

Panel J : Dr Charles Burney Chair Report by Prof Peter Sabor

This panel was especially timely. The first volume of *The Letters of Dr Charles Burney*, covering the years 1751 to 1784, was published by Oxford University Press in 1991, edited by the late Alvaro Ribeiro. Ribeiro had plans to complete the edition in four volumes, but other things got in the way and nothing more appeared during his lifetime. Happily, the project has now been revived, under my general editorship. The edition will contain not four but six volumes, with some 1,100 letters by Charles Burney, the great majority being published for the first time. One of the speakers at our panel, Lorna Clark, has completed the second volume in the series, which will appear in 2024. The other speaker, Elaine Bander, has been working at the Burney Centre with Stewart Cooke, editor of volumes three and four, the first of which will be published in 2023. Our goal is to see the whole edition into print by 2026, in time for Burney's three hundredth anniversary.

In her fascinating paper, entitled 'Doctor Burney's "Doggerel Dialogue": A Window on the Crewe Album', Dr Bander addressed a little-known aspect of his prolific output: the hundreds of occasional poems that he wrote throughout his life. Some of these were inscribed in Frances Anne Crewe's album at Crewe Hall, Cheshire: a celebrated collection of verse composed by visitors, known as the White Album. The paper focused on one of the White Album contributions, entitled 'Doggerel Dialogue', signed by the pseudonymous 'Rheumaticus', and dated 'Crewe Hall. December 29, 1801'. Dr Bander acknowledged that Dr Burney was at home in his rooms at Chelsea Hospital that day but suggested that the poem was inscribed in the Album by another hand: perhaps by his son Charles Burney or his grandson Charles Parr Burney. In an interesting twist to the tale, however, Dr Bander has since discovered, after studying Charles Parr Burney's commonplace book, held by the Beinecke Library, that Charles Burney Jr, not Dr Burney, was the author of the 'Doggerel Dialogue'.

Dr Clark gave an equally stimulating and informative talk, entitled 'A Revisoning of the Life and Letters of Charles Burney'. His letters, she contended, reveal an engaging personality: encouraging and affectionate towards his family; generously loyal to friends and colleagues; helpful to foreign musicians and young protégés. Her paper, richly illustrated with PowerPoint slides, gave a preview of her volume in the ongoing Oxford University Press edition and highlighted a few points of particular interest in the decade after 1784, which has been viewed as the apogee of Burney's career: marked by his acceptance into The Club, his publication of an account of the Handel Commemoration, and the completion of his magnum opus, *A General History of Music*. After 1784, Burney remained engaged in personal, social, literary and political circles of the day. Dr Clark's engaging illustrations included an image showing the heavy obliterations often made to his letters by his daughter Frances, complicating the editor's task, as well as graphs indicating the variety of his correspondents and the output of his letter-writing per year.