

The project was started with Christopher Chowrimootoo as Research Assistant (eventually becoming Co–Researcher). The aim has been to trace the re–use of Italian arias in the London pasticcio, a genre notorious throughout Europe for being subject to the demands of the singers. At its most basic level, the project resolves a range of bibliographic problems relating to London sources; in a wider context, it allows for the first time, the possibility of thorough study of the commercial and aesthetic issues of Italian opera for London. The first phase (the listing of all the arias and the creation of a data base of libretti) is complete; the second (a listing of the related musical material) is due to begin this coming summer. The aria incipits themselves are

2. *An English impresario in America; the case of Louisa Pyne.*

This project has received a British Academy Research Grant and work on the performance calendars and documentation is proceeding. So far, it has produced new light on the development of 19th century music copyright in England, the discovery and edition of a diary the musical director of Louisa Pyne’s company as it toured down the Mississippi, and the (surprise) establishment of a New Orleans connection between Pyne’s company and the Lyster family, William and Frederick, who were major figures on the history of opera in Australia.

3. *Staging Purcell’s operas; a history of operatic taste.*

This is a volume that has been preparation for some years and will trace the performance of Purcell’s operas from 1895 to 1995.


This project has been underway since October 2007, and is set to continue for the next 5 years and beyond. It employs two research assistants at the moment, and is set to expand to include some funded DPhil students and another researcher. The basic purpose of the project is to provide a calendar of stage performances (of operas, ballad operas, pantomimes, plays, and so on) in the London theatre. It is co–ordinated with the revision of *The London Stage 1660–1800*, based at Penn State. It will provide a major research tool for those working on London theatre, and we hope will stimulate research in the field.

The material in the project is related to the Oxford–Princeton Collaborative Research Grant, held with Wendy Heller in the Music Department at Princeton University. The subject is Staging History: performing the past in the theatres of London and New York, 1770–1870, and will result in a new book and an exhibition of the same title to be held in the Bodleian Library’s new research centre, the Weston Library, which opens in 2015.