

# Burney Letter

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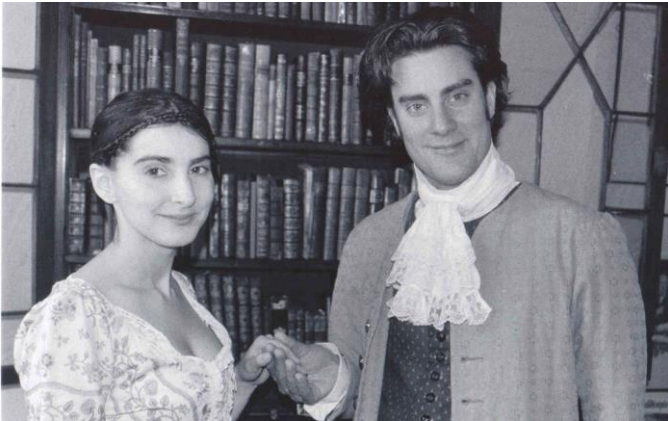
The Burney Society

<http://dc37.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/burney/>

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## *Evelina* Hits the Boards



Sophie Trott as *Evelina* and Tom Sykes as Lord Orville in Kate Glover's adaptation of the novel, performed recently in London.

### By Lorna Clark

Frances Burney's first novel, *Evelina*, has now truly entered onto the stage of the world, in an adaptation written by Kate Glover which was presented by the Historia Theatre Company and performed at the Pentameters Theatre in London between 2 and 28 March 2004. With actress Sophie Trott playing the engaging heroine, Tom Sykes as her noble lover Lord Orville, Lenny Peters as the persecuting Sir Clement Willoughby, Mark Holman as the magnificent fop Mr. Lovel and Brenda Dowsett as the splendid Mme Duval, the production earned favourable reviews in London's Arts and Entertainment Weekly, *Time Out*,

as well as the *Camden New Journal*.

The Historia Theatre Company was created by playwright Kate Glover in 1997 to put on plays which had their source or inspiration from history. It had presented a rehearsed reading of the play to coincide with the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burney's birth (on 13 June 2002) at Dr. Johnson's House off Fleet Street. The latest production, however, was a full-scale stage presentation, featuring a simple set, lavish period costumes, and sparkling dialogue.

The program notes, written by Kate Glover, drew attention to the "contemporary, even . . . timeless relevance" of the themes of *Evelina*: first, the problem of identity; secondly, the innocence and vulnerability of youth; and thirdly (with the Captain Mirvan-Madame Duval episodes) the subject of racism. Although Glover felt obliged to eliminate Captain Mirvan in her adaptation, this last issue is presented through the character of Mme Duval, who is seen as a "malevolent" influence on Evelina's life.

Although there are no firm plans to take the production further, the playwright is approaching various British theatre and TV producers to gauge interest in the project. More information is available on the company's website, [www.historiatheatre.com](http://www.historiatheatre.com)

**For more stories on the play,  
see pp. 8-11**

## The 2003 Montreal Burney Conference

### By Elaine Bander

When we stood up in the Ondaatje Theatre of the National Portrait Gallery on 13 June 2002 and impulsively invited the Burney Society to come to Montreal in 2003, we promised you brilliant Fall colours, a favourable exchange rate, and a choice of excellent restaurants. Sixteen months later, thanks to our magnificent, non-stop summer, Montreal was still green and blooming when Burneyites arrived for our two-day conference in October, so the Fall colours were lacking,

but no one complained about the lovely weather. Oh, yes—the indoor activities also went well. The quality of the talks was consistently high. It was a delight to listen to accomplished writers and scholars speak well about a writer dear to our hearts, and to have opportunities for informal discussion and debate.

Stewart Cooke, Peter Sabor and I began to plan this conference soon after our return from Westminster Abbey in 2002. On a balmy August evening, eight local Burneyites gathered for dinner under the stars at Il Cortile with Ian Kelly,

in town to promote his film "War" at the 2002 Montreal Film Festival. Ian suggested that we take "Frances Burney, Dramatist," as our theme, and we agreed. (Peter was pleased; he keeps hoping that *someone, somewhere*, will do *something* with the tragedies.) At another dinner on the eve of the 2002 Burney meeting in Toronto last October, we came up with the

**Please see Montreal  
on p. 2**

<b>INSIDE:</b>	<b>Grave restoration, p. 4</b>	<b>LA Conference, p. 7</b>	<b>Auction, p. 12</b>
	<b>Bath conference, p. 5</b>	<b><i>Evelina</i> play, pp. 8-11</b>	<b>Burney news, pp. 14-16</b>
	<b>UK meeting, p. 5</b>	<b>Portrait sold, p. 12</b>	<b>Book reviews, pp. 18-20</b>

## Montreal

### Continued from p. 1

plan for the special Keepsake Edition of the Subscription List for *Camilla*. Over many subsequent hours at the Burney Centre, aided by Burney Centre research assistant Laura Kopp and abetted by theatre directors W. Steven Lecky and Myrna Wyatt Selkirk, we reviewed the paper proposals and planned the program. Thanks also to Peter's efforts, our budget was cushioned by a generous conference grant from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Early arrivals on Thursday, 9 October, were able to hear our keynote speaker, Ian Kelly, give an afternoon talk at McGill University on "School for Scandals: Eighteenth-Century Theatre Practice on the Modern London Stage." After this most interesting and entertaining talk, members of the Burney Society who had attended the talk strolled west along stately Sherbrooke Street in the late afternoon sunshine to the Dawson College campus, where Director General Dr. Patrick Woodsworth hosted a welcoming wine-and-cheese party in the seventh floor Rose Lounge. Patrick, who holds a Ph.D. in German Literature, confessed that as a McGill Arts undergraduate during the 60s, he had heard Burney's name mentioned with some regularity without ever knowing anything about her, but that he had Googled Burney that afternoon, so his knowledge had grown appreciably. [Note: I, too, was an Arts undergraduate at McGill in the '60's, and can verify Patrick's statement about Burney being in the air, thanks of course to Joyce Hemlow's Burney Project.] Patrick added that he was very proud of Dawson's high profile in Burney research, since Burney editor and Burney Society Vice-President Stewart J. Cooke, conference organiser Elaine Bander, and conference speaker Louise Slater all teach in the English Department; indeed, Dawson faculty lead the Quebec college system in research, all the more remarkable because research is not required of college instructors.

On Friday morning we gathered at 9:00 a.m. at McGill University's Faculty Club on McTavish Street, just across from the McLennan Library where the new Burney Centre is housed. The

Faculty Club, formerly the elegant townhouse of a Victorian sugar baron, has retained many of its Age-of-Elegance features. We met in the marble-pillared Ballroom, with conference registration, book displays and coffee breaks occurring in the adjoining Lounge, a clubby room furnished with leather chairs and a vast Delft hearth. In addition to the ground floor cloakroom, women were able to make use of the boudoir bathroom upstairs, replete with chintz-covered furniture and plaster *putti*.

After collecting our registration packages from Laura Kopp and admiring the books on display, we took our seats in the Ballroom to be welcomed by Peter Sabor, Director of the Burney Centre, and by Paula Stepankowsky, our president, who then introduced our keynote speaker, Ian Kelly. Ian addressed us on "West End Girl: Burney on Shaftesbury Avenue (A Case Study of an Eighteenth-century Comedy on the Contemporary Stage)." His talk was—of course—witty, informative and entertaining. Ian confided that he was campaigning to re-introduce the eighteenth-century exclamation "Huzzah!" into current usage. If our gathering was any indication, his campaign will be successful. For the two days of the conference we "Huzzah'd" whenever appropriate (and frequently when not). He also had us on our feet practicing eighteenth-century stage postures ("The head is turned slightly to the left. The shoulders are back, but not so far back as to thrust the chest into prominence . . ."). A great time was had by all.

During the coffee break (with muffins, croissants, and Danish) we were able to peruse the book display and discuss Burney. We then returned to the Ballroom for the second morning session on "Letters and Journals," chaired by me. Lorna Clark spoke on "Epistolarity in Frances Burney" and Marilyn Francus on "A Baby, however, is always interesting": Early Childhood as Performance in Frances Burney's Journals and Correspondence." Next we heard from our Burney Centre host Peter Sabor on "The Madness of George III: Burney's Court Journals as Drama," and former director Lars Troide on "Burney's Early Journals: The Final Act." The dazzling summer weather then lured us out to local cafés and restaurants for lunch.

After lunch Stewart Cooke introduced

our first plenary speaker, Kate Chisholm, who spoke on "Dramatic Moments: Travails in the Footsteps of Fanny Burney," recounting some of her experiences and insights gleaned in writing her biography of Burney, in particular the importance of seeing first-hand the places and manuscripts associated with Burney. After another break for tea, coffee and biscuits, we met for our final paper session of the day, chaired by Geoffrey Sill and focused on dramatic aspects of *Evelina*. Ed Cameron spoke on "Evelina and the Vapours as Dramatic Performance," Anja Müller-Muth talked about "Trans formations of Theatricality in Frances Burney's *Evelina*," Alex Pitofsky discussed "Captain Mirvan and the Politics of Manners in *Evelina*," and Jacqueline Reid-Walsh explored "Madame Duval's Minuet: A Performance of French Dance and Fashion in *Evelina*."

The papers were interesting in themselves while also raising some intriguing common issues. Most obviously: how do we pronounce the eponymous title of Burney's first novel? Some speakers, following Margaret Doody's example,

**Please see Montreal Report  
on p. 3**

#### Burney Letter

The semi-annual newsletter of the Burney Society, which includes members in Canada, Great Britain, the United States and elsewhere.

President: Paula L. Stepankowsky  
Editor: Lorna J. Clark

Address correspondence regarding newsletter articles to Dr. Lorna Clark, Burney Centre, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Str. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6 or to [lclarklj@aol.com](mailto:lclarklj@aol.com)

Membership in The Burney Society is available for \$15 (US) annually in the United States and Canada, and £12 annually in Great Britain. To request membership information, or to notify the society of a change of address, write in the United States and Canada to: Lucy Magruder, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, AZ, USA 85646 (or [lucy@magruder.org](mailto:lucy@magruder.org)). In Great Britain, write David and Janet Tregear, 7 Market Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex, England PO19 1JU.

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## Montreal Report

### Continued from p. 2

used a long "i," while others pronounced the name with a short "i." Still others, more cravenly, took to saying, "Eva-lee-na/ Eva-lye-na." [Of course, we have not yet completely resolved the "Frances/Fanny" debate either.] During the cocktail reception at the end of the afternoon, Stewart Cooke cornered a guest from the McGill English Department, a grammarian, who said that the Great Vowel Shift would not have been fully completed by Burney's early lifetime, so she probably said "Eva-lye-na," whereas we are perfectly correct to adopt a modern pronunciation: "Eva-lee-na." We should, however, be consistent in how we also pronounce "Carolina," "Sophia" and "Maria."

Burneyites were allowed an hour off to tour the new Burney Centre as well as the Rare Books displayed in two glass cases outside of the 4th floor elevators in the McLennan Library. Rare Books curator Richard Virr and Paula Stepankowsky were on hand to explain their exhibits, which included some items from Paula's collection of first editions by Burney and others, particularly woman playwrights, and some of the more interesting items from McGill's rich collection of eighteenth-century editions, such as a rare French translation of *Cecilia*. Catherine Roderiguez, from the University of Virginia, spent several days examining this and other Burney items in McGill's collection before attending the conference. During this hour some of us also stole a few minutes to sit in the sunshine.

By 6 pm, however, the Dean of Arts' cocktail reception in the Faculty Club Lobby was underway. Over drinks, Peter introduced Dean Hall, who welcomed us, formally opened the new Burney Centre, and also introduced his predecessor (and good friend of Joyce Hemlow), former Dean Carman Miller. Paula then presented the duplicate window given us by Westminster Abbey to McGill University. (It will hang in the Rare Books Reading Room for maximum exposure). She also announced the inauguration of the Burney Society's Joyce Hemlow Prize for graduate studies in Burney-related fields.

At the end of the hour we proceeded up the carved staircase to dinner in the neo-Gothic dining-room, sitting ourselves at tables of eight, to feast on wild game

pâté with cranberry chutney, cream of asparagus soup, escalope of Atlantic salmon with lobster sauce, and, for dessert, Paris-Brest, accompanied by French wines.

**A surprise "keepsake" gift: a facsimile edition of the subscription list of *Camilla*, bound in blue boards, which "will surely become a collector's item."**

As coffee and tea were being served, I rose to thank those who had contributed to the success of the conference before introducing our after-dinner speaker and President, Paula Stepankowsky, who talked to us about the significance of the subscription-list to *Camilla*. As Paula spoke, members received their surprise "keepsake" gift, a special (numbered) facsimile edition of the subscription list, based on Paula's copy of the first edition, with an introduction by Peter Sabor. The edition is bound in blue boards like an eighteenth-century book and will surely become a collector's item. [Note: extra copies are available through the Burney Society for \$30 Can.] Production of this Keepsake was underwritten by McGill Principal Heather Munroe-Blum.

As the Banquet ended, some members went off in search of a bar in which to continue their conversation, while others returned to their homes or hotels to catch some sleep before morning.

We reconvened on Saturday at 9:00 a.m. in the Leacock Humanities Building, room 232, for a second plenary chaired by Conrad Harper, who graciously introduced Juliet McMaster. Juliet spoke on "Surrealism at the Centre: The Suicide Scene in *Cecilia*," showing how, in *Cecilia*, written just after the suppression of *The Wiltings*, the Vauxhall suicide scene at the centre of the novel is constructed around a series of dramatic scenes or vignettes and infused with dramatic irony rather than controlled by a narrative overview.

Following our mid-morning coffee break, Betty Rizzo chaired the session on "Hallucination, Embarrassment, Break-down, Suicide: Drama in the Novels." Audrey Bilger began with a talk on "'The Little Zig-Zags of Embarrassment': Burney, Austen, and the Comedy of Exposure." Then we heard Li-Ching Chen

discuss "Hallucinations in Frances Burney's Victims of Ideology." Victoria Kortes-Papp discussed "Theatrical *Camilla*," and Louise Slater ended the session with her talk on "Some publick exhibition': Elinor, the Revolutionary Sublime, and French Heroic Suicide; or, The Fishwife in *The Wanderer*."

After a break for lunch (and the brilliant sunshine), we heard our last set of papers in a session, chaired by Alvaro Ribeiro, on "Performativity, Theatricality, Unity." Alvaro began by saying that he hoped to learn what "performativity" meant. [The term PERFORMATIVITY comes from gender and queer theory and is based on the assumption that gender identity is not inherent or biologically determined but rather socially constructed, with recognised markers, so that when we put a female child into a pink dress, she then "performs" the female gender. When her brother plays with his red fire truck, he "performs" masculinity.] During the discussion period, Peter confessed that the program organisers weren't entirely clear what the word meant, but we felt that it sounded sexy for the SSHRC grant application. Alas for Alvaro, none of the papers directly defined "performativity," but they did cover a range of fascinating topics: Gefen Bar-On discussed "*Othello* within *Camilla*: Tensions Between Poetry and Performance on the Eighteenth-Century Stage." Marcie Frank followed with "Frances Burney's Comic Theatre of Shame." Nancy Johnson then talked on "The Drama of Politics and the Politics of Drama." Brian McCrea ventured a summing up with his talk, the final paper of the conference, "Frances Burney, Dramatist: The Struggle with Unities." Perhaps the highlight of this session occurred when Ian Kelly, at Gefen's request, read the hilarious scene in *Camilla* in which the strolling players perform *Othello* in their various regional accents. Once again, this session left me with a sense of the richness of the discourse, the high quality of the scholarship, and (always serendipitous) the interaction of the ideas. Discussion continued briefly as we enjoyed a short break before taking our seats once again for the annual business meeting.

**Please see Montreal Report  
on p. 20**

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# Major Refurbishment at St Swithin's, Walcot, Bath

By Bill Fraser

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St Swithin's started as a small late Saxon / medieval parish church (36 by 26 feet) outside the Bath city walls. It has possible connections with St Alphege, an anchorite at Bath before 980 A.D. who became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1006 but was murdered by the Norsemen in 1012. The remains of the medieval foundations can be seen in the present crypt. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, the parish had become very populous, eventually second only to the London parish of St Pancras in size.

Discussions involving the architect John Wood took place in 1738 to rebuild the church, but it took another forty years for this to be completed by John Palmer in 1790—"a neat modern structure."

By the time the d'Arblays arrived in Bath, the church was too small for the growing parish which is why, as Maggie Lane points out in *A City of Palaces: Bath through the eyes of Fanny Burney* (1999), proprietary chapels started to be built, including the Octagon behind Milsom Street where Mme d'Arblay rented a pew. Her husband, as a Catholic, probably worshipped at St John's Catholic chapel. Burials had to take place at Walcot, and early in the 1800's an additional burial site was opened below the church although the mortuary chapel was not completed until 1842.

In the last century, the parish extended to include St Andrew's, destroyed in a German raid in 1942, which killed the Rector, and latterly Snow Hill. As Desmond Brown (the churchwarden with key responsibility for the refurbishment) reports, the congregation feels strongly the time has come for the parish to focus on St Swithin's. Desmond Brown writes: "Walcot Parish has three centres of worship—St Swithin's, St Andrew's and

Snow Hill Hall. Over the past few years there has been a growing desire at St Andrew's and at Snow Hill for the congregations to come together in united worship at St Swithin's, which is located in the centre of the parish and generally known as the Parish Church. A number of factors have led to this desire: the growth in the numbers worshipping at St Andrew's and the sense that St Andrew's will soon become too small to accommodate any further growth. Also important is the increasing desire for combined worship across the centres and that this should happen at St Swithin's. Simultaneously there has been a growing desire to renovate and decorate our historic and beautifully-proportioned Georgian building and restore it as a centre of public worship in Bath. There is also a deepening sense of responsibility to future generations that worship at St Swithin's should be kept alive."

"Historically, St Swithin's has many interesting connections, and we have received from our predecessors a church building that in most generations has undergone alterations to suit the need of the time. The Georgians, at the time of the Wesleyan Revival, demolished their first building to build this present church. The Victorians furnished it in substantial and grand style. We now need a building whose people can feel at ease and which compares favourably with other public buildings. It is our good fortune to have inherited a building which could, with sympathetic imagination, be adapted to suit modern requirements."

This far-sighted and comprehensive project will do much to present the d'Arblay sarcophagus in a sympathetic setting and allow the interested public proper access along the path through the restored railings which will provide disabled access to the church. It will also ensure the preservation of the memorial

plaques in the church including that of General d'Arblay and the d'Arblay's nephew "Dolph" Broome. Let us wish that the renovation may reveal the fate of Fanny's own memorial and that of her half-sister, Sarah Harriet Burney.

This is an enormous undertaking for the parish which needs every support. There will be two phases. The first, with an estimated cost of £345000 sterling, will renovate the interior of the church with new lights and heating and introduce a layout which will be immediately attractive for the visitor and provide a more sensitive and embracing environment for worship. It also includes the work to restore the railings and build the path through the North garden past the sarcophagus.

The second phase is planned to modernise the crypt to provide an attractive space for parish activities.

The church has some capital resources but needs additional pledges from the congregation, the diocese and those, like ourselves and the Jane Austen Societies, who have a particular connection with the church. We should rejoice that the church, where Fanny Burney's funeral in 1840 was conducted by her great nephew Charles Edward with Sarah Harriet in attendance, is now being restored.

I hope we may be able to make a significant contribution to the project to help with the cost of the new Georgian railings and the work on the North garden and with the preservation of the sarcophagus and the wall plaques. One of our members has generously indicated already that some family trust funds might be available for this purpose.

*Bill Fraser lives in Bath and is a descendant of Esther and Charles Rousseau Burney.*

## ***Fund-raising Drive to Restore Burney's Gravesite***

The Burney Society is formally launching the fund-raising effort to raise a plaque to Frances Burney d'Arblay and restore her gravesite and that of her son at St. Swithin's Church in Bath. It is hoped that this work can be completed by the time the society will hold its meeting July 1 through July 3, 2005, in Bath. It is estimated the project will cost between £1,500 and £1,800. The society would also like to make a contribution (of £500) to the refurbishment of the railing surrounding the churchyard.

Contributions from North American members and members outside of the U.K. may be sent to Lucy Magruder, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, AZ 85646. Contributions from U.S. citizens are tax deductible. Contributions from British members may be sent to David and Janet Tregear, 7 Market Ave., Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1JU.

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# Bath Conference and Ceremony

## By Kate Chisholm

The Burney Society UK branch is planning a conference in Bath on the weekend of 1–3 July 2005, which will include a ceremony to mark the installation of a Burney plaque in the garden of St Swithin's church, Walcot, where the d'Arblay family were buried. The meeting will be held in the Newton Park campus of Bath Spa University, a handsome 1760s Georgian mansion house set in an undulating estate of landscaped grounds with two lakes and wooded areas, five miles west of Bath. Delegates are free to walk through the grounds before and after lectures; a beautifully designed Italianate garden is used for buffet suppers in the summer months. The accommodation is in comfortable, purpose-built blocks for between 8-10 people, with en-suite facilities. Conference delegates may extend their stay for extra nights on a bed-and-breakfast basis (a regular bus service connects the campus with Bath city-centre).

Preliminary planning suggests that we will begin with a drinks party and buffet supper on the Friday evening, held outdoors if weather permits. The conference theme is "The World of Frances Burney," and Professor Peter Sabor will open proceedings on the Saturday morning with a paper on Frances Burney and Dr Johnson. Saturday afternoon will be dedicated to a tour of

Frances Burney's Bath led by Maggie Lane. After papers and discussion on Sunday morning, a visit to St Swithin's, Walcot will be arranged for Evensong in the church followed by the unveiling of the Burney plaque in the garden by our President Paula Stepankowsky.

Proposals for conference papers are invited for consideration by the committee (Kate Chisholm, Bill Fraser, Karin Fernald, David and Janet Tregear and Dr Nancy Johnson). Please send five copies of your proposal (no longer than 500 words) to: Kate Chisholm, 70 Rennie Court, Upper Ground, London SE1 9NZ. Deadline is 31 Jan. 2005.

It would also be very helpful for the conference committee to have an estimate of those interested in attending. The provisional cost per delegate will be in the region of £125 for two nights en-suite accommodation and all conference facilities. Extra nights can be booked (approx. £25 per night). Delegates wishing to come just for the day are also invited, at rates to be confirmed.

Full details and booking forms will be available from the UK branch treasurers, David and Janet Tregear, at 7 Market Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1JU, from July 2004. Bath Spa website: [www.bathsp.ac.uk/conferencing](http://www.bathsp.ac.uk/conferencing)

## NOTES FROM OFF-SHORE ISLANDS

### By David and Janet Tregear

This year's UK Branch gathering will be at Juniper Hall, Mickleham, Surrey, on Fanny Burney's 252nd birthday—13 June 2004. Devout followers of Fanny Burney will have a chance to kneel in the church where she was married to General d'Arblay, and later adjourn to the nearby room where the couple first met to hear wise words about FB's various connections. The nearby church at Mickleham will have its usual morning service at 10 a.m. which is expected to include prayers from Fanny Burney's commonplace book of "Consolatory Extracts," selected and read by Karin Fernald. After joining the local congregation for coffee following the service, members can walk to Juniper Hall for the first of two talks. This year Paula

Byrne will speak on connections between Jane Austen, FB and the theatre, whilst Sarah Burton will speak on the Burneys and the Lambs. The first talk will be at 12 noon and it will be followed by a buffet lunch in Juniper Hall. Following the second talk after lunch, there will be a brief AGM, tea, and all should conclude by 5 p.m. It will help catering arrangements to know numbers a week before the meeting. Please let us know by 5 June on the attached slip, and please include a cheque for £15 to cover refreshments and room hire. Your cheque should be increased to £12 this year (or £20 for two at the same address) to cover Society membership to 13 June 2005.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

No. of people attending on 13 June 2004 \_\_\_\_\_ @ £15 per person \_\_\_\_\_

General Donations \_\_\_\_\_ Membership for 2004/ 5 \_\_\_\_\_

Donations for specific fundraising efforts \_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

Please send to David and Janet Tregear (cheques in favour of Burney Society): 7, Market Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 1JU 01243-783164. We would also be interested to hear your views on the projects outlined above, and on the Bath Conference 2005.

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## *Haycombe Cemetery, Bath: Final Resting Place for d'Arblays?*

### **By Bill Fraser**

On the southern edge of Bath, overlooking to the south the very English countryside between the city and the Mendip Hills, and, to the west, a Constable view of the Avon valley towards Bristol, lies Haycombe Cemetery. It is a peaceful and exhilarating place in marked contrast to the overgrown and decayed state of the lower Walcot graveyard, the original burial site of General and Mme d'Arblay and their son Alex.

It now seems likely that Haycombe became the final burial place of the d'Arblays in 1988. I have been examining a file of letters belonging to the Comyn family which contains correspondence from the early 1960's between Mrs Cecily Comyn, her son John and the city and church authorities. Initially, the letters examine the vexed and still unresolved questions of why no remains were found under the d'Arblay sarcophagus when it was moved to St. Swithin's in 1956 and what happened to the General's black marble headstone—an

issue which, from her letters, puzzled and irritated Joyce Hemlow especially.

The later letters, dating from 1987/88, relate to the city's plans to clear a large part of the lower graveyard for an "openspace." They include letters between John Comyn and the project leader M. J. Gray, with two from Joyce Hemlow. Mr Gray displays a care and concern for establishing the likely locations of the d'Arblay graves and for involving the family in the likely transfer to Haycombe. In addition, there was a crucial telephone conversation to which Mr Gray refers but of which there is no record.

The final letter from Mr Gray (11th January 1988) states that "the remains of Fanny Burney, her husband and their son were reinterred—at Haycombe Cemetery." A previous letter (October 1987) makes it clear that, while there was not complete certainty, a close examination of the Walcot Parish burial records had taken place and had led to the project team's conviction that the three burials had been correctly identified.

While it is clear that John Comyn still had some doubts, it is also plain, after discussion with Cynthia Comyn, that he believed there was little else that could be done to achieve greater certainty and that we should accept that the remains reinterred at Haycombe were those of the d'Arblay family.

The city is in the process of establishing a rockery on the site of the Walcot reinternment at Haycombe and has suggested the placing of a commemorative plaque for the d'Arblay family as a part of the project. They would contribute half of the cost, I have written to members of the Burney family suggesting a wording and that the Burney Society would meet the remainder of the cost. I hope that this will prove a fitting and permanent commemoration. I have made enquiries as to whether there are still some members of the project team around, and also I am trying to trace the burial records. I would be surprised if there are any more revelations!

## **Treasurer's Report**

### **By Lucy Magruder**

Every year at the annual North American meeting in October, our bank account balance amounts are provided: a snapshot of the financial year on about September 30th. Since not everyone can attend the annual meetings, here is a summary, below, of Burney Society finances as of March 31, 2004. The amounts are in US dollars, unless otherwise noted.

Checking account	\$ 497
Savings account	\$ 197
Certificate of Deposit 1	\$ 1,193
Certificate of Deposit 2	\$ 3,500

Some of this money is reserved for special uses. \$1836 has been donated specifically for the Hemlow Prize fund in memory of Professor Joyce Hemlow. The North American treasurer maintains the Society accounts. The UK members' share of the costs of publications and general Society activities remains, in pounds sterling, in an account maintained in Britain by Board members David and Janet Tregear. We are doing this, looking forward to expenses for the placement of a marker over Burney's grave and the refurbishment of the sarcophagus in the Walcot Church yard. About nineteen-hundred pounds is currently there representing the UK members share of expenses. Lorna Clark, *Burney Letter* editor, holds the change from each newsletter production and mailing to use for the next newsletter. Our dues are meant to provide just enough to cover expenses. In the

past few years, the dues amount has not been adequate. *The Burney Journal* has cost about twice as much due to the different format and larger publication. The Burney Centre at McGill University may soon be helping with that funding. We had some unusual expenses in connection with the Burney's Memorial Window at Westminster Abbey and the replica now housed permanently at The Burney Centre, Montreal. Thanks to members' generous donations, though, we are coming out just about even.

The North American treasury received about US\$2,100 this member year which included US\$1030 in dues and US\$1085 in donations. The total cost of *The Burney Journal* last year was about US\$1100. The two issues of the *Burney Letter* cost \$1155 or just about the same. Postage makes up about half the publication expenses; UK members pay higher postage, two-thirds of that fifty percent. Lorna Clark has printed and mailed the last several issues of the *Burney Letter* from Canada, currently less expensive that way. This is, of course, extra work for her, but we certainly appreciate the extra effort which enables us to control the budget. And, you can see how important your donations are. Thank you for providing the extra to help us along. If you would like more specific information, please inquire. We welcome any suggestions.

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## Burney Conference in LA in October 2004

### By Paula Stepankowsky

A discussion of Frances Burney in the context of her contemporaries, a reading from one of her comedies and a display of first editions by Burney and other women writers will highlight the annual Burney Society meeting in North America this fall in Los Angeles.

The meeting will begin in the morning of 7 Oct. 2004, in the lecture room at the main Los Angeles Public Library downtown. Talks will continue throughout the day before the annual dinner in the evening, which will likely take place at the Millennium Biltmore Hotel, two blocks away, the site of the JASNA's annual meeting (to begin Friday Oct. 8th).

Since some Burney Society members may not arrive in Los Angeles until Thursday evening, or may want to participate in JASNA tours scheduled for Thursday, the Burney Society meeting will be priced so that members can either sign up for the entire day, including the dinner and play reading, or just the dinner and play reading.

Juliet McMaster is organising a reading from one of Burney's comedies to be presented following the dinner. Those members who enjoyed the reading of *The Witlings* at the meeting in Boston won't want to miss this presentation.

The display of first editions will be located in cases at the library and open to members of the Burney Society, JASNA and the public at large.

More details about the LA conference will be mailed to all members in mid-to-late summer. Further information will also be available in the fall Burney Letter.

Burney Society members who would also like to attend the JASNA meeting can obtain membership and registration information by writing to Aurise Eaton, 106 Barlow's Run, Williamsburg, VA 23188, in the U.S; or Nancy Stokes, 105-195 Wynford Dr., North York, ON, Canada M3C3P3 in Canada, or consult JASNA's web site: [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org)

### Call for Papers for Burney

**When:** October 7, 2004

**Where:** The Los Angeles Public Library, Los Angeles, California, USA

The Burney Society of North America invites submissions for its annual meeting. With this year's theme we shall consider Frances Burney within the professional and social milieu of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century. We invite papers that will foster a discussion of how Burney related to, responded to, interacted with or was perceived by her contemporaries: other writers, artists, social acquaintances, the literary market place, friends, etc.

Please send one page abstracts for proposed papers by 15 June 2004 to:

**Professor Audrey Bilger, Department of Literature, Claremont McKenna College, Claremont, CA USA 91711. Email: [audrey.bilger@claremontmckenna.edu](mailto:audrey.bilger@claremontmckenna.edu) Fax: 909-621-8419.**

We look forward to seeing you in Los Angeles.

For more information and to join the Burney Society please visit our web site at: <http://dc37.dawsoncollege.qc.ca/burney/index.html>

### *Hemlow Prize in Burney Studies*

The Burney Society is pleased to announce the foundation of an annual prize, named in honour of the late Joyce Hemlow, Greenshields Professor of English at McGill University, whose biography of Frances Burney and edition of her journals and letters are among the foundational works of eighteenth-century literary scholarship.

The Hemlow Prize will be awarded to the best essay written by a graduate student on any aspect of the life or writings of Frances Burney. The essay, which can be up to 6,000 words including notes (but excluding bibliography), should make a substantial contribution to Burney scholarship. The judges will take into consideration the essay's originality, coherence, use of source material, awareness of other work in the field, and documentation. The winning essay will be eligible for publication in *The Burney Journal* and the recipient will receive an award of \$250 US, as well as a year's membership in the Burney Society.

The first Hemlow Prize will be awarded in October 2004. Essays should be sent, by email attachment, to the Chair of the Prize Committee, Peter Sabor, Director of the Burney Centre at McGill University [Burney.Centre@mcgill.ca](mailto:Burney.Centre@mcgill.ca). Submissions must be received by 1 June 2004.

### Commemorative Items for Sale

Hand-made items that commemorate important events in the Burney society's 10-year history are available for sale:

- a small leaded-glass window with Frances Burney's name and dates, a replica of the one installed in Westminster Abbey in June 2002 (\$25 US).
- a hand-made reproduction of the subscription list to the first edition of Burney's third novel, *Camilla*, produced for the 2003 meeting in Montreal (\$18 US).
- full-colour postcards of the Westminster Abbey window (\$1 US).

**All of the above items can be purchased (by cheque made out to Burney Society) from Lucy Magruder, Treasurer, P.O. Box 1267, Tubac, AZ 85646, or by emailing her at [lucy@magruder.org](mailto:lucy@magruder.org)**

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## *Evelina*: Page to Stage in Seven Years

**By Kate Glover**

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“You’re a woman; she’s a woman. Adapt it,” said my husband genially as I unwrapped my paperback copy of Fanny Burney’s *Evelina* in the Christmas of 1996. To tell the truth, I was not really enamoured of the idea. My husband had taught English Literature at Edinburgh University whereas I was a history graduate. Besides which, the eighteenth century was not my period and in any case I was already working on another play, *A Passionate Englishman*, based on the life of William Penn. This was produced in London in 1997.

However, I read the book and discovered it was a good story. I made notes on the plot. Then I began to read myself into the eighteenth century and much enjoyed Kate Chisholm’s excellent biography of Fanny Burney. I read *Evelina* again and took more copious notes. Adaptation seemed a million years away: I could see the potential for a film but my background was stage and in any case I did not have the right contacts to do a film.

There was nothing really planned or focused in this work: I was doing a day job at the time as well as pursuing an acting career. *A Passionate Englishman* was revived as one of the main theatrical events of the City of London Festival in the summer of 2000. In addition, my much-loved father became ill for many months and died in the May of 2001. But it was in that year, in the autumn of 2001, that I caught the obituary of that great Burney scholar—Joyce Hemlow. The writer mentioned that the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burney’s birth was coming up on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002. I decided it was time to stop my dilettante approach and do a rehearsed reading of the—as-yet-unwritten play—in Dr Johnson’s House, off Fleet Street in London, on that day. It was to be part of a series of events designed to mark the anniversary.

**“I had come to decisions, for instance, about which characters out of the 28 or so I would have to lose and which venues I would want to keep out of.”**

I decided to dedicate the three-week Easter period to the writing of the play, so I sat down at the beginning of the period. I wrote six or seven hours every day and I had finished it by the time I had to go back to my day job. The long gestation period had certainly helped me to formulate my ideas. I had come to decisions, for instance, about which characters out of the 28 or so I would have to lose and which venues I would want to keep out of: Howard Grove, Berry Hill, Queen Ann Street where Evelina stayed with the Mirvans, Mme Duval’s residence in High Holborn, the Branghtons’ shop at Snow Hill (this place still exists), Smithfield, Farringdon way, Mrs. Beaumont’s house in Bristol, Sir John Belmont’s lodgings, various gardens including Ranelagh, Marylebone and Vauxhall, Lady Stanley’s dance, the Ridotto, the Hampstead Ball, the Opera, Cox’s museum, and the Pump room at Bristol Hotwells—to mention a selection!

Another of my problems was that the novel is very plotty. I began to understand why the project had never been attempted before . . .

**“The main focus had to be on Evelina and her love for Lord Orville . . .”**

Yet it became clear to me that the main focus had to be on Evelina and her love for Lord Orville and in this I felt supported by Joyce Hemlow who wrote: “The central story of her novel was the love between Lord Orville and Evelina from its inception to its tentative unfolding, growth, and resolution.”

Hemlow also flags up Burney’s abilities as a story teller and this is one of the main functions of theatre—to tell the story. It was to this end that I cut out the character of Captain Mirvan and this proved to be quite a controversial decision. Not everyone approved: a very eminent American academic looked dubious and told me that this was an “interesting” decision. Yet his boorish and frankly tedious tormenting of Mme Duval takes us away from the main plot. In my view, the energy of the writing in the novel declines as yet again one of Mirvan’s escapades is described. I was gratified to find that Sophie Trott, the actress who actually plays Evelina, had exactly the same reaction when she read

the novel. Other major omissions included Monsieur Du Bois, Lady Howard, Mr Villars, Lord Merton, Mrs. Clinton and Dame Green.

One may ask why, in addition to keeping the focus on the main plot, one had to eliminate so many characters. Here the answer is economy of actors. I already had a cast of nine—which is huge. I needed, for example, an actor to play two roles out of a group of three: Du Bois, Mr Macartney and Mr Smith. I decided that Macartney, who turned out to be Evelina’s brother, was much more important than Du Bois. I therefore slightly enlarged the part of the unattractive socialite Mr Smith (much admired by Miss Branghton) and got rid of Du Bois. Again I was much gratified to find that I was supported in this by Mrs Thrale and Dr Johnson:

Thrale: “I always liked Macartney, —he is a very pretty Character, and I took to him,” to which Johnson replies: “Yes, poor fellow, I liked the man.—but I love not the Nation.”

And Johnson on Smith is hilarious:

“O, Mr. Smith, Mr. Smith is the Man! . . . Harry Fielding never drew so good a Character!—such a fine varnish of low politeness!—such a struggle to appear a Gentleman!”

**“I had decided to keep Evelina’s letters. She always has the same desk and chair which never move from their onstage position.”**

Mention of Dr Johnson connects us with his house off Fleet Street and the rehearsed reading that took place there on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2002—the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Burney’s birth. We had the reading on the top floor—where the dictionary was compiled. For reasons of health and safety we were not allowed more than 60 people in the audience—which was frustrating as we could have sold many more tickets. The evening was successful and the cast of nine performed well—with only a couple of days’ rehearsal. There was a

**Please see *Evelina* Play on p. 9**



## *Evelina* Play

Continued from p. 8

chaired discussion after the show and much attention focused on whether I should or should not have included something of the epistolary nature of the novel actually on stage. I had decided to keep *Evelina*'s letters. She always has the same desk and chair which never move from their onstage position. I felt that *Evelina* acted as a sort of Greek chorus commenting on enacted scenes after they happened and also setting up scenes before they unfolded in front of our eyes. The Reverend Mr. Villars to whom *Evelina* addresses most of her letters never appears. I was gratified to find that around seventy five percent of the audience approved of this convention. Some did not: they felt I should have dramatised a sentence like "Mme Duval scolded me well above two hours for my behavior." Since Fanny Burney did not do this either, I felt justified in what I had done. Many people also liked the fact that *Evelina* builds up quite an intimate relationship with the audience: it is to them really that she addresses her innermost thoughts and fears so in a sense they have a privileged knowledge of her joys and apprehensions which other characters on stage do not.

It became clear that the reading should be followed by a fully-fledged production. It was to this end that I decided to apply for charitable status for Historia Theatre Company which I had created to put on plays that have their source in or inspiration from history. This enabled us to attract more funding. Scores of letters to charitable trusts then followed. Although I was turned down by many, including the Arts Council of England, I did secure just enough funding to put on a production, to pay the actors a small fee (though nothing comparable to Equity rates), to rent a theatre, to hire costumes and so on *as long as I could make enough money from Box Office*. This was the crucial thing and this was my risk. Casting (500 submissions from agents) proceeded smoothly enough in January and together with a very experienced actress, Brenda Dowsett, who was to play Mme Duval, we auditioned sixty actors and cast nine.



Lenny Peters as Sir Clement Willoughby, Mark Holman as Mr. Lovel, and Tom Sykes as Lord Orville in Kate Glover's *Evelina*.



Mr. McCartney and Sir John Belmont (played by Gregory McFarlon and William Maxwell) dueling with swords.

Rehearsals were a delight: the actors were great to work with and although we were short of time (just under three weeks), we got the production up and ready for its opening night on 2<sup>nd</sup> March. Our press night was 4<sup>th</sup> March and here good fortune struck again. *Time Out*, the influential London show guide, gave us a very good review—which appeared early in the second week. Other good reviews followed and houses improved exponentially. Our press and publicity man created a glamorous web site: [www.historiatheatre.com](http://www.historiatheatre.com). We made enough on Box Office to break even. My husband who had been such a support to me throughout, helping to ferry hired costumes to and from the National Theatre, taking the cast photographs, helping with the furniture for the set, came to see it at least six times. So, in the words of *Evelina*, "I have no time for more;" except to embrace "the best of men" whose idea the whole project was, and to pay tribute to the genius of Fanny Burney.

*Kate Glover* turned to acting late in life at the age of 36 after a career teaching first history in secondary schools and then English as a Foreign Language in London and all over the world. On obtaining her Equity card, she acted mostly in theatre both in London and on tour, although she has done small parts in both TV and film. She was recently seen playing the part of a Cabinet Minister in the film *Love Actually*. Other plays she has written include *Gerard M. Hopkins S.J.* (about the Jesuit priest-poet Gerard Manley Hopkins) and *A Passionate Englishman* (about William Penn). Both were produced in London although the former also toured. She created Historia Theatre Company with a view to putting on plays that have their source in or inspiration from history. She is married to the American Hume scholar and academic John Valdimir Price.

## Playing the Role of Evelina

By Sophie Trott

I received a call from my agent about an audition for a new play set in eighteenth-century London. I agreed to go, and spent the following evening looking at various restoration plays, in the hope of getting a feel for the language. The next day, I was speaking with Clare, an actress friend of mine, and she happened to have read Fanny Burney's novel, *Evelina*, on which the play was based. She lent me her copy, and I spent the night before the casting gripped by this very funny book. I managed to get most of the way through it and was therefore probably rather pale looking the next morning as I made my way to the Angel to meet Kate, the director.

The previous evening I had received expert acting coaching from my boyfriend. His main criticism, or suggestion, was to over act and imbue every syllable with some attitude or other. His demonstration, prefixed with the note "think Radio 4 play," was high-pitched, with raised eyebrows and with very random intonation. Despite my hilarity at his attempt, I tried to take it all on board. Was it because of, or in spite of his advice that I was offered the part? I'll never know, but I let him think it was all thanks to him.

I think part of what made me able to engage with the novel so easily was its setting. As a London girl, I can picture every location, and I love to walk around town imagining what it was like before cars and tarmac. Lots of old buildings remain, particularly in the centre, and it's not difficult to imagine a much smaller city, traversable by foot. Many street names, too, remain unchanged. In the City, around Bishopsgate, I can still see that although as a financial centre there is a sense of wealth, there is a different quality entirely to the large squares and broad streets to the west, which have a much more aristocratic, leisurely feel. The narrow passages, streets, and lanes between Bishopsgate and St Paul's, with names like Threadneedle St, Bread St, Old Jewry and Poultry, suggest an aspirational, business class; they certainly have the interest, but not the glamour attached to Queen Anne St, and Berkeley Square to the west.

So, firmly placed geographically, how to approach the role? Evelina endeared herself to me by her amazing ability to get herself into endless scrapes, by acting and speaking before she has allowed herself time to think. This particular quality of hers was very easy for me to relate to, and I had little difficulty imagining myself in her situation. Specific instances include the moment when she lies to Sir Clement Willoughby about being unavailable to dance at Lady Stanley's ball, and the time at the opera when she behaves as if she is very pleased to see Sir Clement, thereby allowing him to take advantage of her vulnerability and good will. Also, when writing to Lord Orville, I admire the fact that she has tried to be proactive, and "mend the situation," even though this completely backfires.

She is a serious girl (though not without humour), rarely concerned with clothes and accessories (unlike myself), and only mentions these with the awareness of one who knows their weight as frivolous concerns:

*"I have just had my hair dressed. You can't think how oddly my hair feels; full of powder and black pins, and a great cushion on the top of it. I believe you would hardly know me, for my face looks quite different from what it did before my hair was dressed. When I shall be able to make use of a comb for myself I cannot tell for my hair is so entangled, frizzled they call it, that I fear it will be very difficult."*

She has little tolerance for pretension, and has some pride. At the ball she comments:

*"The gentlemen, as they passed and repassed, looked as though they thought we were quite at their disposal, and only waiting for the honour of their commands; and they sauntered about, in a careless indolent manner, as if with a view to keep us in suspense. I don't speak of this in regard to Miss Mirvan and myself only, but to the ladies in general; and I thought it so provoking, that I determined in my own mind, that, far from humouring such airs, I would rather not dance at all..."*

With observations like these, I see her almost as an early feminist! Her private thoughts, illustrate a steely self-possession, which I felt it was important to draw on. Yes, her public behaviour could make her seem almost meek at times, but this is more due to her shyness and awkward social position, than any suggestion that she might be a "weak, ignorant" young girl.

It is a gift to have so much research material at your disposal when playing a part such as this. Through her letters, she revealed to me, not only her private thoughts, but also her, often contrasting, public behaviour.

I did have a concern that Evelina might not do justice to herself on stage, and I by no means wished to let her come across as weak or boring (she certainly is not in the novel)! I think this worry stemmed from the distancing effect that old language can have (if you let it), and the fact that social codes have vastly changed from the eighteenth century till now. I was very lucky that Kate's adaptation was great at picking out the most lively, dramatic, and comic scenes. Also, Kate's construction was such that there was a good balance between scenes with dialogue, in which Evelina is often mute, and letters, in which she can be very outspoken. I really enjoyed the conflict between Evelina's public and private personas. And this is what I hope gave my portrayal of Evelina life and interest. Worries about how a performance comes across can be very useful during rehearsal, but once you are actually doing it, these concerns have to be set aside. How can you hope to engage your audience if you don't allow yourself the freedom to be open and emotionally real and in the moment?

In all, the role was a great challenge for me, but also immensely enjoyable.

*Sophie Trott has been acting professionally since 1999. She has worked in theatre, film and television. Most enjoyable roles have been Evelina, Anne Frank, and Chantaye in Hey There Boy With The Be Bop. She is about to fly to Italy to play La Fornarina (Margarita Luti) for a BBC film about Raphael.*

## Review of *Evelina* at Pentameters Pub Theatre, 2 March 2004

### By Karin Fernald

Fanny Burney's epistolary first novel *Evelina* (an 18th century British Cinderella?) recruits new admirers all the time. Attracted as I have been mainly to Burney's journals and letters, it is a huge pleasure to meet people who have picked up this first novel from a bookstall out of the blue, been deeply smitten, and gone on from there. Now the actress and writer Kate Glover has dramatised the book, economically, bravely and in the main with great success. Some of her group scenes are highly successful, particularly the one in which *Evelina* goes to the theatre with her embarrassing cousins the Branghtons, all sitting together in the front row of the gallery and all, save *Evelina*, comically oblivious of the ongoing opera performance. This important scene from the novel is enjoyably and amusingly staged.

On reading *Evelina*, our chief pleasure consists in identifying with the vulnerabilities of the young narrator and her agonising emotional life. Few dramatisations of novels can provide us with such insights into the mind of a protagonist. This one, however, illuminates other characters. Lord Orville, the hero, in the novel an impossibly perfect lover-monitor—suited almost to an ancient Greek vase—here becomes a warm-hearted, tongue-tied, introverted and somewhat under-dressed young man, convincingly performed by Tom Sykes. Orville's inability to express himself mirrors that of his *Evelina*, a parallel hard to convey in an epistolary

novel but ideally suited to the stage. (Maybe some Burney Society member may some day offer a near-equivalent of Fielding's *Joseph Andrews*?) As the heroine, *Evelina*, the future Lady Orville, Sophie Trott is admirably clear-spoken, clear-headed and highly intelligent. Among the other performances I enjoyed were those of Brenda Dowsett as Madame Duval and Mrs. Selwyn, and William Maxwell as Sir John Belmont, *Evelina*'s repentant father, irredeemably constipated and stiff-upper-lipped.

Burney's blossoming playwriting abilities are cleverly complemented by those of playwright and director Kate Glover, as adaptor of this first novel. I admired the skilful way in which Glover transposed the innumerable letters from *Evelina* to her guardian Mr. Villars into a narration by Mrs. Mirvan (a watchable and sophisticated Naomi Sachs). And the staging in the small but adaptable Pentameters Theatre was both economical and imaginative.

Drawing inspiration from late 18th century comedies by her admired David Garrick and others, Fanny Burney's plays present today's theatre directors and managers with huge cast lists, and they demand nothing less than superb playing. The Historia Theatre Company cast at Leonie Scott-Matthews' Pentameters Theatre rises to this challenge with enthusiasm and much talent.

### Letter to the Editor

In the 2003 Spring issue of the *Burney Letter*, Barry Moughton opened "a new front in the battlefield of Burney studies," reviewing fiction about Fanny Burney. Here's an addendum that might be of interest to him.

A couple of years ago a German novel by Elsemarie Maletzke appeared called *Miss Burney trägt grün* (*Miss Burney Wears Green*). Maletzke is fairly well known in Germany for her biographical works on the Brontë sisters and Jane Austen. Rather than write another biography, however, Maletzke chose to concoct a biographical novel about Fanny Burney. I don't think it has been translated into English yet, a fact for which one ought to be thankful, since it's the most amazing romantic trash anyone could make out of Burney's life. The author frankly states that she did not much care for Burney as a personality and therefore preferred to rewrite Burney's life story.

Thus, Fanny is introduced as an unwelcome member of the Burney

household consisting of her father, his new wife, and a step-sister called Sarah Harriet. More particularly, Fanny and Sarah Harriet are introduced in a bed-scene involving a lot of panting, sighing and giggling under the covers. Not surprisingly, Sarah Harriet is next discovered with her skirts up in a dark alley in Vauxhall Gardens—together with the singer Millico (of all men).

The only part of the book that seems to be vaguely connected to Burney's real life is a scene more or less translated from the diaries, which involves Dr. Johnson, Sheridan and Sir Joshua Reynolds complementing a seventeen-year-old Fanny on her first novel (which, inexplicably, is called "Virginia"). 'Daddy' Crisp appears as the elderly husband forced on Fanny's flirtatious sister Esther, Mrs Thrale as a vicious patroness—and at that point I stopped reading the book. The cover promises an interesting love story between Fanny and M. d'Arblay, in the course of which she follows him into Revolutionary France.

Most annoyingly, the novel is advertised as a biographical work, and therefore stocked as "biography"; I even had an e-mail from a fond reader asking me how much of it was based on facts! However, one cannot accuse the author of using Fanny's personality in the novel: Burney appears as a simple-minded goose throughout.

I admit that this novel made me reverse all my ideas about an author's licence to use historical persons as fictional characters. If, as must be the case here, historical names are merely introduced to attract readers, the author's intention is blatantly mercenary, and nothing else.

**Mascha Gemmeke  
Munster, Germany**

*Mascha Gemmeke has just finished her PhD thesis, Frances Burney and the Female Bildungsroman, and is preparing it for the press. She is hoping for a grant to work at the Burney Centre for a year on the French Letters to Frances Burney.*

## *Portrait of a Lady as Evelina*

### **By Hester Davenport**

On 27 November 2003 Sotheby's in London sold a portrait by John Hoppner titled "Portrait of a Lady as Evelina." It is a small half-length (27" x 21"), showing a stunningly-beautiful young girl in a white dress with gold embroidery and a gauzy gold scarf round her shoulders. Her rich brown hair is only loosely held by a gold ribbon, tresses teased seductively from it by the breeze. In her hand is an open letter and it is this, added to the girl's look of youthful innocence, which makes the identification with Evelina, though her dress is probably too *décolletée* for Fanny's conception of her heroine.



*Photograph of a "Portrait of a Lady as Evelina" by John Hoppner. Reproduced with kind permission from Sotheby's.*

When was the portrait painted and who was the model? John Hoppner, born in London in 1758, entered the Royal Academy schools in 1775 and began exhibiting five years later. *Evelina* was

then at the height of popularity, and it is possible that this was the picture Hoppner entered in the 1780 Royal Academy exhibition catalogued simply as "Portrait of a Lady." Similarly labelled paintings appeared in both the 1781 and 1782 exhibitions. Assuming that the artist himself intended the identification with Evelina, could it be that the work was designed as a personal echo of the novel? Just as Evelina was making her entrance into the social world (and Burney into the literary), so was Hoppner entering the artistic one, to compete with established portraitists such as Reynolds and Gainsborough. It was at any rate a very successful entry: by 1783 he was exhibiting portraits of the titled, and before the end of the decade he had become official portraitist to the Prince of Wales.

Who the model was is probably not discoverable. She could have been an actress, which would offer another explanation for the title (also suggesting that Hoppner recognised the dramatic qualities of the novel). But aspiring portraitists took their models from where they could find them, which could mean the streets or at least those establishments where a "mother abbess" would select and train young courtesans for high-class service, thus explaining the low-cut dress. Such an "Evelina" would have been headed more in the direction of a Sir Clement Willoughby than a Lord Orville.

No record of sale exists before the late nineteenth century. The first, under the full title, is in 1863, when it was bought for £52.10s after the death of an art collector called George Blamire. By 1872 when it was sold again its value had risen to 250 guineas. Then in 1886, the second Lord Hillingdon paid £945 for it, following a tussle with another bidder. He collected paintings; his father, the first Lord Hillingdon, had amassed a collection of French furniture and porcelain, much of which is now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York. After its purchase in 1886, the portrait remained with the family until the recent sale, where it was joined by three other great eighteenth-century portraits with which it had hung for over a hundred years: Reynolds' 1773 portrait of Miss Hickey, Romney's 1775 painting of Mrs Anne Carwardine and her son, and Gainsborough's magnificent 1780 portrait of Sheridan's friend Richard Tickell, husband of his sister-in-law Mary Linley. It was the first time for a century that any Gainsborough portrait had come to auction so there was excitement to see what it would fetch: in the event that it reached £1,853,600. Hoppner's portrait exceeded price expectation too, the estimate of £40,000-£60,000 falling well short of the winning bid of £173,600.

For a few days when it was displayed in the auction rooms the "Portrait of a Lady as Evelina" could be seen by any member of the public in the know; now the Lady has vanished again. Sotheby's does not reveal the names of buyers so it can only be hoped that we may sometime see her in her sweetness and beauty on a gallery or exhibition wall.

*Hester Davenport is the author of Faithful Handmaid: Fanny Burney at the Court of King George III (2000), and has just completed a biography of Mary Robinson, to be published this summer.*

## Auction of Burney Items

### By Catherine M. Rodriguez

Members of the Burney Society are well aware that most of the Burney family manuscripts remained within the family until early in the twentieth century. Joyce Hemlow has detailed the provenance of the Burney manuscripts and identified most of the individuals and institutions who own them in her *Catalogue of the Burney Family Correspondence 1749-1878*. In the early twenty-first century, it is rare to find a Burney letter or signature for sale. However, recently several such items were sold at Christie's in London at the Halsted B. Vande Poel Collection of English Literature Sale on 3 March 2004, and two are currently available for purchase.

According to Christie's, Halsted B. Vander Poel assembled his collection in the mid twentieth century (between 1935 and 1960), and his was one of the finest collections of English Literature to come on the market in decades. The most important eighteenth-century holdings from the Vander Poel sale, in the opinion of Nicholas Barker, editor of *The Book Collector*, were seventeen letters from Hester Thrale Piozzi addressed to Frances Burney, along with Piozzi's copy of *The Prince of Abyssinia* and a 1784 Bible annotated by her. Three Burney related lots, including this one were auctioned on 3 March: Lot 46, a letter from Charles Burney to his son, Dr. Charles Burney dated 18 July 1796, in which he discusses *Camilla*, estimated: £1500-2,000, sold for:

£3500; Lot 47, a presentation copy of the first edition of *The Wanderer*, inscribed to Sarah Harriet Burney, estimated: £400-600, sold for: £1900; Lot 72, twenty letters from Hester Thrale Piozzi, seventeen of which are addressed to Frances Burney, dated between 1778-1784 and annotated in Burney's hand, estimated: £50,000-80,000 sold for: £50,000.

The Christie's catalogue includes the provenance of the two of these lots. The letter from Charles Burney was sold in 1950 for \$350 by James F. Drake in New York, and this copy of *The Wanderer* in 1953 for £35 by Raphael King in London. As for the Piozzi letters, a notice in the *London Times* of May 6, 1930 for a Sotheby's auction the previous day reports that a lot of 17 letters, dated 1778-1784 from Hester Thrale to Frances Burney sold to Maggs for £210. These prices not only point to the appreciation in the rare book and manuscript market that has occurred over the last century, but also emphasise the increased value that has been conferred upon Burney.

For those who wish to know the final destination of these items, a Burney Society member, Alvaro Ribeiro, attended the sale and reported that the Piozzi letters were purchased by the Houghton Library at Harvard University and the Charles Burney letter by the Beinecke Library at Yale University. We have since learned that the presentation copy of the *Wanderer* is now offered for

sale by Rulon-Miller Books in St. Paul Minnesota for \$8500. Rulon-Miller notes that the dedication to Burney's father has been annotated in pencil, presumably by Sarah Harriet and that the copy is bound in contemporary red half morocco over blue marbled boards, all contained in a red calf-backed slip case. One additional Burney letter has recently appeared on the market: the letter written in June of 1814 by Burney to Charlotte Becketdorff, then keeper of the robes. In it, Burney requests admittance to Becketdorff's chambers so that she may view the Emperor of Russia when he visits the Royal family. The response to this letter granting the request and Burney's Journal entry in which she recounts the visit, are printed in the *Journals and Letters* vol. VII. At that time, only a description of the letter from a 1968 catalogue of the bookseller, Francis Edwards, was available to the editors of *JL*. Edwards was then offering this item for £45. It may now be purchased from Tavistock Books in Alameda, Ca for \$2750.

Thus, for those who wish to own a Burney autograph the opportunities may be rare, but the possibility still exists.

*Catherine M. Rodriguez is a Ph.D. Candidate at the University of Virginia working on a publication history of Frances Burney's works.*

## MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

To renew your membership for the year, please fill out the form below and return it with your cheque (payable to the Burney Society) for the 2004-2005 dues year from 13 June 2004. Those who live in the US or Canada should send a cheque for \$US15 to Lucy Magruder, Secretary/Treasurer, PO Box 1267, Tubac, AZ 85646, USA. Those living in the UK, Europe or elsewhere should send a cheque for £12 (or £20 for 2 at the same address) to David and Janet Tregear, Secretaries/Treasurers UK, 7 Market Avenue, Chichester, West Sussex, PO 19 1JU, UK

Tax-deductible donations, to help the fund-raising efforts are also welcome. Thank you for your support.

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## *Burney News From Around the World*

**By Lorna J. Clark**

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“Isn’t the Burney world a-buzz these days?” writes, very aptly, Professor Alvaro Ribeiro from Washington, D. C. News about Burney events and publications flood in from all over the world.

### **Boston, USA**

Seven Burney scholars appeared recently at a Roundtable Discussion at the 2004 meeting of the American Society for Eighteenth Century Studies, held in Boston, Mass. in March. Chaired by Alvaro Ribeiro, a panel of Burney editors addressed the topic of “Researching the Burneys.”

Lars Troide started things off with an account of the early days of the Burney Project under Joyce Hemlow, and his editorship of the *Early Journals of Fanny Burney*. Peter Sabor, current Director of the Burney Centre at McGill University looked to the future, the six-volume edition of Burney’s *Court Journals*, of which he is the general editor. Nancy Johnson, one of the volume editors, discussed some aspects of Burney’s journal-writing. Lorna Clark described the task of editing the letters of Sarah Harriet Burney and compared it to her current labours on the *Court Journal* of 1788. Philip Olleson of the University of Nottingham outlined progress on the Susan Burney project. Finally, Geoffrey Sill reflected on his edition of Burney’s play, *The Woman Hater*, and looked forward to his role in editing a volume of Burney’s court journals.

John Riely was the respondent, who offered reminiscences of the Horace Walpole project at Yale University. The panel was well attended, with luminaries such as R.D. Hume offering comments in the discussion that followed.

### **Viterbo, Italy**

Dr. Francesca Saggini sends word from Italy of the publication of her book, *La Messinscena dell’Identità Teatro e Teatralità nel Romanzo Inglese del Settecento* (Viterbo: Edizioni Sette Città, 2003) in which Burney figures prominently. With an epigraph quoting Lady Smatter, it examines the theatre and theatricality in the English novel; there are chapters on Burney’s novels *Evelina*, *Cecilia*, and *The Wanderer* and on her play, *The Witlings*, as well as discussions of Burney’s letters.

Dr. Saggini wrote her doctoral dissertation on Frances Burney, and is now working on a second PhD in Theatre Studies, while lecturing in English Literature and Translation Studies at the Faculty of Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures at the University of Tuscia at Viterbo, Italy. She has written and lectured, among other things, on the construction and the representation of men and women actors in the Long Eighteenth Century, literary adaptations, the Gothic and the discourses of the exotic.

She is also involved in compiling an “Italian Burney Bibliography” and recently invited her colleagues in the Italian Society for the Study of English to send news of any relevant publications concerning the Italian presentation, critical studies, editions and productions of Frances Burney’s works. We hope that she will share the results with us.

### **Nottingham, England**

Dr. Philip Olleson writes from the University of Nottingham of his proposal for a web-based edition of the letters of Frances’ sister, Susan Burney. Susan was the trusted confidante of her sister, but her letters also have an interest of their own, containing vivid descriptions of the musical world of London in the eighteenth century. Dr. Olleson’s project was rated highly by assessors for AHRB, but was unable, in the end, to secure funding. He therefore hopes to press ahead with a print volume of selections, for which he will seek alternative funding sources. He is also the editor of Volume 3 of the letters of Charles Burney, Frances’ father (a four-volume set of which Dr. Alvaro Ribeiro is General Editor).

Prof. Olleson announces the recent publication of his book on *Samuel Wesley: The Man and His Music* (2003) by Boydell and Brewer / University of Rochester Press. Samuel Wesley was a friend and colleague of musician Charles Burney, so the work will be of interest to music and social historians.

### **Dublin, Ireland**

Dr. Philip Olleson also shared the intriguing discovery of a local newspaper in Dublin, Ireland, the *Fingal Independent*, which featured (on 6 Feb. 2004) a full-page spread on the exploits of a local hero, Captain Molesworth Phillips, who was born into a well-to-do family in Swords, County Dublin in 1755 and later

distinguished himself by his reported heroism in the fight which led to Captain James Cook’s tragic death in Hawaii in 1779. “How that noble son of Fingal arrived at that point where he was running for his very life on an Hawaiian beach is one of those stories that shapes the history of Fingal itself.”

The marriage to Susan Burney, the sister of his shipmate Captain James Burney, is described, as is the sad ending, with Susan’s untimely death in 1800. Phillips re-married and later traveled to France, where he was imprisoned by Napoleon in 1815. Later, he moved back to London where he had little to live on, and succumbed to cholera in 1832; at the time of his death, he was the last survivor of the voyages of circumnavigator Cook.

### **Sydney, Australia**

Burney scholars know that in Sydney, Australia resides a scholar who is both ingenious and indefatigable in tracking down Burney correspondence, wherever it may have strayed around the world, and is also extremely generous in sharing his finds. Michael Kassler also keeps on the cutting edge of computer and internet advances, and is able to use these tools very effectively to turn up the most fascinating discoveries.

One such recently came to light, the location of the Winnington-Ingram collection, two letters of Charles Burney previously owned by Prof. Winnington-Ingram, who was himself unable to pinpoint their location. They were found by Michael Kassler in the archives of King’s College, London, to which they had been presented. The two letters are written by CB to a Mrs. Chambers in 1797 and 1798 and are of interest for their praise of A.F.C. Kollmann and for other information of musicological importance.

Michael Kassler also announces the recent publication of his edition of *Charles Edward Horn’s Memoirs of his Father and Himself*, by Ashgate Press in 2003. (Horn was a singer and composer of popular music during the Georgian period.)

### **BBC Website, U.K.**

A link on the BBC website will lead readers to a fascinating account of Fanny Burney at court, penned by none other than biographer Hester Davenport, acclaimed author of *Faithful Handmaid: Fanny Burney at the Court of King George III* (2000). Written with Davenport’s usual clarity and verve, the

reader is drawn in, not only by the lively narrative, but also by the striking and original illustrations, several of them drawings by Olivia Davenport, of such unusual subjects as the favourite dog of Queen Charlotte, or the tea-tray and urn presented to Fanny by the Queen. The website link is: [www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/England/berkshire](http://www.bbc.co.uk/legacies/work/England/berkshire)

Since publishing her account of Burney's years at court (of which a paperback edition came out in 2003) Hester Davenport has moved on to write a biography of Mary Robinson, actress, poet and novelist, whose remains lie buried in a tree-shaded graveyard near her home. Robinson's scandalous life (beginning with her time as mistress of the Prince of Wales) has attracted interest, ever since she was pilloried in the press of the day. The book, *The Prince's Mistress: A Life of Mary Robinson*, is expected to come out this summer.

### **Claremont, California**

Audrey Bilger, Chair of the Burney Conference in Los Angeles in October 2004 shows the versatility of her scholarly interests in her recent edition of Jane Collier's *An Essay on the Art of Ingeniously Tormenting* (1753) published by Broadview Press in 2003. It is a beautifully produced book, which features an introduction giving an outline of Collier's life, as well as an analysis of this unusual satire of eighteenth-century conduct-books. In the Broadview model, a series of appendices help to contextualise the work; in Bilger's edition, these include precursors to Collier's satire, excerpts from contemporary works on education and conduct, and satires dating from a later period.

### **CBC Radio, Canada**

Burney Society members who attended the celebration in Westminster Abbey in 2002 may recall that a CBC reporter, Jill Walker, was also present, microphone in hand. The result was an excellent program, aired on two successive evenings as part of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation's "Ideas" show. In it, Walker gives a thoughtful overview of Burney's life and literary importance, enlivened by interviews with biographer Kate Chisholm and Burney scholars Lars Troide and Peter Sabor. An audio cassette

or CD (for \$26 Cdn) can be ordered from the CBC website at: [www.cbc.ca/ideas/](http://www.cbc.ca/ideas/) or by e-mail at [ideast@toronto.cbc.ca](mailto:ideast@toronto.cbc.ca), or by writing to: CBC Ideas, Box 500, Station A, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5W 1E6.

### **New York, New York**

Ian Kelly, a man of many talents, has recently published a biography of Antonin Careme, greatly-valued chef to such diverse monarchs as Napoleon, George IV and Alexander I. Entitled *Cooking for Kings: The Life of Antonin Careme, The First Celebrity Chef*, the book features recipes and menus from the period, adapted for modern kitchens. It is lavishly illustrated with drawings of Careme's greatest pastry and confectionary creations and portraits of the kings he cooked for. Ian recently appeared on television in the UK (Channel 4), to recreate some of the Careme dishes. He has also developed a combination play and Careme class, a Bath Theatre Royal Production, that will appear in New York from 17 May to 6 June 2004 at the 59E59 Theater, located at the corner of Park Avenue and 59th Street. More details, including ticket purchase information, are available at [www.59e59.org](http://www.59e59.org)

Ian Kelly is well-known to the Burney world as the talented actor who took a leading role in Frances Burney's comedy *A Busy Day* in London's West End in 2000 (a show which he also co-produced); he also portrayed the noble Lord Orville in the BBC Radio 4's adaptation of *Evelina*, and he enlivened the 2002 celebrations at Westminster Abbey with scenes from Burney's plays. He was a notable keynote speaker at the Burney Society conference at McGill University last year.

### **Taipei, Taiwan**

Dr. Li-Ching Chen writes from Taipei, Taiwan that, after having successfully defended her dissertation on *Eighteenth-Century English Madness and the Works of Frances Burney* at the University of Reading in 2001, she has accepted an assistant-professorship in the Dept. of Western Languages and Literature in the National University of Kaohsiung, Taiwan. One of the courses she currently teaches covers works from the Restoration to the Victorian Age, and

includes a selection from Burney's *Journals and Letters*. Next autumn, she plans to teach a new course, "Introduction to Eighteenth-Century Conduct Literature for Women" which will aim to help students construct the social and cultural contexts of eighteenth-century England. This topic is also the focus of her current research.

### **Montreal, Quebec**

Prof. Peter Sabor, Director of the Burney Centre at McGill University, misses very little that is going on in the world of Burney scholarship. He noticed a review in *The Times Literary Supplement* (on 14 November 2003) of the world premiere of *The Woman-Hater*, performed last October during the Burney Society's conference in Montreal. Written by Mark Abley (who did not actually attend the play), the article discusses Burney's theatrical ambitions and their frustrations; it describes *The Woman-Hater* as an "odd blend of astringent wit and melodramatic, even Gothic flourishes," and quotes Sabor's assessment that Burney "could be delightfully witty and she had a terrific ear for dialogue." The reviewer also points out (as other critics have done) the element of anger in Burney's work, which underlies this stringent satire of misogyny.

Prof. Sabor also writes word of a recent coup in Burney scholarship. Frances Burney is to have a Cambridge Companion volume devoted to her, to be edited by Peter Sabor. The contract was awarded earlier this year, at the same time as Sterne, and ahead of Richardson and Fielding! (Jane Austen, of course, has already been companioned.)

### **Charlottesville, Virginia, USA**

Justin Cober-Lake of Intellex Corporation writes from Charlottesville, VA to announce that the Past Masters edition of Peter Sabor's recent edition of *The Complete Plays of Frances Burney* has now been released as part of its Women Writers series of electronic texts. This full-text database includes the complete 2-volume edition from Pickering & Chatto. You can find full details on this title at: [www.nlx.com/titles/titlww6.htm](http://www.nlx.com/titles/titlww6.htm)

## *Summer Tours and Performances*

### **By Karin Fernald**

Last autumn, wearing my lecturer's hat, I visited Australia with my illustrated dramatised talk, *I Was Most Excessively Delighted*, on Queen Victoria's early life; her diaries and her watercolours from Windsor Castle. I went from Sydney to Cairns speaking to 19 branches of the Australian Association of Decorative and Fine Arts Societies. They looked after me and took me to crocodile farms, rain forest etc. and also laughed a lot at the lecture, QV being very amusing as a diarist. I enjoyed my visit tremendously. It was my 2nd visit to Oz; they still remember the first one, when I spoke on Frances Burney. Back home in London, I appeared at the National Portrait Gallery, with my latest illustrated talk on Florence Nightingale; and with a new programme on Virginia Woolf, together with the distinguished veteran publisher John Calder. We both felt that Woolf's image

needed looking at again after the film *The Hours*, in which she appears entirely obsessed by death. Anyone reading Woolf's diaries must see that is only one aspect of her extraordinary character. We focus instead on the energy and humour displayed in her diaries, letters and lectures, together with those extraordinary insights in *To the Lighthouse*. In June we go to Edinburgh with this show.

Later in the year I look forward very much to returning to Dr. Johnson's House, Gough Square, where I have performed my stage show *The Famous Miss Burney* several times, up in the famous attic. This time I am giving a dramatised talk on Hester Thrale.

Over the past few years I have been occupied with projects based on my own research, which gives me no time to miss theatre work. Rather to my horror, it has now been suggested I should perform something incredibly

demanding, later this year or next, at small theatres in London—Samuel Beckett's *Happy Days*, no less, where the woman is buried up to the neck in sand for 50 minutes in Act One and 40 in Act Two!!! I can't decide whether or not to hope this idea goes away. Meanwhile, for a brief holiday, my partner Nick and I are off to Salvador, Brazil ("where the nuts come from!" *Charlie's Aunt!*). Back for FB's birthday June 13th, to read a prayer written by her, chosen by Kate Chisholm, in Mickleham Church, where she and d'Arblay were married.

Below is a list of bookings for the spring and summer 2004. Should anyone be interested in attending any of these, please e-mail me directly at [kfernal@ukf.net](mailto:kfernal@ukf.net) and I will gladly provide further details. The NADFAS bookings have to be done privately, through me

### **Karin Fernald: UK SPRING AND SUMMER BOOKINGS 2004**

10 May 2004 **THE QUEEN, THE PRINCE AND THE ARTISTS** (*illustrated dramatised talk on Queen Victoria*):  
Battleby House, Perthshire; NADFAS booking (National Association of Decorative and Fine Arts ) 11 a.m

13 May 2004 "**LISZT IN PETTICOATS**" (*words-and-music evening on Venezuelan pianist Teresa Carreno*) with Clara Rodriguez: Burgh House Hampstead, London NW3 7:30 p.m. tel. 0207 431 0144

20-21 May 2004 **VIRGINIA WOOLF; NEW WOMAN, NEW NOVEL** (*talk and readings*) with publisher John Calder  
Edinburgh Arts Club and Swallow Theatre, Galloway, Scotland 7.30 p.m 01988 850 368.

3 June 2004 **THE QUEEN, THE PRINCE AND THE ARTISTS**:  
Stallbridge Community Hall, Nr Shaftesbury, Dorset (NADFAS booking) 1:45 p.m..

15 June 2004 "**EVERYTHING IS WON AT THE POINT OF A SWORD**" (*illustrated dramatised talk on Florence Nightingale*): The Guildhall, Winchester 2:30 p.m.

16 June 2004 **JANE AUSTEN: LETTERS, LIFE, LESSER KNOWN WORKS** (*illustrated dramatised talk*);  
Memorial Hall, Old Windsor (NADFAS) 8:00 p.m.

21 June 2004 "**I WAS MOST EXCESSIVELY DELIGHTED**" (*illustrated dramatised talk*) *Queen Victoria again*  
St. George's Hall, Blockley, Glos. (NADFAS) 2:30 p.m.

7 July 2004 **THE QUEEN, THE PRINCE AND THE ARTISTS**:  
The Assembly Hall, Melksham, Wilts. 11 a.m.

23-24 Sept. 2004 "**A HEAP OF RUBBISH IN A VULGAR STYLE**" (*Horace Walpole on Mrs. Piozzi's Anecdotes of Johnson*) *The later life and writings of Mrs. Thrale-Piozzi*, Dr. Johnson's House, Gough Square, London E.C. 1:  
7:30 p.m. tel. 0207353 3745



## Lasting Impressions

By Barbara Gorman

Having spent my summer immersed in Jane Austen novels, I was a little apprehensive about reading Francis Burney's *Evelina* for the first time, especially since I knew beforehand that Burney was the precursor of Austen.

Specifically, my concerns stemmed from the fear that I would be forever trying to distinguish similarities in both style and storyline and also because of my absolute love of Austen's novel, *Pride and Prejudice*, which I feared could not be lived up to by Burney. In fact, Austen's other novels could not live up to *Pride and Prejudice* in my opinion, so when my copy of *Evelina* finally arrived, I almost dreaded the thought of reading it. Almost. Fortunately, my deeply-ingrained reading habits and overwhelming curiosity got the better of me so there I sat, book in hand.

As my journey with *Evelina* began, my interest was immediately piqued by the epistolary form in which this novel was written, as I cannot ever recall having read this form before, with the exception of a few examples in a Prose Fiction class I took recently. That being said, I dove in head first and became so securely hooked that I realised by the half-way point of Volume 1 that not once had I tried to seek out comparisons, but was instead happily engrossed in the plot. In fact, the first time I consciously thought about Jane Austen was during the onset of the ridiculous relationship and antics that took place between the equally outrageous Madame Duval and Captain Mirvan. My thoughts at first were indeed to make the comparison that Austen's characters were never as ludicrous as were this unlikely pair, and my sense of unease returned as I feared that this portrayal might be too absurd to allow for my continuing enjoyment of the novel. I persevered, however, and must grudgingly admit that it wasn't long before I found myself so caught up in the absurdity that I could hardly wait to turn the pages! This complete turn-around in my way of thinking can only be credited to the author's ability to make her characters come to life and pull the reader into their world—which greatly impressed me because I can be very difficult to sway once my opinions have been formed.

It was also interesting to note that Burney's characterisation of *Evelina* as a socially inexperienced young woman who had led a very sheltered life, in no way took away from the advantages she received from such an upbringing. These advantages included *Evelina*'s attitudes towards healthy relationships and respect for others which is evident throughout the novel, not only in the way she treats others, but also in the loyalty she demonstrates towards her faithful guardian, the Reverend Villars. Her letters to him are open and her emotions undisguised as she seeks his guidance in matters where she is unsure. As well, *Evelina*'s obvious dislike of

Captain Mirvan and the manner in which he treats his own family demonstrate that she has formed solid ideas regarding relationships, which must be credited to the respectful environment in which she has been so fortunate as to grow up.

This brings me to what I found most impressive about Burney's literary talents and that was her use of theme in two very distinct manners. The first and most obvious theme is the education and maturation of a young woman as she is exposed to a world that is largely unknown to her and is similar to the journey taken by Elizabeth Bennett in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. This theme is presented in such an open manner that the secondary title itself immediately discloses the main premise of the story.

The second theme, however, is more difficult to identify, even though it was just as constant throughout the novel as the first, with the exception that it was accomplished in such a way as to be almost undetectable. This underlying theme is the unique and powerful bond that exists between a parent and a child and I believe that this is the true foundation that the novel is built upon. I also believe that Frances Burney's intention was to demonstrate that difficult circumstances can be withstood and even overcome with the love and guidance provided by a parent, and that the Reverend Villars' love for *Evelina* exemplifies this wholesome bond. Even though *Evelina* is separated from her beloved guardian, he remains constant and foremost in her life which is what truly allows her to manage in the outside world while at the same time staying true to herself and her convictions. Burney's portrayal of the Reverend Villars is so masterfully understated as to be almost unnoticeable, as was my sense of admiration for him which I didn't truly appreciate until the latter part of the book. As I pondered this revelation, it occurred to me that although the author had disclosed very little about this character or his life, I felt that I knew more than enough in order to see that he was an exceptional person who had not only honoured his promise to *Evelina*'s mother but also honoured the sanctity of the parent/child bond and because of this I will always regard him as the true hero of this novel and will therefore, forever remain his faithful servant.

*Barbara Gorman is studying Linguistics at the University of Ottawa and hopes one day to assist adults in upgrading their skills in order to further their education.*

**Do you remember your first encounter with Frances Burney? When did you read her, how did you come to discover her, what were your "first impressions"? If you would like to share your story (in 800 words or less) please send it to the Editor.**

### BURNEY LETTER EDITOR WELCOMES INPUT

The *Burney Letter* welcomes input from members. News, letters, stories, or suggestions should be sent to Dr. Lorna Clark, c/o Burney Centre, McGill University, 853 Sherbrooke Str. W., Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 2T6 or to lclarklj@aol.com

## BOOK REVIEW

Frances Burney, *Evelina*, ed. Chiara Vatteroni (Roma: Fazi Editore, 2001). L. 38,000 (19,62 euro) ISBN 88 - 8112-172-7

### By Francesca Saggini

In Spring 2001, the well-established Italian publishing house Fazi came out with the first ever translation in Italian of a Burney work. Quite predictably, *Evelina* had the honour of opening what we hope is only the first in a series of works in translation which may render Burney more of a household name south of the Alps. Fazi paperback editions, all moderately priced, aim to appeal at the larger public, and yet they generally manage to maintain good publishing quality. The popular series "Le Porte" in which the translation has appeared includes such famous works as Goldsmith's *Il vicario di Wakefield* (*The Vicar of Wakefield*), Keats's *Iperione* (*Hyperion*), Charlotte Brontë's *Vilette* (*Villette*), and Thomas Hardy's *Due occhi azzurri* (*A Pair of Blue Eyes*), amongst the others, thus firmly placing *Evelina* amongst the classics of English literature. The novel is translated and edited by Chiara Vatteroni, a long-standing collaborator of Fazi's, for which she has translated, to name just a few, works by Thomas Hardy, Eugene McCabe, Louis De Bernière, Rohinston Mistry and Ray Bradbury.

Fazi press agents have provided me with copies of two brief reviews which appeared on local newspapers; however, I am aware that the volume has also received the attention of two important Italian scholars, who in past months have positively commented on the quality of the enterprise. (Carlo Pagetti's review can be read on the web.) Such a premise may encourage any Italian Burneyite to expect a long-awaited, accurate and exhaustive edition. Unfortunately, I must admit that this was not quite the case

with me, possibly because the outstanding quality of Burney's past and present Anglo-American editions may have spoilt me as to scholarly excellence and precision.

First of all, a note on the front cover of the volume, that reproduces Edward Francesco Burney's well-known portrait of Frances Burney. In my opinion such a choice may encourage the once-common equation between the author and her first heroine, a misunderstanding made all the more possible by the fact that Burney is just making her editorial debut in Italy. Most of the buyers of the Fazi edition will possibly be still unfamiliar with either the author's main biographical facts or the relevant scholarship about her. Having said that, I must admit I have omitted to check whether reproducing a well-known portrait of the author is part of Fazi standard editorial policy: maybe Wilkie Collins appears on the front cover of their edition of *The Woman in White*, and so may do Maria Edgeworth on that of *Castle Rackrent*. I shall investigate further.

Vatteroni's edition maintains Burney's rich paratext (opening poem, dedication and preface), whilst adding 73 notes and a nine-page afterword with critical and biographical notations. No bibliographical reference is given to any original edition of Burney's works, to her self-writings, or to the most important critical studies in the field (either in English or Italian). An unfortunate choice, since it may have encouraged the public to look further at such a prolific author.

The first drawback of the Fazi Italian *Evelina* is given by the translation of the Dedication, "To the Authors of the *Monthly* and *Critical Reviews*." Vatteroni fails to recognise the titles of the two reviews which Burney so carefully mentions, as she translates the equivalent of "to the authors of the monthly reviews of literary criticism." Translation oversights continue to appear disappointingly throughout the following

pages. After choosing the masculine for the gender of the author of the Preface, near the end Vatteroni inadvertently slips into the feminine. Amusing sartorial blunders pepper the letters: at page 37 we learn that in view of their approaching trip to London, Miss Mirvan busies herself with preparing her own "berretti," namely berets or close-fitting peaked hats, rather than "caps." *Evelina* fares no better at page 42, where the "compleat suit of linen" she bespeaks is translated as "un due pezzi completo," which in Italian reads as a two-piece swimming suit—small wonder such country girls made an odd appearance in the circle of high life! Competent translators must be constantly aware of what is called "semantic reorientation," a tricky linguistic phenomenon through which the meaning attributed to words changes in time. Here must step in the contextual competence of the translator (and especially so when she also acts as editor of the work), who must be able to determine the plausibility of meaning and convey the historical dimension of words. The same explanation may be behind Vatteroni's uniformity in rendering Burney's characteristic use of cant intensifiers and solecisms.

The translator also has difficulties when challenged by Burney's more complex syntax. Sometimes she maintains the author's highly-complicated structures, whilst at others she prefers to break down and modernise the most convoluted phrases. The result is an uneven mixture of high and low styles, of ancient and modern, with the odd false friend thrown in, as in the case of "infamous," which temptingly—though falsely—sounds like the Italian slang adjective "infame."

Vatteroni's afterword is disappointingly concise, sometimes even curt, with just a passing bow at Dale Spender's *Mothers of the Novel*, the only critical work that manages to be mentioned and whose title has the honour of providing the back-cover publicity line. (I prefer

## BOOK REVIEW

not to include in my list the couple of quotations from two standard histories of English literature which make up the whole critical background she openly makes reference to.) However laconic, she still finds the opportunity to mention the role played in Burney's life by Hester Thrale, to quote Burney's three comedies (*The Woman-Hater* R.I.P., since it is denied existence) and to mention that *Cecilia* reaped a tepid success. However, it is the notes to the text that reveal Vatteroni's cavalier handling of literary and cultural context. Their scarcity may be depreciated in passing, even more so when Margaret Anne Doody, editor of the 1994 Penguin *Evelina* explains that "notes have been supplied fully [there are over 500 of them], in the consciousness that [. . .] neither eighteenth-century manners nor English place names are necessarily matters of course" (xli-ii). More relevantly, some of the notes are marked with the indication "[N.d.T.]" which stands for "Note by the Translator." If the translator (i.e. Vatteroni) acknowledges her own authorship of these five notes, who is the unnamed author of all the others, I wonder? And why do some phrases in the notes appear between inverted commas, as if in quotation, when no such source text is acknowledged anywhere?

The parts of the novel which stand better to translation are those in which Burney's comic genius shines: the comic exchanges, the Holborn adventures and the highly idiomatic characters remain vividly alive in translation and cannot fail to amuse the Italian reader. In particular, Madame Duval still makes a great read in Italian. Her idiolect is given good rendition by an enjoyable mixture of contemporary slang and more polished terms that manage to reproduce well her ragings and vulgarity. In these episodes—more dependent on slapstick than on contextual nuances of meaning—Vatteroni's linguistic ability finds justice and deserves praise. Whilst unreservedly admiring her decision to take up such a daunting task as the translation of the bulky *Evelina*, and at

the same time applauding Fazi for being willing to invest in such a risky publishing gamble, the outcome of this editorial venture remains uneven and not fully satisfying, especially as to scholarly standing, it being often scarcely informed and sometimes inaccurate—as unfortunately seems to be the case with numerous works in translation commissioned by some Italian publishing houses. At least we may find bitter comfort in the fact that after many years of marginality, this time Burney has not been discriminated against.

### Teaching Burney in Italy

However, since novels are translated for the enjoyment of the public at large and not just for that of the fussy reviewer, it may be interesting to see how Vatteroni's *Evelina* did when facing a class of twenty-odd Italian third-year university students. After trying to teach *Evelina* and *The Wanderer* untranslated in 1997, only to discover that my final-year class was depressed by the size of both novels (finally we had to retrench to excerpts, in order to render the size of the compulsory readings manageable), I gave up teaching any other Burney course until the present academic year, when I decided to include *Evelina* in my seminar "The Country and the City in the Eighteenth Century." Besides Burney, the course reading list included such well-established blockbusters as William Wycherley's *The Country Wife*, William Congreve's *The Way of the World*, Henry Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Oliver Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer*. Texts had to be read preferably in English, although Italian editions might be used. Invariably, this was the case with Burney. Course assessment was by class presentation (40%) and an individual paper (60%). Teacher support was significantly reduced to minimum class guidance and post-course individual tuition, whilst student peer-response was privileged throughout. The students were required to choose any one from the five texts of the reading list, on which they were encouraged to report to the class and, in case they had enjoyed

it, write a paper. However they remained free to choose any other text should they have matured a preference for a different work at a later stage of the seminar.

*Evelina* enjoyed average success, surprisingly attesting itself before either *The Way of the World* (whose plot intricacies remained obscure to the majority) and *Tom Jones* (the least popular text with my class, which was—incredibly—put off by its length). It may be interesting to record the reasons why most students enjoyed Burney's novel. Given that no male student chose the book for either presentation or essay-writing, my female students read it as an early example of women's romance fiction, a romantic love story with a beautiful young heroine, to whom they found they might sympathetically relate, beset by a string of obnoxious suitors and relatives, who were discussed in completely contemporary terms. In short, it appears that most of those working on *Evelina* chose to do so because they reckoned it a romantic comedy they felt encouraged to approach from a contemporary, prevalently de-historicised perspective.

In this light, Vatteroni's *Evelina* proved a valuable tool with my class, not only because the editor consistently downplays the contextual framework of the novel, but more significantly because she—perhaps unintentionally—updates and modernises Burney's language. My class fairly enjoyed this present-day Italian version of *Evelina*, now let's just hope that there may soon be a chance of working together on the genuine, eighteenth-century English original.

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## BOOK REVIEW

*The Wiltings and The Woman*  
Bainbridge, Beryl, *According to Queeney*  
(New York: Carroll & Graf Publishers,  
2002). Pp.216. ISBN 0-7867-0982-0

**By Akoulina Connell-Delaney**

*According to Queeney* is not really "according to Queeney" per se, but according to Samuel Johnson, Hester Thrale, Queeney Thrale, and Mrs. Desmoulins (Johnson's housekeeper). The point of view shifts between these characters as the plot progresses through the years of Samuel Johnson's association with the Thrale family. The shift in point of view allows the reader to get a multi-faceted sneak peek into the tensions between the servants in Johnson's household, the sexual tension between Johnson and Hester Thrale, and the often strained atmosphere in the Thrale home. Sprinkled throughout the narrative are letters exchanged by Laetitia Hawkins (who wants information on the Johnsonian Circle) and the adult Queeney Thrale (H.M. Thrale). When the correspondence begins, Queeney politely offers up information but becomes increasingly reticent as the invasiveness and gossipy nature of Laetitia's correspondence increases (and persists) over time. Here and there along the way, other characters associated with Johnson and the Thrales make cameo appearances, including Fanny Burney.

Sandwiched between a description of Samuel Johnson's autopsy proceedings and a detached epilogue cataloguing the details of Johnson's funeral is the convincingly recounted saga of the Johnson-Thrale association. It is a fascinating read, crammed from end to end with well-researched facts, beautifully evoked settings, and cleverly scripted dialogue. As historical novels go, it left me wondering where fact ended and fiction began more than any other book I've read. But it was not a book that left me wishing for more. As I turned the last page, I felt as though I were closing the door on a cold room.

While there are bright spots that evoke a smile here and there (a naked Johnson on the grounds of Streatham Park sending Hester's very priggish mother into a tailspin, for example), the characters themselves are all so self-absorbed that it is difficult to find one among them with whom to sympathise. This is not because the characters are not well developed. Au contraire; they are each distinct from the other, and their individual vacillations, internal struggles, and emotional territories are all convincingly rendered.

Perhaps emotional repression (perfectly believable for the period, and to some extent alive and well today) is so integral a part of the atmosphere rendered in this book that there is no room for warmth. Open expression of warm feelings was probably discouraged. As a result, self-absorption prevails: Mrs. Desmoulins is obsessed with Johnson, feels jealous of any attentions bestowed

by Johnson on other members of the household, and positively detests Hester Thrale for being the object of his affection. Johnson's attraction to Hester Thrale occupies him when he is not absorbed in his writing or academic rivalry. Hester Thrale gives birth to many children (some live, some die) but mothers none of them with any tenderness. Queeney is an insightful but cold observer of the adults around her, and is treated like a trained monkey who can perform neat tricks for company.

This is a seamless piece of historical fiction. It is well-researched, sharp-witted, cleverly written, and believable. But its theme can be distilled in the sentence ending Queeney's first piece of correspondence: "As somebody has remarked most truly, a fair proportion of the unhappiness of life consists in recollections of past, or dread of future, miseries." While I don't expect every novel I read to be uplifting, and certainly concede that to explore the depths of the human psyche, one cannot ignore pain and suffering, its pervasiveness in this novel makes it shadowy, dark, and desperate.

Light reading for the beach, this is not. From an academic standpoint, I highly recommend this book.

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### Montreal Report Continued from p. 3

Briefly, at the meeting, chaired by Paula, we learned from Kate Chisholm that the British society is raising dues to £12, that an all-day meeting at Juniper Hall is planned for June 2004, and that a longer conference might be planned for Bath in July or August 2005 (see **Bath Conference**, p. 5).

Victoria Kortes-Papp announced that *The Burney Journal* is moving to the Burney Centre, and Lorna Clark urged us to send material for *The Burney Letter*. Kate also reported that the Walcott Church graveyard project will cost upwards of £3000, to be spent in stages.

The Hemlow Prize Committee consists of Audrey Bilger, Elizabeth Burney-Parker, Peter Sabor (chair), and John Wiltshire. Stewart Cooke announced that the Burney Society website at Dawson College is now linked to the new Burney Centre website at [www.arts.mcgill.ca/burneycentre](http://www.arts.mcgill.ca/burneycentre).

Peter and Stewart reported on the progress of the *Early Journals* and the *Court Journals* editions. Volume four of the *Early Journals*, edited by Betty Rizzo, has just been published, and work on volumes five and six is well underway. The *Court Journals* will be published in six volumes by Oxford University Press. Peter Sabor, the general editor, is also editing volume one. Volume two is being edited by Stewart Cooke, volumes three and four by Lorna Clark, volume five by Geoffrey Sill, and volume six by Nancy Johnson.

Finally, all of our officers were re-elected. The next North American meeting will take place in conjunction with the Annual General Meeting of the Jane Austen Society of North America (see [www.jasna.org](http://www.jasna.org)) at the Biltmore in Los Angeles in October 2004. Paula will investigate the possibility of an all-day Thursday session, possibly at the Huntington Library, which has a rich collection of Thraliana and Frances Burney's Common-place Book.

We had reserved tables at three local restaurants for pre-theatre dinners. In the end only nine people signed up, all for the venerable *Le Caveau*. Five additional people showed up unannounced, but the management was unfazed. In their usual professional, urbane manner, they gave us a private room with a spacious table and added *couverts* as necessary. The room allowed us to talk, the food was good, the price was right, the wine flowed, and in the end, everyone (barely) made it to the theatre on time.

Back at Moyses Hall in the Arts Building, Laura Kopp, assisted by Jacqui Reid-Walsh and her daughter Krista, heroically coped with the huge crowd elbowing for tickets to the one-night-only-must-see-World-Premiere of the Lecky-Selkirk adaptation of *The Woman-Hater*. Thanks to an excellent article that morning in the *Montreal Gazette*, telephone sales had been brisk all day. In short, we pretty much filled the house, capacity 300.

As the theatre doors opened and we

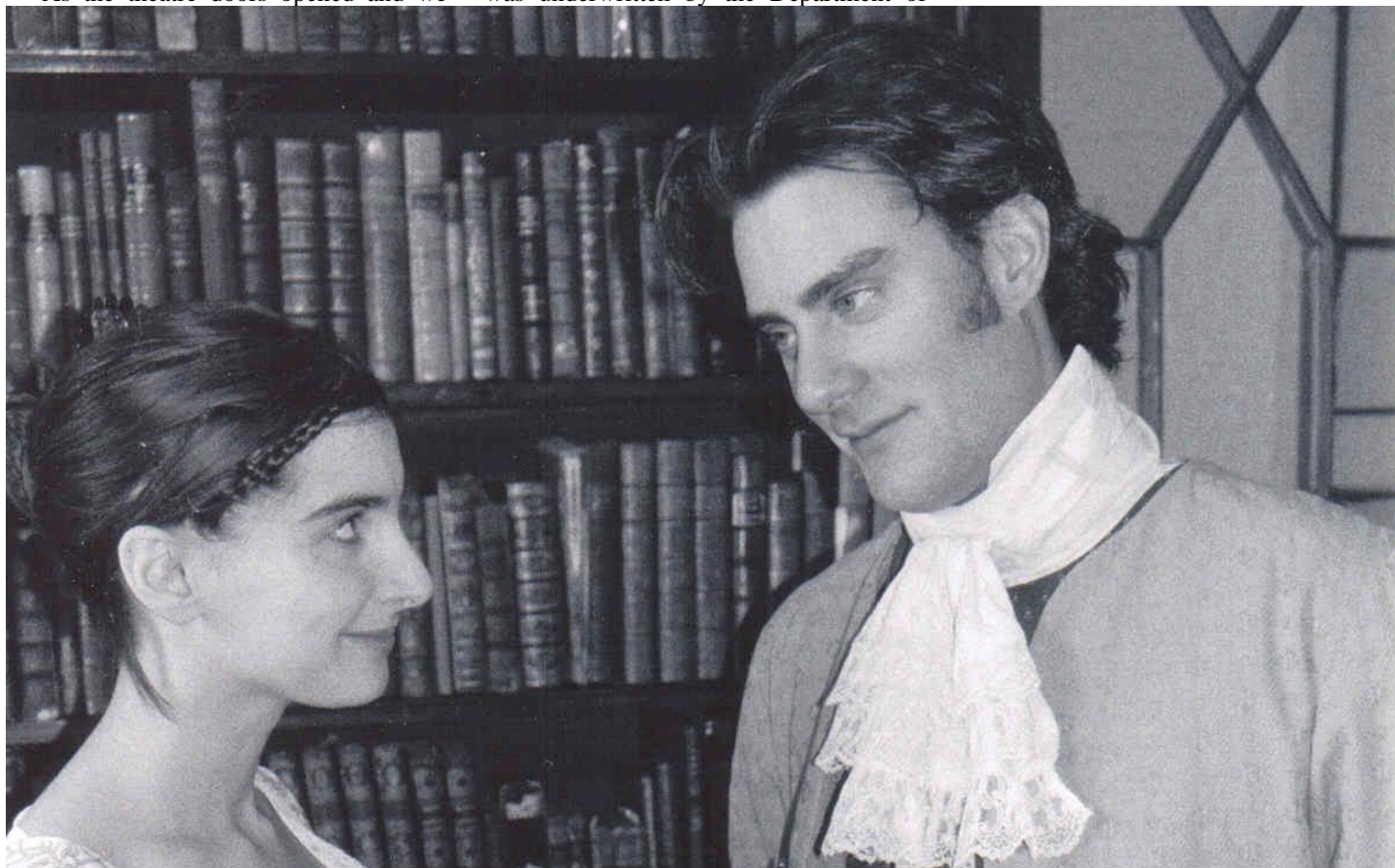
took our seats, four costumed musicians on stage—two violins, a cello and a spinet—played Baroque music. The play began with all actors coming on stage for a brief prologue to explain the complex plot. Some members of the audience were a little confused at first, but in short order the lively performances of the young actors, some of them McGill University students and others recent graduates of the Dawson College Professional Theatre Program, engaged the audience, who responded with enthusiasm to the comedy. Sets were abstract, enhanced by period props, while costumes were vividly in period. *The Woman-Hater* (Lite) moved fast, scenes punctuated by musical interludes. (Even the musicians were laughing at the antics on stage.) The ninety-minute show ended with all actors back on stage and the audience on its feet, applauding. Several hundred people had just enjoyed their introduction to Frances Burney.

The wine-and-cheese reception that followed in the nearby Arts Council Room was underwritten by the Department of

English at McGill and expertly organised by conference speaker Gefen Bar-On, who also enlisted her partner's services as barman: 25 bottles of wine were opened, poured, and consumed in short order under the eyes of the formal portraits of the gowned, capped and furred former Deans of Arts. This crowded reception allowed audience and actors to mingle, and the inventive directors, Steve and Myrna, to receive our congratulations for a wonderful show, a fitting end to a satisfying conference.

(Epilogue: After the post-reception clean-up, eight diehards walked west along Sherbrooke Street to the Ritz-Carleton Hotel to sit in the quiet bar and talk about next year. Rumour has it that those Burneyites closed the bar, but such calumnies will not be repeated here.)

*Elaine Bander teaches in the English department at Dawson College, and was co-organiser of the October conference in Montreal.*



*Sophie Trott and Tom Sykes as Evelina and Lord Orville in the world premiere of Evelina, recently performed in London.*

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