

The Works of John Eccles

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Performance parts are available from the publisher.

A-R Editions, Inc., Middleton, Wisconsin
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Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-9872-0856-6 (print)
ISBN 978-1-9872-0857-3 (online)
DOI <https://doi.org/10.31022/B237>
ISSN 0484-0828 (print)
ISSN 2577-4573 (online)

Ⓢ The paper used in this publication meets the minimum requirements of the American National Standard for Information Sciences—Permanence of Paper for Printed Library Materials, ANSI Z39.48-1992.

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Introduction

Amanda Eubanks Winkler, Alan Howard, and Estelle Murphy

John Eccles's active theatrical career spanned a period of about sixteen years, though he continued to compose occasionally for the theater after his semiretirement in 1707.¹ During his career he wrote incidental music—ranging from a single song in some cases to multiple songs with instrumental music in others—for more than seventy plays, in addition to the twelve larger-scale theatrical entertainments that he set either himself or in collaboration. Eccles's success at meeting the demands of these larger genres, combined with the undeniable glamour of dramattick opera and the monumentalizing tendency of later generations, inevitably results in a privileging of these genres as a measure of the composer's achievements. Yet in reality most of his output was conceived on a much smaller scale: no doubt a large part of his popularity among audiences and literary collaborators alike was the result of his unerring ability to provide songs that fit perfectly within their dramatic contexts, offering carefully tailored vehicles for his singers' talents while remaining highly accessible—dare one say it, popular—in tone.

It is this eminently practical, yet no less skillful or attractive, part of Eccles's output that makes up the contents of the three volumes of incidental music within the series *The Works of John Eccles*, dividing the music alphabetically according to the names of the plays for which the music was written. Like the larger dramattick operas and related genres, these plays were fundamentally collaborative ventures, with contributions of course from playwrights, actors, scene designers, and costumers, and furthermore from multiple composers in addition to the various singers, actor-singers, and instrumentalists required for the musical parts of the performance. As a reflection of this aspect of music in late-Restoration theater, the decision was taken to include, in addition to Eccles's music for a given play, all the known songs and instrumental items for the same play by Eccles's immediate predecessors and contemporaries. Not only does this mean that all surviving music for productions involving Eccles has been collected together, but also that music written for earlier productions has been included. This inclusive approach seemed by far the most pragmatic

solution, since in many cases it is not known whether Eccles's music replaced or supplemented the existing items.

Background

Eccles began his theatrical career with Christopher Rich's United Company, which had formed in 1682 as a result of the merger between the two patent companies, the King's and the Duke's. His first known composition for the theater dates from 1690: "Ah, whither shall I fly," performed in Elkanah Settle's *Distressed Innocence: or, the Princess of Persia*.² The text of the song, which was not printed in the playbook, also appears in William Congreve's novel *Incognita*, which although published in 1692 appears to have been written in 1689 or 1690.³ The relationship between Eccles and Congreve proved fruitful for both parties, as Eccles wrote music for many of Congreve's plays and set his librettos for *The Judgment of Paris* (1701) and *Semele* (1707; never performed).

During Eccles's tenure with the United Company, he also worked with Henry Purcell; the composers divided songwriting duties in Thomas D'Urfey's *The Richmond Heiress* (1693) and *The Comical History of Don Quixote, Parts 1 and 2* (1694). Some contemporary audience members preferred Eccles's direct dramatic idiom to Purcell's thornier one, particularly when Eccles's tuneful melodies were performed by the actor-singers in the company. In a letter to publisher John Walsh, John Dryden described the audience reaction to the singers in *The Richmond Heiress*:

Durfey has brought another farce upon the Stage: but his luck has left him: it was sufferd but foure dayes; and then kickd off for ever. Yet his Second Act, was wonderfully diverting; where the scene was in Bedlam: & Mrs Bracegirdle

2. In his *GMO* article on Eccles, Stoddard Lincoln lists *The Richmond Heiress* as the first production for which Eccles wrote music, but it was more likely *Distressed Innocence; or, the Princess of Persia*. In Eccles's *Collection of Songs for One Two and Three Voices* (London: John Walsh, 1704), 140, the header to "Ah, whither shall I fly" reads, "A SONG in the Princess of Persia." Settle's play, according to the *London Stage*, was performed in 1690, three years before *The Richmond Heiress*; see *LS* 1, 390.

3. *ODNB*, s.v. "Congreve, William (1670–1729)," by C. Y. Ferdinand and D. F. Mackenzie.

1. See, for example, Judith Milhous, "The First Production of Rowe's *Jane Shore*," *Theatre Journal* 38 (1986): 309–21, esp. 319.

By those pigsneys

John Eccles

Fulvia

Quickwit

Basso continuo

By those — pigs- neys, pigs- neys, pigs- neys, by those — pigs- neys that

4

Quick.

B.c.

stars — do seem, Those breasts — as white — as curds — and cream, That

7

Quick.

B.c.

cher- ry, cher- ry, cher- ry lip and dim- pled chin, 'Tis Mop- sa that must be my

10

Quick.

B.c.

queen, my queen; 'tis Mop- sa that must be my queen, be my queen; — 'tis

13

Fulv.

Quick.

B.c.

Mop- sa that must be my queen; — 'tis queen. —

Art

Can life be a blessing

John Eccles

Violin 1

Violin 2

Viola

Singer

Basso continuo

9

Vn. 1

Vn. 2

Va.

Sing.

B.c.

17

Sing.

B.c.

life be a bless- ing, or worth the pos- sess- ing? Can life be a bless- ing if
eve- ry pos- sess- ing, the rav- ish- ing bless- ing, In eve- ry pos- sess- ing the

Dance

Anonymous

Quickly //

Find me a lonely cave

John Eccles

C
Very Slow

Soprano

Basso continuo

Find me a lone- - ly cave, Find me a

lone- - ly cave, Re- mote from hu- man- kind, _____

Dark as the mid- night grave, Dark as the mid- night grave, And dis- mal, and

dis- mal as my mind. There let me sigh, _____ let me

Instrumental Music

I. Overture

John Eccles

Musical score for the first system, measures 1-5. The score includes parts for Trumpet, Violin 1, Violin 2, Viola, and Basso continuo. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. A common time signature (C) is indicated above the first measure. The Trumpet part begins with a rest in the first measure, followed by a melodic line. The Violin 1 part has a melodic line with some rests. The Violin 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Viola part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Basso continuo part has a bass line with some rests.

Musical score for the second system, measures 6-10. The score includes parts for Tpt., Vn. 1, Vn. 2, Va., and B.c. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#) and the time signature is 4/4. The Tpt. part has a melodic line with first and second endings. The Vn. 1 part has a melodic line with first and second endings. The Vn. 2 part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The Va. part has a rhythmic accompaniment. The B.c. part has a bass line with first and second endings. The first ending is marked with '1.' and the second ending with '2.'. The third ending is marked with '3i' and a 3/4 time signature.

Confusion to the power of Cupid

Catch for 3 voices

John Eccles

Con- fu- sion, con- fu- sion, to the power _____ of Cu- pid; Brisk wine, brisk wine ne'er
 made a mor- tal stu- pid. Drink, drink, drink, drink while so- ber sots look
 pale, Con- demned to claps, con- demned to claps and fog- gy ale. A pox of
 love, a pox of love, there's noth- ing in it, A bump- er gives the hap- py, hap- py min- ute.

1 Con- fu- sion, con- fu- sion, to the power _____ of _____
 2 Drink, drink, drink, drink while so- ber sots look
 3 A pox of love, a pox of love, there's noth- ing

5 Cu- pid; Brisk wine, brisk wine ne'er made a mor- tal stu- pid.
 3 pale, Con- demned to claps, con- demned to claps and fog- gy ale.
 20 in it, A bump- er gives the hap- py, hap- py min- ute.

6 :S:
 11 [:S:]
 16