MUSICAL MONUMENTS FOR THE COUNTRY HOUSE: MUSIC, COLLECTION, AND DISPLAY AT TATTON PARK

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Among Nigel Fortune’s many contributions to Purcell scholarship was a short article published in 1964 in which he announced the discovery of a previously unknown ode, The Noise of Foreign Wars is preserved as a fragment at Tatton Park, Cheshire, in a four-volume manuscript collection copied mainly by Philip Hayes (1738–1797), Professor of Music at Oxford, and afterwards owned by Samuel Arnold (1740–1802), composer, conductor of the Academy of Ancient Music, and an indefatigable promoter of older repertory.1 Nearly all the works in the books are attributed to Purcell, and concordances support the attributions. Hayes identified several of his sources, which include extant Purcell autographs and other copies closely associated with the composer.2 The appearance of the The Noise of Foreign Wars amid so much music securely attributed to Purcell, the reliability of Hayes’s named sources, and aspects of musical style led Nigel to conclude that Purcell was the likely composer, although the piece is unattributed in the Tatton Park manuscript. Subsequent scholars have sought confirmation of Purcell’s authorship and, although a definitive attribution has yet to be made, the most recent research strongly supports Nigel’s hypothesis.3

Less attention has been paid to how these volumes, compiled and owned by male professionals and devotees of ‘ancient music’, made their way to a country-house library as a gift to a female amateur, Elizabeth Sykes Egerton, in the early nineteenth century. Nor has there been any examination of how the manuscripts relate to the larger music collection of which they formed a part. Yet a closer look at the Tatton Park library can illuminate how music fits into the broader history of English book acquisition and display, and how the activities of young women in domestic settings contributed to developing notions of musical heritage.

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1 Nigel Fortune, ‘A New Purcell Source’, Music Review, 25 (1964), 109–13. The manuscripts are kept in the Music Room at Tatton Park, shelfmark MR 2-5.1–4; full contents are listed in Shirley Pargeter, A Catalogue of the Library at Tatton Park, Knutsford, Cheshire ([Chester], 1977), 306–7. In Pargeter’s catalogue shelfmarks refer only to cases or shelves, rather than individual books: M[usic]R[oom] 2-5, for example, is the shelfmark for fifty volumes of music. The third number in the shelfmark, which refers to individual volumes, is currently available only by examining the books themselves.

2 See Robert Shay and Robert Thompson, Purcell Manuscripts: The Principal Musical Sources (Cambridge, 2000), 308.


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The story of the music books involves two families, the Sykes of Sledmere in Yorkshire and the Egertons of Tatton Park, over two generations. Several of the protagonists fit into the familiar profile of the gentleman-collector: descendants of the seventeenth-century ‘virtuosi’ and later ‘dilettanti’ whose splendid collections of books and art served as markers of elite status. As Britain’s wealth increased in the eighteenth century, such collecting flourished as never before. Galleries and libraries became an essential component of upper-class town and country houses, and the architecture and interior decoration of elite dwellings were increasingly related, often in complex and fascinating ways, to the content of pictures and books on display. By 1809 the bibliographer Thomas Frognall Dibdin could write that the passion for book collecting that had been on the rise throughout the previous century had reached unprecedented heights. Striking aspects of this ‘bibliomania’, Dibdin claimed, were that its symptoms were limited to higher-class men, and its manifestations most evident in grand dwellings:

In treating the history of this disease, it will be found to have been attended with this remarkable circumstance; namely, that it has almost uniformly confined its attacks to the male sex, and, among these, to people in the higher and middling classes of society, while the artificer, labourer, and peasant have escaped wholly uninjured. It has raged chiefly in palaces, castles, halls and gay mansions; and those things which in general are supposed not to be inimical to health, such as cleanliness, spaciousness, and splendour, are only so many inducements towards the introduction and propagation of the Bibliomania.

But if collecting rare books remained principally a masculine occupation, by 1800 the country-house libraries in which the bibliomaniacs’ treasures were usually displayed had become the main informal living room for the entire family—including its girls and women—and a receiving room where house guests congregated for conversation and other activities, especially when bad weather obliged them to stay indoors. Some libraries housed musical instruments, which could be used for private or sociable music-making, while others included scores as well as books about music on their shelves. At the same time, in larger houses both instruments and scores were increasingly kept in new, specially designated music rooms, which architects included in the floor plans when designing new houses or restructuring old ones.

Although the narrative of country-house history has traditionally been marked by a focus on male architects and their patrons, recent scholarship on gender and material culture has emphasized women’s contributions to design and furnishing as well as to governing concepts of taste. Music has not figured in any of these accounts. Yet in

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4 Mark Girouard, Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architectural History (New Haven and London, 1978), 164–80. Girouard also considers how new patterns of entertainment such as private concerts and balls affected house design, but neither his work nor subsequent research deals more broadly with the impact of upper-class musical activity, including collection and performance of music by owners themselves and their families.


the years around 1800 women were the principal consumers both of domestic keyboard instruments and of the sheet music that rolled off British music-publishers’ presses in increasing quantities; and women’s music-making was essential to notions of elite identity in aristocratic and gentry families. These gendered patterns in the production and use of musical materials intersected with concepts of taste, class, and domesticity to produce distinctive effects on country-house design.

By this time, the practice of touring country houses was firmly established as a popular leisure activity, and the state rooms—including libraries and music rooms—were intended to be open to genteel visitors. Competition and emulation between country-house owners made the state rooms a prime locus for the manifestation of status and taste, and guidebooks and engravings ensured that even those who were unable to visit in person could gain a sense of the rooms’ disposition, contents, and decoration. In contrast to the truly private family rooms and offices—which were housed in separate pavilions or above stairs and were rarely open to visitors—the state rooms not only answered their owners’ quotidian needs but served to construct idealized visions of domestic life for external consumption. At the same time, as Philip Connell has argued in relation to rare books, the acquisition and display of magnificent collections was increasingly seen to have broader social utility, and can be read not only as dilettantism on the part of wealthy amateurs but as efforts to promote a distinctive elite contribution within emerging notions of a public, collective artistic heritage. In this study, I use the music library at Tatton Park to show how such intersecting processes of domestication and monumentalization could mark the place of music in the English country house.

ELIZABETH SYKES EGERTON AT SLEDMERE AND TATTON PARK
The first volume of the Purcell manuscripts is inscribed ‘Bought at S. Arnold’s Sale May 1803 by M. Masterman Sykes and given by him to his Sister Elizabeth Egerton, and after her decease to his cousin Mary Egerton and upon her decease to the Library at Sledmere. Tatton Park, Feb the 23rd 1807 M. Masterman Sykes’. The recipient of this generous gift was born Elizabeth Sykes in 1777, the youngest daughter of Sir Christopher Sykes and Elizabeth Egerton (see Fig. 1). She married her cousin Wilbraham Egerton of Tatton Park in 1806, and the manuscripts were a present from her brother, Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, among the most notable bibliophiles of the period. The Sykeses were rich merchants from Hull, whose fortunes were on an upward swing in the eighteenth century. In 1748 Richard Sykes had celebrated the family’s increasing affluence by replacing the original Tudor house at Sledmere with a new mansion. His brother Revd Mark ‘Parson’ Sykes, who inherited the estate on Richard’s death in 1758, was created a baronet for services to agriculture, largely because of the work of his son Christopher, who managed Sledmere from 1776. Christopher Sykes’s marriage to Elizabeth Egerton in 1770 had brought new wealth into the family, and she subsequently received two substantial inheritances that were used to improve the estate. After his father’s death in 1783 Christopher rebuilt and extended the house to his own designs, in consultation with leading architects: first John Carr


and then Samuel Wyatt, whom he met through his Egerton relations. The virtuoso plasterer Joseph Rose the younger was engaged for the interiors. Work on the mansion’s structure began in 1786 and was completed in 1790; the decoration was largely finished by 1794. The initial plans included a central staircase from which radiated a Library, Music Room, Drawing Room, and Dining Room on the ground floor, and on the first floor an enormous double-height gallery, running the entire 120-foot length of the park-facing side of the house. While Wyatt appears to have conceived the gallery for paintings and occasional use as a ballroom, Sykes decided to make it the Library, to provide his growing collection of rare books and prints with an appropriately splendid setting. In 1795, he commissioned an engraving of the completed room, which he circulated among his friends (Pl. 1).

Elizabeth Sykes’s childhood coincided with the expansion of the Sledmere estate and the rebuilding of the mansion. The family moved into the house in 1783 and lived in it for long periods even at the height of the construction, so that her father could supervise the execution of his plans. According to a letter written by a visitor in 1784, Sledmere had an organ and a harpsichord. Elizabeth was initially educated at home, and her early musical activity is partly traceable through her manuscript music books, three of which are today held at Tatton Park. The earliest is a pre-ruled oblong music notebook in a limp marbled paper binding, dated 1790 and inscribed ‘Miss Sykes’ on the front; signatures on the inside cover suggest that it originally belonged to Elizabeth’s elder sister Beatrix. It contains two main hands, the first responsible for a series of catches copied at the front of the book. The second scribe began writing from

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Fig. 1. Simplified genealogy of the Sykes and Egerton families

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12 ‘Miss JC’, who visited Sledmere in Sept. 1784, wrote to her sister Nancy that the house was ‘a very good one of its Age’, containing ‘plenty of Books, Pictures good & Antiques, which keep one in constant amusement, besides Organ, Harpsichord, etc.; which strange to tell I’ve exercised my small skill upon, before all the Party every day’. Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/10/1. The organ was incorporated into the new Music Room during the expansion of the house: a letter from Joseph Rose to Christopher Sykes, 9 May 1793, discusses mouldings for the case (Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/10/6) and a watercolour of 1847 by a family member shows the instrument against the end wall of the room, while a harp stands by the window (Sykes, *The Big House*, 127).

13 Unlike Elizabeth’s two later music manuscripts, this book (shelfmark LR 116) does not appear in Pargeter, *Catalogue of the Library of Tatton Park*. The inside cover reads ‘Miss Sykes // D.H.B. Sykes / Eliz / Sykes / 1790’. Decima Hester Beatrix Sykes may have given up her musical activities on her marriage in 1795 and passed on her music books to her sister. For the birth and marriage dates of Beatrix Sykes, see Revd William Betham, *The Baronetage of England, Or, the History of the English Baronets, and such Baronets of Scotland as are of English Families*, 5 vols. (London, 1801–5), iv. 132.
the end, turning the book upside down so the contents could be read from the back.14 This second scribe copied seven hymns as well as inserting two humorous catches in empty spaces among the others in the front section of the manuscript. The second hand is a good match for that in a commonplace book Elizabeth began in 1793 at age 16.15 Both parts of the music manuscript contain incomplete pieces or messy first attempts immediately followed by fairer copies, which suggest relative inexperience in music writing. It may have been shortly after this period that Elizabeth acquired her copy of the second edition of John Wall Callcott’s Explanation of the Notes, Marks, Words &c. Used in Music.16

If the brief catches and easy hymns in her earliest manuscript book at Tatton Park do not suggest very high levels of skill or knowledge, Elizabeth’s next extant book, started in 1799, paints a different picture. In the interim she had spent several

14 Bound books had long been begun at both ends simultaneously in order to distinguish between different types of content (here, hymns as opposed to catches). In this case the difference in hands suggests that the book was also turned because it had a new user.
15 Chester, Cheshire Record Office, DET/3229/77. The inside cover is signed ‘E. Sykes / Sep. 28. 1793’. The bulk of the entries were copied soon after this date, although the back includes texts from the late 1790s (e.g. p. 160, an epitaph following a death in 1797).
16 London, n.d.; the first edition had appeared in 1792. The Tatton Park copy (MR 2-4.34) is signed ‘Miss E. Sykes’ on the title page and manuscript cover label.
years—from the autumn of 1793 to the summer of 1796—at an expensive and exclusive London finishing school run by Ellin Devis.\(^1\) During her school years Elizabeth was in frequent contact with Joseph Rose and his wife, who were now acting not only as her father’s interior decorators but as his London agents while Sledmere was finished. Elizabeth played the go-between, bringing drawings and samples from London to Sledmere and delivering presents of game from the estate in the opposite direction. In his letters to Christopher, Rose regularly sent news of Elizabeth’s progress: in November 1793 he already found her ‘much improv’d’, in January he reported that she had been awarded a medal of merit for the tenth week running, and by November 1794 he declared her ‘very handsome’.\(^1\) Rose’s language was similar to that her cousin William Tatton had employed in 1792, when he wrote to his father, ‘I never saw any place so much improved as Sledmere’;\(^2\) and Christopher Sykes’s social ambitions underpinned his expenditure on ‘improving’ both his estate and his daughter. He no doubt felt that his rapid rise in the world required attainments for his daughter that her mother apparently lacked: one visitor to Sledmere commented, ‘you must not expect any great polish in [Lady Sykes], a resident in the Country always, and without Education, suitable to her great fortune’.\(^3\) In the summer of 1796, Elizabeth’s formal education was finished and she returned to the family, where she was now the only daughter at home and her mother’s principal companion. She accompanied her parents on an extensive tour of Wales and the west in May–July 1796, and in the following years alternated periods at Sledmere or her brother Mark’s estate at Settrington with excursions to local attractions in York and Beverley, and longer stays in London and Bath.\(^4\)

Both Elizabeth’s 1799 manuscript and her next extant copybook, from 1801, were larger pre-ruled music books obtained from the London music publisher Robert Birchall, featuring engraved title pages with blank spaces for the purchaser to note her name and other details.\(^5\) The 1799 book was purchased during a season when her mother’s health required treatment in London, during which her father frequently took Elizabeth to concerts, plays, and balls.\(^6\) Inscribed ‘Manuscript Music // Elizath / Sykes / London April 1st 1799 / April Fool’, the copybook seems to have been used at least partly to record vocal ornaments or other performance information for pieces

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\(^1\) Christopher Sykes’s daybooks record payments for Elizabeth’s school in 1794, 1795, and 1796 (Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/102/24–6). Mrs Devis’s school, in Queen’s Square, Bloomsbury, was known as the ‘Ladies Eton’. Devis was the author of the first English grammar specifically for young women, which was first published in 1775 and went through eighteen editions before her death. See Carol Percy, ‘The Art of Grammar in the Age of Sensibility: The Accidence... for Young Ladies’, in Marina Dossera and Charles Jones (eds.), Insights into Late Modern English (Linguistic Insights, 7; New York and Bern, 2003), 45–82.

\(^2\) Rose’s letters figure in correspondence received by Christopher Sykes in Hull, University Archive, DDSY/3/5/1 (1783–93) and DDSY 3/6/1 (1794–1801).

\(^3\) William Tatton to William Egerton, 19 May 1792, University of Manchester, John Rylands Library, Egerton of Tatton Muniments, 3/0/2/37.

\(^4\) Letter from JC to her sister Nancy, 8 Sept. [1784], Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/104/21. JC continued ‘but she’ll improve in Londres, if it should suit her tolerable well but she has very weak nerves against and diffidence, dreads being presented at Court, which you can pity her for: but the family must be elevated’.

\(^5\) The itinerary for the Wales trip is included in Christopher Sykes’s daybook, and he kept a journal including descriptions and drawings of houses they visited (Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/102/26a and 26b). Subsequent daybooks and the accounts at DDSY/1/98/142 show the family’s movements until Christopher’s death in 1801.

\(^6\) The contents of both books (MR 2–4:32 and 2–4:33) are briefly listed in Pargeter, Catalogue of the Library of Tatton Park, 363, although with several omissions (e.g. ‘Dove sei’ in MR 2–4:32, which does not appear in the catalogue entry), and errors in title transcriptions and attributions.

\(^7\) Accounts at Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/98/142, p. 62, record Christopher’s expenses for concerts, plays, and balls in spring 1799. Correspondence in DDSY/1/101/68 from the winter of 1798–9 describes Lady Sykes’s medical treatment in London and Bath.
she was working on. It begins with an extract from Handel's *Susanna*, ‘If guiltless blood be your intent’, and continues with further Handel arias as well as ‘Come if you dare’ from Purcell’s *King Arthur*. In several places vocal ornamentation has been sketched out on supplementary staves; the bass line in the Purcell, copied in ink, has figures added in pencil. ‘Dove sei’ from Handel’s *Rodelinda* appears as melody only, in a heavily ornamented version with further alternative ornaments included at the bottom of the page. The hand is not Elizabeth’s, suggesting that the ornaments were supplied for her by a singing teacher, and that this copybook records some elements of her advanced training in vocal technique. At some point this book too was turned and copied from the back, and this phase of copying was devoted to Italian arias and duets, some with keyboard accompaniment and others in score. The inclusion of ‘Questo fior che involo al prato’, a duet by Agostino Steffani, as well as a ‘Qui tollis’ by Leonardo Leo suggest that Elizabeth’s interests in older music encompassed Italian as well as English repertory. Of the more recent music, Giovanni Paisiello’s duet ‘Non temer non sono amante’ from *Antigono* (1785) is by far the longest piece in the book, taking up thirty pages in score. It is copied in ink but both vocal lines are heavily annotated with difficult ornamentation in pencil.

The annotation of both vocal parts raises the question of who could have performed these pieces with her. One candidate is her younger cousin Mary Egerton of Tatton Park (1782–1846), who clearly shared Elizabeth’s keen interest in music. Elizabeth Sykes began her third extant manuscript book in 1801 while staying with her cousins at 7 St James’s Square, the town house the Egertons had purchased in 1797.24 Like the 1799 ‘April Fool’ copybook, this volume contains a mixture of short songs and catches (including further songs by Purcell), more ambitious pieces in score (such as the quintet ‘Doni pace ad ogni core’ from Handel’s *Flavio*), and performance notes (a roughly sketched keyboard cadenza for use in an unidentified ‘grand concerto’). It also contains two pieces signed by Mary Egerton, who copied them out for Elizabeth. The first is a song, ‘Blest were the hours’, unattributed in the manuscript but identifiable as a ‘Favorite Mad Song’ arranged by William Parsons and first published c.1798.25 The second is a keyboard introduction and ‘Tuba mirum’, identified as ‘Part of a Mass composed by Sarti’, which Mary signed and dated 21 August 1801.26 This is evidence of an increasingly common practice in which young women used manuscript music books to collect pieces from friends and relatives. A 1799 letter from Jane Austen suggests that she was engaged in such exchanges with her sister-in-law Elizabeth Bridges; and in 1825 Elizabeth Gaskell filled a complete book with pieces obtained from classmates at Avonbank, where she was at school.27 Many similar music compilations of the early nineteenth century show that young women swapped notated


25 *Blest were the hours in which I stray’d. The Favorite Mad Song sung by Mrs. Jordan in the Last of the Family. The Melody arranged and the Accompaniment added by Sir William Parsons* (London, c.1798). In the Tatton Park manuscript, MR 2-4.33, pp. 12–13, the piece is inscribed ‘M.E. Egerton’ in the top right corner.

26 MR 2-4.33, pp. 17–23. The opera composer Giuseppe Sarti (1729–1802) wrote a large number of sacred works. I have not been able to determine the source for this extract; the text indicates that it must come from a Requiem.

27 Jane Austen, _Jane Austen’s Letters_, ed. Deirdre Le Faye (3rd edn., Oxford and New York, 1995), 33; the Gaskell manuscript is held at Manchester, Central Library, ms823894Cl. Both Austen and Gaskell were from families of modest means, suggesting that the practice was not confined to wealthy milieux.
music much as today's teenagers exchange recordings, with the music album acting similarly to the personal collection on a tape, CD, or iPod in the recent decades of sound reproduction. Mary Egerton was not the only person other than Elizabeth to enter material into the 1801 copybook, which suggests that it was used in such an intensely social fashion to facilitate musical exchange, as well as serving educational purposes.

Mary Egerton's signature on the two pieces she copied in Elizabeth's 1801 copybook permit identification of her hand in a fourth, partially preserved manuscript in the Tatton Park library. The material was copied into a pre-ruled music book produced by the firm of Monzani and Cimador between 1800 and 1803, and the hand for the bulk of its contents is an exact match for the items Mary Egerton copied for Elizabeth Sykes in the summer of 1801. This suggests that Mary's copybook was filled at about the same time, and at least some of it was done while the cousins were staying together in London. Amid a heterogeneous assembly of songs that includes Italian ariette by Luigi Marchesi, humorous 'Scots' songs, and exotic novelties such as a 'Corsican Air' and a 'Persian Song', the copybook contains several substantial ensemble pieces that the young women could have performed together: these include another Paisiello duet, 'Manco l'antico ardori', and several chamber duets and trios by the Venetian nobleman Benedetto Marcello (1686–1739) both in Italian and in English translation. Another notable item is an unattributed alto solo with cello obbligato in three sections (Lento, 'Preserve me Lord'; Allegro, 'There is pleasure evermore'; concluding Symphony), probably also by Marcello, and certainly from the early eighteenth century. The cello line for this piece gestures towards one last family member who may have participated in musical activities with Elizabeth: her cousin and future husband, Mary's brother Wilbraham. The uncatalogued sheet music at Tatton Park contains a cello tutor that belonged to Wilbraham, Joseph Reinagle's *Concise Introduction to the Art of Playing the Violoncello*, as well as other contemporary pedagogical material for cello from c.1800 that he apparently also used. Wilbraham seems to have been skilled enough to play not only the cello obbligato for the aria in his sister's copybook, but also to take the relatively easy parts in the large number of accompanied sonatas that made up Elizabeth's rapidly growing music collection.

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29 My thanks to Penelope Cave, whose excavation of uncatalogued sheet-music holdings at Tatton Park resulted in the manuscript's discovery. It has become partially disbound and is missing the front and back covers that may have contained signatures or ownership marks; the first gathering has become separated from the bulk of the manuscript, and the final gathering or gatherings are missing. The first extant page is the Monzani and Cimador engraved frontispiece that would have formed the original cover of the copybook before binding. Remnants on the spine suggest it was once bound in tan full calf in the same style as Elizabeth's 1799 and 1801 copybooks.

For in the same years that she compiled the three manuscripts now in the Tatton Park library, Elizabeth Sykes accumulated a vast amount of printed sheet music. She regularly signed her music on acquisition, enabling identification of items she brought to the house on her marriage. Although most of it was published in London and much may have been purchased while she was at school there, booksellers’ stamps indicate that her copies were also often obtained in York, the city closest to Sledmere, where her family had close connections with the Minster and its musical establishment. Her printed music confirms the tastes evident from the manuscript books: the interest in older music they suggest is borne out by sheet-music extracts of Handel operas and oratorios and sets of catches and glees in which Purcell figures heavily. She also possessed large numbers of the most fashionable songs of the 1790s, including English ballads and Scots and Irish airs by composers such as Stephen Storace, Charles Dibden, James Hook, J. W. Callcott, and William Shield. Italian operatic music includes further duets by Paisiello, as well as solo arias and duets by Luigi Cherubini, Giacomo Gotifredo Ferrari, Antonio Sacchini, Giuseppe Sarti, and Mozart. The extensive collection of vocal music is matched by an equally large number of keyboard works, particularly accompanied sonatas. Favourite composers, represented by several works each, seem to have been Jan Ladislav Dussek, Leopold Kozeluch, Ignace Pleyel, Mozart, and Haydn, whose extraordinarily successful late piano trios (Hob. XV: 5–31, 1784–96) feature prominently in Elizabeth’s collection. The accompanied sonata, a piano trio in which relatively simple violin and cello lines enhance a substantial keyboard part, is a genre with well-established connections to both piano pedagogy and domestic female performance. Although the works could be played as solo keyboard pieces if desired, Elizabeth’s copies have separately bound string parts that show signs of use: potential performance partners for these pieces included not only her cousin Wilbraham Egerton but her father, who played the violin when at Oxford as a young man and who apparently maintained an interest in string chamber music. In addition to the many sonatas, the keyboard music includes duets of various types, and solo keyboard arrangements of a wide range of works—songs, opera overtures, oratorio sections, symphonies, concerti, and string quartets—often of considerable difficulty. Frequent annotations on the vocal and keyboard works, and intersection with performance notes in Elizabeth’s manuscript books, confirm that the printed sheet-music was acquired and initially used as performance material.

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32 For example, MR 2-5.25, a song compilation, contains many items purchased at Samuel Knapton’s music shop in Blake Street. Christopher Sykes’s correspondence includes frequent exchanges with the Archbishop of York, and in the summer of 1795 his daybook records a visit to Sledmere by a Mr and Mrs Camidge while Elizabeth was home from school (Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/102/25, entry for 22 Aug.). This was probably John Camidge (1734–1803), organist at York Minster from 1756 to 1799 and director of the York Musical Society as well as successful music festivals in the city. He was succeeded as organist by his son Matthew (1764–1844), who was the violinist for the Musical Society and a composer; several of his works appear in Elizabeth Sykes’s music collection. See Nicholas Temperley, ‘Camidge’, in Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04658> (accessed 3 May 2010).

33 Basic catalogue entries on much of the printed music appear in Pargeter, Catalogue of the Library of Tatton Park, though usually without information on ownership marks. The full extent of the collection remains to be determined; in addition to more than thirty volumes of sheet music carrying Elizabeth’s ownership marks, large amounts of her signed, unbound sheet music have been discovered since the completion of the catalogue.

34 Sykes, The Big House, 40, cites a letter (held at Sledmere) from Christopher to his father, dated 6 May 1770, in which he claims to be playing the violin for an hour or two per day. His accounts for May 1790 (Hull, University Archive, DDSY/1/98/142) include purchase of a bass viol in London for £8. 8s. (p. 52), although I have been unable to determine if it was for his own use.

35 Examples of particularly extensive performance markings include the vocal ornamentation for Handel arias in MR 2-5.22 and MR 2-5.10; the latter contains a print by Birchall of ‘Dove sei’, whose annotations link it to the 1801
While Elizabeth Sykes became an accomplished performer and acquired the foundations of her music library, her brother Mark was making his first forays into the aristocratic masculine world of bibliomania. In 1795 he married Henrietta Masterman, sole heiress of a considerable estate at nearby Settrington Hall. Henrietta had literary interests of her own, and is credited with the authorship of two novels published anonymously in 1808 and 1812. Mark Sykes took the name Masterman to acknowledge the importance of the match, and Henrietta’s wealth allowed him to become a serious collector not only of books but of paintings, engravings, coins, and medals. When Christopher Sykes died in 1801, Mark moved with Henrietta to Sledmere, added his father’s considerable collection to his own, and used his inheritance to accelerate the pace of his acquisitions. In the year of his father’s death alone, he purchased paintings by Salvator Rosa, Nicolas Poussin, and Guido Reni, paying more than 3,000 guineas for them at Christie’s. But it was for his collection of books and engravings that he was best known, and before the end of the decade his library at Sledmere was already being praised as one of the finest in England. He was a founding member of the exclusive bibliophile’s society, the Roxburghe Club, in 1812. He specialized in early printed books, especially Elizabethan literature and early Italian and German editions of classical texts. The prize of his library was a vellum copy of the Rome Livy of 1469, which he acquired for over £900 in 1815. Sykes was also a famous devotee of ‘grangerizing’, the practice of illustrating a book by collecting engravings of individuals or places and tipping them into the binding where they are mentioned in the text; many of the fine prints he purchased were incorporated into the library in this way.

The catalogue of Sykes’s collection prepared for its sale after his death shows few musical items. Those that do appear were acquired as examples of the printer’s or bookbinder’s arts or for their significance as first or unique prints, not because of interest in music per se. Notated music appears in liturgical books or theoretical treatises, but there are almost no examples of scores. This absence was typical of the most manuscript copybook version. Italian arias and duets also frequently show extensive annotations (e.g. arias by Sarti in MR 2.5.22, and Bianchi in MR 2-3.10; the Cherubini duets in MR 2-3.2). Fingerings, ornamentation, slurs, and other markings appear in keyboard works, and keyboard accompaniments to vocal works are often also annotated (MR 2-3.26 has examples of both).

36 Margiana, or, Widdrington Tower: A Tale of the Fifteenth Century (London, 1808) and Sir William Dorien, A Domestic Story, 3 vols. (London, 1812); a third novel, The Yorkshire Baronet, was unpublished at the time of her death and remains among the family papers at Sledmere. Christopher Simon Sykes (Sykes, The Big House, 110–11) believes the manuscripts of Margiana and Sir William Dorien in the Sledmere papers are simply Henrietta’s copies of works she admired, but literary scholars consider her to have been their author (see ‘Henrietta Masterman Sykes’, in Susan Brown, Patricia Clements, and Isobel Grundy (eds.), Orlando: Women’s Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present (Cambridge and New York, 2006), <http://orlando.cambridge.org/> (accessed 2 Dec. 2009).

37 Sykes, The Big House, 106.


40 Catalogue of the Splendid, Curious and Extensive Library . . . Part the First, p. iv.

41 A typical entry is that for Gaffurius’s Theoriciun Opus Musicae Disciplinae, which the catalogue notes is ‘the first treatise on music which issued from the press after the invention of printing’ (Catalogue of the Splendid, Curious, and Extensive Library of the Late Sir Mark Masterman Sykes, Part the Second (London, 1824), 4). I have been unable to determine whether Mark Sykes played a stringed instrument, as did his father and cousin Wilbraham; if so, the music he used would in any case not have been considered part of his fine book collection.
famous English book collections of the period, such as those compiled by the Duke of Roxburghe or by Richard Heber. According to Alec Hyatt King, the development of music collections as a branch of bibliophilia relied on the prior establishment of a historical appreciation of music; such collections only began to multiply in the Georgian era, contemporary with the work of historians such as Charles Burney and John Hawkins. Little attention has been paid to how women participated in this growth in interest in past music and musical scores, although at least two of the large collections Hyatt King mentions may have been similar to that now at Tatton Park.42

Women's tastes are more frequently evoked in connection with the explosion of English sheet-music publishing in the late eighteenth century, and with the production of vast amounts of music whose historical value was unclear. The London music-printing trade sprang up from the popular song-sheet, and a large proportion of London publishers’ wares continued to comprise short pieces of sheet music, rapidly produced to promote and benefit from music-theatrical spectacles then playing in the capital. Appeals to fashion and novelty were a strong component of publishers’ marketing strategies: the names of celebrated singers and fashionable theatres, and claims such as ‘sung to unbounded applause’ figure prominently on the title pages. Keyboard variations and accompanied sonatas often connected to this vocal repertory by using popular song tunes as themes. Prints of songs and piano pieces intended for domestic performance foreground the moment in a way contrary to the increasingly powerful ideal of the transcendent musical work, and the sheet-music format’s connections to popular balladry linked such publications to ephemera rather than to history or to the fine book as an enduringly valuable object. Sheet music posed problems for the library, for it was difficult to catalogue and shelve, and the content was often regarded as not worth preserving. At the British Museum, where successive copyright acts resulted in the deposit of increasingly large amounts of sheet music in the late eighteenth century, it accumulated in neglected stacks for years, until a cataloguer was finally appointed in 1841 to create what eventually became the museum’s Music division.43

In its initial phases, Elizabeth Sykes’s acquisition of music—and probably that of most of her female contemporaries—conformed to the gendered patterns that have been observed by historians of collecting in the European tradition. As Susan Pearce has observed, such women’s collections have often not been recognized as collections at all, but rather as a form of accumulation with social and relational goals. The formal collecting record has instead privileged masculine collecting styles—well represented by her brother Mark—that are more sharply defined, particularly in relation to intellectual and aesthetic values, and which were practised in more public and

42 Alec Hyatt King, Some British Collectors of Music, c. 1600–1960 (Cambridge, 1963), 17: Robert, Lord Clive, his wife, and daughter Charlotte collected over 160 volumes of musical manuscripts in the late 18th and early 19th cc.; the Cornewall family of Moccas Court, Herefordshire, had about 2,000 items, much of the collection belonging to Miss Cornewall (probably Frances Elizabeth Cornewall), according to a catalogue of 1795–6. King’s position (p. 7) on the paucity of British music collection before the late 18th c. may be overstated, but it is true that earlier music collections were more often made by music professionals as working libraries than from antiquarian impulses.

43 Malcolm Turner and Arthur Searle, ‘The Music Collections of the British Library Reference Division’, Notes: Quarterly Journal of the Music Library Association, 38 (1982), 499–549 at 500. For some stimulating reflections on the problems for music historiography that have resulted from the prominent place of women and domestic music-making in English music production of this period, see Christina Bashford, ‘Historiography and Invisible Musics: Domestic Chamber Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain’, Journal of the American Musicological Society, 63 (2010), 291–359; I am grateful to Dr Bashford for allowing me to see her work prior to publication.
often highly competitive ways. But the subsequent history of Elizabeth Sykes's music collection provides a more complex picture, showing how the commercial world of music publishing and the realm of social practice represented by the acquisition of sheet music and the copying, sharing, and performance of its contents could intersect with the historicizing collector mentality of the bibliophile. Elizabeth's music was gathered and bound in large folio volumes, with as few as six or as many as forty items per volume, depending on the length of the pieces. The earliest bindings are in gold-tooled green half-calf, with covers in expensive green, red, and gold marbled paper over board. Red morocco labels on the front covers are gold-tooled 'Miss E. Sykes' or 'Miss Sykes'. Most of the books feature a general description, such as 'Piano Forte Music' or 'English and Italian Songs', on the spine; several also provide a more detailed list of contents on the front label under Elizabeth's name. Many were bound by the Covent Garden bookbinder J. C. Flack, whose label appears in several volumes, and who seems to have specialized in binding music books in this fashion for affluent owners. Variations in binding decoration and labelling style, as well as the date range of the contents, indicate that the binding was done in batches over time rather than all at once. Among the earliest may be MR 2-5.26, whose spine is stamped with the Roman numeral I and the indication 'Piano Forte & Vocal'. The contents (short keyboard pieces, Italian arias, and English ballads) date from the early 1790s and the items are variously signed 'Miss E. Sykes', 'Eliz. Sykes', or 'Eliza Sykes'; bound in the back of the book is a manuscript copy of chord progressions for use in preludes, no doubt a product of her music lessons during this period. Other volumes probably bound before 1795 include MR 2-5.12, MR 2-5.10, and MR 2-5.30, which all have front covers tooled 'Miss E. Sykes' and feature similar manuscript tables of contents (probably prepared by the binder) glued to the inside covers. Later volumes are stamped 'Miss Sykes' and can often be grouped by binding style into sets of three or four volumes.

The practice of binding sheet music into albums had become increasingly common in the second half of the eighteenth century. Bindings on extant albums from before the 1790s vary considerably, and include both soft bindings of paper or calf as well as full or half-calf bindings over board. The sheet-music contents were equally varied in size, quality of printing, and print layout, with little standardization, for example, in the format of songs (which could appear in score, or with keyboard accompaniment; with vocal text underlaid to the right hand, or the vocal line on a separate stave above or below the right hand). From the 1790s onwards, binding habits became more uniform and wealthier buyers increasingly used the style of half-calf binding adopted for Elizabeth Sykes's books. As the bindings began to show more coherence of taste, music printers facilitated this style of compilation by producing more highly polished products—with more uniform sizes and layouts, more elegant engraving, and more elaborate title pages—that look better in the large albums than the diverse and often

45 MR 2-5.12, 2-5.13, 2-5.28, 29, and 30 all contain Flack’s label. Other patrons for whom he bound sheet music include Lydia Hoare Acland, whose music collection at Killerton House (Devon) has much in common with that at Tatton Park. A 1794 London directory of musicians lists J. C. Flack Sr as a teacher of trombone, horn, and viola, and J. C. Flack Jr as a violin, trombone, trumpet, and horn player; the latter’s address is the same as that for a ‘Music Paper-Ruler’, confirming the family’s connection to the music-book trade. See Lyndesay G. Langwill, ‘Two Rare Eighteenth-Century London Directories’, Music & Letters, 30 (1949), 37–43 at 40.
46 For further information on binding practices, with examples from other collections, see Brooks, ‘Les Collections feminines’.
crudely printed sheet-music of previous decades. The new visual elegance of the music combined with the quality of the binding to produce an attractive book for the library shelves.

Although some of Elizabeth Sykes’s volumes were provided with indexes or continuous pagination, which would have made finding individual items for performance more feasible, the albums are often too large and too tightly bound for easy use on an instrument stand or keyboard desk. The Tatton Park collection also contains many unbound sheet-music items signed ‘Miss Sykes’, which suggests that music could remain unbound for some time and that compilation into albums occurred only after the piece was no longer in her current repertory. Thereafter, however, the binding of the music signalled its move into a different realm of significance. That this progress from current repertory as sheet music to binding as library volume was common is suggested by the increasing numbers of sheet-music stands or canterburies made in this period: many were designed to fit under domestic keyboard instruments, with slots, racks, or drawers that could keep sheet music in order until it was bound. In this respect the gestation of music albums matches practices employed for other kinds of books produced in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, especially novels, another form of printed material with a large female audience. Novels were generally issued in temporary paper boards, untrimmed and lightly sewn, with the expectation that buyers would have them permanently bound in a personal style for their libraries after reading.47

The music books produced for Elizabeth Sykes were not organized in a fully systematic way—they seem to have been compiled as necessary when a sufficient amount of music had accumulated—but they do operate distinctions between vocal and instrumental music. Keyboard genres are often grouped, and there is sometimes evidence of thematic grouping between songs, suggesting that decisions about content and order were not random. For example, the volume ‘Songs Duetts and Marches’ (MR 2-5.22) not only contains separate sections for each type of piece, but also groups music by the same composer together and, in a few cases, juxtaposes songs with texts on similar themes. Unusually, glued into the inside cover of this volume is a portrait of the famous castrato Farinelli, in the 1735 engraving by Joseph Wagner made after a painting by Jacopo Amigoni.48 The accompanying verses discuss the singer’s triumphal arrival in Britain in 1734, a theme that resonates with the inclusion of several Italian arias in the album, as well as with the strong presence of Italian vocal music in the collection more generally. Much of Elizabeth’s Italian repertory was composed or performed by Italian musicians such as Domenico Corri, Venanzio Rauzzini, Ferrari, and Sacchini, whose successful careers in London in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries might be read as retracing elements of Farinelli’s trajectory.

The Farinelli portrait is the only example I have found of something like the grangerizing that characterized Mark Masterman Sykes’s library. However, the

47 On the use of temporary bindings up to c.1820, when paper boards became more often retained as permanent bindings, see Jonathan E. Hill, ‘From Provisional to Permanent: Books in Boards, 1790–1840’, The Library, 6th ser. 21 (1999), 247–73. On temporary bindings at Tatton Park, see the unpublished collection survey of the library prepared by Edward Potten for the National Trust (2007), 38 (henceforth ‘Collection Survey’). I am grateful to Mr Potten and the Trust for allowing me to consult this document. The Tatton Park collection contains novels with Elizabeth Sykes’s ownership marks from before and after her marriage, in permanent calf bindings and in board; examination of this largely unstudied material is likely to provide significant insights into women’s reading and collecting habits in this period, as well as illuminating how her reading and musical activities interacted.

48 The engraving is discussed and reproduced in Daniel Heartz, ‘Farinelli Revisited’, Early Music, 18 (1990), 430–43.
binding of sheet music into folio compilations could allow music to occupy a similar place in elite leisure as the albums of engravings, illustrated books on antiquities and art, or grangerized books that their bindings make them resemble. T. F. Dibdin supplies some insights on their potential interaction in his *Bibliomania; or Book-Madness, a Bibliographical Romance*, first published in 1811. Dibdin provided the 1842 edition with a supplement identifying his models for its various characters, claiming that one of the main protagonists, Lorenzo, had been intended to represent Mark Masterman Sykes.\(^{49}\) Three of the book’s six sections take place in Lorenzo’s opulent country estate, in the Library, Drawing Room, and in a classical temple in the garden. There seems no doubt that the setting is meant to evoke Sledmere, which Dibdin had visited at least once and possibly several times. Two of Lorenzo’s sisters, under the names Almansa and Belinda, appear halfway through the Drawing Room section, and return the following day in the garden scene. Both participate in the conversations about book collecting and bibliomania that constitute the work, mainly by asking questions, demanding clarification, and teasing the male bibliomanics about their obsessions, while at the same time displaying considerable literary and historical knowledge themselves. In the work’s final section the discussions include observations on how to collect fine engravings as well as books. Over dinner at the end of the day, the group has a conversation on ‘the comparative excellences of *Music* and *Painting*’; and dinner is followed by a small concert.\(^{50}\) Dibdin’s main concern is bibliography, and the closing episodes of the dinner and concert are thus not elaborated in detail. Nevertheless, the ‘comparative excellences’ conversation does promote the display of knowledge by adopting the comparativist discourse of contemporary taste-forming debates.

Dibdin does not identify his models for the two female characters in the 1842 supplement, but one or the other may represent Elizabeth Sykes, especially if Dibdin’s episodes carry traces of a stay at Sledmere before her marriage in 1806.\(^{51}\) Whether or not this is the case, the scenes evoke a mixed-sex milieu in which conversation about rare books and engravings moves smoothly into discussion of art and music, and where a collection of music books might act both to nourish the knowledge necessary to participate in such conversations and as prop for its display. Handsomely bound music books permitted consultation of scores by drawing a volume from the shelf just as one might extract a rare book or album of engravings, gesture to a painting on the wall, or pull out a tray of medals or coins. At the same time, the conclusion of Dibdin’s proceedings with a concert seems to acknowledge that music differs from other forms of collection, in that it requires sounding performance to bring it fully into play as a manifestation of status and taste. An examination of the Music Room at Tatton Park helps to illuminate how country-house design reflected this need.

\(^{49}\) Revd Thomas Frognall Dibdin, *Bibliomania; or Book-Madness, a Bibliographical Romance in Six Parts* (2nd rev. edn.; London, 1842), 611. This was a *roman-à-clef* partly based on the 1809 *Bibliomania*, in which the earlier treatise was expanded and recast as a dialogue between characters modelled on members of Dibdin’s circle. Dibdin often acted as Mark Sykes’s book-buying agent, and descriptions of the Sledmere library and items within it pepper Dibdin’s numerous bibliographical works.

\(^{50}\) Ibid. 496–51 and 556–8.

\(^{51}\) Mark Sykes had only two sisters, Elizabeth and Decima, who may have served as the models for Lorenzo’s unmarried sisters, although Decima was married and no longer at home by the time Sykes began extensive collecting. In the 1811 *Bibliomania* Lorenzo is described as a bachelor, which Sykes was not; so it is conceivable that the two sisters of the novel were modelled after his sister Elizabeth and wife Henrietta Masterman, both resident at Sledmere at approximately the correct time, if indeed Lorenzo’s sisters are based on any real people.
THE FUNCTION OF THE MUSIC ROOM

On 11 January 1806 Elizabeth married Wilbraham Egerton and her music moved with her from Sledmere to the Egerton country house at Tatton. The Egertons, like the Sykeses, were notable collectors of books and paintings. Wilbraham’s father William Egerton had also decided to rebuild his family seat, as had Christopher Sykes, employing the architect Samuel Wyatt to elaborate a ‘grand design’ in the neoclassical style according to plans completed c.1785. Country houses of this period were rarely completed in a single sweep, whether because of the owner or architect’s illness or death, difficulties of cash flow or materials supply, or any number of other problems that could affect such an ambitious and costly endeavour. Fashions often changed while work was ongoing, and plans were revised to take account of new trends as well as fluctuations in the amount of capital available to support the project. Tatton Park was no exception. The construction of the new house took nearly forty years and fell into two main phases separated by a large gap. The first stage was largely complete by 1791, when the landscape gardener Humphry Repton produced a ‘Red Book’ with suggestions for improvements to the park. The second phase did not begin until Wilbraham inherited the estate in 1806, when Samuel Wyatt’s nephew Lewis William Wyatt (1777–1853) was engaged to finish the house on a somewhat reduced scale, a project that continued until c.1825.

It is unclear whether Wilbraham continued to play the cello as he had as a young man, but later household accounts show that he remained an enthusiastic connoisseur who regularly attended concerts and operas when in London and who subscribed to concert series and musical societies. Elizabeth not only shared in these activities, but also appears not to have given up musical performance on her marriage, as did many of her contemporaries. In addition to the large collection of ‘Miss Sykes’ albums, the Tatton Park library includes compilation volumes bound in black half-calf with gold marbled paper covers, and black front labels gilt-stamped ‘Mrs Egerton’. Some contain items signed ‘Miss Sykes’ that were acquired before Elizabeth’s marriage, while others reflect further acquisitions in the years after 1806. The much smaller number of bound albums in the later style suggests a substantially slower rate of music purchase after marriage, which brought increased responsibilities for household management and children (eight were born between 1806 and 1824) and thus a reduction in time available for musical performance. Wilbraham and Elizabeth’s marriage was, however, marked by continued collecting; they purchased the majority of the fine Italian paintings currently at Tatton Park, and made significant additions to the library, adding many examples of early printing and bookbinding as well as huge numbers of contemporary books. It seems likely that Mark Masterman Sykes

52 Unexecuted plans by Wyatt for less extensive rebuilding go back to at least 1774 (drawings held in the Tatton Park archive, D/3/8 and D/4/9); these include a substantial Library, but no Music Room. Presentation drawings c.1785 for the ‘Grand Design’ are held at D/2/12.
53 The house guidebook provides a brief overview of its history: Tatton Park: The Mansion (Knutsford, 2005), 1–3.
54 Wilbraham’s account books from 1830–6 (Chester Record Office, DET/3229/11) include yearly joint subscriptions to the Royal Society of Musicians and the Concert of Ancient Music for Elizabeth and himself and frequent outlay on theatre, opera, and concert tickets. His father William had been active in musical circles in Chester (acting as steward for the Chester Music Festival in Sept. 1783 according to a letter to Christopher Sykes, dated 30 Aug. 1783, in Hull, University Archive, DDSY/3/5/1), and it seems likely Wilbraham continued in a similar vein.
55 Tatton Park, 58; Potten, ‘Collection Survey’, 20–1. Elizabeth’s role in the acquisition of paintings and books, usually credited solely to her husband, is not entirely clear; but as Potten points out, the frequent appearance of her ownership marks and her early years in a collecting family make it likely that she actively participated in building the library.
offered views on both the house and the collections; and Mary Egerton, who was still at home when her brother and cousin married, must have contributed as well. The already close relationship between the families was further strengthened the year after Henrietta Masterman Sykes’s death in 1813, when Mary Egerton became Mark Masterman Sykes’s second wife (see above, Fig. 1). Sykes was clearly visiting Tatton Park in 1807 when he wrote the envoi to his sister on the Hayes Purcell manuscripts, and his gift seems particularly well chosen to unite Elizabeth’s interests in music and books and to provide a significant item for the house on whose completion she and her husband were about to embark.  

Despite sustained scholarly and popular interest in country-house history, the role of specially designated Music Rooms has been little studied. Many stately homes today have a Music Room, often with an instrument (although it may have no provenance related to the house) and scores used as room dressing. However, these spaces were often originally designed as parlours, drawing rooms, libraries, or studies (which may have had instruments in them, but were not intended as principally or solely for music) and were not converted to purpose until the late nineteenth century or after. The inclusion of a specially conceived Music Room in great houses was rare before the middle of the eighteenth century, but became increasingly common thereafter. The introduction of a designated space for music as a regular element of interior design is a major shift that underlines music’s importance to new concepts of elite domesticity.

The plan of Tatton Park reflects this fashion, and particularly resonates with the highly influential work of the architect Robert Adam. At Kedleston Hall in Derbyshire, for example, where he became lead architect in 1760, Adam introduced new plans for a neoclassical ‘Temple of Art’ that included a Music Room, Drawing Room, and Library in an enfilade on one side of the entrance hall and domed Saloon, and a Dressing Room, state Bedroom, and Dining Room off the other. These rooms were described in a printed catalogue made in 1769 and used to conduct tourists around the house, which was open to visitors from the beginning; at least four editions of the guide were published by 1800, and it would have been known to any wealthy landowner contemplating a major building project. Samuel Wyatt, who worked on both Sledmere and Tatton Park, had been Adam’s assistant at Kedleston; and Joseph Rose had executed the plasterwork, so the Sykeses and Egertons had additional sources of first-hand knowledge of the house’s design and decor. Adam was keenly interested in music, and subsequently designed music rooms and keyboard instrument cases, in both town and country houses, for a range of different patrons.  

56 The dedication also reveals Mark Masterman Sykes’s affection for his cousin and future second wife, and regard for her musical interests, since it provides for Mary Egerton’s inheritance of the manuscripts on Elizabeth’s death, and for the return of the books to his own possession at Sledmere only if Mary should die before him. Sykes died in 1823, and Mary remarried; since Elizabeth Sykes Egerton outlived them both, the Purcell manuscripts remained at Tatton Park rather than returning to Sledmere.  

57 For a floor plan and cross-section view of Kedleston Hall, see Gervase Jackson-Stops, The Country House in Perspective (London, 1990), 98–9. An earlier plan involved the construction of a music room in a separate pavilion, which was never built.  

Samuel Wyatt’s ‘Grand Design’ clearly reflects Adam’s influence, although only part of the plan was executed. The ground-floor state rooms included a large Library, a Dining Room, and a Music Room, as well as a Saloon, a state Bedroom with adjoining Dressing Room, and a Chapel. The rooms actually built in the first phase of construction included a magnificent Dining Room, which is still extant, and the first Music Room, whose existence has until now been completely unknown. Following the initial plans, this early Music Room was situated across the staircase from the Dining Room in what would eventually become the Entrance Hall. No further work seems to have been done towards finishing the ‘Grand Design’ after the Music Room was built in 1792. By this time, the inclusion of ground-floor state apartments had already become rare, and when Wilbraham Egerton began the second phase of building on his father’s death the reduced plans for completion of the house eliminated the state Bedroom and Dressing Room from the design. Samuel Wyatt provided one set of new plans in 1806 and after his death later that year his nephew Lewis William Wyatt furnished alternative plans in 1807 and 1808. These represent several different modes of conceiving the ground-floor state rooms, and vary particularly in their treatment of the Library, which in some versions of the plans was imagined as an imposing vaulted gallery similar to the one at Sledmere, cutting through the central width of the house.

In the years between the original ‘Grand Design’ for Tatton Park and the plan of c.1808 chosen for the completion of the project, however, the brand of opulence that was in vogue when Sledmere was built had begun to fall out of fashion in favour of an equally luxurious but more informal style. In the final plans, the Library ran across the park-facing length of the house, while a new Music Room and Drawing Room occupied the width to the east, opposite the existing Dining Room on the west (see Fig. 2; the existing Music Room seems to have been converted into a study, although this is not specified in any of the plans). Lewis Wyatt conceived the Music and Drawing Rooms as a suite, with matching door-cases and chandeliers; their relationship was further emphasized by finishing and decoration, which reflects the rage for French styles that remained undiminished during the Napoleonic wars. Both rooms feature gilt ceilings and curtain supports and many items of gilded furniture; there is an abundance of boulle work, brass-inlaid furniture in a revival of a style used by André-Charles Boulle in furniture made for Louis XIV. The effect in evening candle- or firelight was particularly stunning, contributing to the festive atmosphere of the rooms.

The Music and Drawing Rooms are joined by large folding doors that may be opened to connect them for special occasions and large parties. This aspect of the design is similar to Adam’s work for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn’s town house in

59 The Music Room designs are held in the Tatton Park archive, D/2/16 (1–3) and consist of three pen-and-coloured-wash designs, dated June 1792, showing an organ on the east wall. Samuel Wyatt’s letter to William Egerton, dated 30 June 1792, gives news on the progress of the new chimney piece for the Music Room and instructions for the plastering that show the room had been built by this date (Manchester, John Rylands Library, Egerton of Tatton Muniments, EGT 3/82/39).

60 Plans in the Tatton Park archive, D/3/21 and D/3/25, including a watercolour for the projected decoration of a Sledmere-style gallery Library.

61 Girouard, Life in the English Country House, 213–44, discusses the growing preference for ‘naturalness’ and comfort in country houses in the late 18th and early 19th cc., as improved transport networks encouraged the rise of the informal house party.

St James’s Square, and reflects broader trends in floor plans for great houses. The desire to mount private concerts was often the stimulus for building Music Rooms, particularly in London houses, where professional singers and players were frequently engaged to perform alone or to supplement efforts by wealthy amateurs. Siting the Music Room next to a larger room into which it could be opened to form an auditorium was a practical mode of providing for such events. Although male aristocrats often arranged and paid for private concerts and men appeared as professional performers, the amateur musicians who participated in such events were almost invariably female, usually the daughters or wives of the male patron. In town houses, but

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**Fig. 2.** Ground plan of the fifth, executed design for completing Tatton Park. After plans by Lewis William Wyatt for Wilbraham Egerton, January 1808 (Tatton Park, The Egerton Collection (The National Trust), TAT/D/3/27/1)

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65 Ibid. 45.
especially in the country, where amusements away from home were less numerous, smaller-scale performances by family women were one of the principal forms of entertainment. The folding doors at Tatton Park also allow the Music Room to be closed off from the Drawing Room to create a more intimate space for such informal music-making or for private practice. Musical motifs vary its decor from that of the larger Drawing Room: images of musical instruments decorate the white marble fireplace—originally made for the first Music Room in 1792—and feature on some of the furniture. The ‘Grecian’ couches, upholstered chairs, pole screens (used to protect ladies’ complexions from the heat of fireplaces), and sewing and games tables, commissioned for the room from Gillows of Lancaster, suggest relaxation and leisure, and place music amid such characteristically feminine pursuits as needlework. In its flexibility of use and its potential to evoke everyday solitary or family activity as well as magnificent entertainments, the room demonstrates how easily music lends itself to projections of cultivated leisure in which ostensibly private activities are given a public face. If music had been functioning this way in elite self-representation for some time by 1800, the Georgian country house provides a particularly striking example of the material expression of this role.

Music’s place in the ensemble of pursuits imagined for the country house is illustrated in Humphrey Repton’s *Fragments* (1816), which was compiled from the documents he had prepared for various clients over many years and may reflect something of his work at Tatton Park. In the section ‘Concerning Interiors’, Repton describes the new fashion for replacing cold, stiff parlours with more informal suites of connected rooms giving out onto the gardens. He explains:

>The most recent modern custom is, to use the library as the general living-room; and that sort of state-room, formerly called the best parlour, and of late years the drawing-room, is now generally found a melancholy apartment, when entirely shut up, and only opened to give the visitors a formal cold reception: but if such a room opens into one adjoining, and the two are fitted up with the same carpet, curtains, &c. they then become in some degree one room; and the comfort of that which has books, or musical instruments, is extended in its space to that which has only sofas, chairs and card-tables; and thus the living-room is increased in dimensions, when required, with a power of keeping a certain portion detached, and not always used for common purposes.66

The ‘modern living room’ Repton illustrated in the adjacent plate is strikingly similar to the Music Room at Tatton Park, including the design of the ceiling, the placement and style of the fireplace and mirror over the mantel, and the position of the windows (Pl. 2). Carpeted, with bookshelves lining every wall and light pouring through the large windows, the room reflects the early nineteenth-century fashion for an informal, ‘lived-in’ appearance often attributed to the influence of the Prince of Wales’s London residence at Carlton House.67 Repton’s illustration is peopled with figures representing an array of leisure activities: an older man reading alone in a comfortable chair; a young couple conversing in a window alcove; two women and a man at a table looking at an open book; and a woman playing the harp alongside two other women who are showing a large book—perhaps the score from which the harpist is playing—to a child.

67 *Tatton Park*, 24; Tatton Park was among the earliest country houses to reflect this trend.
At Tatton Park, the Music Room’s aura of luxurious but informal comfort is similarly combined with the evocation of advanced education and highly developed taste. The Wyatts’ original designs included a large alcove intended for a chamber organ, occupying most of the north wall. The Egertons instead decided to use it for books, commissioning a splendid rosewood *boulle* revival bookcase with elaborate inlaid floral

Pt. 2. ‘The Cedar Parlour’ (top) compared to ‘The Modern Living Room’ (bottom) from Humphry Repton with J. Adey Repton, *Fragments on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening, Including Some Remarks on Grecian and Gothic Architecture* (London, 1816), following p. 58. © British Library Board (shelfmark 59.e.20)

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designs and arabesques, which has been attributed to Louis Constantin Le Gaigneur, a French cabinetmaker established in London. Built around 1820, the bookcase was partly devoted to housing Elizabeth’s music collection. Her bound sheet music was kept there alongside the Hayes Purcell manuscripts, and with contemporary prints resulting from the same antiquarian and monumentalizing impulses. These included rare numbers of Benjamin Goodison’s projected complete edition of Purcell, begun c.1789; at Tatton Park, the volumes are bound together in the black ‘Mrs Egerton’ binding (MR 2-5.5), suggesting they were acquired or at least bound after she had received the Hayes manuscripts and that they formed part of a sustained interest in Purcell stretching back to her earliest music copybooks. Nearly an entire shelf of the bookcase is occupied by bound volumes of Samuel Arnold’s ambitious collection of Handel’s works, originally issued between 1787 and 1797. This was the first complete edition of any composer, pre-dating by more than a decade the Breitkopf firm’s attempt at a Mozart Gesamtausgabe. The imposing collection of bound music books provided both a historical and a material backdrop for music-making by female amateurs that took place in the room. And the appearance of these collected editions next to Elizabeth Egerton’s copybooks and sheet-music compilations containing Handel and Purcell, amid much other old music, prompts questions about how women’s engagement with earlier music contributed to the composers’ achievement of iconic status in English culture. Just like the much more thoroughly studied concert series and festivals of ‘ancient music’, women’s domestic musical activities kept early music in circulation, both reflecting and fuelling the developing English consciousness of the musical past in the late eighteenth century, and contributing to strong connections formed between older music, elite status, and taste.

In addition to its antiquarian aspects, another prominent feature of the Tatton Park music collection is the large amount of Italian music it contains. Italian musicians, many of them recruited by Englishmen whose tastes had been formed on the Grand Tour, had been making their fortunes in London throughout the eighteenth century, and links between aristocratic status and cultivation of Italian repertory were firmly established, if sometimes deplored. Elizabeth Sykes Egerton’s manuscripts and sheet-music compilations here resonate with the conspicuous role of Italian objects and images in other aspects of the country-house interior. Dana Arnold has argued that neoclassical design, like the Palladian style it superseded, bolstered English imperialist and mercantile ambitions by connecting the landed class to imperial antiquity.

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71 On audiences for Italian opera in this period, see Rachel Cowgill “‘Wise Men from the East’: Mozart’s Operas and their Advocates in Early Nineteenth-Century London’, in Christina Bashford and Leanne Langley (eds.), *Music and British Culture, 1785–1914: Essays in Honor of Cyril Ehrlich* (Oxford, 2000), 39–64. As Cowgill observes (p. 42), Italian opera was ‘the most conspicuous form of musical consumption’ at this time.
via modern Italy and its treasures. At Tatton Park, the origin of a substantial portion of the family's wealth in Venetian trade is everywhere evident. The Drawing Room in particular demonstrates sustained interest in Italian art and luxury goods, including a painting of Samuel Egerton in Venice, Venetian views produced by Canaletto for Egerton's uncle Samuel Hill, and a set of Italian chairs from c.1730 whose design may have inspired other furniture commissioned from Gillows for the room. The Library included a large number of Italian incunabula and rare books, as well as modern works on Italian art and architecture. The bound volumes on the Music Room shelves stamped 'Italian Vocal Music' brought the figure of the English connoisseur of Italian art into another domain, continuing a process seen in the cult of Corelli in the previous century and helping to bolster notions of England as a place where artistic achievement was more properly appreciated than in its country of origin.

Despite the existence of the Music Room, musical elements also marked the appearance of the Library. An expensively furnished room intended to house a large and valuable book collection, it was nevertheless designed to be a more comfortable and less imposing space than the gallery at Sledmere, which Dibdin, for one, thought a little too grand, despite its exceptional beauty. The Tatton Park Library was finished and decorated at the same time as the Music Room and Drawing Room, and opens onto the latter through a door disguised as part of the fine bookcases made by Gillows in 1811–12. An 1820 watercolour by J. C. Buckler (Pl. 3) shows the finished room with a large keyboard instrument prominently placed in the foreground, which seems to be the 1789 harpsichord by Abraham and Joseph Kirkman today housed in the Music Room. It is likely that the harpsichord—a beautiful instrument from a famous maker—had been replaced by a newer piano in the Music Room, and that its relegation to the Library indicates its removal from the sphere of contemporary music-making into the domain of history. At the same time, the instrument's presence there is another illustration of the interlocking nature of the display of antique and contemporary art, music, and books in the state rooms, which flow together as Repton recommends in a demonstration of both educated taste and fashionable ease.

Tatton Park's design emphasizes a form of elite domesticity, increasingly privileged in the early nineteenth century, in which concepts of enduring knowledge and beauty were attached to notions of modern comfort and daily life. Music joined art and books as a field for simultaneous monumentalization and domestication, in the senses both of 'taming' and of 'bringing into the home': Purcell appears both as a revered giant of the past and in the guise of family friend. Traditional narratives of country-house history often eclipse the role of women in the patrilinear outlines of inheritance, whether of property or the mantle of architectural innovation. But, as in many other domains, a closer look at music collections shows how the material setting was constructed though interlocking, gendered patterns of acquisition and display that
involved whole family networks, and which relied on women's contributions in many areas. Whether the Egertons were in residence or away, the sounds of Elizabeth's music were evoked for visitors, then as today, by her scores as well as her instruments, and feminine musical accomplishment was woven into the fabric of the family's projection of cultivated taste through the decoration of their house. At the same time, her scores were a contribution to a collective as well as familial patrimony, part of an effort to construct and confirm the value of the English musical past through collection, preservation, and display.

ABSTRACT

This study uses the Library and Music Room at Tatton Park, Cheshire, to investigate how music collection by women fits into broader patterns of book acquisition and display c.1800, and how their activities influenced aspects of country-house design. It shows how women's music-making and its representation in the country house contributed both to new images of elite domesticity and to developing notions of an English musical heritage.