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Blind Eighteenth-Century Musician

by

John Richard Prescott

Doctor of Philosophy

in

Music

in the

Graduate Division

of the

University of California, Berkeley

Committee in charge:

Professor Davitt Moroney, Chair

Professor James Davies

Professor Susan Schweik

Fall 2011

Abstract

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Professor Davitt Moroney, Chair

This dissertation explores the life and career of John Stanley, an eighteenth-century blind organist, composer, conductor and impresario. Most historians of blindness discuss Stanley but merely repeat biographical material without adding any particular insights relating to his blindness. As for twentieth-century musicologists, they have largely ignored Stanley’s blindness. The conclusion is that Stanley’s blindness, despite being present in most of his reception, is not treated as a defining factor. This study pursues new questions about Stanley’s blindness. His disability is given pride of place, and perspectives from the fields of disability studies and minority studies are central to the work.

A biographical sketch precedes a discussion of the role of Stanley’s blindness in his reception. The central role of Stanley’s amanuensis and sister-in-law, Anne Arlond, leads to a discussion of issues of gender, and the general invisibility of caregivers.

Chapter 2 explores those aspects of Stanley’s life that required an engagement with literate music. In performance of his own solo music, as a church musician, he had little need to deal with literate music since memory and improvisation were central to his success; but literacy becomes important in his compositions published or written for other instruments. Here the role of the amanuensis is crucial. Literacy in Stanley’s musical education is explored, with references to a treatise by a contemporary blind organist (who discusses the teaching of blind students). This leads to conclusions that Stanley’s career and working methods were not so different from those of blind people working in oral traditions.

In Chapter 3, Stanley’s education is compared to that of both his musical contemporaries, both sighted and blind, of his non-musical blind contemporaries. Attention is also given to his own active role in the education of blind musicians. Stanley’s story definitively challenges the notion that education for the blind did not exist before the late eighteenth century and the formalized institutions for the education of the blind that developed after his death.

Chapter 4 turns to Stanley as disabled performer and performer of disability. A survey of literature from the field of performance studies dealing with disabled performers opens the door to considering “performance” as self-conscious stage performance as well as the performance of disability in everyday life. Stanley did not self-consciously foreground his disability. However, I explore how passing in itself is a performance of disability. I discuss how able-bodied people aided in Stanley’s “passing” and how Stanley’s choices of instrument and roles in performance were influenced by his blindness. Stanley skillfully manipulated his performance of disability, both on and off stage.

Chapter 5 explores the relationship of Stanley’s blindness to his compositional process with particular focus on his organ voluntaries. I discuss the liminal place that voluntaries occupy, somewhere between composition, memory, and improvisation. Such compositional techniques as repeated material and contrapuntal process served as powerful memory aids to a blind musician like Stanley. I discuss the importance of figured bass notation as a dictatorial shorthand used by Stanley and his amanuensis. I conclude that Stanley’s blindness did have effects on his compositional process. He was able to make effective use of common compositional techniques to assist in memory, performance, and dictation of these pieces.

Chapter 6 discusses my personal experiences as a blind musicologist and musician. The concept of “covering” (the partial hiding of one’s minority status) is also developed, describing ways in which I attempted to “cover” my blindness in my personal and academic life. My double minority status being blind and gay and my gradual journey of uncovering both statuses. This uncovering has led to this dissertation as a piece of scholarship that fully incorporates my status as a blind man and musician.

An appendix considers the various laudatory verses written in honor of Stanley, using as a comparison poems written in honor of Bach and Handel.

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Preface

In the course of my musicological research, I have often come across references to, and stories about, John Stanley “the blind organist”, or John Stanley “the blind composer.” Being myself a blind musician and musicologist, I found these references tantalizing, but I was also frustrated that, for the most part, twentieth-century musicologists told Stanley’s story as though he were not blind. The questions they asked were essentially the same as those normally asked about sighted musicians. What was Stanley’s place in eighteenth-century English music? How does Stanley’s surviving music compare with that of his contemporaries? Who influenced him? Who, in turn, was influenced by him? What is the state of the sources for his music? These are all excellent questions and they have provided a solid foundation of information on which I could build.

However, different questions can lead to different stories. With many writers about disabled people, what is passed over in silence is sometimes as revealing as what is explicitly discussed. When they are not lionizing or pitying their subjects, there is often the proverbial “elephant in the living room.” Much musicological writing about Stanley has taken this tack by studiously avoiding engaging with this seemingly obvious and most noteworthy characteristic. For my own Stanley study, I wanted to engage directly with it.

Most of my primary questions about Stanley relate to his blindness. How did it affect the way he was perceived by his contemporaries and successors? How did he get the education necessary for his career in an era before formalized education for the blind? How did he, as a blind musician, engage with the purportedly literate world of Western classical music? How did his music get transferred from his mind and his fingers into the scores that survive? How did he actively perform his own disability, both musically and non-musically? How does he fit into the long and illustrious history of blind musicians in the Western tradition? And of course, how did his blindness affect the way he was assessed by the modern writers who didn’t seem to want to talk about it?

As I undertook the writing of this study, my aim became to chronicle the ever-changing ways in which Stanley’s blindness interacted with his remarkable life and career. This approach is not meant to replace the traditional musicological story told about Stanley but, rather, to illuminate and complement it.

My study opens with a brief summary of Stanley’s biography, drawn largely from eighteenth-century texts. It closes (in the appendix) with a study of the various eighteenth-century verses written in his honor. Poetry, like portraiture, presents a historical person in language that is different from that of the more sober prose of historical narrative. The use of mythological imagery and allegory provides new perspectives on Stanley’s disability and sheds light on how it was perceived and narrated by his contemporaries. Between these two “book-end” sections, I discuss various aspects of Stanley’s life and work, from a different angle to that taken by previous scholars.

First, I write about the changing role of his blindness, which darts in and out of his reception history, looking at it through the specific prism of his disability. Disability in reception history can make the disabled person either superhuman or subhuman. In Stanley’s case, the former approach predominates.

In the second chapter, I turn to the question that initially captivated my interest: how did such a blind musician function in the purportedly literate tradition of Western music in an era before Braille and sound recordings? This, in turn, raised a larger question: is literacy as central to Western music as is usually thought, and in which ways is it not central, and perhaps not even necessary? There was a complex web of memory, improvisation, and sighted assistance that came together to help make Stanley's career a success.

This led me next to consider how Stanley's extraordinary professional success might have related to his education. Histories of the education of the blind usually begin at the end of the eighteenth century, with the development of official institutions dedicated to this purpose, but Stanley clearly belonged to an earlier era, one in which many blind musicians had nevertheless been successful. I therefore compared Stanley's education to that of other groups of people: sighted musicians; blind musicians; and blind non-musicians. Stanley is at the intersection of all of these groups. This comparison, discussed in the wider context of the education of eighteenth-century blind people, throws light on how he might have been educated. This led me to consider Stanley's role in his later years as an educator himself, and his links with an intriguing group of blind musicians connected with London's Foundling Hospital, an institution with which Stanley was connected as benefactor, musician, and educator.

I next turned my attention to Stanley as a blind performer, and then as a blind composer. Here, I have been inspired by contemporary disability studies but have also drawn freely on new theoretical perspectives found in performance studies, that have considerably broadened the concept of what "performance" is, might be, or might have been. I am interested in the issue of performance of disability, both on and off stage, and although such discussions are usually today located in more recent artistic endeavors, I found it was revealing to apply some of these new ideas to an eighteenth-century blind musician. The idea of Stanley "performing his disability" appeals to me because it helps me see his musical and non-musical lives as more unified. As must all disabled people, Stanley negotiated his way through a world of expectations, limitations, and opportunities.

This led me to explore the ways in which other people, especially the authors of the early sources discussed in my first chapter, in effect performed Stanley's disability for him. I also examine the various connotations, both positive and negative, of Stanley as performer on the organ, on the violin, and in his role as conductor. This section of my study closes with a discussion of Handel's performance of his disability, after the onset of his blindness late in life. When Stanley took over conducting Handel's oratorios after Handel himself went blind, Handel is famously said to have referred to the fact that the blind would now be leading the blind. However, the striking point here is that the blind Stanley could indeed lead, whereas the blind Handel could not even follow.

From this, I went on to explore the exceptional body of compositions that Stanley has left us. They are our best window into his musical process. Since one of the central questions of "New Musicology" over the past two or three decades has been whether a composer's identity has tangible effects on his/her written music, my study would not have been complete without addressing the critical questions of the relationship of Stanley's blindness to his compositional processes. I kept my focus on his organ voluntaries, the part of his output that has remained continuously in the performing repertoire right up to the present day. I suggest ways in which Stanley turned some of the common compositional processes of his time to his own particular

advantage in creating, remembering, and performing his works. One of the more revealing aspects of this investigation was my experiment in dictating a voluntary movement to a sighted amanuensis, in order to try and understand how Stanley's compositional process might have worked at the practical level.

Finally, post-modern scholarship has created a greater scholarly place for the subjectivity of the author. This dissertation embodies an important moment in my own journey as a blind musicologist, musician, and person. It was the "uncovering" of my own individuality, as both blind and gay, that enabled me to complete this dissertation and to understand in a new way Stanley's particularity as a blind man and musician.

It has been a deep source of joy to bring this project to fruition, and I hope it will lead to a deeper appreciation of Stanley's contribution to the history of Western music and to the history of blind people. Most of all, I will be pleased if this study can help open doors to further inquiry and scholarship about the countless other blind musicians who have flourished in Western music across the centuries.

Acknowledgements

One of the most important concepts in contemporary disability theory, and in this dissertation, is that of interdependence. In this project I have been incredibly fortunate to have had a wonderful network of professors, assistants, colleagues, family and friends to support me.

I would first like to acknowledge my dissertation committee. Professor Davitt Moroney has been an unfailing source of support, encouragement and wise counsel. Professor Susan Schweik has brought invaluable perspectives from the field of disability studies to this project. I would also like to thank Professor James Davies for his thoughtful and helpful input. Before embarking on the Stanley project, I began work on a dissertation tracing changing performance practice in the music of Handel through sound recordings. I would like to acknowledge Professors John Roberts, Wendy Allenbrook and James Turner who formed my first dissertation committee, before I changed topic.

My heartfelt thanks go next to my friend and colleague Dr. Jennifer Griesbach for countless hours of assistance with the more visual aspects of this dissertation such as formatting and footnotes.

For both practical and moral support from the beginning of this project I would like to thank David Morris and Nora Phelps: a powerful team. Like every other blind scholar, I have relied on the assistance of a wonderful group of amanuenses over the years. I would like to thank Susan Leffingwell, Richard Mix, Silvia Yee, Beth Levy, Rob Phallon, Ben Privitt, Nathaniel Lew, Erica Levenson and James Apgar. I also owe a debt of gratitude to A. G. Williams and M. W. E. Jenkins whose seminal dissertations on John Stanley have made my work possible.

I would like to thank my immediate family for their unwavering belief in me throughout this project. I would like to thank Bob and Mary Eichinger without whose material and moral support this project would not have been possible.

I am thankful for the deep wisdom and guidance of Dr. Brendan Collins over the years. To Vanessa my guide and to Jude my rock.

I also wish to acknowledge John Stanley and the countless other blind musicians throughout history whose stories are only now being uncovered.

Chapter 1

A life of John Stanley, with Notes on his Reception History

John Stanley (1712-86) was born at a difficult moment in English history, both musically and non-musically. The death of Henry Purcell (1659-95) almost two decades before Stanley's birth had delivered a severe blow to the great school of Restoration musicians, of whom Pelham Humfrey (1647-74) and John Blow (1649-1708) were the other two principal exponents. Maurice Greene (1696-1755), who played an important role in Stanley's story, was the most prominent inheritor of that tradition. In addition to the traditions of native English music, Stanley was strongly influenced by the international styles of his own day represented by Handel, who had arrived in England the year before Stanley's birth.

Five basic types of musical patronage shaped English musical culture in the early eighteenth century. These consisted of the established Church, the monarchy, the aristocracy, philanthropic institutions such as the Foundling Hospital, and the concert- and opera-going public. Of these, the two predominant influences shaping musical life in Stanley's childhood were the church, with its continuing tradition of supporting English sacred music, and the concert-going public, which was infatuated with Italian opera. (If the church did not sponsor a substantial number of new masterpieces, it at least vigorously continued to preserve a living repertoire dating from the previous two centuries.) Stanley was supported by all of these forms of patronage at different times in his life and career.

By the time of his death, the compositional styles of English composers continued to be dominated by the ghost of Handel. This was due in large part to the patronage of George III, who kept Handel's music in vogue.¹ The influence of Charles Burney's *A General History of Music* (1776 to 1789) was also important, as were the grand Handel commemoration performances in May and June of 1784. Stanley and all the composers of his generation labored under Handel's shadow.

The larger social context of England in the mid-eighteenth century played an essential role in molding Stanley's life and career. At the time of his birth, the Industrial Revolution had not yet taken hold in the way that it had done at the end of his life. However, he was born at a time when a solid English middle class had developed. This working middle class is the place in society that the Stanley family occupied in 1712. No information about Stanley's parents has yet been identified, beyond what is contained in baptismal, marriage and burial records.

Charles Burney and John Alcock are the first authors to provide information about Stanley's childhood² and most of the later texts seem to be based on their accounts. Stanley was

¹ Howard E. Smither, *The Oratorio in the Classical Era*, vol. 3 of *A History of the Oratorio* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1987), chapter 24, "Social Contexts of the English Oratorio," 199-237.

² Charles Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.," in *European Magazine, and London Review* 6 (September 1784), quoted in A. Glyn Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977); John Alcock, Letter concerning Stanley in the *Universal Magazine* 79 (July 1786): 44; reprinted in *European Magazine, and London Review* 10 (August 1786): 80.

blinded at the age of two in an accident involving a china bowl.³ We do not know the precise extent of his blindness. This can be a complex issue when discussing blind historical figures. Two of Stanley's contemporaries illustrate the point. The Italian violinist Paolo Tommaso Alberghi (1716-85) was only blind in one eye; and the English organist Jonas Blewitt (who died in 1805) was said to be "almost blind." Other composers sometimes referred to as "blind" include people who lost their sight only gradually during their lifetime yet continued dictating compositions, including such men as Henry Thomas Smart (1813-79) and Antonio Smareglia (1854-1929). There were some ways in which composers who, like Stanley, were blind from childhood could be said to have at least one advantage over those who became blind in adulthood. They had a chance to adapt. Stanley was never fired for becoming blind, as happened in 1738 to the Italian oboist Giuseppe Besozzi (1686-1760).

No personal accounts seem to survive of reactions to his accident, either from family or from those who knew Stanley's parents. Thus his parents' outlook and reaction to having a blind son can only be conjectured. Stanley's earliest musical education began at the age of seven with the organist John Reading II (1685-1764). All early sources agree that Stanley's parents had no expectations from these lessons other than that their son should be amused and distracted by them.⁴ Stanley then continued his studies with Maurice Greene (1696-1755), the organist at St. Paul's Cathedral. Stanley's relationship with Greene connected him to the musical establishment and the centers of power in England, especially in relation to church music.

Although his early career is sketchy, Stanley seems to have demonstrated a prodigiousness that recalls certain aspects of the young Mozart's life. At the age of eleven, he was appointed to the post of organist at the church of All Hallows, Bread St.⁵ At the age of fourteen, in 1726, he became organist at St. Andrew's, Holborn (where Maurice Greene had been appointed organist in February 1718, followed by John Isham; Greene may have had some influence in securing this appointment for Stanley eight years later). Stanley remained organist at St Andrew's for the rest of his life.⁶ At about seventeen, in 1729, he became the youngest person to be awarded a B.Mus. degree by Oxford University, following his performances in several extraordinary concerts in Oxford. Five years later, in 1734, he also became the organist of the Inner Temple, a post that he held for the rest of his life.⁷ In addition to these duties in various churches, Stanley had a thriving parallel career as a secular musician. As a violinist, he conducted public concerts at the Swan Tavern in Cornhill, and The Castle on Paternoster Row.⁸ He also wrote music to be played at the Pleasure Gardens such as Vauxhall and Marylebone.

In 1738, Stanley married Sarah Arlond, whose father was a captain in the East India Company. Their marriage was clandestine and took place at the Fleet prison where priests who

³ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley," quoted in Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 1:3. "At about the age of two years, he had the misfortune to fall on a marble hearth, with a china bason [sic] in his hand, by which accident he was deprived of his sight."

⁴ Ibid., 8.

⁵ Ibid., 17.

⁶ Ibid., 18.

⁷ Ibid., 20.

⁸ Burney, *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period* (London, 1776-89), quoted in Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 1:24.

were serving prison sentences performed such ceremonies.⁹ A number of reasons have been proposed for this secrecy. It has been argued that the disparity in their economic circumstances may have led to a need for secrecy. There is also some evidence that Sarah's father may have been a Roman Catholic, which would have complicated things for her marrying a Protestant. I would add the question of Stanley's blindness and whether that might have made him an undesirable match for the Arlonds' eldest daughter. In any case, we know that there was a pre-existing connection between them since Sarah had been one of Stanley's many students.

Several years after their marriage, Anne Arlond, Sarah's younger sister, came to live with the Stanleys. In many ways, she seems to have been John Stanley's true musical partner. She lived with the family until Sarah's death, and continued to live with John until his own death. During all this time Anne served as Stanley's amanuensis, writing down his compositions. She was also the means by which he was able to conduct scores composed by other musicians. She would play through the score of an oratorio that Stanley was to conduct, and he would learn it from memory.

Stanley was well known and sought after not only as an organist and conductor but also as a teacher. One of the most important accounts of Stanley's life was written when he died by his former student, John Alcock. With one exception, accounts of his teaching are highly favorable but do not give specific details of his teaching methods. The accounts by Stanley's contemporaries tend to contain descriptions of his non-musical life. This raises complex issues involving the difficulty today of distinguishing between historical realities and myth-making in the lives of prodigious disabled people. The stories vary from the plausible (such as Stanley conducting other people's compositions) to the fantastic (such as his supposed ability to distinguish colors by touch).

As mentioned earlier, Stanley was first connected with England's musical elite in his childhood through Maurice Greene. His most illustrious musical connection, however, was with George Frideric Handel. Ironically, it was the blind Stanley who took over conducting Handel's oratorios after Handel lost his own sight in his mid-sixties. Stanley was able to do so because he had learned since childhood to overcome his "disability" in a way Handel, afflicted at a later stage, could not.

Following Handel's death in 1759, Stanley took over the administration and direction of these oratorio performances, starting in 1760. In this venture, he collaborated first, until 1774, with the younger John Christopher Smith (who in 1754 had become one of the unofficial organists at the Foundling Hospital), and from 1774 onwards, with the elder Thomas Linley (who was a highly successful concert manager). After Stanley's death, his role of musical director of these concerts was taken over by Samuel Arnold. John Stanley was thus the direct inheritor of probably the most important English musical legacy of the eighteenth century. The performance of Handel's oratorios has continued in an unbroken, if not unchanging, tradition from the composer's time to the present. The idea of "Stanley the blind conductor" is an intriguing one. The metrical regularity of music of the baroque period requires less guidance from a conductor than music of later centuries. He most likely conducted from the harpsichord, or perhaps from the violin.

⁹ Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 1: 28-29.

In the 1770s, Stanley took on a new role that would have important implications for his relationship to future blind musicians: he had previously been on the Board of Governors of a school near where he lived,¹⁰ but in 1770 he was elected to the Board of Governors of the Foundling Hospital. In this position, he acted in an authoritative role over several young blind residents of the Hospital. Several of them were given musical training, and at least one, the singer Mercy Draper, studied directly with him. He also conducted the annual Foundling Hospital performance of *Messiah*, another of Handel's musical "legacies" to Stanley. The Governors of the Foundling Hospital also relied on Stanley's expertise for other musical matters, such as the examination of alterations made to the organ in 1771.¹¹

In the last years of his life, Stanley consolidated his place in the English musical elite by taking the place of William Boyce (1711-79) as Master of the King's Music. In this capacity, like Handel and Boyce before him, he wrote court odes for the New Year and official Birthday odes. We know the titles for fifteen of them and their dates (1779-86) but the music, which was never printed, is not known to have survived. Lastly, no doubt as a result of this official position at court, he is known to have also written music for various court balls. A portion of it may survive in the various arrangements of little dances that survive in published anthologies, but the main part of this instrumental repertoire now seems to be lost.

Although many of Stanley's works have been lost, the main losses seem to relate to these late works composed as Master of the King's Music. Several early stage works also seem to be lost, notably *Oroonoko* (1759) and *The Tears and Triumphs of Parnassus* (1760). At one time, Stanley was credited with an opera *Teraminta*, but recent scholarship has cast doubt on his authorship.¹²

Fortunately, however, a significant portion of his creative output does survive. These works include the pastoral *Arcadia, or The Shepherd's Wedding* (1761), some early secular odes (such as *Great Hercules* and *Rise Harmony*, probably dating from 1729), and a few anthems. But the main part of his surviving output is known from authoritative printed editions. The RISM listing (S4635-4691) contains nearly sixty items. There are two volumes of solos for flute or violin and continuo (1740 and 1745), a volume of six concerti grossi (1745?), and a collection of organ or harpsichord concertos (1775), as well as three volumes of secular cantatas (1742, 1748, and [1751]; a couple of other cantatas are known from manuscript sources). His best known works are the three published organ collections (1748, 1752, and 1754), each containing ten voluntaries. In addition, we have his three biblical oratorios, *Jephtha* (1751-52, surviving only in manuscript), *Zimri* (published in 1760), and *The Fall of Egypt* (1774, surviving only in manuscript). These works place Stanley squarely in the Handelian tradition, both by the musical style and by the choice of subject matter. (Handel's own setting of *Jephtha* seems to immediately predate Stanley's, having been composed between January and August 1751; *Israel in Egypt* was completed by April 1739.)

¹⁰ M. W. E. Jenkins, "John Stanley: His Life and Works" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Auckland, 1977), 36.

¹¹ R. H. Nichols and F. A. Wray, *The history of the Foundling Hospital* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 211.

¹² Malcolm Boyd and A.G. Williams, "Stanley, John." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26522>, accessed November 12, 2011.

Stanley's chamber music allowed him to capitalize on the growing market for smaller works suitable for amateurs, but like his concerti grossi, which skillfully handle larger orchestral forces, they place him directly in Handel's footsteps. Stanley, however, is of a younger generation, as can be seen and heard in the clearly galant style of a number of the movements. The keyboard concerti, which Stanley published in the last decade of his life, show him staying up to date with musical developments, particularly in their scoring for organ, harpsichord, or forte piano.

In terms of the quality of his music, Stanley belongs among the group of highly competent post-Handelian composers. His works, though generally not ground breaking, are graceful and inventive. They epitomize the elegance, variety and sweetness of the mid-eighteenth century English style.

Given Stanley's considerable popularity and great professional success during his life, the speed with which he was forgotten after his death is astonishing. He shares this fate with many composers throughout history. One reason for this is that, like J. S. Bach, he was much better known in his lifetime as a performer than as a composer. The accounts contain many more references to his performances than to his compositions. Stanley came close to achieving a Handel-like status at the time of his death. It was felt that it would have been appropriate for Stanley to be buried in Poets' Corner in Westminster Abbey. This was prevented only by Stanley's will, which instructed that his funeral expenses should not exceed those of his late wife and that he should be buried beside her at St. Andrew's Church, Holborn. The desire to bury him in Westminster Abbey, along with the various musical appointments mentioned earlier, confirms that Stanley was regarded as a national treasure, nearly in the same category as Handel who, by the 1780s, was well on his way to becoming the national and cultural icon he has been in Britain ever since.

John Stanley's Blindness in his Reception History

Five primary sources contain biographical material on John Stanley. Five of them date from the eighteenth century: (1) Sir John Hawkins' *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776); (2) Charles Burney's account of Stanley in the *European Magazine* (1784); (3) Burney's *General History of Music* (1776-89); (4) John Alcock's similar account (1786); and (5) William Coxe's lengthy footnote on Stanley in his *Anecdotes of Handel and Smith* (1799).¹³ To this list can be added a sixth item, the memoirs of Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, who was the daughter of Sir John Hawkins (1822).¹⁴ Her relationship to Stanley will be discussed below.

¹³Charles Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.," in *European Magazine, and London Review* 6 (September 1784), quoted in A. Glyn Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977); John Alcock, letter concerning Stanley in the *Universal Magazine* 79 (July 1786), 44, reprinted in the *European Magazine* 10 (August 1786), 80; William Coxe, *Anecdotes of George Frideric Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1799; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1979): 50; and Sir John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, new edition with the author's posthumous notes (London: Novello, Ewer, 1875).

¹⁴Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1822).

Although these sources agree in large part about the basic elements of Stanley's biography, each source has a different emphasis. Some sources omit key details that others include.

The relationship of each author to Stanley needs to be understood. Three of them (John Hawkins, Burney, and Alcock) had personal knowledge of, and acquaintance with, the composer. I have not been able to determine whether Coxe knew Stanley personally. We may assume that Laetitia Hawkins did know Stanley.

The Accounts of John Hawkins (1776); Charles Burney (1784 and the *History*); John Alcock (1786); and William Coxe (1799)

John Hawkins (1719-89) started out as a close friend and collaborator of Stanley's. Slightly younger than the composer, he was also the author of the texts of many of Stanley's secular cantatas.¹⁵ Their relationship, however, eventually soured. At least one important reason for this was the fact that Hawkins developed a romantic interest in Stanley's sister-in-law and second amanuensis Anne Arlond, who will be discussed below, but Anne did not return his feelings.¹⁶

Although the account of Stanley written by Charles Burney (1726-1814), written just after the composer's death, is mostly laudatory, their relationship had an element of rivalry to it. After Boyce's death in 1779, Burney had hoped to get the position of Master of the King's Music but the position was offered instead to Stanley.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the two men also had another more professional link since Burney took over from Stanley the musical direction of the public concerts given at the Swan Tavern.¹⁸

John Alcock (1715-1806) seems to have had the most unqualified positive relationship with the composer. In the era before formal conservatory training in England, the apprenticeship system was the primary way for a musician to receive an education. Alcock was Stanley's apprentice. Thus, Stanley was responsible for Alcock's main education and formation as a musician. Furthermore, before his formal apprenticeship, Alcock served as Stanley's first amanuensis. Alcock states that there was only two years difference in age between the two composers (in fact there was a three-year difference) so the relationship was more like one of brothers rather than a traditional master/apprentice relationship.¹⁹

The fact that Alcock had been Stanley's amanuensis made their relationship both deeper and more complex. It created a level of interdependence between the two men which exceeded that which would normally exist between master and apprentice. The intimacy of this relationship also appears in Stanley's relation to the rest of the Alcock family. He was godfather to Alcock's grandson, who in turn was named John Stanley Alcock. Nothing in the literature indicates any type of jealousy or rivalry between these two musicians.

¹⁵ Malcolm Boyd and A.G. Williams, "Stanley, John." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online* <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/26522>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁶ Williams, "Life and Works": 32.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 60.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 24.

¹⁹ Alcock, 80.

The account of Stanley given by William Coxe (1747-1828) is more removed from the composer in two ways. First, it appeared some thirteen years after the composer's death. Second, Stanley appears as mainly a footnote in Coxe's book on Handel and J. C. Smith, *Anecdotes of George Frederick Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London, 1799). Interestingly, however, Coxe includes certain biographical information that does not appear in the other eighteenth-century accounts of Stanley.

These four authors agree on many of the basic details of Stanley's biography. They agree about the circumstances of Stanley's becoming blind at the age of two and about the basics of his musical education starting at the age of seven, first with Reading and then shortly after with Greene. They also agree about the dates of many of the major turning points in Stanley's life, including his marriage and principal musical appointments. All agree that Stanley's family did not expect music to develop into a profession for the boy; rather, they expected it to be a form of entertainment in which, as a blind child, Stanley could participate.

More interesting are the places where these accounts do not agree or overlap. In some cases, one author will include a detail or anecdote, which another author omits, but sometimes, the accounts flatly contradict one another. For example, Burney says in both his *European Magazine* article and his *General History of Music* that Stanley made rapid progress with Reading before transferring to Greene.²⁰ Coxe, on the other hand, states that Stanley "continued under Reading only a few months during which time the difficulty of receiving information was so great that he made scarcely any progress."²¹ This raises the intriguing question of how Stanley received information, a matter dealt with elsewhere in this study. Coxe also says that Stanley made progress with Greene "under this scientific master."²² It is hard to read the word "scientific" without imagining the differing methods of teaching a blind student. What might have been Greene's "scientific" methods for teaching his young pupil? Do these methods relate to those of Griffith James Cheese, discussed in the next chapter? I discuss below Greene's possible personal motivations for helping a disabled child.

As for Stanley's musical process, Alcock's comments are revealing. He says that for a year before his apprenticeship, Stanley employed him to write music. "Writing" (in the sense of "writing down" or "notating") is, of course, only half of the work of a musical amanuensis for a blind musician. Stanley's long-term amanuensis, Anne Arlond, certainly took musical dictation for Stanley. But she also read music for Stanley; that is, she played through scores of oratorios and works by other composers that Stanley was to conduct. Alcock, by contrast was, it seems, not performing this second function; or at least, he does not mention doing so.

If, in these early years, Stanley performed only his own music (not that of other composers), he would have had no need of an amanuensis to teach him music by other composers. It also may be that Alcock, before his apprenticeship, did not have the performing skills to play through scores the way Arlond did later. The reception or, in many cases, the lack of commentary on Stanley's working methods will be discussed later.

Another remarkable aspect of Alcock's account of Stanley is the fact that he alone discusses Stanley's violin playing. Apparently Stanley played all the solos of Corelli and

²⁰ Burney, *A General History of Music*: 495.

²¹ Coxe, *Anecdotes*: 50.

²² *Ibid*, 50.

Geminiani.²³ We do not know by whom Stanley was taught to play the violin. Could he have been self-taught on this instrument? If so, this would be one of the most remarkable aspects of his musicianship. (I speculate below on a possible link with Talbot Young; see p. 18.) If Stanley played Corelli and Geminiani early the early years of his career, when Alcock was his amanuensis, then Alcock or someone else must also have been playing this music for him so he could learn it. The fact that no one else mentions Stanley's solo violin playing also raises another possibility. Did Stanley only perform this music in private? Could this be why only Alcock, who had intimate acquaintance with Stanley, discussed this aspect of Stanley's musical life?

Another reason why this matter is not mentioned by other writers is perhaps that sometimes the most obvious facts are not mentioned simply because they are assumed to be known by everyone. Burney, in his account in the *European Magazine*, says "it is almost unnecessary to enter into his merits as a performer, those being as universally known as acknowledged and we do not need to write a panegyric on this gentleman's talents."²⁴ Stanley's violin playing could have been so well known that Burney did not need to mention it.

Burney and the other authors do sometimes refer only obliquely to his various skills. One story that appears in the early accounts and recurs in later biographical material concerns a performance of Handel's *Dettingen Te Deum*. Stanley discovered that the organ was a half-step sharp by comparison with the other instruments. Without any preparation, he transposed the organ part from D major to C-sharp major.²⁵ Alcock and the other authors marvel at Stanley's ability to do this. Burney describes the event as follows:

...it is worth recording that at a performance of one of Handel's *Te Deums* for the benefit of a public charity the organ was half a note too sharp for the other instruments that were to assist in the performance: on which occasion he transposed the whole of it with as much ease and address as any other person could have done by the help of sight.²⁶

However, in doing so, authors ancient and modern miss an important distinction between a visual and a non-visual approach to the problem of transposition. The authors talk about the difficulties in playing in the key of seven sharps. They say that Stanley did this as easily as anyone who had had the opportunity to write the part out in advance. These sighted authors are thinking primarily of the difficulty of reading a score in so many sharps. This is understandable when considering the limited range of keys commonly used, even in the late baroque period. Yet when playing by ear, such a transposition would be less complicated than when reading from a score. The performer needs to adapt the fingerings but is not distracted by the visual alteration of key signatures and accidentals.

If we take conducting as an aspect of Stanley's performance, then Burney adds a panegyric on Stanley's abilities, "whose retentive memory is almost beyond the bounds of

²³ Alcock, 80.

²⁴ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.": 172.

²⁵ Alcock, 80.

²⁶ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq."

probability... The manner and propriety with which he has conducted the oratorios for many years past has excited not only the admiration but also the astonishment of all the amateurs of that elevated species of music."²⁷ Stanley's musical memory seems to have been one of the keys to his success both as a performer of his own music and that of other composers.

Related to the comments on Stanley's memory are those concerning his skills as an extemporaneous performer. At least one modern musicologist has examined the relationship of Stanley's written voluntaries to improvisation.²⁸ Alcock specifically mentions the draw that Stanley's performance of voluntaries had for other musicians, describing how forty or fifty musicians, including Handel, could sometimes be seen at the altar listening to Stanley's closing voluntary.²⁹ (Chapter 2, on musical literacy, will further discuss Stanley's skill at improvisation.)

Stanley's nonmusical memory also occupied the attention of his contemporaries. Some of the stories told in this context are not, in fact, particularly remarkable, if taken in the context of what many blind people are capable of. One such anecdote, first related by Alcock but retold in most later accounts, concerns Stanley's ability to recognize voices. Stanley, he says, recognized the voice of a man who had been out of the country for twenty years.³⁰ Burney notes that Stanley could be seated at a table with twenty people and know by their voices who was sitting where.

According to contemporary accounts, Stanley had extremely good mobility skills. He could navigate the streets in his area of London both on foot and on horseback. When walking on foot, the authors do not tell us whether or not Stanley used any kind of a stick as was common for many blind people. Horses have long been known to have extremely retentive memories for routes and familiar places. None of this is to detract from Stanley's accomplishments. Rather, the goal here is to separate what was truly remarkable about Stanley, primarily his musical memory, from the other aspects of his nonmusical life which, if put in the context of other high-functioning blind people, become (if not absolutely average) quite within the normal range of plausibility.

The Account of Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins (1822)

The four sources discussed above form the core of the biographical material that later authors tend to repeat about Stanley. The *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches and Memoirs* (London, 1822) by Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins (1759-1835), although technically not an eighteenth-century source, belong with the texts of Burney, Alcock, Coxe, and her father Sir John Hawkins.³¹ Laetitia Hawkins seems to have been the last author to write about Stanley who may have known him personally. Although I will draw on her account at a number of places in this study, it has a special place here in this chapter on reception since it is the only one to be highly critical of the composer. Laetitia is also the only contemporary author to mention Stanley's sister-in-law and principal amanuensis, Anne Arlond. Considering the interest that

²⁷ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq."

²⁸ Malcolm Boyd, "John Stanley's Voluntaries" *Musical Times* 115 (1974): 598-601.

²⁹ Alcock, 80.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 80.

³¹ L.-M. Hawkins, *Anecdotes*.

earlier male authors show in many aspects of Stanley's career, it seems on first glance remarkable that they completely ignore a person who was so vital to the composer's life and professional success. Laetitia Hawkins's critical tone about Stanley and the centrality of Anne Arlond to her account are related. Laetitia saw Arlond as the great, unsung heroine of Stanley's story. Her text therefore serves as a corrective to the male narratives that present Stanley as a self-made man whose success was due entirely to his own ingenuity and remarkable abilities.

A specific anecdote related to this disparity in viewpoints concerns Stanley's prowess at card playing. Descriptions of Stanley's extra-musical life all seem to contain mentions of this pastime. The discrepancy between Laetitia's account and the earlier ones consists of the discussion of the adaptation of the cards necessary for Stanley to play. Coxe, for example, simply says: "The cards were marked with a needle at one corner"³² Burney similarly says: "Each card is marked at the corner with the point of a needle."³³ The passive construction used by these two authors is revealing, or rather obscurantist: it completely removes Anne Arlond from the equation. According to Laetitia Hawkins, it was Arlond who invented the system of pinpricks by which the different numeric value for the cards was indicated. This was not the first proto-braille system. However, it is the first one, to my knowledge, which is designed specifically for playing cards.

More crucially, Arlond's role in Stanley's musical success is completely overlooked by the eighteenth-century authors. From the early 1740s until Stanley's death, Arlond was the sole vehicle for communicating Stanley's written music. She was also the means by which Stanley learned the music of other composers. It is unclear how much music by other composers Stanley played on the organ, although we have seen that he played Corelli and Geminiani on the violin. He did, however, conduct extensive amounts of music of other composers. The prime examples of this are the Handel oratorios. An author such as Burney could marvel at Stanley's feats of memory in his conducting while not thinking to mention the means by which Stanley acquired this knowledge in the first place.

In contrast to this, Laetitia Hawkins maximizes Arlond's contribution to Stanley's success. This fits into her generally critical tone about Stanley and his wife Sarah. According to Laetitia Hawkins, neither the Stanley household nor the composer's illustrious career would have been possible without the efforts and abilities of Anne Arlond.

In her recent work, Julia Rodas has explored the idea of the "satellite subject".³⁴ By this term, Rodas refers to those able-bodied people who are, in one way or another, attached to a disabled person. These can include caregivers, assistants, relatives, or combinations of these. She explores the various ways in which these figures are described and portrayed. Among the variety of portrayals are those in which the "satellite" does not exist in the account of the disabled person. The eighteenth-century sources for Stanley fit into this type. Another way of dealing with a "satellite subject" is to focus on her or him so much as to obliterate the disabled person. More modern examples of this later type of account include writings about Anne Sullivan who worked with Helen Keller, as her interpreter. These accounts describe Sullivan's contribution to Keller's success to such an extent that Keller herself becomes a passive recipient

³² Coxe, 50.

³³ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq."

³⁴ Julia Miele Rodas, "The Satellite Syndrome: Disability in Victorian Literature and Culture" (Ph.D. dissertation, The Graduate Center of the City University of New York, 2003).

of Sullivan's attentions. The play about Sullivan entitled "The Miracle Worker" is just such an example.³⁵ Laetitia Hawkins account of Stanley fits nicely into this later type of "satellite" portrayal.

In addition to Rodas' work, a more historically based approach may help to account for Anne Arlond's absence from the eighteenth-century Stanley biographies. At that time, since unmarried women occupied a marginal place in British society, an unmarried sister-in-law living in the Stanley household would have been largely invisible to the male writers of Stanley's time. Unmarried women seem to have occupied a similar place to that of servants: necessary, but not worthy of comment. The contribution of servants to the life of the house was so assumed that it was taken for granted.

Laetitia Hawkins's negative assessment of Stanley and his accomplishments is not supported by those who were his contemporaries. A complexity in the relations between the Hawkins and Stanley families was the fact that Sir John Hawkins seems to have had romantic feelings for Anne Arlond. Arlond, however, did not return his feelings. The fact that Laetitia Hawkins was a personal friend of Anne Arlond may at least partially account for her sympathetic portrayal of Arlond and her contribution to Stanley's music achievements. From a feminist standpoint, in her account Laetitia, as another unmarried woman, is in solidarity with Anne Arlond. Laetitia's descriptions of Stanley should therefore be read with some caution; but she does provide a useful counterpoint to the other contemporary accounts and later biographers are indebted to Laetitia for this information.

The sources that have been discussed here form the core of the known biographical material on Stanley. With the exception of Laetitia Hawkins, the few authors in the nineteenth century who were interested in Stanley mostly recap this same information. The same can be said of much of the early scholarly work on Stanley, beginning with that of Gerald Finzi in the 1950s. In the 1970s, two doctoral dissertations appeared, by M. W. E. Jenkins and A. G. Williams. Both are studies of the composer's life and works. They focus primarily on Stanley's compositions, but each one includes a chapter on his life.³⁶ The authors revisit the eighteenth century and unearth some additional primary source material, filling out the biographical picture by examining newspaper accounts and church records, etc. Part of the difference in approach here is that these two authors apply more positivistic methods to the study of Stanley and his music.

Both Jenkins and Williams detail several important aspects of Stanley's life ignored by eighteenth- and nineteenth-century biographers, such as Stanley's role as a Governor of the Foundling Hospital and his similar role at St. Andrew's school. From the perspective of disability studies, these two activities play a crucial role in a modern analysis of Stanley's life. One of the central issues in much disability-related work concerns a disabled person's relationship to power and, more specifically, to institutional authority. These issues will be taken up later in this thesis. However, neither Jenkins nor Williams explores the ramifications of the new information they present. Two reasons suggest themselves for this lack of commentary: first, in the 1970s the fields of disability studies and disability history did not exist in their

³⁵ William Gibson, "The Miracle Worker" (New York: S. French, c.1960).

³⁶ M. W. E. Jenkins, "John Stanley: His Life and Works" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Auckland, 1977); A. G. Williams, "Life and Works."

modern form; second, Stanley's blindness plays only a marginal role in their dissertations. In the tradition of the other twentieth-century musicological work on Stanley, the composer is of interest to these authors primarily because of the written artifacts of his work, namely his music.

By contrast, two other modern scholars, Malcolm Boyd and H. Diack Johnstone, do explore an aspect of Stanley's compositional process that relates to his blindness.³⁷ In their discussion of Stanley's voluntaries, they touch on the relationship between improvisation and the written compositions that come down to us. As discussed below, in the chapter on Stanley's musical literacy, improvisation played a crucial role in his career as a performer. However, his blindness seems not to play a central role for either of these authors. Once again, they are interested in a positivistic investigation of Stanley's compositions.

These twentieth century studies are useful in leading us back to other eighteenth-century primary source material. In his dissertation, Jenkins cites several newspaper accounts from Stanley's youth. These concern Stanley's youthful prowess as an organist, the first aspect of Stanley's musical life to attract public attention. In 1725, the diarist Thomas Hearne referred to the young musician as "the best organist in Europe, maybe in the world."³⁸

Several of the other newspaper accounts of Stanley point out an interesting paradox in his reception, involving his blindness and his education. One refers to him as "the blind youth educated by Mr. Greene."³⁹ Another describes him as "a youth who had the misfortune to be blind, having been educated by Mr. Greene."⁴⁰ In both of these accounts, the disadvantage of Stanley's blindness seems to be offset by the advantage of his education with an illustrious musician and teacher such as Maurice Greene.

Another type of source material related to Stanley does not come from specifically musical sources. Rather, several works on blindness have retold Stanley's basic story. One of the few early nineteenth-century sources on Stanley is James Wilson's *Biography of the Blind* (1819).⁴¹ Wilson was blind himself, so one might expect that he would have added his own analysis or unique perspective to Stanley's story. However, he simply relates the basics of Stanley's biography drawn from the eighteenth-century sources, with no particular comments of his own.

The same can be said about Henry Wagg's *Chronological Survey of Work for the Blind* from a hundred years later (1932).⁴² Wagg retells the standard short biography of the composer: "[t]he reason for the inclusion of John Stanley in this book is the fact that he was a pioneer in what has since become a recognized profession for the blind."⁴³ It is interesting that neither of these authors who are much more familiar with issues surrounding blindness comment further on Stanley's functioning and success as a blind musician.

³⁷ Boyd, "John Stanley's Voluntaries"; H.D. Johnstone, "An Unknown Book of Organ Voluntaries" *Musical Times* 108, (1967): 1003-7.

³⁸ Williams, "Life and Works": 15.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 17.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

⁴¹ James Wilson, *Biography of the Blind* (1819), collected and edited by Kenneth Stuckey (Washington: Library of Congress, 1995).

⁴² Henry J. Wagg and Mary J. Thomas. *A Chronological Survey of Work for the Blind: (with an appendix of the prevention of blindness, and a bibliography) from the earliest records up to the year 1930* (London: I. Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1932).

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 8.

Our information about Stanley's life and career thus comes from a relatively small number of primary sources. From the standpoint of reception history, the interesting thing about these sources is their difference in inflection and emphasis as they tell Stanley's story. Laetitia Hawkins's later account, although clearly biased and in some ways ill informed, points up important areas missed by earlier chroniclers. Authors concerned with the history of blindness and blind people added little to the written portrayal of Stanley but repeated the important facts of his life. The twentieth-century musicologists who have studied Stanley have done so through the positivistic lens of their time and profession. In my own work, I am indebted to all of these previous writers, but I am placing Stanley's blindness at the very center of the study. My own study will, I hope, become in turn a part of Stanley's more recent reception history, evidencing as it does my own interests and pre-occupations, and imprinted, as it must be, with my own cultural context and values.

Chapter 2

Stanley and Musical Literacy

The relationship between blindness and musical literacy has not received a great deal of attention from scholars. The connection of blind people with music in the oral tradition, however, has received considerable attention throughout history and has occupied the attention of a number of excellent modern scholars. This connection crosses cultural and ethnic barriers. Much of the liturgical chant repertoire in the Egyptian Coptic church was passed on by blind musicians.⁴⁴ Many performers on the Biwa (a Japanese lute) have historically been, and continue to be, blind.⁴⁵ As with the Biwa tradition, blind people were involved in the world of Irish harp playing well into the eighteenth-century and the time of Turlough O'Carolan, (1670-1738) the most celebrated figure in the history of the Irish harp tradition.⁴⁶ In the United States, blind musicians have occupied pivotal places in the African-American based musical traditions of jazz, blues, soul and gospel music; a number of these blind musicians, such as Ray Charles (1930-2004) and Stevie Wonder (b. 1950), have shaped much of mainstream popular music worldwide.⁴⁷ The common thread running through many of these forms of musical employment is the fact that they depend on oral tradition.

Blind Musicians Before and After Braille

After the middle of the nineteenth century, blind musicians working in the literate musical tradition had access to a standardized system of Braille musical notation, invented in about 1825, when he was about fifteen years old, by Louis Braille (1809-1852), who also became a church organist. A few years later he published his famous book, *Procédé pour écrire les paroles, la musique et le plain-chant au moyen de points, à l'usage des aveugles et disposés pour eux, par Louis Braille, répétiteur à l'institution Royale des Jeunes Aveugles* (Paris, 1829). This is an important historical watershed. Many of these blind musicians also received instruction in the newly developed formalized institutions for the education of blind people.⁴⁸ By the early twentieth century, more standardized pedagogical methods were in use for teaching blind musicians.

John Stanley is an interesting case study of the earlier type of blind musician. Living a century before the advent of Braille musical notation, he was in a different position from that of his later colleagues, but much more comparable to earlier ones. Blind European musicians from

⁴⁴ Marian Robertson-Wilson, "Coptic Church Music," in *Grove Music Online, Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/06429>, accessed November 12, 2011.

⁴⁵ Hugh de Ferrani, "Biwa," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (New York: Grove 2001).

⁴⁶ Donal O'Sullivan, *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*, vol. 2 (Louth: Routledge & Keegan Paul Limited, 1958; reprinted by Ossian, 2001).

⁴⁷ Dave Marsh, "Charles, Ray," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*; David Brackett, "Wonder, Stevie," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.

⁴⁸ Henry J. Wagg and Mary J. Thomas, *A Chronological Survey of Work for the Blind (with an appendix of the prevention of blindness, and a bibliography) from the earliest records up to the year 1930* (London: I. Pitman and Sons, Ltd., 1932).

Francesco Landini (1325-1397) up through figures such as Maria Theresia Paradis (1759-1824) had to develop their own systems of musical communication.

This communication operated in two directions. As public performers, they had to be able to learn music that had been composed by others in order to perform it. And as composers, they also had to be able to communicate their musical ideas to others if their own music was to be written down and become known beyond their own performances of it, by becoming available to other players.

Musical Literacy and the Reception of Blind Musicians

The questions of musical literacy and blindness extend far beyond the mechanical methods by which these blind musicians learned the music of others and produced their own music. Like most of his musical contemporaries and predecessors, Stanley was at various times of his professional life primarily occupied as composer, solo performer and conductor. Thus, we cannot say that the learning of music written by other people, either to play or conduct, was any more or less important than the communication to others of his own compositions.

Beyond the mechanical issues of musical literacy are the issues of musical literacy that relate to the reception of musicians such as Stanley. Sometimes, interesting issues arise because of things that are not mentioned. One of the most remarkable factors in the reception history of Stanley, from the eighteenth century to the present, is the almost universal lack of commentary on his ability to function professionally in a musically literate context.

The way in which disabled people are represented is often dictated by cultural assumptions. The strong linkage in the popular imagination between blindness and music has led to a lack of curiosity about Stanley's compositional processes. This can be seen by contrasting Stanley with the Lucasian Professor of Mathematics at Cambridge, Nicholas Saunderson (1683-1739), who was also blind. Biographers have paid considerable attention to his working methods, and been fascinated by the fact that Saunderson worked not only in Mathematics but also, despite his blindness, in Optics.⁴⁹

Literacy, Memory, and Orality

Linked to questions surrounding musical literacy and blindness are those that relate to memory, orality, and improvisation. As an organist, Stanley's skills were at their height during one of the periods of Western classical music in which improvisation had a central role.

Another related issue is that of Stanley as performer as opposed to composer. As a performer of his own solo music, Stanley's abilities were completely unmediated by a need for literacy. At the other end of the spectrum, Stanley's music composed for instruments other than the organ relied completely on a literate mediation if it was to be performed.

A number of blind musicians published instructions for playing the organ, including at least three of Stanley's fellow blind English organists: Jonas Blewitt (d. 1805), organist of the united London parishes of St Margaret Pattens and St Gabriel Fenchurch; Griffith James Cheese

⁴⁹ H. F. Baker, rev. James J. Tattersall, "Nicholas Saunderson," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/index/101024709>, accessed 6 May 2008.

(1751-1804), from 1771 organist of Leominster and from 1783 of the cathedral in Manchester; and Francis Linley (1771-1800), organist of St James's Chapel, Pentonville.⁵⁰ This aspect of the contribution of blind musicians to musical pedagogy helps to reinforce their strongly held place in the literate musical tradition.

Literacy in Stanley's Success

Stanley's musical life began at the age of seven when his parents sent him for music lessons to John Reading (c1685-1764), the organist of St. John's, Hackney. Since all sources agree that Mr. and Mrs. Stanley had no expectation of these lessons other than amusing their son, there is no particular reason to suppose that Reading felt the need to instruct Stanley in the conventions of written music. He could have begun entirely by teaching the young boy by ear. This could also apply to Stanley's second and better known teacher Maurice Greene, but Greene had himself, at the age of eleven, been taught by a blind organist, Richard Brind who had become organist at St. Paul's Cathedral in December 1707, when Greene had been a choirboy there. On Brind's death in 1718, Greene succeeded him as organist at St. Paul's. Greene may well also have felt personal sympathy for and solidarity with Stanley's disability; moreover, he was himself disabled, being afflicted with scoliosis. Stanley was lucky to have one of his teachers rise to such an eminent post at just this moment. Greene knew from his own experience that an expertly trained blind organist, if he had sufficient talent, could achieve genuine professional success and could also train others.

A few years later, Stanley obtained his first professional organ position at the age of eleven, at All Hallows, Bread St., a church that had been rebuilt after the Great Fire, and had a new organ installed in 1717.⁵¹ The church already had a connection to a famous blind person, since John Milton had been baptized there. One might assume that becoming the organist of a prominent London church at such a young age, would have propelled Stanley into the world of literate music. However, this may not entirely have been the case. In order to place Stanley in his context as an eighteenth-century parish church musician, we must examine what was then expected of a parish organist.

Nicholas Temperley has shown that in a parish church such as All Hallows, Bread St., the duties of the organist at that time centered around playing for Morning Prayer on Sundays; this involved the playing of two or three voluntaries, which were often extemporized.⁵² Temperley notes that the performance of psalmody also had an important improvisatory component,⁵³ since even sighted organists usually improvised the accompaniment to the psalms or, at least, played

⁵⁰ See Jonas Blewitt, *A Complete Treatise on the Organ, to Which is Added a Set of Explanatory Voluntaries Composed Expressly for the Purpose of Rendering Theory and Practice Subservient to Mutual Elucidation* (London: Longman and Broderip, 1795); Francis Linley, *Linley's Assistant, for the Pianoforte* (Baltimore: Carr, 1796); and Griffith James Cheese, *Practical Rules for Playing and Teaching the Pianoforte and Organ: With General Observations on the Accompaniment and Performance of Vocal Music* (London: Goulding Phipps, ca. 1800).

⁵¹ See Bruce Bannerman, *The Registers of All Hallows, Bread Street, and of St. John the Evangelist* (London: 1913), viii.

⁵² Nicholas Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

⁵³ Temperley, *The Music of the English Parish Church*, vol. 2, 129.

from a figured bass accompaniment. Improvisation could also have a particular role in the interludes between the psalm verses and in the “Giving out” of the tune at the beginning of the psalm.

The implications of this for Stanley are two-fold. Improvisation informed many aspects of the performance of his duties as church organist. In addition, the psalms were sung to a relatively narrow range of tunes. John Playford’s collection of psalm tunes written in 1671 formed the core of tunes used in London churches; since Playford had been Stanley’s predecessor at the Temple Church, it is reasonable to assume these tunes were the ones Stanley needed to know.

He could therefore have performed his duties as a professional organist in a parish church with only minimal engagement with the literate musical tradition. Once he had memorized the limited repertory of psalm tunes in use, he could improvise the accompaniments and interludes; and the performance of his voluntaries would have been extremely free in terms of any restrictions, as long as he provided music of the basic affect desired for the divine service. Stanley’s performance of voluntaries was a particular topic of great interest; musicians from all over London came to hear him perform.⁵⁴

In 1726, Stanley changed posts, moving from All Hallows, Bread St., to St. Andrew’s, Holborn. In 1734 he also took over as organist of the Inner Temple church. He apparently alternated Sundays at these two churches for the rest of his life, deputizing the work to others on the Sundays he was absent.⁵⁵ Neither of these posts would necessarily have required any further involvement with written music than had the position at All Hallows, Bread St.

The earliest event in Stanley’s life which I have come across which necessitated his involvement in literate music occurred in 1729. This was the awarding of the B.Mus. degree at Oxford. Although most of the Stanley literature refers merely to a series of concerts that the young musician gave in Oxford at the time of receiving his degree, it is clear from the list of Stanley’s works that he was also required to produce written music. His ode “Rise, Harmony (The Power of Musick)” was his B.Mus. “exercise”; along with another vocal work, “Great Hercules, Jove’s Warlike Son (The Choice of Hercules)”, it seem to be one of the earliest examples of Stanley’s formally notated music.

These two works suggest an early and deep engagement with literate music, for several reasons. These were not works for organ, his principal instrument or, like his voluntaries, transcriptions or adaptations of his extemporizations. Rather, they were large-scale works for soloists, chorus and full orchestra. They also involved the extra dimension of text setting. The setting of pre-existing text involves further interaction with a sighted amanuensis to help Stanley learn the text. One important question raised by these works is: who served this function for Stanley in this early period?

James Wilson (1775-1845), in his *Biography of the Blind* (published in four editions from 1821 to 1838) sheds important light on the questions of blind people and their amanuenses.⁵⁶

⁵⁴ A. Glyn. Williams, “The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977).

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ James Wilson, *Biography of the Blind: Or The Lives of Such as Have Distinguished Themselves as Poets, Philosophers, Artists, etc.*, 4th ed. (Birmingham: J.W. Showell, 1838). This volume opens with biographies of 24 blind people, five of whom are musicians (“Carolan, the Blind Poet and Musician”; “Hugh James, M.D. and Blind

Although Wilson's brief biography of Stanley (one of sixty given in the collection) is highly conventional, his own autobiography gives a fascinating first-hand account of the life of a blind person born in the late eighteenth century. In describing his own upbringing and education, Wilson makes it clear that he usually had a group of friends and sometimes comparative strangers who read to him. We may presume they also sometimes took dictation from him.

One anecdote from Wilson's own memoirs demonstrates the range of people who assisted in his engagement with the literate world. At one point in his early career, Wilson worked as an upholsterer. While performing this work, he often persuaded the lady of the house or even one of the children to read to him.

I was in a situation that afforded me better opportunities of acquiring knowledge than I had ever possessed, previously to this time I also with much friendship from many to whom I was but very little known; and when it was understood that I was desirous of information, I generally received assistance in this way, even where I could not have expected it; either the lady of the house in which I was employed, or one of the children, generally read to me while I was at work. Thus I improved my mind, while labouring for my support...⁵⁷

In this way, Wilson was able to continue his unorthodox education while performing one of the few manual trades for which blind people were trained at the turn of the nineteenth-century.

This anecdote demonstrates the range of possible people who could have worked with Stanley in the role of the amanuensis. In terms of the amanuensis, different levels of specialization were required depending on the field in which the blind person was working. For Wilson, anyone who could read and write could serve, whereas for Stanley the amanuensis had to be at least competent in notating music as well as in sight-reading and performing. This would have narrowed the range of people who could have helped him with his musical endeavors. However, since Stanley from an early age frequented professional musical circles, he could, like Wilson, have relied upon a variety of people to fulfill this function.

In the 1730s, Stanley's secular career, outside the limited field of parish organists, also gathered momentum. He began performing as a violinist although it is not known who taught him to play this instrument. There may have been a connection here with the Young family. The music printer John Young (c.1672-c.1732) was also known as a violin maker. His sons played the violin, notably Talbot Young (1699-1758), who was appointed to the King's Music in 1717 and became a member of the Chapel Royal in 1719; he also became organist of All Saints, Bread St., in 1729. With his father and Maurice Greene, he had co-founded in about 1715 a series of weekly musical meetings. From the mid 1720s they were known as the Castle Society of Musick concerts, and they held their meetings in the Castle Tavern in Paternoster Row, in the City of

Musician of Carlisle"; "John Stanley"; "Thomas Wilson, the Bell-Ringer of Dumfries"; "Joseph Strong, the mechanic and Musician of Carlisle". The second half includes anecdotes concerning 31 people, five of whom are musicians: "Henry, the Blind Minstrel"; "Some Particulars of the Last Years of the Life of Handel"; "Caspar Crumbhorn, a celebrated Musician"; "Theresa Paradis"; "Francis Lindley".

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, xlvi-xlvii.

London. John Stanley became the director of the Castle Society concerts and of those held at the Swan Tavern, in Cornhill.⁵⁸

Did Stanley, in fact, conduct these concerts or did he direct the series in an administrative capacity? Or did he do some combination of both? If his work was that of an impresario it would not have necessitated a detailed knowledge of the written music of other composers. Since, as far as is known, he had not written any secular instrumental music at this time, he would not have had to communicate his own music to performing forces at these concerts.

If Stanley was conducting, it was likely from the harpsichord or violin. From the harpsichord, his primary responsibility would have been knowledge of the figured bass and of the general harmonies of the piece; from the violin, a detailed knowledge of the melodic line would probably have been sufficient to lead the orchestra. Mid-eighteenth century music, with its emphasis on melody and bass line leading the other parts, would lend itself to this type of conducting far more than would music of the nineteenth or twentieth centuries.

Literacy in Stanley's Teaching

Another important aspect of Stanley's career where issues of musical literacy need to be explored is his teaching. We know that, by 1738 when he married Sarah Arlond, he was already a teacher since Sarah had been one of his students.⁵⁹

Many issues surrounding blind teachers and blind students are addressed by Griffith James Cheese, in his tutorial on playing the fortepiano or organ, dating from the turn of the nineteenth century.⁶⁰ This is the first example I have found of a blind organist born in the middle of the eighteenth century addressing these issues. I will cite several paragraphs of his introduction here because they shed light on many of the issues at hand.

For the convenience of blind teachers, I have, in the reading tables and some of the first examples, numbered the bars by which means they may easily make their new scholars begin at any place they please which will considerably expedite their progress in reading. The passages which are explanatory of the arithmetical proportions are all contrived within the compass of the five fingers. A blind teacher would do well to procure a number of blank message cards upon each of which let there be ruled one or two staves of five lines. Then mark the card by cutting one, two, or more notches as may be required near one of the corners which corner must be held upper most and to the teacher's right hand. Upon one of these cards, let there be written the first example of notes in this book marked with a bass clef and without the letters. Then, let the card be pricked through each of the characters. The master, by putting a pin through these holes from the other side the

⁵⁸ Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 24.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 22.

⁶⁰ Cheese, *Practical Rules* (London: Goulding, Phipps & D'Almaine, ca. 1800).

point showing the particular line or space the character is written upon will soon discover whether the lesson be duly prepared. Let the second, third, and fourth examples written on separate cards in the same manner. By having as many ruled cards as there are characters in use thus properly marked and pricked through he will be able to teach, even a child with a moderate capacity all the characters in a few hours.

Let him then put the pupil to read some of the first examples in this work as though the master were going to study them. By adopting this mode for a few months, the scholar will derive considerable advantage.

This invention I present to the blind as an appendix to that of the pin cushions which I gave to the public a few years since, and for which I received the gold medal from the Society for the Encouragement of Arts and Sciences A.D. 1786.⁶¹

This invention is even mentioned on the title-page of Cheese's work. This implies a somewhat sizable number of blind organists who might be expected to have access to this work.

In numbering the bars in his examples, Cheese also prefigures what in modern disability parlance is called "universal design". This refers to adaptations, which are initially made for disabled people but then benefit the general population as well. A prime example of universal design is the curb cut which was developed for the use of people in wheelchairs but which is more generally useful for anyone pushing or pulling anything on wheels.⁶²

Another point made explicit by this quotation is the fact that a proto-Braille system was specifically being used for teaching music, nearly half a century before the developments of Louis Braille. Cheese's method belongs to a larger history of pre-Braille tactile communication systems going back at least into the sixteenth century. However, Cheese's is the first description I know of a tactile notation specifically designed for music. More research is still needed on his pincushion invention. Was this also a specifically musical notation? We know that Stanley's amanuensis Anne Arlond developed a tactile system for marking the value of playing cards but there is no direct evidence of Stanley using any type of tactile musical notation.⁶³

Cheese's writings also show that blind musicians could and did teach beginning students who were in the process of learning to read music, as opposed to merely coaching more advanced students. Since Cheese was blind, it is logical to assume that the card method he advocates was something he had developed in his own teaching. It implies that the teacher has the help of a sighted amanuensis before the student arrives, but can then work directly with a sighted student without any further help during the lesson.

Cheese also refers specifically to the teaching of children who are blind:

⁶¹ Ibid., 9-10.

⁶² Bart Pisha and Peggy Coyne, "Smart from the Start: The Promise of Universal Design for Learning" *Remedial and Special Education* 22 no. 4 (2001): 198.

⁶³ Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1822), 200.

Blind children should be taught in a more scientific manner than those who have their sight. As soon as they know their characters, they should be made acquainted with the intimate connection between melody and harmony, with the nature of consonance and dissonance, and how the breaking of one chord into several notes or intervals forms an air. By this means, they will soon obtain a general idea of the principles of the art, which will greatly assist them in the recollection of the proper succession of passages. This is necessary because the act of playing is too quick to admit the operation of a recollection. They must, therefore, have recourse to the succession of one harmony or modulation to another to perceive the connection to the whole.⁶⁴

The second half of Cheese's comment is equally rich in terms of implications. His admonition to give blind children an extra dose of music theory to aid in their memorization has important implications for Stanley's work. For eighteenth-century musicians, a complete and almost intuitive knowledge of harmony and figured bass would have given them an important advantage in terms of retaining large amounts of music in their head.

Two other organ tutors by eighteenth century blind organists, Jonas Blewitt and Francis Linley, had been published shortly before Cheese's; they corroborate Cheese's assumptions and even his methodologies. However, Cheese's ideas and methodologies cannot be applied directly to a study of Stanley's working methods, yet they do open intriguing possibilities about how, eighty years earlier, Stanley might have been taught by John Reading and, in particular, Maurice Greene, who had himself been taught by a blind organist. They also suggest possible ways in which Stanley could have interacted with his own students.

Stanley's Principal Amanuensis: Anne Arlond

One of the most crucial events of Stanley's musical life, shortly after his marriage to Sarah Arlond in 1738, was the arrival in the Stanley household of his sister-in-law, Anne Arlond.⁶⁵ She lived with John and Sarah Stanley for the rest of their lives and served as Stanley's amanuensis. Arlond's role in his success provides an excellent example of one of the key concepts advanced by modern disability theory, that of interdependence. Interdependence is postulated as an alternative to an older binary opposition of dependence and independence. On the one hand, dependence refers to a one-way relationship of care and control on the part of the able-bodied and helplessness and reliance on the part of the disabled person; and on the other hand, independence refers to complete self-reliance on the part of the disabled person. Occupying a fruitful middle ground, interdependence refers to a set of interlocking relationships between the able-bodied and the disabled.⁶⁶ (The terms "able-bodied" and "disabled" will

⁶⁴ Cheese, *Practical Rules*, 9-10.

⁶⁵ Williams, "Life and works of John Stanley," 32.

⁶⁶ Gary L. Albrecht, Katherine D. Seelman and Michael Bury, eds., *Handbook of Disability Studies* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc. 2001).

receive attention later in this dissertation as they, themselves, are constructions of the modern era).

Anne Arlond was both the principal means by which Stanley learned the music of other composers that he was to conduct and also the means of his communicating his music to others in written form. Stanley's relationship with Anne Arlond belongs in two histories: in the history of blind people with their amanuenses and also in the history of sighted composers with their copyists. The relationship of a composer to his/her copyist is a prime example of interdependence.

For the reasons discussed above, Anne Arlond's role as Stanley's amanuensis may not have been as central as that of other nonmusical amanuenses and assistants. The nature of musical performance and communication is such that the amanuensis is not necessary for all aspects of the work. This is not the case for literary communication in the era before Braille. The Scottish poet and preacher Thomas Blacklock (1721-91) relied very heavily on amanuenses. Although Blacklock could, of course, preach without the aid of an amanuensis, his learning of theology and other academic subjects as well as the publication of his poetry relied entirely on sighted mediation.⁶⁷

Anne Arlond's contribution was made to only one aspect of Stanley's career, and in fact, it was not the most famous aspect of his career since during his lifetime Stanley was much more well known as a performer than he was for his compositions; his involvement with literate music was of secondary importance. His direct tactile engagement with his instruments is what kept him in a place of honor in the British musical scene as a living and performing musician for over fifty years. But after his death, his success in engaging with the literate musical tradition became the primary way in which his reputation was able to survive.

Stanley's last and most prestigious job, that of Master of the King's Music, was perhaps the only job that formally required him to produce written compositions, as evidenced by the fifteen royal new-year and birthday odes. These were large-scale works for voices and instruments and must have involved a considerable amount of collaboration with Anne Arlond to produce them.

Another directorial job that plays an important part in Stanley's career is his taking over the direction of the Handel oratorios in the 1750s. These are probably the largest scale works that Stanley had to memorize and conduct. Certain works such as *Messiah* appeared repeatedly from season to season. However, a number of new works also appear on the performance lists for these seasons. Thus Stanley not only needed a very quick memory for learning new works, he also needed to be able to retain entire works in his head from season to season.⁶⁸

Stanley's Written Music and Literacy

Stanley's written music is the surviving artifact of one half of his engagement with the literate musical tradition. We know of the other half, his ability to learn music by other composers, only through accounts of his performing and conducting. One striking feature of his

⁶⁷ Eunice McAlpine Smith, "Thomas Blacklock," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2525>, accessed 7 May 2008.

⁶⁸ Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London, New York: Oxford University Press, 1959).

works has interesting implications for a discussion of his relationship to literate music. This is the relatively small place occupied by works for the organ. His surviving printed output for his primary instrument comprises three sets of ten voluntaries each and a set of concerti written late in his career. We can deduce from this that Stanley's compositions had a separate place in his musical life from his more celebrated career as a performing organist. This puts him in direct contrast with a composer such as Chopin almost all of whose compositions were vehicles for his own instrument the piano.

Like the works of many composers, Stanley's compositions (including those that are now lost) seem to be clustered in different periods of his life, reflecting different aspects of his employment. The great majority of his surviving music comes from the time after Anne Arlond started working with him. The presence of a regular, reliable, live-in amanuensis no doubt encouraged him to produce more written music.

Literacy in the Careers of Two of Stanley's Blind Musical Contemporaries: Maria Theresia Paradis and Turlough O'Carolan

The matters of musical literacy and the ways they apply to our view of Stanley's career, may be usefully seen by an examination of the musical life of the pianist Maria Theresia Paradis (1759-1824). A number of parallels are evident between the two musicians. Both produced a number of works for larger performing forces, which would have necessitated the use of literate communication. A much larger portion of Paradis's works is lost than of Stanley's.

Paradis and Stanley were both also famous primarily as performers. One important difference is in the nature of their performances. Stanley derived much of his fame from his improvisatory performance of voluntaries in church, and at that time improvisation had a stronger connection with the organ than it did with the piano. Much of her performing career was taken up with performances of concertos by her teacher, Leopold Kozeluch. However, Paradis did also perform her own compositions. The solo piano works would not necessarily have entailed direct engagement with musical literacy. The same could be said for her vocal works, for which Paradis accompanied herself when she sang them. The chapter on Stanley's reception as a blind musician will take up this comparison between Stanley and Paradis further.

Similarly, the Irish harper Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738) provides a fascinating case study of a blind musician's relationship to the literate tradition.⁶⁹ On first examination, it would appear that he was not connected to the literate tradition. He was the most famous exponent of a harp tradition that was primarily oral; and there were many blind harpers who learned and transmitted their music by ear. Two factors, however, belie this assumption: first, O'Carolan was even better known as a composer of tunes than he was as a performer; second, he had more engagement with written art music, especially with that of Italy, than did many of his blind harper peers. He is known to have had connections with composers such as Geminiani in Dublin.

O'Carolan's most important connection to the literate musical tradition occurs in the written preservation of his own tunes. They come down to us in several sources but, primarily,

⁶⁹ Information on O'Carolan taken from O'Sullivan, *Carolan: The Life Times and Music of an Irish Harper*.

in a collection transcribed by O'Carolan's son, himself a harper. Thus, although he was working in the oral tradition, much of O'Carolan's legacy takes the form of the written transcription of his tunes.

Without these transcriptions, we would have merely a few anecdotes regarding this important figure in eighteenth-century musical life. O'Carolan therefore has a paradoxical relationship to musical literacy. The literate transcriptions of his tunes are one of the few glimpses we have into the performing practice of the eighteenth-century Irish harp tradition.

John Stanley's relationship to musical literacy is more complex. Like many blind musicians throughout history, he occupied a dynamic liminal place between literacy and orality. Blind musicians such as Stanley point up a larger set of questions that relate particularly to Western classical music. Music is, by its nature, an auditory temporal art. However, much Western music has been transmitted in the form of relatively fixed written scores. The blind musicians who work within this tradition help to destabilize any fixed boundaries between literate and nonliterate engagement with music.

Chapter 3

Stanley's Place in the History of the Education of Blind Musicians in the British Isles

Little detailed information about Stanley's education has survived. All sources agree that he studied with Reading and then with Greene. The sources disagree about the reason for changing teachers. Burney says that that Stanley made such rapid progress with Reading that he was transferred to Greene.⁷⁰ In contrast to this, as I have already noted above, Coxe says that Stanley "continued under Reading only a few months during which time the difficulty of receiving information was so great that he made scarcely any progress."⁷¹

In evaluating these sources, we should note that Burney had a personal acquaintance with Stanley whereas the same cannot be said of Coxe. The truth might lie somewhere in the middle. Even if he had been making good progress under Reading (and why should he not have been doing so? Reading, a pupil of John Blow, was a good musician who had recently published quite a lot of music, and Stanley was obviously a talented boy), there would have been every reason to move to Greene if an opportunity presented itself. Greene was younger, and more closely linked with the important musical circles of the day, through his links with St. Paul's cathedral; also, as discussed earlier, he could have taken a personal interest in the young Stanley, having had a blind organist as teacher and being himself disabled. It is not impossible that Reading could even have introduced the talented boy to Greene.

No other teachers are mentioned in connection with Stanley's education. The only credential Stanley is known to have received was the Oxford B.Mus. degree. Until the later nineteenth century, the Oxford B.Mus. was not primarily an academic degree. Rather, it required the applicant to have practiced in the field of music for seven years and to submit a composition that needed to be approved by the Oxford Professor of Music.⁷² Stanley's degree, received at the age of 17, did not imply he had received further formal education; rather, it was a confirmation of his abilities and mastery of the art. Stanley is known to have written two works and given several recitals in Oxford at the time of the conferring of the degree in 1729.⁷³ At that time, the professor was Richard Goodson Jr. (1688-1741), not known as a composer of any merit, so Stanley was in fact already rather more accomplished than the Oxford Professor of Music. However, Goodson (like his father before him) was the organist of Christ Church, and he would have been well placed to appreciate Stanley's organ recitals.

The mechanics of Stanley's musical education do not appear in any of the commentaries on his life from the eighteenth century or later, but certain things can be deduced, based on his

⁷⁰ Charles Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.," in *European Magazine, and London Review* 6 (September 1784), quoted in A. Glyn Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977).

⁷¹ William Coxe, *Anecdotes of George Frideric Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1799; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 50.

⁷² Susan Wollenberg, "Oxford." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20620>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁷³ M.W.E. Jenkins, "John Stanley, His Life and Works: An Historical Assessment" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Auckland, 1977).

working life as a musician. Stanley's education must have extended beyond a vocational training as an organist. In addition to playing and composing for the organ, he played the violin and conducted large orchestral and choral works. His compositions ran the gamut of musical genres available to an eighteenth-century English composer, including opera, oratorios, sacred choral music for smaller ensembles, concertos, instrumental chamber music, solo cantatas, and solo keyboard works. Thus, Stanley seems to have been exposed to a wider musical education than just that of playing the organ. Stanley may have received his basic musical grounding from Reading and Greene and then acquired further musical knowledge through listening to and absorbing a great deal of diverse music on his own. James Cheese's treatise on the teaching of blind children and the proper way for blind teachers to work (already discussed in chapter 2) also sheds light on the possible mechanics of Stanley's learning of his musical skills.

From a modern perspective, it seems remarkable how brief Stanley's formal education was. By the age of eleven, Stanley had already learned a trade, since he was appointed to a regular church job. It is unclear whether or not he continued to study with Greene after he began working at All Hallows, Bread St. However, it seems that Stanley already had the skills needed to fulfill the church duties that would provide him steady employment for the rest of his life. As is discussed below, Stanley's fellow musician and Greene student William Boyce was apprenticed to Greene for seven years.⁷⁴ Many of the later schools for the blind expected their students to stay with them for a period of four years before going out into the community to work.

In his book *The Blind in British Society*, Gordon Phillips refers to what he calls "the blind elite,"⁷⁵ that is, people who through some combination of talent and fortunate circumstances managed to rise above the typical expectations for blind people of their time. For several reasons, Stanley clearly fits into this "elite." His particular education is one of these factors.

Stanley's father had a job in the Post Office.⁷⁶ This put him in the middle class. No records of the Stanleys' financial arrangements with John's teachers are known to survive. However, it may reasonably be assumed that Stanley's parents had the means to pay for his instruction. If the Stanleys had been extremely poor, John may not have had the opportunity to get his initial teaching that launched his career. Many of the blind who excelled in various fields in the eighteenth century (and earlier) came from families with at least some disposable income. In addition to financial backing, the blind who excelled in their professions often enjoyed patronage.⁷⁷ Although Stanley is not known to have had any specific wealthy patrons, his tutelage by the organist of St. Paul's Cathedral, Maurice Greene, could be considered a form of patronage.

A number of Stanley's fellow blind prodigies had more overt forms of patronage, including the two musicians discussed at the end of Chapter 2. Maria Theresia Paradis received important patronage from the empress Maria Theresia, after whom she was named; her

⁷⁴ Ian Bartlett and Robert J. Bruce, "Boyce, William." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40029>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁷⁵ G. Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind in the 18th Century," in *The Blind in British Society: Charity, State, and Community, c. 1780-1930* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004).

⁷⁶ M.W.E. Jenkins, "John Stanley, His Life and Works," 4.

⁷⁷ G. Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind."

performances for the empress had an important role in launching her career.⁷⁸ And Turlough O'Carolan was given his musical start by Mrs. McDermott Roe, an Irish aristocrat; most of the performing venues for O'Carolan were in the aristocratic houses of Ireland.⁷⁹

In the context of this discussion of patronage and economic advantage, the blind were not so different from the sighted. In an era before universal public education, sighted people also depended on either family money, the Church, or patronage to receive an education. Education was often out of reach of the poorest of the poor, whether blind or sighted. The Foundling Hospital, where John Stanley had an active role both as teacher and on the Board of Governors, was one of the few places where a poor child without any kind of patronage could get at least a rudimentary education. (The Foundling Hospital will be dealt with further below, in the context of the discussion of Stanley as an educator.)

Thomas Blacklock and Nicholas Saunderson

First, I would like to consider the case of two other eminent blind contemporaries of Stanley: Thomas Blacklock, the Scottish preacher, poet, and linguist; and Nicholas Saunderson, the Lucasian professor of Mathematics at Cambridge. Both men had unique educations, differing in several material aspects from Stanley's.

Thomas Blacklock (1721-91), like Stanley, lost his sight in early infancy. He apparently received help from his father and friends in his early education. After his father's death, a local boy named Richard Hewitt "came to be educated and to attend Thomas as his guide and reader."⁸⁰ The next thing we learn about Blacklock's education is that John Stevenson became Blacklock's benefactor and enabled him to attend a grammar school in Edinburgh. In addition, Blacklock became a student at the University of Edinburgh where he studied Philosophy and Divinity, as well as French, Greek, Latin, and Italian.

Several important differences stand out between Blacklock's and Stanley's educational histories. Blacklock had the help of a fellow student, whereas no record exists of Stanley having this type of assistance. Also, Blacklock was educated in institutions with other sighted students, namely a grammar school and the University of Edinburgh. This key difference may be a result of the different fields in which Blacklock and Stanley worked. Blacklock had a broadly humanistic education which, for a sighted person, would have been received in school and university.

The education received by the mathematician Nicholas Saunderson (1683-1739) also paralleled in many ways that of his sighted contemporaries. The first story about Saunderson's education seems to reside in the realm of mythic descriptions of the superpowers of remarkable blind people. We are told that Saunderson taught himself to read by tracing the letters carved on grave stones. (Fantastical descriptions of the accomplishments of blind individuals, including

⁷⁸ Rudolph Angermüller, et al. "Paradis, Maria Theresia." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20868>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁷⁹ Gráinne Yeats, "Carolan, Turlough." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04978>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁸⁰ Eunice McAlpine Smith, "Blacklock, Thomas (1721–1791)," in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004), <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/2525>, accessed May 3, 2010.

Stanley, are dealt with further elsewhere in this dissertation.) More believably, we learn that Saunderson was taught arithmetic by his father so that the boy could help his father with his excise work. This puts Saunderson in a trajectory similar to that of many sighted men of his time, who learned their father's skills and were apprenticed to their father's work. As part of this mathematical work, Saunderson is said to have developed a counting board to aid with calculations. This situates Saunderson in the history of tactile reading and writing systems for the blind.

The next mention of Saunderson's education is intriguing partially because of its lack of detail. We learn that he "first learned classics at the free school at Penistone and became competent in Latin and Greek and fluent in French."⁸¹ No mention is made of what kind of help Saunderson may have received to keep up with his sighted peers. Next, apparently, "when he was eighteen, he was tutored in Algebra and Geometry."⁸² In 1702 Saunderson was sent to Attercliffe Academy in Yorkshire, to be tutored in Logic and Metaphysics. At the age of twenty-four he went to Cambridge, and was helped by another student, Joshua Dunn; they resided at Christ College.⁸³ Saunderson occupied a liminal place in the university during his early years. He had library privileges but was not formally admitted to the university. Thus much of Saunderson's education seems to have involved his participation in the mainstream education of sighted students. The accounts of his education contain two references to his being tutored. This could have involved a more individualized learning style adapted to Saunderson's blindness. As far as his time at Attercliffe Academy and at Cambridge, it can be assumed that Saunderson had sighted assistance both to read material to him and to transcribe his written schoolwork.⁸⁴

Stanley's Education and that of Maria Theresia Paradis

Maria Theresia Paradis shares certain important characteristics with Stanley in that she was a highly gifted blind musician whose primary instrument was the keyboard. However, her life and education also differ significantly from his. Paradis was a generation younger than Stanley, and was Austrian. The gender difference between the two musicians must also be taken into account when evaluating their respective educations and careers.

The most striking difference between Stanley's and Paradis's education is in the number of teachers they had. It seems that a different teacher took charge of each branch of Paradis's musical education. She studied piano with Leopold Kozeluch, singing with Vincenzo Righini, singing and dramatic composition with Salieri, theory and composition with Abbé Vögler, and

⁸¹ H. F. Baker, "Saunderson, Nicholas (*bap.* 1683, *d.* 1739)," rev. James J. Tattersall, in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: OUP, 2004); online ed., ed. Lawrence Goldman, May 2007, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/24709>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁸² *Ibid.*

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ I am grateful to Professor James Davies for pointing out that Saunderson is discussed and even theorized in Diderot's *Lettre sur les aveugles, à l'usage de ceux qui voyent* (which was first published, in French, in London in 1749; the English translation appeared in 1750). Professor Davies notes that this is evidence of the ways in which the category of "the blind," as distinct from "the poor" or "the disadvantaged" was being conscripted into wider social and philosophical debates

theory with Carl Friberth.⁸⁵ This multiplicity of teachers gives her education closer parallels with that found in a modern conservatory, where students go to different teachers for different specialties. Does this mean that she had a more diverse musical education than Stanley? If we compare the careers of these two musicians it does not necessarily seem that this was the case. Stanley certainly had a diverse musical career working as organist, composer, violinist, conductor, and teacher. Paradis worked as composer, pianist, singer, and teacher.

Thomas Augustine Arne and William Boyce

It will be useful to consider here the education of Stanley's two most illustrious English musical contemporaries, Thomas Augustine Arne (1710-78) and William Boyce (1711-79). Unlike many other musicians, Arne seems to have had a broad nonmusical education, having been sent to Eton. It is said that "he tormented his fellow pupils day and night by playing the recorder."⁸⁶ We also learn that he practiced the spinet secretly during the holidays, apparently muffling the sound with a handkerchief. (This last anecdote comes from Charles Burney, and is suspiciously similar to an anecdote in the early life of Handel.) Arne studied composition on his own which was not unheard of in the eighteenth century. He then studied violin with Michael Christian Festing (1705-52). Thus Arne's education seems to have been a combination of self-teaching and study with a noted performer. The English composer Charles Dibdin (1745-1814) claimed to have learned composition by copying out the concertos of Corelli.⁸⁷

Boyce was a contemporary and sometime rival of Stanley and Arne. His career was launched in one of the premier choral foundations in England when he was admitted to the music school at St. Paul's Cathedral in 1719 where he was educated by the master of the choristers Charles King. When Boyce entered the choir at St. Paul's, he started studying and working directly under Maurice Greene, Stanley's second teacher. When his voice broke, Boyce became an articulated pupil of Greene for seven years.⁸⁸ This raises interesting comparisons with Stanley's study with Greene. Boyce also studied with J. C. Pepusch who educated him in music theory and early music. Thus both Arne and Boyce received their musical education from more than one source.

In addition to Stanley's own education, this chapter explores his role in the education of other musicians. The fact that he taught sighted students is confirmed by John Alcock,⁸⁹ who was one of Stanley's first students. He attests to the quality of Stanley's teaching and to his popularity as a teacher. Before being apprenticed to Stanley, Alcock was a choir boy at St. Paul's

⁸⁵ Rudolph Angermüller, et al. "Paradis, Maria Theresia." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20868>, accessed November 12, 2011.

⁸⁶ Peter Holman and Todd Gilman, "Arne, Thomas Augustine." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40018>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁸⁷ Roger Fiske and Irena Cholij, "Dibdin, Charles." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/07733>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁸⁸ Ian Bartlett and Robert J. Bruce, "Boyce, William." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40029>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁸⁹ John Alcock, letter concerning Stanley in the *Universal Magazine* 79 (July 1786): 44, reprinted in the *European Magazine* 10 (August 1786): 80.

Cathedral with Boyce.⁹⁰ This suggests that, by the time he started studying with Stanley, he had already learned the basic rudiments of music, at least as they would have applied to choral singing. This puts Stanley in the role of a more advanced teacher. The other sighted student who definitely studied with Stanley was his future wife, Sarah Arlond. In neither case do we have any specific details as to the methods or pedagogical approaches taken by Stanley. We know nothing of Sarah Arlond's musical abilities, but Alcock's successful career suggests that he received a well-rounded musical education.

The Foundling Hospital

Equally importantly, Stanley took an active part in the education and musical lives of several talented young blind musicians who were all connected with London's Foundling Hospital, one of the early institutions involved with the care of blind children. It was one of three institutions in London with similarly philanthropic goals: the Lock Hospital, which cared for patients suffering from venereal diseases; the Magdalene Hospital, which operated for the benefit of penitent prostitutes; and the Foundling Hospital, founded in 1741 by the philanthropist Thomas Coram (1668-1751) with the mission of caring for orphaned and abandoned children. (The Foundling Hospital still exists, but under the name of the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children.) Two of these three institutions, the Magdalene and the Foundling Hospitals, both had choirs whose singers were drawn from the residents. The Lock Hospital also had a chapel where music was performed.

All of these Hospitals operated at the intersection of charity and religion. Music played an important part in both of these aspects of the institutions since the institutions' chapels served not only a religious but also a fund-raising function: the monetary collections received during services provided an important source of revenue. In addition to the normal religious services in the chapels, oratorio concerts were held also as fundraisers for the institutions.⁹¹

Of the three, the Foundling Hospital seems to have been the one where music occupied the most important place. This institution is remembered in music history largely because of its most illustrious musician benefactor, George Frideric Handel, and his most illustrious composition *Messiah*. This work was regularly performed at the Hospital from the 1740s onwards. The most famous of the many performing versions of *Messiah* used by Handel is the one that he created explicitly for the Foundling Hospital. Handel's musical associations with the Hospital paved the way for Stanley's later important role in several aspects of the musical life of the institution.

The Foundling Hospital had an organ even before it had a chapel. It was Handel who was asked to inaugurate the instrument, in 1750.⁹² Handel was elected to the Board of

⁹⁰ Watkins Shaw and Peter Marr, "Alcock, John (i)." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00491>, accessed May 3, 2010.

⁹¹ Simon McVeigh, "Music and the Lock Hospital in the Eighteenth Century," *Musical Times* 129 (1988): 235-240; Nicholas Temperley, "The Lock Hospital Chapel and its Music," *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 118 (1993): 44-72.

⁹² R.H. Nichols and F A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital* (London: Oxford University Press, 1935), 202.

Governors, as Stanley was after him.⁹³ Both Handel and Stanley were consulted in choosing and in renovating the organ there. But Stanley had one important role at the Foundling Hospital that Handel did not: that of teacher and overseer of the musical education of several of the residents, both blind and sighted.

Unlike the later schools for the blind, the Foundling Hospital only incidentally cared for blind children. Henry Jacques Stiker, in *A History of Disability*, has discussed the connection between poverty and disability.⁹⁴ In his wide-ranging discussion of blindness up to the eighteenth century, Stiker notes that early census records do not distinguish disability but do distinguish levels of poverty. He maintains that the disabled were often submerged into the ranks of the general poor. This is certainly true in the case of early institutions for the care of the indigent.

Perhaps by lucky coincidence, a group of musically gifted blind people lived and worked at the Foundling Hospital during Stanley's lifetime, and after. Five blind musicians, in particular, appear in the records of the Foundling Hospital from the late eighteenth into the early nineteenth centuries. The blind organists Thomas Grenville (who also taught the blind organist John Purkis) and John Printer had important roles to play in the musical life of the institution and beyond (Printer was also one of the singing teachers). The singers Mercy Draper (with whom Stanley had the closest connection), Blanche Thetford, and Jane Freer, all not only sang in the Hospital itself but also had professional engagements in more public venues in London. This group of blind musicians presents a fascinating case of interdependent working and teaching relationships among blind people and deserves further study. Although many of these blind musicians had some professional success, many of them ended their lives in conditions of general distress. Stereotypically, one would expect institutionalized disabled people to be in a relationship of dependence to outside able-bodied teachers and caregivers. The reality for the blind residents of the Foundling Hospital was more complex and dynamic.

Thomas Grenville and John Printer

The first of these was the organist Thomas Grenville, who had a life-long connection with the Foundling Hospital. Grenville was admitted to the institution in 1746.⁹⁵ Although his date of birth is not given, it seems that most of the foundlings were admitted in infancy so it can be assumed that he was born around 1746; he died in 1827. During this long life, he distinguished himself musically in a number of ways. He was the first resident to receive formal instruction in music.⁹⁶ It seems that the Governors approved finding a music instructor for him in 1758, at a time when music was not a general part of the curriculum for the sighted children. Music was one of the few ways in which Grenville could earn a livelihood, justifying the expense of his instruction. After the success of Grenville and the other blind musicians (to be discussed below), it was eventually decided to give music instruction to a number of the sighted children as well. This provides another interesting example of the concept of "universal design"

⁹³ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 202.

⁹⁴ Henry Jacques Stiker, "The Birth of Rehabilitation," in *A History of Disability*, trans. William Sayers, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2000), 65-99.

⁹⁵ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 244.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 233.

mentioned in chapter 2, whereby adaptations initially made for the disabled come to benefit a more general population.

One of the few details we know about Grenville's education is that he used some type of apparatus for the learning of music. It is referred to as a "music board" in the Hospital minutes.⁹⁷ This apparatus has been the source of some confusion in the Stanley literature. Many of the early sources state that Stanley invented this apparatus. But it has been established that Grenville used it as early as 1758, before Stanley had any formal association with the Hospital. It seems that it was actually invented by a Mr. Scott, Grenville's first teacher.⁹⁸ Although Stanley was not responsible for the development of this apparatus, its existence shows that such systems were being developed during Stanley's lifetime. The blind singer Blanche Thetford also later used a similar apparatus.

The intentions of the Hospital governors of giving Grenville a means of learning a trade bore fruit in 1767 when he received his first outside engagement. Through the patronage of Lady Sophia Egerton, he became the organist at the parish of Ross in Herefordshire, for a period of five years.⁹⁹ By the year 1771, Grenville had progressed as an organist to the point where he was able to apply for the job as organist at the Foundling Hospital itself.¹⁰⁰ He was unsuccessful at first, but two years later, when the position came available again, he was successful, and with this post came a salary of 40 pounds per year.¹⁰¹ In addition to his work as organist and teacher, Grenville was employed as a compiler and adapter of music for the Foundling Hospital. He adapted the works of Handel to the use of the Hospital. In 1796, Grenville was asked to compile fair copies of the Foundling music, for which he was paid 20 guineas.¹⁰² The idea of a blind musician being engaged in such seemingly visual tasks raises many questions and implications. In 1775 it was determined that a boy or girl foundling who was not blind should be trained to copy music.¹⁰³ This young person could have done the actual writing out of musical manuscripts with supervision by Grenville. In the case of the adaptation of Handel's works to the needs of the chapel, Grenville probably had a more active musical role, if such activities as transposition, editing and re-composition were involved.

One interaction recorded in the hospital minutes gives a glimpse into Grenville's character. When he was teaching the children with the singer Blanche Thetford, Grenville was offered a pay raise. He magnanimously declined the raise but, instead, asked that Blanche's pay be raised.¹⁰⁴ Grenville was for part of his lifetime highly successful; at one point he was earning £800 a year from his various positions.

John Printer was another influential blind organist who began life as a foundling. He seems to have been taught, like Grenville, by the inventive Mr. Scott.¹⁰⁵ And like Grenville, he reached a level of musical proficiency that enabled him to obtain a professional engagement

⁹⁷ A.G. Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 50.

⁹⁸ M. Boyd, "John Stanley and the Foundling Hospital," *Soundings* 5 (1975): 72.

⁹⁹ R.H. Nichols and F A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 233.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 227.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 212.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 218.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 235.

¹⁰⁵ M. Boyd, "John Stanley and the Foundling Hospital," 72.

outside the walls of the Foundling Hospital. He became the organist at the church of St. Katherine Coleman.¹⁰⁶ In 1775, it was determined that fourteen (presumably sighted) children from the Hospital should be sent to Grenville's church to sing.¹⁰⁷ Here again is a case of a blind musician paving the way for other sighted foundlings. This incident suggests that by 1775 at least some of the sighted children were receiving regular instruction in the singing of church music. In 1777, Printer was back at the Hospital as a teacher for the other foundlings. He was also consulted about the music for the services at the Hospital.¹⁰⁸ It seems that Printer married and lived outside the walls of the Hospital for a number of years. After the death of his wife, he petitioned the Hospital to return as a resident, in exchange for teaching music to the children.¹⁰⁹

During his years outside the Foundling Hospital, Printer seems to have enjoyed considerable financial success. He presented a new organ to the Hospital which was valued at 60 pounds.¹¹⁰ In 1807, he bought an annuity worth 1,000 pounds.¹¹¹ After moving back into the Hospital, he unfortunately fell out of favor with the Governors, by neglecting to attend divine services, which was a requirement of residents of the hospital.¹¹² In 1815 he moved out of the Hospital again, and no further records of him are known to survive.

Mercy Draper, Blanche Thetford, and Jane Freer

Mercy Draper (1756-1818) occupies an important place in this chapter because she is known to have studied directly with Stanley. She was born Elisabeth Chambers on 24 October 1756, "the bastard daughter of Anne", and admitted to the Foundling Hospital one month later as "Foundling no. 2767"; according to the institution's normal practice, she immediately received a new name. She contracted smallpox at the age of four, and this may have been the cause of her blindness.¹¹³ Although she had some professional success, the end of her life was less fortunate. She died in 1818 in East Malling, a mental asylum in East London.¹¹⁴ Her singing talent was discovered early on. Stanley was consulted about a teacher for her and he recommended a certain Mr. Atturbury.¹¹⁵ For unspecified reasons, this arrangement was not successful. Stanley was again asked for advice about Mercy's instruction and this time he offered to instruct her two or three times a week *gratis*, in order to determine if she had talent.¹¹⁶

Draper seems to have attracted the notice of other musical patrons as well. In 1776 both she and her fellow singer Blanche Thetford were requested to sing for Sir Thomas and Lady Catherine Wynne.¹¹⁷ Draper also sang professionally in the oratorios at the Drury Lane Theater,

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 79.

¹⁰⁷ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 235.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., 215.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 233.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 220.

¹¹² Ibid.

¹¹³ M. Boyd, "John Stanley and the Foundling Hospital," 78. See also Sunita Rappai, "Little Orphan Lives Revived", *Camden New Journal*, 26 July 2007. http://www.theconj.com/review/072607/feat072607_02.html

¹¹⁴ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 239.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 238.

¹¹⁶ M.W.E. Jenkins, "John Stanley, His Life and Works," 48.

¹¹⁷ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 238.

which had been one of London's most important performing venues since the time of Handel. (The Drury Lane oratorios had been taken over by Stanley in 1760, after Handel.) Draper appeared in the oratorios for the next seven years.¹¹⁸ In addition, she was asked to sing at the Magdalene Hospital in 1775.¹¹⁹

Even after the end of Draper's career, she seems to have been held in esteem and affection. After she became a patient at East Malling, Stanley paid money toward her care and left a bequest for this purpose in his will. In addition, a George Whateley provided for her care in his will.¹²⁰ Finally Stanley's sister-in-law and amanuensis, Anne Arlond, also left Mercy Draper a public annuity of £20 for her care.¹²¹

Stanley's relationship with Draper is a good example of power relations at work between disabled people. In this case, we have Stanley, a non-institutionalized disabled person, taking a paternalistic role of authority towards an institutionalized disabled person. And Stanley's protective attitude towards Draper went further than mere education and authority, passing into the realm of the personal by including financial support for her for the rest of her life. In addition to teaching Mercy Draper directly, Stanley took a more general responsibility for the musical education of the foundlings. In 1773, he is known to have advised on singing teachers at the hospital.¹²²

Another of the blind musicians of the Foundling Hospital was the singer Jane Freer (1785-1845). Although Freer seems to have had considerable talent, her personality and behaviors in the hospital continually got in the way of her career. Freer was taught by Blanche Thetford and rapidly became one of the star singers of the Hospital.¹²³ She and Thetford were allowed to attend public oratorio performances. In 1803, she was even given a dress allowance of 10 guineas. She was also sent away for a month of sea bathing in 1804. In 1805, her salary was raised to £25 per year.¹²⁴ In 1807, she was thanked by the Board of Governors for her services to the institution but that same year she fell from favor, not for the last time.¹²⁵

The nature of Freer's misbehavior is only referred to as "improper conduct" but few details are known about the nature of this impropriety. The only concrete piece of information we have is a complaint made by the hospital Matron that Freer was teaching blasphemous and shocking language to another blind resident.¹²⁶ Freer's room was given to Thetford and she was forbidden to attend divine services. This suggests that her improper conduct took the form of some type of public misbehavior which would reflect badly on the institution or might have a bad influence on the other residents. The idea that Freer was a potential bad influence on her fellow residents is supported by the fact that lodgings were found for her outside the hospital.

It is clear, however, that Freer's musical skills both as singer and teacher were still held in high esteem. Even when she was no longer living in the hospital, she was sent for on Sundays

¹¹⁸ M. Boyd, "John Stanley and the Foundling Hospital," 78.

¹¹⁹ R.H. Nichols and F A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 237.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹²¹ A.G. Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley," 51.

¹²² M. Boyd, "John Stanley and the Foundling Hospital," 77.

¹²³ R.H. Nichols and F A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 220.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 242.

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 243.

to sing and on Fridays to teach the children. On those days, she was allowed to dine in the Hospital, at the officer's table.¹²⁷

In addition to being a singer, Freer apparently had considerable keyboard skills. At the age of 12, she came to the notice of no less important musicians than the Wesleys, for whom she played a fugue on the organ.¹²⁸ Freer's aptitude as an organist is also attested to by the fact that she owned a manuscript of Stanley's voluntaries (suggesting that she also had someone who could help her learn music that had been notated).¹²⁹ The complex story of Jane Freer demonstrates that even with the difficulties that the Hospital had with her, the Board of Governors could not dismiss her significant contribution both as a performer and as a teacher within the institution.

The musical education of these Foundling musicians is closely interrelated. In 1771, Draper taught Thetford,¹³⁰ who in turn taught Freer; and Freer was also taught by the blind organist Thomas Grenville.¹³¹ Grenville's influence in the Foundling Hospital was such that he was able to recommend Frederic Vernon, another blind foundling, for admission to the Hospital in 1795.¹³² In addition to teaching each other, the blind musicians of the Foundling Hospital played important roles in the education of their sighted colleagues. Stanley seems to have played an active role in the musical education of the sighted foundlings in the procurement of teachers for at least 20 of them.¹³³ In 1777, Grenville was engaged to teach William Bellamy, a foundling who is not described as being blind and can be presumed to have been sighted. Along with Thetford, he also taught music to several other (sighted?) foundlings.¹³⁴

Stanley and this group of blind Foundling musicians received a number of marks of the esteem in which they were held within the Foundling Hospital and beyond. Stanley, we have seen, served as one of the Governors. The records of the Foundling Hospital also indicate that in 1775 Draper and Printer ate their meals in the staff room, a distinction that placed them in a position elevated above that of ordinary inmates. Draper was so highly regarded (before mental illness ended her career) that in 1775 she was presented by the Hospital with a harpsichord.¹³⁵ In 1794, both Printer and Grenville were presented with pieces of plate each valued at £10.¹³⁶ In 1813, Thetford was honored for her many years of teaching and singing service to the institution by being presented with a silver teapot.¹³⁷

None of these musicians, including Stanley himself, were educated in an institution expressly designed for the education of the blind. However, all of them received a training that enabled them to have careers in the professional music world, where they enjoyed varying degrees of success. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, institutions dedicated to providing formalized education for the blind spread throughout Europe and North America. Although it

¹²⁷ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 242.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 245.

¹³⁰ R.H. Nichols and F.A. Wray, *The History of the Foundling Hospital*, 237.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 241.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 244.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 237.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 233.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 239.

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, 218.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*, 247.

might be tempting to view the founding of these institutions as the beginning of education for the blind, the careers of Stanley and his blind musical contemporaries show that blind musicians who found themselves in the right circumstances were sometimes able to get solid and practical musical educations, long before the establishment of institutions dedicated to this purpose.

Chapter 4

Stanley Performs

At the intersection of the fields of disability studies and performance studies stands a growing body of investigation into the lives, careers, and impact of disabled performers. At one level, scholars have studied the actual theatrical or musical on-stage performance of disabled artists. Other scholars have taken the term performance in a more global way to mean the performance of disability itself in the lives of disabled people.

This broader definition of performance is derived, at least in part from the work of such scholars as Judith Butler in her work on the performance of gender.¹³⁸ In vision, the triangulation between two eyes helps give the viewer an accurate sense of depth perception. In hearing, having two ears is important for assessing the direction and distance of a sound. Similarly, this project will greatly benefit from the use of two perspectives: disability studies and performance studies. Studying Stanley merely as a disabled person of his time leaves out a crucial aspect of his identity which defined his career and personality, namely performance. Studying Stanley merely as a performer neglects the central and defining role which his disability played in his life and career.

One of the advantages performance studies lend to this project is the fact that they tend to focus on the contributions and experiences of individuals. Disability studies, on the contrary, have in many cases shied away from the study of individuals, in favor of a more sociological approach which puts greater emphasis on the experience of larger populations. This lack of focus on individuals was a needed corrective to a tendency to lionize heroic disabled individuals such as Beethoven, Helen Keller, and Steven Hawking. Disability scholars and advocates rightly point out that holding up these remarkable individuals as models for the general disabled population is not helpful in improving the conditions of ordinary disabled people. What was possible for exceptional disabled individuals is often not possible for most people who share the same disability. Beethoven had a supreme musical gift and was well established as a musician and composer before he lost his hearing. Helen Keller came from an affluent family who could afford to hire a full-time teacher and interpreter for her.¹³⁹ Steven Hawking is highly educated and, like Beethoven, had established his career before the onset of his illness.¹⁴⁰ This is referred to in contemporary disability language as the “Supercrip” phenomenon.¹⁴¹

As with these people’s lives and careers, Stanley’s life and career cannot be taken as representative of that of a typical disabled person of his time. Rather, due to a set of fortunate circumstances and his remarkable musical ability and personality, Stanley became far more

¹³⁸ Judith Butler and Elizabeth Weed, *The question of gender: Joan W. Scott’s critical feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011).

¹³⁹ Keller, *The life of Helen Keller*, Royal National Institute for Blind People, 20-11-2008, http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_keller.hcsp.

¹⁴⁰ Biography of Professor Stephen W. Hawking, www.hawking.org.uk/index.php/about-stephen, accessed 22 November, 2011.

¹⁴¹ Tobin Siebers, “Disability in theory: From Social Constructionism to the New Realism of the Body,” *American Literary History* 13(4): 2001, pp. 737-754.

successful than most of his blind contemporaries. Performance studies have recognized the fact that performers are, by nature, quirky, unique, and atypical.

A distinction must also be made between the related but not identical fields of disability studies and disability history. Disability studies tend to focus on the lives of contemporary disabled people with the explicit goal of political advocacy and improving the quality of life of the disabled community as a whole. The less explored field of disability history uses many of the theoretical frameworks and methods of disability studies to illuminate the lives of disabled people from different historical periods. Disability history may raise important political and social implications for contemporary disabled people, but this is not its primary goal; rather, the goal of disability history is to tell untold stories of disabled people or to tell familiar stories from previously unheard voices.

Similar to disability studies, performance studies tend to focus on more contemporary performers. The study of performers and performances from the past presents scholars with particular challenges. Performance has been, until the twentieth century (and the invention of film, recording and other such media), by its nature ephemeral. For earlier eras we must rely entirely on written accounts of performances, apart from some interesting evidence provided, for example, by early barrel organs that “recorded” performance practice in the eighteenth century. Thus, while scholars of contemporary performance can study the performance directly, those studying pre-twentieth-century performance must rely entirely on secondary sources.

These sources take two forms. First, we can study performance practice commentaries from the time, such as treatises, or performance markings in scores. Second (and more important for this study), we can study the reception of performances from the performer’s time. Reception history can illuminate both types of performance studied here. Commentators of Stanley’s time such as Burney and Alcock consciously comment on his musical performance. They also, unconsciously, comment on his performance of his disability in the broader sense.

Text and Performance Quarterly (2008)

Here, I would like briefly to summarize one cross-section of recent work by several scholars, undertaken at the convergence of disability studies and performance studies. Although the work of these specialists does not objectively relate directly to Stanley, it serves as a series of snapshots that can prove to be useful jumping-off points for new ways of looking at Stanley.

Their work is included in a single entire issue of the journal *Text and Performance Quarterly*, in 2008, that was devoted to the intersection of disability and performance studies. These articles provide a rich theoretical background for much of this chapter. Each author provides an insight that can also illuminate something about Stanley’s position. I will therefore try to show how several of the principal contemporary ideas about the performance of disability might fruitfully be used to understand some aspects of Stanley’s situation, and how these new perspectives can serve as a counterbalance to the less sophisticated approaches of traditional musicology that are not informed by disability studies.

In the eighteenth century, there were many blind mendicant musicians, and blindness was often therefore associated with mendicancy. Blind musicians were regarded with suspicion and, at times hostility, being often suspected of being idle or, worse, dissolute. Stanley never had to resort to mendicancy, but his violin playing could easily have placed him perilously close to the

trope of the blind fiddler. Sheila Moeschen's article on the performance of disability by mendicants in early twentieth century America shows how able-bodied beggars could "perform" disability in order to gain sympathy and improve their takings, and how the image of the dishonest beggar feigning disability ended up in American culture having a negative impact on genuinely disabled people. Moeschen therefore describes able-bodied people performing disability.¹⁴² This same topic is taken up by Carrie Sandahl, who explores the controversial issue of casting able-bodied actors as disabled characters in theatrical performance. Although this issue does not directly bear on Stanley's case, her article fleshes out the complex issues of ownership of disabled identity in the public arena.¹⁴³

We have seen that Stanley's appointment as organist at All Hallows, Bread St., involved his being chosen over more experienced organists. He is referred to in early accounts as having "the misfortune to be blind." Is it possible that his disability could actually have worked to his advantage in getting this first job? This paradoxical theme of "disability as an advantage" was explored by Kurt Lindemann in his article on rugby players in wheel chairs.¹⁴⁴ These men sometimes (it seems) exaggerate their disabilities because doing so works to their advantage. Despite their differences, sports and music are both types of performance with strong elements of competition. To what extent did Stanley "perform his blindness" in the context of his audition for the post at All Hallows?

Disabled people have often used humor as a means to negotiate their way in an able-bodied world and to put their able-bodied contemporaries at ease. There are no accounts of Stanley using humor in relation to his blindness, although he definitely seems to have had a congenial personality and a positive attitude toward his disability. In practice, this was an ability to put others at ease with his blindness.¹⁴⁵ For a modern counterpart from disability studies, see the way humor is used in Brian Lobel's one man show *Ball* (a narrative performance of the author's experience of testicular cancer) to put the audience at ease and draw them in.¹⁴⁶

Integral to Stanley's reception history is the perception of his disability by his contemporaries. Culturally loaded characteristics such as disability often generate conflicting perceptions. The work of Margaret Quinlan and Benjamin Bates explores the performance of an amputee, Heather Mills, on the television program *Dancing with the Stars*. They examine not only Mills's actual performance but also the conflicting reception it received from the public. Some admiring viewers saw Mills as a heroic example of overcoming, while others felt that she was taking unfair advantage of her disability. Interestingly, Mills's performance also had mixed reviews within the disabled community in that many disabled people felt that she was being held up as an example in the "Supercrip" vein discussed above. The work of Quinlan and Bates

¹⁴² Sheila C. Moeschen, "A Crippling Deceit: Mendicancy and the Performance of Disability in 'Progressive America,'" *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28 (2008): 81-97.

¹⁴³ Carrie Sandahl, "Why Disability Identity Matters: From Dramaturgy to Casting in John Belluso's Pyretown,'" *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28 (2008): 225-241.

¹⁴⁴ Kurt Lindemann, "I Can't Be Standing Up Out There": Communicative Performances of (Dis)Ability in Wheelchair Rugby," *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28 (2008): 98-115.

¹⁴⁵ Charles Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.," in *European Magazine, and London Review* 6 (September 1784), quoted in A. Glyn Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977).

¹⁴⁶ Brian Lobel, "BALL: The Script," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28 (2008): 160-177.

shows how a performance of disability can be interpreted in different ways.¹⁴⁷ Stanley's performance of his blindness was generally viewed as positive. However, Laetitia Hawkins, the one negative commentator on Stanley (see pp. 9-10, describing her insistence on the role of Anne Arlond), took a different view, in ways that will be further examined below. But it would be fascinating to know how some of the other blind professional organists viewed Stanley. At that time, there were at least six professional church organists working in London who were blind.

Throughout his life, Stanley performed and interacted with able-bodied people, both musically and non-musically. His life, career, and education were spent primarily among sighted people. (One exception to this was his involvement with the blind musicians at the Foundling Hospital.) Stanley's interactions with his able-bodied colleagues, friends, and family members, invite us to consider the segregation and integration of disabled people across different historical periods. Before the eighteenth century, disabled people tended to be relatively integrated into the larger society; there tended not to be special provisions for people with impairments and so they lived and functioned within their able-bodied community.

With the developments of formalized education for the blind as well as a modern concept of disability came a separation of the disabled from the able-bodied population. A reintegration of disabled people into the larger society has come only in the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries.¹⁴⁸ If Stanley had been born in the nineteenth century, he would likely have been educated at a school for the blind and would have had a more segregated life and career. His life therefore exemplifies the interaction between able-bodied and disabled performers, in particular at the end of his career, when he was involved in conducting oratorios. The theme of reintegration of able-bodied and disabled people in our own time has been explored by Telory Davies, who investigates issues surrounding performances by a dance company made up of both disabled and able-bodied dancers. The work of the Access Dance Company is ground breaking and also returns to a much older model of interaction between disabled and able-bodied people.¹⁴⁹

When discussing the history of disability, complex issues of subject/object relations arise. I will return to this idea below. In the performance of his own disability, Stanley (like most disabled people) occupies not only an active place, but also — crucially — a passive place since the performance of his disability by others forms an integral part of his reception history. Similarly, the modern performance of mental illness has occupied the attention of a number of modern disability and performance scholars. Petra Koppers examines dance performances dealing with autism and various types of mental illness. In these performances, people living with disability reclaim their agency by performing their own stories, and this is one of the principal issues taken up by modern disability studies.¹⁵⁰

The theme of able-bodied people performing disability for disabled people is the subject of Ann Millett's article. She delves into the complex relationship between able-bodied

¹⁴⁷ Margaret M. Quinlan and Benjamin R. Bates, "Dances and Discourses of (Dis)Ability: Heather Mills's Embodiment of Disability on Dancing with the Stars," *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28 (2008): 64-80.

¹⁴⁸ Brendan Gleason, *Geographies of disability* (London: Routledge, 1999), 74.

¹⁴⁹ Telory Davies, "Mobility: AXIS Dancers Push the Boundaries of Access," *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28 (2008): 43-63.

¹⁵⁰ Petra Koppers, "'Dancing Autism: The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Nighttime and Bedlam," *Text and Performance Quarterly*, 28 (2008): 192-205.

photographers and their disabled models.¹⁵¹ Although Stanley lived before the era of photography, two engravings of him survive. A sighted scholar with training in art history should now make an interesting investigation of how these two portraits “perform” Stanley’s blindness. As a blind scholar, I cannot do this; yet sighted scholars seem not to think of doing it.

The only article in this *Text and Performance Quarterly* collection to deal specifically with music and disability is Kirsty Johnston’s exploration of a performance of a musical theater piece about depression.¹⁵² Although music is secondary to the theatrical performance she studies, Johnston explores factors such as tempo and musical affect in how they help portray the many faces of depression. I have not yet been able to identify many obvious, concrete signs of Stanley’s blindness in his written music. However, his disability did have tangible effects on his choice of instrument, his performing venues, and the role he played in ensemble performances. I am convinced that further research in this direction could produce some rewarding results.

Lastly, Julie-Ann Scott explores the ways in which several young women with eating disorders perform their stories.¹⁵³ These women’s stories differ in most respects from Stanley’s. However, Scott focuses on the idea of narrative as performance. The narratives of Stanley’s disability form an important part of this chapter as well as the chapter on Stanley’s reception. These narratives can emphasize such contrasting themes as pity, overcoming tragedy, or superhuman compensation. In Stanley’s case the generally positive narratives of his early biographers have informed the narratives of later scholars.

Self-conscious musical performance and broader performance of disability both play a crucial role in Stanley’s life and career. Many differences, however, come into play between the study of such a historical figure and contemporary disabled performers. The disabled performers in the above mentioned collection of studies are, in most cases, profoundly post-modern. Like all post-modern performers, they are operating in reaction to modernism and its way of dealing with disability. Stanley, on the other hand, was working in a pre-modern context but lived into the early modern era.

Post-modern performers have self-consciously foregrounded disability, making it a central aspect of their performance. They are engaging with, deconstructing, and reacting to, the many historical layers of the concept of disability, which did not exist in the same way in the eighteenth century. As a pre-modern disabled man, Stanley does not seem to have been pre-occupied with such notions of transgression and disruption, in either his life or work. However, his life, work, and personality all colluded with, and disrupted, eighteenth-century notions of the disabled performer and the performer of disability.

Stanley and the Organ

One way in which Stanley’s performance of his disability colluded with expectations of his time was in his primary performing instrument. The organ has a long history of association

¹⁵¹ Ann Millett, “Performing Amputation: The Photographs of Joel-Peter Witkin,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28(2008): 8-42.

¹⁵² Kirsty Johnston, “Performing Depression: The Workman Theatre Project and the Making of Joy. A Musical. About Depression,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28 (2008): 206-224.

¹⁵³ Julie-Ann Scott, “Performing Unfeminine Femininity: A Performance of Identity Analysis of Bulimic Women's Personal Narratives,” *Text and Performance Quarterly* 28 (2008): 116.

with blind performers going back at least six hundred years, to Francesco Landini. Within the Western classical tradition, organ playing seems to be one of the most common modes of performance for blind musicians. Thus, in performing on the organ, blind musicians do not engage in transgressing expectations of disabled people; rather, they help to shore up a stereotypical activity for blind performers. There are several possible reasons for this connection between blindness and the organ.

First, playing the organ has always had a strong association with improvisation. Even today, church organists are expected to be able to improvise interludes between hymn verses and at other moments during the liturgy. Outside of early music, organ playing is one of the last bastions of improvisation in the Western classical tradition. Particularly in an era before tactile musical notation was widely available, improvisation was a naturally more accessible form of performance for blind musicians. The importance of improvisation to a blind musician such as Stanley is also discussed in the chapter on musical literacy.

The tactile nature of early keyboard technique also lends itself to performance by blind musicians. This appears even in the terminology to do with pre-nineteenth century keyboard pieces and technique. The title of François Couperin's 1716 treatise *L'Art de toucher le clavecin* reveals in the choice of verb the centrality of the tactile experience to keyboard playing. Similarly, the term "toccata" (from the Italian *toccare*, to touch) also intimately connects early keyboard technique to the sense and activity of touch.¹⁵⁴ As a blind keyboard player with both piano and harpsichord training, I can attest that harpsichord technique lies much more intuitively under the hands of a blind person than pianistic technique.

The developments of the piano, primarily the advent of the sustaining pedal seem to be the technological impetus for the change in approach to the keyboard. Aesthetically, the nineteenth-century love of extravert virtuosity also encouraged the development of keyboard techniques that involved a greater amount of leaping from one part of the keyboard to another, and the keyboard itself was getting larger and larger: in just over two hundred years it doubled in size, from the three-and-a-half octaves found on many early seventeenth-century keyboards to the seven octaves on more modern pianos. The keyboards of Stanley's organs would have had four octaves. Interestingly, in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the organ continued to attract many more professional blind musicians than did the piano (and the keyboard range of modern organs is still about two octaves less than that of a piano). Organ technique preserved a continuity into the modern era which continued to make the organ an attractive and logical instrument for blind musicians.

The organ's intimate association with the church must also be taken into account when investigating the connection between blindness and organ playing. Many of the earliest institutions that educated blind people were associated with church bodies. The Foundling Hospital is a prime example of just such an institution. On the European Continent, as well, a blind person without financial means or family connections would have been completely at the mercy of church-run organizations for care and any education he or she might have received.¹⁵⁵ These pre-nineteenth-century institutions only incidentally cared for blind people as a part of

¹⁵⁴ I am indebted for this idea to the Spanish musicologist Carlos Martinez-Gill, who pointed out in 2005 the importance of the toccata in sixteenth century Spain when there was also a flowering of blind organists.

¹⁵⁵ G. Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind in the 18th Century," in *The Blind in British Society: Charity, State, and Community, c. 1780-1930* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate, 2004): 18.

their mission to care for the indigent of society. Even the schools explicitly for the blind which were founded starting in the late eighteenth century had, in most cases, church affiliations.¹⁵⁶ This association of church bodies helping the disabled is the reverse of a much more negative religious association. Going far back into the Judeo-Christian tradition is an association of disability with sin or God's displeasure.

The organ is at the center of this complex and not unproblematic relationship of blindness to religion in the West. For institutions such as the Foundling Hospital, teaching the residents to play the organ had a practical purpose. Organ playing formed an integral part of the chapel services at the Foundling Hospital; having residents who could perform this function made sense from the point of view of maximizing resources. (I do not know whether the residents were compensated at the same scale as outside, sighted musicians would have been, but I suspect that the Hospital came out ahead financially by employing their own blind residents.) By teaching their residents to play the organ, the Hospital also gave them a chance at gainful employment in other churches. Organists, then as now, were among the few groups of musicians who could expect some degree of regular employment because of the weekly need for organists at Sunday services, as well as at other occasional yet regular events such as marriages and funerals. Thus, a complex web of altruistic and self-interested motivations probably caused the Foundling Hospital to instruct some of its residents in organ playing.

Another set of associations developed between blind people and the organ with relevance for both performance studies and disability studies. The early schools for the blind founded in the British Isles just after Stanley's death were not concerned with academic education of their pupils. Rather they sought to teach a vocational trade by which the pupils could earn a livelihood. The great majority of this work consisted of such occupations as basket making and mat weaving. The only field of instruction which differed from this work was organ playing.

In this context, "performing manual labor" deserves attention. The idea of "performing work" is an intriguing one to add to the many aspects of performance studies which other scholars have investigated. I have not come across any scholarship specifically addressing labor as performance, or performance as labor, but it is a relevant area of inquiry. Students at the early schools for the blind performed manual labor in their basket making and mat weaving. To what extent were those engaged in organ playing also "performing manual labor"? These organists were "performing" by any normal definition, and organ playing is certainly manual in that it directly involves the hands. This was particularly true in England in the eighteenth century when organs generally did not have pedals. The term "manual" also has a double linguistic meaning in this context since the keyboards of organs and harpsichords are referred to as "manuals."

What might it mean to say that blind organists in England in the eighteenth century performed manual labor? Today, the phrase "manual labor" has connotations from which most musicians would prefer to distance themselves. This distinction is largely a product of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries rather than of the eighteenth. From the time of Beethoven, an idea of musicians as artists rather than artisans developed in the Western World. Before this time, musicians were mostly viewed and often viewed themselves, as craftsmen. Although most nineteenth- or twentieth-century musicians would perhaps have been insulted by having their work referred to as manual labor, eighteenth-century musicians might not have had such a

¹⁵⁶ Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind," p. 18.

reaction. Stanley's contemporary Josef Haydn spent most of his working life as a servant wearing servant's livery and does not seem to have taken offense at the idea of his performance as labor. Yet this did not stop him seeing himself as an artist. This discussion of organ playing and manual labor may seem like a digression, but it broadens the context for Stanley's performance as a blind organist.

Unfortunately, the more negative connotations of manual labor seem to have applied to some of the organists trained in the early schools for the blind. Organ playing became such an expected vocational path for blind people that these institutions began training most of their students as organists, regardless of the musical inclination or ability of the students. The result was a surfeit of mediocre blind organists in parish churches in the early nineteenth century. This, in turn, led to a generally negative view of blind organists.

Thus, the teaching of organ playing in these early institutions had both a positive and negative result. On the one hand, it provided the possibility of gainful employment to blind people at a time when very few other jobs were open to them. On the other, it tended to re-enforce a negative stereotype of blind organists as incompetent. Stanley's performance as a blind organist is thus part of a rich fabric of associations and ideas surrounding the notion and the reality of a blind organist.

As noted earlier, Stanley's unique musical gifts and position must be taken into account in an examination of his place in the history of blind organists. He clearly had an extraordinary musical memory and compositional ability. In addition, he was taught by one of the most eminent English musicians of the early eighteenth century, Maurice Greene. Thus Stanley's performance in all aspects of his musical and non-musical life probably had different connotations for his contemporaries than a performance by one of his less gifted and/or less fortunate blind colleagues.

Stanley's performance of his disability in the context of church music also had different connotations than his performance of secular music in taverns. In his performances, Stanley inhabited both the sacred and secular realms. In some cases, Stanley occupies an intermediate place, straddling these two worlds. However, his performances of organ concertos could be seen as having both connotations. The organ, even in concert performance, held on to its uplifting, ecclesiastical associations. Like his illustrious contemporary Handel, Stanley presumably usually performed his organ concertos in the context of oratorio performances (a point that presumably correlates with his set of six such concertos having been published only in 1775, after he had been directing oratorio performances for some years).

Oratorios themselves, in England, occupied a middle ground somewhere between the sacred and the secular. Performed in theaters during the Lenten season, in lieu of operas, their religious subject matter caused some confusion for listeners of Handel's time, and after. The larger context of the performances was a secular theater with opera soloists, yet the subject matter was religious. Likewise, the choral singers usually drawn from London's many church choirs would have been associated with religious music.

Stanley and the Violin

In addition to the context of the performance, the choice of instruments has implications for the role Stanley performed in any particular situation. When considering the archetypal

associations of Stanley's other instrument, the violin, its alter ego, the fiddle, must also be taken into account. By the eighteenth century, the violin had earned a respectable place as the mainstay of the orchestra. Composition for the violin had reached new heights of virtuosity and expressivity. However, the violin's pedigree can be traced back to the fiddle, associated with street music.¹⁵⁷ Going back into the Middle Ages, the fiddle had strong negative associations, and at times was even considered to be associated with the devil.

This anti-fiddle bias still had a strong hold on English culture in the eighteenth century. Idiomatic phrases in English using the term "fiddle" demonstrate a large number of negative associations. "To fiddle around" and "to fiddle the books" imply wasting time and dishonesty, respectively. Nero did not, it is said, play the violin while Rome burned: he fiddled. These turns of phrase belie a deep-seated mistrust of (and lack of respect for) the fiddle and those who play it. The form of this prejudice most relevant here was the specific attack on blind street fiddlers, a prejudice that is in turn bound up with negative feelings about mendicants in general. This prejudice, which extends into our own time, is based on the notion that street beggars are lazy, dishonest, and not really in as much need as they appear to be. As discussed in Sheila Moeschen's work (mentioned above), disability both complicates and aggravates prejudices. Disabled beggars are under the suspicion of, at the least, exploiting their disability or, worse, feigning disability altogether. Thus disabled beggar-fiddlers could be seen as doubly suspect by a large part of the population. Blind street fiddlers were among the most suspect of outcast social groups because of a triple prejudice against their disability, their status as mendicants, and their instrument.

The other culturally suspect space where blind fiddlers performed was the tavern. This led to another set of negative associations with blind fiddlers, linking them to suspicions of drunkenness, carousing, and general loose living. Much of the motivation for the early schools for the blind was to rescue blind people from this presumed corrupt life style into which they would otherwise fall. A number of these institutions specifically forbade their students from fiddle playing.¹⁵⁸

The above exploration of the ideas surrounding blind fiddlers has relevance for a performance study of Stanley because he came so close to these associations, yet was able to distance himself from them. Stanley's primary known performances on the violin seem to have been for the concerts at the Swan Tavern and other similar establishments. We know that at least one and possibly both of Stanley's fine violins (one was a Jacob Stainer, the other a "Cremona" violin) was destroyed in a fire at this establishment.¹⁵⁹ Thus, although Stanley was a blind violinist performing at concerts in taverns, he does not seem to have been associated in the minds of his contemporaries with the figure of the "disreputable blind tavern fiddler", and the quality of his two violins no doubt helped place him in a more elevated category.

Three factors must have enabled Stanley to operate in this sphere without attracting any negative resonances. First, he was, as far as we know, performing art music and not the folk music associated with the fiddle. Second, by the time he began performing in tavern concerts he was firmly established as a professional church organist; being primarily known through his

¹⁵⁷ David D. Boyden et al, "Violin." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/41161>, accessed November 22, 2011.

¹⁵⁸ Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind," p. 54.

¹⁵⁹ Charles Burney, *A general history of music* (London: Charles Burney, 1789), 665.

ecclesiastical connections would cancel out most dubious associations of secular music in a tavern. Third, Stanley's respectability as a legitimate musician was established by his teacher Maurice Greene, the most eminent English musician of the time, who by then had accumulated the posts of organist of St Paul's Cathedral, organist and composer to the Chapel Royal (1727), Professor of Music at Cambridge (1730), and Master of the King's Music (1735). Moreover, it was Greene himself who had co-founded the Castle Tavern concerts in about 1715.

Stanley's Performance of his Disability

The above discussion shows how Stanley, in his performance, negotiated a unique path between contrasting and sometimes conflicting archetypes of a blind musician of his time and place. Stanley walked a line between the worlds of sacred and secular music. He also found a way to retain his respectability and propriety while performing on an instrument and in a venue closely associated with cultural outsiders. He performed with able-bodied performers and for able-bodied audiences. Yet, he also operated within pre-existing expectations for blind musicians. Stanley's performance of his disability can be seen as a skillful maneuvering among and between these pre-existing ideas about blind musicians. His negotiation of cultural expectations, strictures, and opportunities is typical of many high functioning disabled people throughout history.

As alluded to above, contemporary cultural theorists have devoted scholarly attention to the relationship between subject and object. Performers occupy a complex status as both subjects and objects. On the one hand, the performer is doing the performing so becomes the subject. On the other, performance requires an audience and from this perspective the performer becomes the object.

Disabled performers inhabit an even more complex set of subject/object relationships. Throughout much of history, disabled people have been presented as objects—objects of pity and of contempt. In the modern era, disabled people have often been presented as objects of medical intervention. Some remarkable disabled people have been objects of admiration and wonder. One of the principal tasks of contemporary disability studies has been to reclaim the subject position of disabled people.

In many aspects of his life and career, Stanley seems to have effectively taken the subject position in his performance of his disability. However, the ways in which others performed Stanley's disability also puts him in the object position. As we have seen in Stanley's reception history, those who wrote about Stanley performed his disability in a variety of ways. These performances range from the mythic "Supercrip" vein (from such authors as Burney) to the contemptuous reading which Laetitia Hawkins lends to her performance of Stanley's disability.

Others who did not write about Stanley were also crucially involved in the performance of his disability, most notably his sister-in-law and amanuensis Anne Arlond. Musically, she played a crucial part in Stanley's role as disabled performer and non-musically she played an equally crucial role in Stanley's performance of disability in his daily life. The intriguing thing about Arlond's role in the performance of Stanley's disability is the fact it seems to have been largely invisible to Stanley's contemporaries.

In addition to Anne, Stanley had a largely invisible supporting cast in his performance of disability in his daily life. These included his wife Sarah and the unnamed servants who were an

assumed part of any respectable middle-class eighteenth-century household. Julia Rodas's work discussed earlier addresses the fact that these "satellite subjects" at times perform invisibly in the life of the disabled person. Here, it will prove useful to draw an analogy between performance of disability in daily life and overt theatrical or musical performance. Rodas's satellite subjects in the lives of disabled people may be likened to an off-stage chorus, or to such essential yet invisible people as set designers or stage hands.

In concrete ways, Stanley's disability affected his choices as a performing musician. Paradoxically, as a blind musician it was much easier for Stanley to lead as a conductor than it would have been for him to follow another musician conducting. In all the records of Stanley's activities as a performing musician, he is either a soloist or a conductor. Most of his performing seems to have been as an organist where he was in a leadership role leading the congregation in psalmody. The other part of his church music duties involved the performance of voluntaries which were largely improvisatory and did not involve interacting with other musicians. His activities as violinist are not as well documented, but he always seems to have been either a soloist¹⁶⁰ or orchestral leader.¹⁶¹ Similarly, his other important conducting job, leading oratorio performances, put him in the place of being followed rather than of following. He never seems to have sung in a choir or played in an orchestra that he wasn't conducting.

One intriguing aspect of Stanley's performance of his disability occurs in his relationship with other blind musicians. As a Governor of the Foundling Hospital, where he had an important role in the education of a number of the blind musicians resident in the hospital Stanley's role was that of a supervisor, teacher and institutional director. He would seem to have been performing able-bodiedness. In his time and before, institutions that cared for the disabled were typically run by able-bodied people. However, blind people within the Foundling Hospital itself had important roles in educating other residents. In addition, a number of the schools for the blind which first appeared in the late eighteenth century were founded by blind people; a notable case is Edward Rushton, who founded the Liverpool school for the blind and was himself blind. Many of the teachers at these early schools were, themselves, blind.¹⁶² Thus, Stanley's performance of his disability in this role in one way disrupted expectations about the dependant nature of disabled people. In another sense, Stanley was performing the role of a high-functioning non-institutionalized blind person at a time when blind people were beginning to take leadership roles in these institutions.

Maria Theresia Paradis had her own way of performing her blindness, which, in some ways contrasted with and in other ways was similar to Stanley's. In one instance at least, she quite self-consciously foregrounded her blindness in performance. Nothing could be a more explicit foregrounding of disability than her cantata entitled, *Ich bin eine armste Blindin* ("I am a Poor Blind Woman"). This solo cantata was performed by Paradis herself. It puts her completely in line with modern (and post-modern) self-conscious performers of their own specific disabilities. Paradis's evocation of pity contrasts with Stanley's reported positive attitude towards his blindness. It seems likely that differences in gender, nationality, generation,

¹⁶⁰ John Alcock, letter concerning Stanley in the *Universal Magazine* 79 (July 1786): 44, reprinted in the *European Magazine* 10 (August 1786): 80.

¹⁶¹ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq."

¹⁶² Phillips, "Hierarchies of the Blind," p. 21.

and personality account for the different way in which these two musicians performed their disability.

One historical case in which blind musicians self-consciously performed their disability occurred in France in the early nineteenth century. The school for the blind founded in 1784-86 by Valentin Haüy (1745-1822) put on demonstrations of the abilities of his blind pupils. A number of these demonstrations consisted of public concerts, with the specific intent of showing what blind people studying under his methods could accomplish.¹⁶³ In these pedagogical demonstrations, teachers such as Haüy were performing their pupils' disability as much as the blind children were performing it.

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a new narrative of overcoming disability began to emerge. Two key elements here were education and medicine. Haüy and his pupils literally performed the overcoming of blindness through education. The performance of overcoming disability is, in its own way, just as much a performance of disability.

A dramatic performance of overcoming disability through paramedical means involved Paradis. Dr. Mesmer, the noted hypnotist claimed to have cured her blindness through hypnosis, by "mesmerizing" her. Such performance puts both Paradis and Mesmer firmly in a different generation and context than Stanley. The historical accuracy of this account is less important than the fact that it is firmly lodged in the reception history and lore surrounding both Paradis and Mesmer.¹⁶⁴ Petra Kuppers devotes an entire chapter of her book on disability and performance to the performance of disability in the medical theater.¹⁶⁵

John Stanley, both on and off stage, performed the overcoming of disability. This overcoming or over-compensation performance also makes it into the Stanley mythology. On stage, Burney's marveling at Stanley's ability to conduct oratorios is a performance of overcoming, along with Burney's narrative about Stanley transposing the Handel *Dettingen Te Deum*.¹⁶⁶ Off-stage, the stories of Stanley's accomplishments at cards, and independent mobility are mythic performances of overcoming disability.

Even the childhood accident that caused Stanley's blindness is, in a sense, performed in the retelling. Modern disabled performers vary in their disclosure of the nature and cause of their disabilities. Some foreground the cause of their disability in their performance. There is no known account of Stanley himself telling the story of his blindness. However, the story of the small child with a china basin in his hands, which he drops on the hearth and gets fragments in his eyes, begins nearly every biographical reference to Stanley. It would seem that starting biographies of Stanley in this way would set up a performance of his disability as tragedy. The performance of Stanley's disability in the biographical material tends rather toward narratives of overcoming and positivity. Among the biographers who knew Stanley personally, only Laetitia Hawkins performs his disability negatively. This negative performance of Stanley's blindness does not, as is often the case with tragic performance of disability, inspire pity for the disabled person. Due to Hawkins's generally hostile tone toward Stanley, this performance of his

¹⁶³ D. G. Pritchard, *Education and the Handicapped, 1760-1960* (London: Routledge, 1963), p. 196.

¹⁶⁴ Rudolf Angermüller et al, "Paradis [Paradies], Maria Theresa." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20868>, November 22, 2011.

¹⁶⁵ Petra Kuppers, *Disability and contemporary performance: Bodies on edge* (London: Routledge, 2003), 31-48.

¹⁶⁶ Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq."

disability instead inspires pity for those around him especially for his sister-in-law, Anne Arlond. Laetitia Hawkins performs Stanley's blindness as a liability and inconvenience for those around him rather than a tragedy for Stanley himself.¹⁶⁷

Another area of cross-over between disability studies and performance studies is that of improvisation. Improvisation cuts across both types of performance being studied in this chapter. For Stanley as an organist, improvisation played a crucial part in his performance and compositional practice. As a disabled person, improvisation also played a crucial part in his performance of his disability in daily life. In adapting to an ablest environment, disabled people constantly engage in dynamic acts of improvisation in the performance of their disabilities. These acts of improvisation may have had to be even more creative in an era before specialized technologies designed for disabled people. For example, a blind person in the modern era has access to Braille, talking computer software and highly trained guide dogs.

Stanley's education as a blind musician may also have been an act of improvisation on the part of his teachers Reading and Greene. Even in the modern era with standardized systems such as Braille, teachers of blind students often have to come up with creative ways of teaching. This would have been even more true in the eighteenth century, with no formalized system of tactile notation that we know of. Stanley's teachers facilitated his performance as a disabled musician by their performance as teachers.

Handel's Blindness

To close, this chapter turns to a comparison of Stanley's performance of his disability with that of his most illustrious contemporary, G. F. Handel, who lost his sight late in life. This profoundly affected his compositional and performing life. As in Stanley's case, Handel's disability was performed by those who knew him and by later historians. In terms of his stage performance after his blindness, his performances of his late organ concertos seem to have been the most dramatic examples of how his blindness affected his performance. He dictated the orchestral parts to his copyist John Christopher Smith, but did not have the solos written out since he would be playing them himself. (In the surviving scores these sections are still incomplete in many cases, and the keyboard part is marked *ad libitum*.) Thus like Stanley, Handel may have produced a largely improvised performance of the solos in these late concertos. And like Stanley, Handel was, after his blindness, functioning in a leadership and solo position in his own performance. Early in his career Handel had played second violin in the Hamburg Opera orchestra.¹⁶⁸ It seems unlikely that he would have been able to do this easily after his blindness.

Handel's acquaintances and colleagues seem to have performed his blindness as a tragedy much more than did Stanley's circle. This is probably largely due to the loss of Handel's sight later in life. In narratives about disability, becoming disabled later in life is often presented very differently than early disability. In Stanley's case, his blindness was a known factor in his

¹⁶⁷ Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1822).

¹⁶⁸ Anthony Hicks, "Handel [Händel, Hendel], George Frideric [Georg Friederich]." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40060>, November 22, 2011.

reception from his first public appearances playing the organ as a young boy, and indeed his success was linked to his blindness in many ways.

Mary Delaney, Handel's long-time friend, wrote in her diary about his blindness, noting that he still played the organ in performances of *Samson*. Mrs. Delaney comments on the sad irony of the blinded Handel performing in the oratorio about the blinded hero Samson.¹⁶⁹ In this case, Delaney performs Handel's performance as a tragedy. Her account partakes of a strain of eighteenth-century sentimentalism that is rare to non-existent in the Stanley literature.

As noted earlier, modern disability theorists point out that disability is the one minority group which any one may join at any time due to accident, disease, or old age. It seems that Handel's late-onset blindness inspired shock because audiences were used to him as a sighted performer. An able-bodied person suddenly becoming disabled is unsettling because it reminds spectators of their own vulnerability. The term "temporarily able-bodied" (or T.A.B.) is now used in disability circles to describe the highly contingent and unstable nature of able-bodiedness.¹⁷⁰

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the relationship between Handel and Stanley is the fact that the blind Stanley took over conducting Handel's oratorios after Handel lost his sight. This turn of events has been mentioned frequently by biographers of both men. However, it has never been explored from the disability perspective. The anecdote recorded in the literature recounts how, when this idea was proposed to Handel, he referred to the Matthew's Gospel, chapter 15, verse 14: "And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch."¹⁷¹ Despite this apparent objection by Handel, Stanley did take over Handel's conducting role in the oratorios.

Why did this seemingly odd choice work out well? Since compensatory skills often come easier to those who have been disabled early in life, Stanley was better equipped to function as a blind musician than was Handel. It seems from the historical record that Stanley had been conducting since early in his career specifically at the concerts at the Swan Tavern. Whereas blindness was a disability for Handel that prevented him from conducting, the same impairment was no longer a disability for Stanley.

Stanley was accustomed to having the help of assistants in such tasks. In addition to Anne Arlond, he had an important collaborator in the first four years of his direction of the Handel oratorio performances, in the person of Handel's own copyist and amanuensis, J. C. Smith. This seems a natural choice in the sense that Smith had already been dealing with Handel as a functionally blind composer. We do not know the exact division of labor between Stanley and Smith in the running and production of the oratorio season. However, Burney's account of Stanley's conducting makes no mention of Smith assisting him in the actual performances.¹⁷² One can imagine that Smith took over such duties as preparation, revision, and copying of scores and performing parts. He may also have had an important role in the administration of these concerts. Then from 1774, Stanley had the help of Thomas Linley with the oratorio concerts. So

¹⁶⁹ Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1959), 263.

¹⁷⁰ Tobin Siebers, "Disability as Masquerade," *Literature and Medicine* 23, no.1 (2004): 1-22.

¹⁷¹ William Coxe, *Anecdotes of George Frideric Handel and John Christopher Smith* (London: W. Bulmer and Co., 1799; reprinted New York: Da Capo Press, 1979), 50.

¹⁷² Burney, *European Magazine*.

once again we see Stanley knowing how to work with sighted people who could help him function professionally, whereas Handel could not. This reinforces the point about interdependence and collaboration in Stanley's life and career that I have already underlined in this study.

Stanley's life and career is illuminated in important ways by the double lens of disability studies and performance studies. He is a performer both in the traditional musical context and in a more global and modern sense of performing his disability. Scholarship about modern disabled performers reveals fascinating similarities and contrasts with Stanley's case. In addition to Stanley's unique negotiation of his performance as a disabled musician and a disabled man of his time, others from his time and after have taken part in the performance of his disability.

Chapter 5

Stanley Composes

The most tangible artifact of Stanley's career and compositional process is his published written music. This is the most direct link we now have with him and our most direct insight into his musical mind and working patterns.

In recent decades, various types of minority studies in musicology have addressed two basic questions. The first is: does a composer's membership in a minority group affect his/her music? The second is related to this: how readily apparent is this difference to listeners and scholars experiencing the music? Susan McClary and Philip Brett opened up newer areas of feminism and queer studies in relation to the Western musical canon.¹⁷³ We have seen in the discussion of Stanley as disabled performer, that a number of disability scholars have written extensively about the role of disability in the careers of disabled performers. However, little attention has been devoted to the compositions of disabled composers.

I will here focus on Stanley's 30 organ voluntaries published as his op. 5, op. 6 and op. 7. These works, more than any other part of his output, have remained in the performing repertoire among church organists, for several reasons. The basic function of the voluntary in church music has changed little since the eighteenth century. Many Christian church services still make use of a prelude and postlude and often brief musical interludes at various points during the service. Stanley's voluntaries are as well suited to this function today as they were in the eighteenth-century. They are short and their straightforward melodic style is accessible to congregations. They are not too technically demanding, even for amateur organists. These voluntaries have remained in the repertoire partly due to the conservative nature of much church music, including organ pieces. By the early nineteenth century, Stanley's other music would have been considered out of date, stylistically. Stanley did not have the canonic status of Bach, whose music experienced a revival in the early Romantic period, or the cultural status of Handel, whose music never went out of favor in England.

I discuss later my ways of operating as a blind musicologist (see Chapter 6). One of the principal ways I engage intellectually with music is through sound recordings and fortunately many of Stanley's voluntaries are available in recorded form, unlike most of his other music. It is therefore more easily available to me. Moreover, in some cases, particularly in op. 6 and op. 7, particular voluntaries are reworkings of earlier music that appears not to have been originally conceived for organ. The voluntaries are thus a gateway to his other musical achievements. The practice of musical recycling is, of course, far from unique to Stanley and cannot be attributed to his blindness. Many composers of the period, particularly Handel and Bach, were known for their re-use of their own (and sometimes other composers') material.

Related to the issue of musical recycling is the practice of composite authorship. In a number of manuscript sources,¹⁷⁴ movements from Stanley's voluntaries are coupled with movements from works by other composers. There are other examples of this practice in

¹⁷³ Susan McClary, *Feminine endings: Music, gender and sexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991); Philip Brett, "Introduction", in Philip Brett, Elisabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas, eds., *Queering the pitch: The new gay and lesbian musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁷⁴ H.D. Johnstone, "An Unknown Book of Organ Voluntaries" *Musical Times* 108, (1967): 1003-7.

England in the eighteenth century, one of the most notable being *Muzio Scevola*, a composite opera performed in 1721.¹⁷⁵ The circumstances surrounding *Muzio Scevola* were different than those of the composite voluntaries, where the interchangeability of movements may result from the functional nature of music designed for church services.

Stanley and his contemporaries were the first generation to begin publishing formal collections of voluntaries in large numbers, usually ten or twelve. A number of organists published notable voluntary collections during Stanley's lifetime, but mostly after his own were published.

Composers of Organ Voluntaries Before Stanley

Stanley's place in the history of English organ voluntaries is important, both by the quantity and the quality of his works. He was influenced by (and in turn influenced) some of the most eminent English organ composers of the eighteenth century. In the period 1720-60, voluntaries were composed by a number of significant composers, including both of Stanley's teachers, Reading and Greene. Many of these were published only later in the century but circulated first in manuscript form. Two voluntaries by Reading were published in 1767, three years after his death (in an anthology of ten such works), but the bulk of his voluntaries survive in earlier manuscripts that are now in the Dulwich College library and the Manchester Public Library. Similarly, many of the voluntaries composed by Greene were published only posthumously, in 1779, over twenty years after his death. Both of Stanley's teachers had probably written their voluntaries before Stanley published his own collections (1748, 1752, and 1754). It is likely that they had an influence on his voluntaries that is belied by the publication chronology. Greene, in particular, seems to have codified the two-movement, slow-fast form that predominates in Stanley's voluntaries.

In addition to his teachers, the works of several other eighteenth-century organ composers may have influenced Stanley's style, but once again this influence is particularly hard to identify due to the fact that many of the surviving works were only published posthumously and the dates of composition, relative to Stanley's publications, are not known. Furthermore, the main influence on his style is likely to have been the improvisations by his colleagues that he heard. Stanley's position can thus be seen among about twenty composers of organ voluntaries in the eighteenth century.

Half a dozen composers of voluntaries of the two generations before Stanley may be considered to have importance or to have contributed to the development of the genre.

— Philip Hart (1674-1749) published a collection of fugues and lessons in 1704. They break away from the earlier style, found in the seven voluntaries published by Matthew Locke in his *Melothesia* (1673), and in the few surviving unpublished voluntaries by Henry Purcell.

— John Barrett (1676-1719) is known by only two voluntaries that survive, both in an assured style; they are preserved only in manuscript sources.

— William Croft (1678-1727) wrote many voluntaries but they were not printed in his lifetime, circulating only in manuscripts. (Thirteen of them survive.)

¹⁷⁵ The first act was composed by Filippo Amadei (Mattei), the second by Giovanni Battista Bononcini, and the third by Handel.

— John Robinson (1682-1762) had a fine reputation as a player, but only one organ voluntary by him survives.

— William Hine (1687-1730) is now known from just one voluntary, but it is of high quality.

— Thomas Roseingrave (1690-1766) published a collection called *Voluntaries and Fugues* in 1728; the young Stanley could certainly have known these important works.

Stanley's Contemporaries

Next comes the generation of composers who were more or less Stanley's contemporaries. For many of them, the late dates of publication of their voluntaries imply that their works, in published form, cannot have influenced Stanley; yet it is quite possible that he knew the style of these men's works either from hearing them play or from knowing their compositions that circulated in manuscripts. These composers include the following:

— John James (d. 1745), whose voluntaries were published only posthumously (in 1770) but whose works circulated quite widely in manuscript. (Over twenty are now known.)

— John Travers (1703-58) also composed works that circulated in manuscripts, but were published only posthumously (in 1769).

— Peter Prellieur (1705-41): although nothing was printed in his lifetime, ten voluntaries by him survive.

— William Boyce (1710-79), whose ten voluntaries were published posthumously [1779].

— Starling Goodwin (c.1713-74) published two volumes of voluntaries (twelve in each volume) at the end of his life, in the 1770s.

— James Nares (1715-83), the organist of York Minster; several organ works by him survive.

The Next Generation

Finally, there are the composers of a generation younger than Stanley, who are most likely to have been influenced in their turn by Stanley's published voluntaries. These include:

— James Worgan (1713-53) and his younger brother John (1724-90).

— William Walond (1719-68), an Oxford organist, whose two collections of voluntaries were published in 1752 and 1758.

— John Bennett (c.1730-84), whose *Ten Voluntaries* appeared in 1758.

— Henry Heron (fl. 1745-c.1795), who published his collection of voluntaries in 1760 (they were republished in 1765).

— Jonathan Battishill (1738-1801), also known as a fine improviser of voluntaries; very little of his output has survived.

— John Keeble (1711-86), whose *Select Pieces for the Organ* (including voluntaries) appeared at the end of the 1770s.

Particularly interesting from the point of view of Stanley's influence, is the publication of voluntaries by his student, John Alcock, in 1774. Of all these composers of voluntaries, Alcock

is the only one known to have had an intimate connection with Stanley. He was Stanley's first amanuensis and became a life-long friend and wrote one of the important eighteenth-century biographical accounts of Stanley, already discussed in Chapter 1.

Relatively few of these men are now primarily known for compositions entitled "voluntaries." However, the types of organ movements that they composed are, in many cases, similar to those which Stanley included in his collections of voluntaries.

Stanley's Voluntaries

By comparison with all these composers, Stanley published more collections of voluntaries, and his surviving output is larger. Other music, not just organ pieces, also casts its shadows over Stanley's works. His voluntaries are a repository for a variety of influences and musical affects. The Voluntary in D minor (Op. 5, no. 8), for example, has the formal and affective characteristics of a classic three-movement concerto on the Italianate model. In this case, the influence on Stanley's creative process does not come specifically from the genre of the voluntary but rather from wider contemporary musical culture.

Substantial though the surviving body of published or manuscript voluntaries is, it would be a mistake to limit the study of the voluntary to its published or notated forms. The voluntary should be understood also as an act of performance. Commentators of Stanley's time focused more on Stanley's performance of his voluntaries than on them as published works. Stanley's hearing of performances by his contemporaries and teachers probably had a more immediate influence on him than did the eventual publication of these composers' voluntaries. In turn, since London organists are known to have often attended Stanley's Sunday performances, the hearing of Stanley's own way of playing his voluntaries extempore may have most influenced his younger contemporaries.

Stanley's voluntaries occupy a liminal place between the worlds of composition and improvisation, somewhat akin to the French unmeasured preludes and other improvised forms. This close link between voluntaries and extemporization is confirmed by Charles Burney who notes that when he was in Italy he "played a Voluntary, for I could neither see, nor remember anything, I was so frightened."¹⁷⁶

This more dynamic way of thinking about voluntaries has a counterpart in another type of baroque instrumental music. If we consider fugue to be a process rather than a static form, we can much better account for the formal variety of pieces which fall into the category of fugue. This idea of process is particularly useful when thinking about voluntaries. If the voluntary is a dynamic improvisatory musical process that exists in real time, then the written versions of these pieces can be considered artifacts of the process rather than as intrinsically "The Work."

It is a cliché to talk about the importance of improvisation in the careers of blind musicians; yet, like many clichés, it has a grain of truth to it. This has not been lost on previous Stanley scholars, particularly those studying the voluntaries. Malcolm Boyd has this to say regarding the connection between improvisation, Stanley's blindness, and the voluntaries: "For someone unable to work over his pieces in manuscript as other composers could, the processes of

¹⁷⁶ Charles Burney, *Dr Burney's Musical Tours in Europe*, ed. P.A. Scholes (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), I: 135.

extemporization and composition must have been more than usually inseparable, and it is safe to assume that Stanley's published voluntaries represent the improvisations, albeit in a more polished state, that swelled the congregations at All Hallows and St Andrew's."¹⁷⁷

One question is particularly intriguing: what, if anything, about Stanley's voluntaries was influenced by his blindness? Such a fundamental characteristic as a sensory disability must have informed every aspect of Stanley's life and career. For the purposes of this study, the question is narrower. Can I as a blind musician, two and a half centuries after Stanley, now recognize anything as being "blindness-related" in his voluntaries?

I began this part of my inquiry by searching for idiomatic non-visual keyboard writing. I expected to find that Stanley's writing was more conjunct than that of his sighted contemporaries. Leaps on a keyboard are more challenging for a non-visual performer. I believe this may be one reason that there are many more professional blind organists than pianists to the present day since organ technique still tends to be more conjunct than pianistic technique since the keyboard range is considerably smaller. I therefore compared Stanley's organ music to that of many of his English contemporaries. But I did not find that Stanley's music was any more or less conjunct than that of his fellow English organists.

There is, nevertheless, one interesting aspect of Stanley's keyboard writing that has been pointed out by A. G. Williams, who noted that Stanley frequently employs the practice of "thumbing down", wherein the fingers of one hand are on one manual and the thumb is on another. Thus the organist can play three manuals with two hands. (The technique is well known from French seventeenth-century organ composers such as Louis Couperin, André Raison, and Jean Henry d'Anglebert.) Williams does not make a connection between this practice and Stanley's blindness. However, I think an argument can be made that for a blind organist, "thumbing down" could be an easier technique than jumping from manual to manual or from one end of a manual to another. For example, although Stanley writes many trumpet tunes, these do not, like the French *basses de trompette*, involve large leaps of up to two octaves.

Just because something is more challenging for a disabled person does not necessarily mean that he or she will avoid it. As I will mention in Chapter 6, I have spent a considerable amount of energy in my life deliberately doing things which others would have thought difficult for me, partly to prove that I could. My own attempts to make my musicological work look like that of a sighted musicologist may have been paralleled by Stanley writing music which is indistinguishable from that of his sighted contemporaries.

If one had to make a general statement about Stanley's music it is that it appears now to be archetypical of its time and place. Stanley's music is among the best written in England in the mid-eighteenth-century. However, its quality comes not so much in invention as in mastery of the existing styles (both old and new) of his time. Stanley might well have written similar music had he been sighted. If he felt pressure to compose music that in no way deviated from the norms of sighted composition, he would have been practicing a form of "covering" (also discussed in Chapter 6).

Turning from an examination of Stanley's keyboard technique, I found a more fruitful area of inquiry lay in studying other aspects of his compositional process. The voluntaries of Stanley's teacher Greene, as well as those of such contemporaries as John Bennett, exhibit a

¹⁷⁷ Boyd, "John Stanley's Voluntaries."

lighter, more galant texture.¹⁷⁸ Many of Stanley's most memorable voluntary movements are also in this simpler two-part texture. The two-part style (principal melody and accompanimental bass) would have been easier for a blind musician to improvise, but also easier to dictate to an amanuensis. As usual, however, Stanley resists facile classification as a blind musician. Although his fugal movements are not as common as the simpler type, they are every bit as complex, polyphonic and long as any being written in England in his lifetime. As will be discussed below, fugal writing may even have been an asset to a blind composer. Thus although the simple textures may have been easier for Stanley, he did not limit himself to such styles.

The Importance of Memory

Voluntaries, especially as performed by a blind musician, are also liminal in another way. Stanley's voluntaries challenge the clear distinctions between improvisation and memory. Improvisation, in a wider sense, could hardly exist without some element of memory. In most musical traditions, from basso continuo to jazz, improvisation relies heavily on certain aspects of musical memory. It relies on a general stylistic and formulaic memory since such features as harmonic progressions, stock cadences and melodic formulae are essential tools in the improviser's arsenal. More specifically, improvisation can be based on pre-existing music; in many cases, musicians rely on the memory and outline of pre-existing, well-known tunes. This is no less true in the Western classical tradition. From plainchant to the Lutheran treatment of chorale tunes, Western church musicians have used (and continue to use) pre-existing material as the seeds for improvisations.

Stanley's three printed sets of voluntaries are notated acts of memory as well as notated acts of improvisation, and the acts of memory operate at several levels. The first act of memory common to all thirty voluntaries was the transcription of the works from Stanley's own memory into a notated form.

A different act of musical memory, and revision, may have occurred when a number of these voluntaries were transcribed and in some cases transformed from manuscript to published forms. More than a decade sometimes intervened between these versions of the voluntaries, and a number of changes were made for the published versions (as we can see from various surviving manuscript versions). The compositional changes were, presumably, made by Stanley himself, or at least under his control. Thus, another layer of memory was involved in the re-composition of these pieces.

A third use of memory involves those pieces in op. 6 and op. 7, which are transcriptions of other pieces by Stanley. If he performed these works on the organ, as voluntaries in church, they cannot be said to have been improvised in the same way as some of the others. Rather, they were recollected; and perhaps they were also spontaneously transformed into idiomatic organ pieces. Since Stanley was primarily a keyboardist, it seems reasonable to assume that he composed at the keyboard. If so, his orchestral and vocal music may have been first conceived in his head as keyboard music. Does this imply that some of the voluntaries were first thought of

¹⁷⁸ H. Diack Johnstone, "Greene, Maurice." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11707>, accessed November 22, 2011; John Caldwell, "Voluntary." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/29665>, accessed November 22, 2011.

as keyboard music, then transformed into orchestral form, and then transformed again back into keyboard music? If so, such revised voluntaries may have simply been reversions to Stanley's original conception of the music.

My own experience confirms that this mixture of memory and improvisation is an effective way of negotiating musical performance. Although I still perform non-improvised classical music, I have, in recent years moved into a more improvisatory musical world. I grew up studying classical piano, harpsichord and voice but in my thirties began to study and explore the Celtic harp. I found great liberation in this improvisatory tradition. Instead of laboring to memorize every note of a Beethoven sonata from a recording, I can take an existing piece of music and create my own improvised/remembered arrangement of it. I can understand how Stanley could have thrived in such a musical world; it helps me understand why his voluntary playing was his crowning achievement as a performer.

In addition to the voluntaries, in Stanley's performing career the other important intersection between memory and improvisation was in his work as a basso continuo player. This practice has relevance for his activity as a conductor. If he had memorized the bass lines, that would have given him enough of a framework to conduct ensemble works from the organ or harpsichord. I say this not to diminish Stanley's formidable accomplishments as a blind conductor; rather, it explains a technique by which he was able to lead such large works as Handel oratorios.

One piece of historical evidence supports this idea. We have tantalizingly little information about the mechanics of Stanley's working process as a musician. The one source which illuminates his relationship with his amanuensis is the account by Laetitia Hawkins. She gives a glimpse into the working relationship between Stanley and his amanuensis Anne Arlond. Referring to Stanley's conducting, Hawkins says that Stanley worked "From the slight basses she (Arlond) gave him."¹⁷⁹ This tells us that Stanley only had to "learn" the bass-line and its figures; then, with his excellent knowledge of harmony, he was easily able to realize the chords above the bass and hence to keep the band and singers together. Charles Burney's account of Stanley's conducting shows the typical response of an able-bodied person when encountering a high-functioning disabled person performing a seemingly impossible task.¹⁸⁰ Hawkins's account, however, provides concrete evidence of the strategy Stanley used to accomplish his task.

Further light is shed on Stanley's compositional process in relation to his blindness, by two recent observations made by Barry Cooper.¹⁸¹ The first is that Stanley makes more extensive use of the ritornello principle than do his English contemporaries; the second is that Stanley's fugal movements tend to be longer than those of his colleagues. Cooper makes these observations without relating them to the composer's blindness, but both of these characteristics of Stanley's music can be related directly to his blindness and to the linkage between memory and improvisation discussed above. The connection between ritornello form and memory is

¹⁷⁹ Laetitia-Matilda Hawkins, *Anecdotes, Biographical Sketches, and Memoirs* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, 1822), 205.

¹⁸⁰ Charles Burney, "Some Account of John Stanley, Esq.," in *European Magazine, and London Review* 6 (September 1784), quoted in A. Glyn Williams, "The Life and Works of John Stanley (1712-86)" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Reading, 1977).

¹⁸¹ Barry Cooper, "New light on John Stanley's organ music," *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 101 (1974-1975): 101-106.

straightforward. By using recurring thematic material, a relatively long piece can be generated out of a much smaller amount of musical material. For a blind musician, repeated sections of music form a practical framework for the improvisation/composition of larger-scale works.

Although I have referred here to the ritornello principle, Stanley's movements tend to conform more closely to the French *rondeau* form rather than Italian ritornello form. In French *rondeaux*, the principle thematic material (usually referred to as the *Grand Couplet*) tends to be repeated in its entirety. In Italianate ritornello form (as found in the music of Vivaldi), the core thematic material appears complete at the beginning and end of the movement but other appearances in the middle of the movement may be truncated. This does not mean that Stanley was directly copying French models, although there were certainly many French musicians working in London in his youth, and much French music was published in London as well. Rather, I believe he was influenced by earlier traditions of English music that had, in their turn, been influenced by French models. This complete repetition of primary thematic material makes more sense when considering the particular challenges of a blind composer.

Cooper's second observation, that Stanley employed longer fugal movements, is not so obviously connected to his blindness. However, the fugal process provided a framework for spinning out improvised or composed works. In addition to fugue and ritornello/*rondeau*, baroque music contains many formulae, conventions, and musical processes that would have facilitated the improvisation, memorization, and composition of fairly complex keyboard music by a talented blind musician who was steeped in this musical vocabulary.

I approach the music from the angle of Stanley's improvisatory, compositional, and memory processes. Two basic principles can help explain the ways in which Stanley could have perceived, remembered, and created compositions. The first is the creative use of repeated material. This includes everything from full-scale repeats of *rondeau* sections to the repetition of distinctive motives (which can be only a few notes), or even forms in which themes are repeated, at regular time intervals, but placed in different areas of the keyboard (such as fugues).

The second principle at work for Stanley was contrapuntal process, operating at a microscopic as well as a macroscopic level. It is the driving force behind Stanley's extended fugal movements, but also governs such local details as chains of suspensions. It helps to generate the harmonic bass-lines that were the cornerstone of Stanley's music. Contrapuntal process and use of repeated material were, by no means, unique to Stanley. Although counterpoint was part of the essential musical language of any eighteenth-century musician, for a blind musician it could have particular relevance. Blind musicians must retain much more minute bits of musical information in their head. Stanley's reliance on these two musical principles helped make possible his remarkable career as performer, composer and conductor.

Organization and Repetition in Stanley's Voluntaries

The separate movements of Stanley's voluntaries fall into several types each with its own affect and musical character. I will now discuss representative movements of each type and how a blind musician might perceive, categorize, and organize this music.

I will first examine Stanley's voluntaries that fall into the two-movement (slow-fast) form that had been especially developed by Greene. The slow introductory movements are, in some ways, the most formulaic and therefore probably the easiest to improvise or memorize. Many of

these movements are imitative in texture without being fugal in form. These movements are generally in three-part texture. For an experienced continuo player like Stanley, the two parts in the right hand of such movements can be seen as a kind of realization of the figured bass implied by bass line in the left hand. The motivic material in the imitative right-hand parts is usually fairly simple, often consisting of four or five notes in a straightforward rhythmic pattern. One of Stanley's favorite devices here is the use of chains of suspensions. Like any other sequential patterns, for anyone who has a basic knowledge of counterpoint suspensions are easy to perform from memory or to improvise; indeed, they generate almost automatically reasonably effective music, when overlaid on a well-crafted bass line. Did Stanley first compose a bass line, think of the harmonies (with figures)? If so, it would have implications for the compositional and dictatorial processes.

In an effort to get inside this aspect of Stanley's compositional process, I conducted an experiment. Taking as my premise the idea that Stanley first composed a bass line with figures and then added the right hand figuration, I explored the process of dictating a figured bass to an amanuensis. I engaged the services of an excellent organist and fellow Berkeley musicology graduate student, James Apgar. I used the Andante movement from the Voluntary in F major (Op. 7, no. 6), a straightforward, homophonic piece. I attempted to deconstruct the movement and re-dictate it in its bare-bones, essential text, as a bass line with figures. I tried, as much as possible, to recreate the conditions under which Stanley and Anne Arlond might have worked. The only modern technology I used was a sound recording of the piece, but that can be seen as comparable to Stanley himself sitting at the keyboard.

I listened to the piece many times to have it firmly ensconced in my memory. I briefly considered making Braille notations of the figures but then abandoned the idea since Stanley would not have had access to that technology. When Mr. Apgar and I met, I first had him play through the movement once on the organ, so that it would be fresh in my mind. We then took the movement apart, phrase by phrase. Next, I dictated the bass line and called out the figures to go with each note and Mr. Apgar wrote them down. From time to time, I had him repeat a phrase (or part of a phrase) so I could double-check what I was saying. When we had finished, I had him play back the figures I had given him in simple blocked chords. In this last check, I caught three errors I had made, and was easily able to fix them.

I had guessed that this might be a means of efficiently conveying musical information orally, and I was not wrong. We completed the exercise in about thirty minutes. I found this particularly remarkable since I had not dealt much with figured bass for over twenty years and neither of us had ever done this particular exercise before. If we could function efficiently while doing this for the first time, then surely Stanley and Arlond, who collaborated for decades, could have worked faster than we did. This efficiency came from the fact that figured bass is, in itself, an extremely efficient form of musical shorthand. A single musical note and one or two numbers can convey an entire harmonic context from one knowledgeable musician to another. Once Stanley and Arlond had laid down the harmonic and chordal foundation for such a movement, the filling out of the right hand could have proceeded quickly.

Much of the right-hand figuration of Stanley's voluntaries is based on well established conventions. I have already mentioned the importance of suspensions. In addition, sequential figurations and cadential formulae relied on similarly conventional patterns. Since Arlond was, no doubt, as steeped in these conventions as Stanley, another kind of musical shorthand may

have been at work between them. If he gave her the beginning of a sequence, she would very likely have known how to continue it. Similarly, she would have known how to fill in a cadential pattern in the right hand. The *rondeau* movements discussed above also imply an even more striking form of shorthand. Stanley could have merely said “Repeat the first section” and that would have been the extent of the dictation of a whole section of the composition.

I have evoked elsewhere the idea of composite authorship in voluntaries whose movements are each by a different composer. Stanley and Arlond’s working relationship raises another issue, and potentially a thornier one: that of collaborative authorship. Since the nineteenth century, musicians and musicologist have been pre-occupied with the idea of the autonomous art work, and related to this is the idea that the autonomous art work is the sole property of an individual creator. Ethnomusicologists have had more experience dealing with music which is the property of more than one person and, in some cases, is the property of an entire cultural group. Stanley’s voluntaries, as they now exist in their written form, may represent a collaboration between Stanley and Arlond. This does not diminish Stanley’s achievement as a composer; rather, it would be an example of a highly effective interdependent relationship.

In another movement, the opening movement of op. 5, no. 9 (in G minor), Stanley creates a splendid effect by relying on two simple musical devices, one of which has relevance for a blind performer. It begins with a pedal tone in the top-line over an undulating alternation of tonic and dominant chords in the other parts. This pattern alternates with passages of suspensions over circle-of-fifths progressions in the bass. I have experimented with playing such right-hand pedal notes and found that they have a practical use in addition to being musically effective. They create a useful point of reference, an anchor in relation to which my other fingers can move and create undulating chordal patterns. Of course, much of Stanley’s music does not have such anchoring pivot notes to hold on to; yet such techniques would have been useful aids and natural devices that maximized musical effect while minimizing hand movement.

On the other hand, many of the fast movements of Stanley’s voluntaries make use of repeated material in *rondeau* form. These *rondeau* repetitions are important as memory aids. In addition to remembering the distinctive motives of each *rondeau*, Stanley had another set of associations that would have aided his memorization of these pieces. Several of these *rondeau* movements closely imitate specific instrumental effects. For example, two “Corno” movements and several trumpet movements are typical of this approach. The two horn movements (the Andante from op. 6, no. 4, and the Vivace from op. 7, no. 6) closely imitate the conventional writing for pairs of orchestral horns, based on the harmonic series of the natural horn. This evocation of the hunting horn was often used in eighteenth-century music, from Bach to Mozart, to suggest hunting motives in music. Stanley’s simple two-part writing in thirds, fifths, and fourths, would have been instantly evocative to Stanley’s listeners. But it would also have been easy for Stanley to remember such themes as a trope or stereotypical musical gesture. Both of these movements have a complete *rondeau* repetition at the beginning, middle, and end, leaving only two interludes of “non horn-like” material for Stanley to create and remember.

Much the same can be said about Stanley’s trumpet movements. They rely on the traditional fanfare motives associated with military trumpet calls. They also evoke the notes of the natural harmonics on a valveless trumpet, especially in the high *clarino* register. This association is further cemented by the fact that Stanley’s trumpet movements are only in the keys

of D major and C major, the traditional keys for the trumpet. (The horn movements discussed above are similarly restricted to F major, the normal key of the natural horn.) Thus, Stanley keeps to the idiom of the instruments he is imitating as closely as possible. This strong association of affect and musical idiom would have also helped to plant such pieces firmly in Stanley's memory.

The trumpet movements show a greater variety in form and technique than the horn ones. The *rondeaux* of the horn movements are strictly in two-part texture, imitating the pair of horns, but the trumpet movements alternate solo trumpet sections with pairs of trumpets. This gives Stanley another opportunity for the creative use of repeated material in the form of echo effects. The simplest form of this is a presentation of a theme or motive in the solo trumpet followed by a repetition by the pair of trumpets in thirds, fourths or fifths. Echo effects extend a relatively small amount of motivic material to form a piece of appropriate length, and in performance rely essentially on the use of memory, a feature particularly well developed in a blind composer such as Stanley. In his capable hands, these judicious and effective uses of echo techniques are in a way musical representations of the act of memory in that they rely not only on the player's or composer's memory but essentially on the listener's memory to identify the repetitions that are part of the echo effect.

Stanley's Contrapuntal Textures

Much of what I have said above about forms of musical shorthand applies mainly to Stanley's more homophonic movements but in a fugal movement one cannot simply lay down a figured bass and elaborate a right hand over it. Nevertheless, certain types of musical shorthand would still have been useful to Stanley and Arlond. If he wanted a repetition of the subject of the fugue but in a different key, he would only have to indicate what key it was to be in and Arlond could copy it with any alterations Stanley might have wanted.

Stanley's slow movements raise different questions. Three movements in particular provide archetypical examples of this style of composition that link with what has just been said about possible compositional processes: the Adagio in D major (from op. 5, no. 1); the slow movement from in C major (from op. 5, no. 5); and the Andante from in F major (from op. 7, no. 6). This last piece is the work I used above for my re-composition and dictation project. These three relatively simple slow movements can be analyzed using the principles of contrapuntal process and ritornello process discussed above. Such processes would have been equally useful to Stanley in the creation as in the recall of these pieces.

Stanley wrote other slow movements that do not fit so easily into the preceding perspectives. In particular, the slow movements that precede fugal movements have a different affect and are constructed with a variety of textures. A rich example of motivic repetition and contrapuntal process is found in the first movement of op. 7, no. 9 (in G major). This movement is dominated by a strong motive, consisting of two staccato notes followed by a triplet figure. In the first few measures, this motive occurs within a homophonic texture. It appears in parallel thirds in the right hand over a pedal note in the left hand. The contrapuntal interest is then increased as the left hand takes up the triplet figure and the right hand begins another chain of suspensions. This entire small movement can be heard as having been generated from the triplet motive and the contrapuntal working out of suspensions around and above it.

The two principles of re-use of existing material and use of contrapuntal processes come together in Stanley's fugue writing. In such works, once the composer has a subject and a countersubject, the rules of counterpoint and fugal entrances largely guide his/her working out of the fugue. It is revealing to compare Stanley's and Handel's fugal technique. Handel's fugal writing is notoriously unrigorous, at least according to the Germanic rules that have since become the norm; however, in keeping with his Italianate upbringing, they are extremely effective dramatically. Handel works out his fugal process for as long as they suit his dramatic purpose but he can then abandon the fugue writing without any warning. Stanley's fugues, on the other hand, are more thoroughly worked out in terms of counterpoint and scientifically "correct" contrapuntal process. Regardless of his blindness, it may have been in Stanley's nature to be more thorough in the working out of contrapuntal and motivic possibilities in his music.

Fugal process could even have been particularly conducive to the compositional needs of a gifted blind musician. The structural elements of subject and countersubject and their prescribed tonal relationship to one another provide a solid framework in the musical memory of the performer. In terms of new material, Stanley would need only to focus on the episodic material before returning to the central fugal material.

I have attempted here to draw attention to ways that Stanley used repeated material and used his knowledge of counterpoint as compositional aids to help his already powerful memory. By appearing to reduce some of Stanley's techniques to formulae, I do not mean to minimize in any way his musical accomplishments as a composer of voluntaries, and I have said nothing here of his power of invention or his melodic gift. Rather, I have tried to draw attention to ways he could have utilized such techniques. Like all effective eighteenth-century music, Stanley's relies on the manipulation, fulfillment, and subversion of a well-known series of conventions. He was able to make use of a number of the most important of these conventions. The result was a repertoire of voluntaries that is still well ensconced in the performing canon of church organists, two and a half centuries after the works were first published.

Chapter 6

A Blind Musicologist Speaks

For disabled people, as for any members of a minority group, stereotyping is a fact of daily life. These stereotypes can come in surprising forms and can pigeonhole us in positive and negative ways. When I meet people for the first time and I tell them I am a musician the response is often “oh, of course.” There is often a tone of relief in their voices because music is considered an obvious career choice for a blind person.

This relief can be interpreted in different ways. To be charitable, they are happy for me because they can imagine this as a field in which I can excel as a blind person. I imagine their minds filling with images of Ray Charles, Stevie Wonder and other blind musicians with supernatural compensatory powers of hearing and memory. The other possible cause for people’s relief at my musicianship is less altruistic. Disability studies, along with other minority studies, have shown how stereotypes and stereotyped behavior are a way for the dominant culture to manage, control, and render harmless the members of a minority group. It is when members of minority groups attempt to break out of their stereotyped roles that they encounter resistance from the larger culture. The same person who would have no problem going to a gay hairdresser might object to a gay school teacher or clergy person. Thus I, as a blind musician, am not seen as a threat to the wider culture.

If the conversation about my occupation continues, however, things get more complicated. After saying “oh, of course”, the next comment is usually “what instrument do you play?” I then embark on the task all of us in our field have to do of explaining musicology. “It’s like art history only for music” I explain. The more I talk, the initial relief on the part of my interlocutor turns to confusion, then concern, and finally that patronizing amazement which suggests “but how can you do that, I mean if you can’t read the music?” (This last question has been asked of me in myriad forms by a great variety of interlocutors, from my family, to scholars working at major universities, and strangers on airplanes.)

The deeply assumed connection between vision and musicology is particularly fascinating since musicology is the study of an aural art. The suffix “-ology” in itself points in a traditionally visual direction, relating to words, and therefore reading (an activity thought to be for the eyes). From ancient times in the West, knowledge has been closely equated with sight. Thus -ology, the study of a subject, is (in the Western mind) an essentially sighted enterprise. It is interesting, in this context, that the sister discipline of art history does not need an -ology attached to it (except in “iconology”). I suggest that a gendered anxiety motivated this word choice. Music has, throughout much of Western culture, been associated with the feminine.¹⁸² By attaching the -ology suffix, derived from the masculine Greek noun *Logos*, the discipline is placed firmly in the traditionally masculine scientific realm. It is also implicitly placed in the realm of sight-based activity.

The nature of much early musicology of the more positivistic vein was, in fact, extremely visual. Positivistic musicological tasks included preparation of editions of little known

¹⁸² Philip Brett, Elisabeth Wood and Gary C. Thomas, eds., *Queering the pitch: The new gay and lesbian musicology* (New York: Routledge, 1994).

composers and detailed study of manuscripts and sketches by more well-known figures. This is a type of scholarly work which I, as a blind musicologist, cannot do without a great deal of assistance and translation on the part of sighted readers. The majority of my analytical musicology has been done with the aid of sound recordings. Perhaps the most visual musicological assignment I have undertaken was a transcription project in an ethnomusicology seminar. This involved transcribing a sound recording of non-Western music into Western notation. I thus had to listen to the recording, memorize the music, and then dictate it note by note to a sighted assistant who wrote in a form to which I would never have access, a particularly frustrating process.

I have done other musicological projects using recordings in which a great deal of time was spent counting measure numbers in my head so that I could refer to events in the music by their measure number. This is another type of translation for the benefit of sighted readers. Neither measure numbers nor notation are particularly relevant to my experience of music. However, I have learned to use them when I am communicating analytical musical thoughts to sighted readers, because they need them.

This dissertation, like much other work related to disability, has essentially dealt with the concept of “passing.” The idea of passing has occupied theorists of many minority studies and involves the person of a minority status portraying themselves as a member of the majority group. Having a disability that is obvious, I cannot hide or “pass”, so I have never felt that the concept of “passing” as sighted was particularly relevant for me. Recently, however, legal scholar Kenji Yoshino has proposed a much more subtle and useful concept, that of “covering.” Taking an idea from sociologist Irving Goffman, Yoshino has devoted his recent book to this notion.¹⁸³ Covering involves minimizing attributes or characteristics that distinguish members of a minority group. I have probably never “passed” as a sighted musicologist, but I have, in both my writing and my teaching, certainly attempted in various ways to “cover” my blindness. To be fair to my professors and students, the demand for covering often came as much from me as it did from others. Like many high-achieving disabled people, I was eager to prove that my work could be indistinguishable from that of my sighted peers. Furthermore, I was eager to prove that I could do so with little (or preferably no) special accommodation. Even if this “covering” was not requested by those around me, I did receive considerable rewards for doing so. After my musicology seminars I received such comments from my professors as: “Heroic”, “Tremendous grit”, “Not a shred of self-pity”.

I believe this phenomenon is common to many people who, in one way or another, “cover” some aspect of themselves that differs from the mainstream culture. Particularly in the realm of disability, a prevalent type of covering is the over-compensation of disabled people to prove that they can still do everything an able-bodied person can do, and more. This is the “Supercrip” phenomenon already mentioned. It occurs both in reality and in the realm of the media. One recent example is Eric Weihenmayer, the blind mountain climber who climbed Mount Everest in 2001. Another is the recent film *Soul Surfer*, dealing with a professional surfer who lost her arm in a shark attack and nevertheless returned to surfing. This type of compensation is a kind of “covering” in that it erases the particular experience of disability and helps to put able-bodied people at ease with disabled persons. My musicological “covering” has

¹⁸³ Kenji Yoshino, *Covering: The hidden assault on our civil rights* (New York: Random House, 2006).

involved nothing so dramatic as these two heroic examples. However, it did shape much of my experience of the field.

Another important motivation for “covering” comes from the concept of “master status.” Tanya Titchkosky, in her book *Disability, Self, and Society*, explores this concept that originated with sociologists.¹⁸⁴ “Master status” is the idea that if one is a member of a minority group, that status takes precedent over all other statuses one might have. Thus in my case, my status as blind would trump the facts that I am male, white, educated, Christian, and upper-middle-class. Many of us cover our minority status in an effort to counter-act this swallowing up of all of our other attributes.

A striking example of this phenomenon occurred a number of years ago when I was teaching a discussion section of the “Introduction to Music” course for non majors at U. C. Berkeley. I had been leading the class successfully for about eight weeks and thought I had established myself as a credible music history instructor. One day, I brought a sighted assistant with me for purely mechanical reasons. I needed her to hand out exams which I had graded, and I needed someone who could read the names and find the appropriate people. As soon as my assistant was in the room, all the students’ questions were directed to her, not to me. Up to this point, the students had gotten used to addressing their questions to me, but I was completely ignored the moment there was a sighted person in the room who was perceived to be in authority. Suddenly, my status as Blind (and therefore presumed to be less competent) took over from my status as Music History Instructor. Such demoralizing incidents as this further encourage the act of “covering”.

More recently, I found myself using one status to cover for another, when I was invited to a rehearsal of *Götterdämmerung* at the San Francisco Opera. The stage director, who had invited me, graciously introduced me to most of the cast and the production team. She merely introduced me by name and I found myself chiming in with the phrase “I’m a musicologist.” I realized that this had an anxious quality to it that was almost desperate. Essentially, I was adding this information to legitimize my presence at the rehearsal. This came from a fear that, without my academic status, I would just be “that Blind Man.”

The area in which I received the most direct coercion to cover my blindness had to do with my physical behavior. I have a plethora of physical mannerisms common to many congenitally blind people. Growing up, I was strongly discouraged from engaging in these “blindisms” as they are called. A direct shaming approach was used by the special education teachers with whom I worked. I was told that if I rocked back and forth or moved my hands in a certain way I would look retarded. These efforts were, no doubt, well-meant. My family and teachers did not want me to have to bear the additional and inaccurate stigma of cognitive disability. The result of this approach was, however, a great deal of shame and relatively little alteration in my behavior.

Although we are all complex blends of different statuses, I am considered to belong to two at least recognized minority groups. In addition to being blind, I am a gay man. This double minority status has had interesting repercussions both in my working and personal life. One way in which my teachers attempted to suppress my physical mannerisms was intertwined with my sexuality. More than once I was told versions of the following scenario: “one day, you’ll meet a

¹⁸⁴ Tanya Titchkosky, *Disability, Self and Society* (University of Toronto Press, 2003).

wonderful girl whom you'll want to impress and you don't want her to be put off by your mannerisms." This narrative reflected two intertwined fantasies on the part of the adults around me. Had this fantasy of theirs come true, I would have dated girls and not acted blind. This is a powerful example of the way in which the wider culture supports, encourages and at times demands "covering." But sexual orientation can be more easily hidden than can a sensory disability such as blindness. Growing up, I could pass as not-gay more easily than I could pass as not-blind, and my blindness could act as a smokescreen for my sexuality. Throughout high school and college, no one asked why I didn't have a girl friend. Within the dominant culture, it is common to see disabled people as asexual. Thus it was assumed that I was not dating women because I was blind, not because I might be gay. Having double minority status can reveal things about both statuses and how they are perceived. Curiously, I am often asked by other gay people "if you are blind how did you know you were gay?" This rather odd question reveals the extremely visualist nature of the wider culture and, I believe of gay culture specifically. It belies an assumption that sexuality and sexual attraction are primarily or solely visual.

My sexual orientation informed two small musicological efforts in the 1990s. I wrote a review for a gay and lesbian newsletter put out by the American Musicological Society. Interestingly, I was advised by a counselor at U.C. Berkeley's Career Center not to include this on my C.V. This was a case where a gentle pressure to cover was exerted even by such a purportedly liberal institution as the University of California, Berkeley. My second piece of overtly gay musicology was a highly personal presentation on my erotic relationship to the male singing voice. This presentation was given to a class on gay and lesbian music at San Francisco City College taught by my friend and colleague Judith Peraino. Although I enjoyed both of these ventures into the modern scholarly discipline of Queer Studies, I did not consider them serious parts of my career or of my musicological identity.

For me, as for many other members of minority groups, humor has had a complex and many-layered relationship to issues of "passing," "covering" and "uncovering." Two situations come to mind in which I have used humor to introduce the subject of my minority statuses to my students. The first is a logistical way of handling my blindness which I have used many times both in the classroom and in my work as a pre-concert lecturer. From earliest years of schooling, most people are socialized to raise their hands when they want to ask a question. To counteract this impulse, I perform the following patter for my students.

"As you have probably deduced, I am blind so if you raise your hand all that will happen is your arm will get very tired and all the blood will drain out of your hand so, don't do that." Here I smile and chuckle. "Be brave! Just shout out your question." Here I get a chuckle back from the students, and it usually has the desired effect of getting them to call out their questions. This performance is well rehearsed and I have given it many times over the years. This is a clear case of my own performance of my disability, and underlies my discussion earlier of the topic of John Stanley's "performance" of his own disability.

The second use of humor was a way in which I dealt with my sexual orientation with a group of students recently. I had taught a one-week course on Handel and his world. On the last day, I brought up the musicological debate around Handel's sexual orientation. In closing the discussion, I said, "Well, it doesn't matter that much to me whether Handel was gay or not. After all, he's dead so I can't go out with him." Comedians and jesters throughout the centuries (as well as the father of modern psychology, Sigmund Freud) have known the power of humor

when dealing with complex or fraught topics. Some of this power derives from the fact that humor can simultaneously conceal and draw attention to an issue or situation. In the two personal examples above, I was both drawing attention to my minority statuses and in some way “covering” them.

In the first case, my humor acknowledges my blindness. It is also designed to put the students at ease with my disability. Joking conveys that I have a light-hearted and positive attitude towards my blindness and it is all right for them to have the same attitude. This serves to “cover” any negative feelings I may be having about my disability. Thus I may be “covering” an aspect of my feelings about my blindness through humor specifically to please and comfort my sighted students.

In the second example, my joke about not being able to date Handel is a sort of veiled coming out. Keeping it light and keeping it witty serves to soften the effect on my hearers. This oblique form of coming out could be missed by those who are not thinking in terms of my sexual orientation. It has the feel of an “in-joke”. Interestingly, although I have been “out” to family and friends for twenty years, this was my first venture into coming out to a larger group of students. I do not bring in my sexual orientation here because it has direct bearing on the Stanley project; rather, it is another area in my life where the complex issues of passing, covering, and uncovering have played a crucial role, and therefore I believe it has an indirect bearing on my study of Stanley.

From the beginnings of my graduate work there has always been present a contrasting theme. I knew that I had an interest in orality and its relation to blind musicians. My final project for the ethnomusicology seminar mentioned above involved ideologies and issues surrounding oral tradition. I specifically examined the case of Ethiopian Coptic chant that was traditionally transmitted orally, in many cases by blind people. My next attempt to “uncover” my blind interests occurred when Susan McClary visited Berkeley as the Bloch Lecturer. In her seminar on music and post-modernism, I proposed doing a project on blind musicians. She pointed out that this was too big a project for a term paper, so I shelved it. In this way, I was rewarded for covering my blindness and writing and speaking like a sighted musicologist.

However, a number of my professors did make efforts to steer me in directions that would be more conducive to me working non-visually. This consisted primarily of my working on pieces for which sound recordings were readily available. This led eventually to my first foray into the study of recordings themselves as artifacts of performance. I wrote a paper on changing interpretations of Schubert Lieder in recordings across the twentieth century. Although this type of work did not specifically deal with my blindness, it did offer me a chance to work directly with my material rather than having it interpreted by a sighted assistant. This led to my considering a dissertation topic that utilized sound recordings as the primary material to be studied. I had had a long love of and scholarly interest in the music of Handel. It seemed natural for me to embark on a dissertation involving a systematic study of changing performance practice of Handel’s music as revealed by recordings. In retrospect, this idea involved a partial “uncovering” of my blindness.

The nature of that project had been shaped by my blindness. It seemed that the material was more accessible to me as a blind scholar than would have been printed sources or manuscripts. However, that was the extent of my “uncovering.” It would never, at that time, have occurred to me to refer in any way to my blindness during the writing or make it a topic of

discussion in the dissertation. It would also never have occurred to me to examine such issues as Handel's blindness later in life. In this context, it is salutary to examine my own internal resistance to a more personal engagement with my blindness in my academic work.

For much of my life, "uncovering" my blindness was equated with segregation and marginalization. This anxiety was seeded in my infancy. At the age of six months, after extensive testing, my parents were told that I had permanent impairments to my optic nerves which would make me totally blind. The elderly ophthalmologist then added, "these children are better off in institutions where they can be properly looked after." This offensive and (even for 1967) outdated comment enraged my parents. To prove this doctor wrong, they set about giving me as "normal" a life as possible. This impulse and its results were in large part a good thing. They prevented me from falling into a "self-pitying victim" mentality and also encouraged me not to limit myself to activities that were traditionally "blind-identified". However, they also lead to an attitude of reactive negativity towards anything associated with formalized activities for the blind, or even socializing with other blind people. I was in the first generation of children to be "mainstreamed" by being educated in standard schools alongside sighted children. Throughout my entire education, I have always been the only blind student in my classes in my school or university program. This lone-wolf status encouraged me to fit in to the sighted educational world as much as possible.

To this family and educational background should be added my wider cultural background. I come from a Scandinavian-American family who, while being extremely verbal, were very taciturn about expressing deeper emotions or needs. Thus my personal, family, and educational circumstances all pushed me in the direction of "covering" my blindness whenever possible. The impulse to cover was not a conspiracy of outside forces determined to oppress me. Rather, it resulted from a complex web of familial, cultural, social, and educational circumstances.

My lack of success in bringing to fruition a dissertation about Handel recordings is also complex. I never found an approach or enough of an original idea to form the topic into a dissertation. During this period of my life, both academic and personal circumstances lead me to embark on Jungian depth analysis. Although I didn't initially present my blindness as an important topic to work with, it soon became clear that my blindness needed addressing in this context. One of the core concepts in Jungian theory and practice is that of the shadow. In brief, the shadow is the part of ourselves which we generally avoid examining. According to Jung, if the shadow is repressed or ignored, it will manifest in negative ways. When the shadow is embraced, it can often release a great deal of energy for other things. The shadow material in itself often also turns out to be positive rather than negative. This digression about my own Jungian journey directly relates to my dissertation work. I began embracing rather than shunning my blindness in various aspects of my life. The idea of a radical departure came suddenly and dramatically. I was on an airplane flying to Florida to visit my parents. At my therapist's suggestion, I had been doing extensive journaling. During the flight, I was writing both about feelings about my blindness and about the dissertation problem when a connection occurred. I began physically shaking with fear and excitement as I contemplated a complete fresh start with a very different type of dissertation.

The work that has become this dissertation on John Stanley has foregrounded blindness in two ways. First, the main subject of the dissertation was a blind musician. Second, my

scholarly interest in the topic is explicitly located around his blindness. This puts my work in considerable contrast with most previous scholarship about Stanley that has mentioned his blindness only minimally and has not delved into it as an area of scholarly inquiry. My shift in scholarly interest and focus also contained an irony. In explicitly studying a blind composer and foregrounding his blindness, I had to return to the study of written documents and move away from the seemingly more accessible area of sound recordings.

This shift, in turn, reflects a difference in the way in which my own blindness informed the projects. In the Handel project, my blindness shaped the nature of the project in a pragmatic way, in terms of the type of study and the material studied. In the present dissertation, the mode of study may be more traditionally sighted, yet my blindness has informed the project at a much deeper level since my blindness has a crucial ideological place in the project. Like many other scholars of disability and other minority studies, I have a polemic purpose here, which is to tell the story of an important blind musician putting his blindness at the forefront.

My blindness gave me a way into this story which might not be open to sighted scholars. I have had to struggle with many of the same issues as did Stanley nearly 300 years ago. Some of these issues are pragmatic, memorizing large amounts of music that my sighted colleagues can simply read. Others are more subtle and have to do with covering, disclosure and how to negotiate my own blindness within a largely sighted world. I also have first-hand experience with the ways in which sighted people present, represent, and misrepresent blind people and their accomplishments and lives.

In conclusion, in my self-uncovering and my uncovering of Stanley as a blind musician, I have been extremely fortunate. I have received nothing but unconditional support and encouragement from my advisors, family, and friends, as well as from the wider scholarly and musical community. In fact, the Stanley project seems to be of interest to a far wider range of people than was my Handel work. Kenji Yoshino describes in his book on “Covering” how he was initially urged by his colleagues not to put his gay status forward in his teaching and writing. However, he found that when he let his different identities fully inform his scholarship, he was embraced and affirmed by his colleagues.

Having begun the process of “uncovering” myself, this dissertation attempts to uncover John Stanley in at least some of his particularities. For all people, disabled or not, an important part of uncovering involves the uncovering of history. This is particularly true when it involves previously untold history. The last few decades have seen a steady flow of interesting studies in women’s history, gay history, and the histories of multiple ethnic and cultural groups. For this reason, it seems appropriate now to situate John Stanley in the long and vibrant history of blind musicians within the Western tradition.

Stanley’s Place in the History of Blind Musicians

From the Middle Ages onwards, blind minstrels are mentioned from time to time, but without much detail. However, this meant that when blind musicians appeared on the scene in the literate tradition, people such as Francesco Landini, the concept and the archetype of the blind musician was not a new one. In the fifteenth century, two well known blind minstrels are recorded, Jehan de Cordoval and Jehan Ferrendes. Sometimes, individuals are remembered in

history because of their connection to an iconic figure. The above blind musicians worked at the Burgundian court and influenced the music of Binchois.

Conrad Pauman was another blind musician in the fifteenth century who was clearly known for his own merits. In the 1470s, Johanan Alemanno comments about Pauman's playing, "what happened to me is what happens to those who eat sweets made of honey and nectar: I was so conquered by his lovely playing that all spirits within me reached out to the sweetness of his sound."¹⁸⁵ Ambrosius Metzger (1573-1632) was one of the last of the Meistersingers. He composed both the poetry and music for his songs, many of which were written after he lost his sight.¹⁸⁶

Also in the sixteenth century, a flowering of blind musicians occurred in Spain and its dominions. Giacomo Gorzanis (1520-79) was known as a lutenist and composer of seven suites for his instrument.¹⁸⁷ In the middle of the century, Francisco Sacedo held the post of cathedral organist at the vital center of Seville.¹⁸⁸ Miguel de Fuenllana (fl. 1553-78) was one of the greatest exponents of the Spanish vihuela, both as performer and composer.¹⁸⁹ Francisco de Salinas (1513-90) is remembered not only as a composer but also for his important contribution to Spanish music theory.¹⁹⁰ Finally, crowning this list of significant blind Spanish musicians of the sixteenth century is the important figure of Antonio de Cabezón, whose blindness is often obscured in music history because of the significance of his compositions in the history of keyboard music.¹⁹¹ Pablo Bruna (1611-79) and his pupil Pablo Nassarre (1654-1730) were both organist-composers, like Stanley; they represent a later flowering of the tradition of Spanish blind musicians.¹⁹²

In Italy, during the transition from the Renaissance to the Baroque, a number of blind musicians also distinguished themselves, notably Martino Pesenti, Giovanni Carisio, and Antonio Valente.¹⁹³ In Switzerland, Esther Elizabeth Velkiers (1640-85) is one of the few blind

¹⁸⁵ Don Harrán, "Alemanno [Alemann], Johanan." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42198>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁸⁶ Walter Blankenburg and Dorothea Schröder, "Metzger, Ambrosius." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/18529>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁸⁷ Arthur J. Ness, "Gorzanis, Giacomo [Jacomino (de)]." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/11493>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁸⁸ Robert Stevenson notes this in his article on Juan Peñalosa, an organist who assisted Sacedo at the Toledo Cathedral. See Stevenson, "Peñalosa, Juan de." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21239>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁸⁹ John Griffiths, "Fuenllana, Miguel de." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/10345>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁰ Claude V. Palisca, "Salinas, Francisco [Franciscus] de." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/24381>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹¹ Louis Jambou, "(1) Antonio de Cabezón." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04511>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹² Almonte Howell and Louis Jambou, "Bruna, Pablo." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04161>, accessed November 12, 2011; Almonte Howell and Juan José Carreras, "Nassarre [Nassarre], Pablo." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/19595>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹³ Eleanor Selfridge-Field, "Pesenti, Martino." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/21414>, accessed November 12, 2011; Guy Bourlignieux, "Carisio, Giovanni ['Il Orbino', 'Il Cieco']." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

woman composers recorded before her later colleague Maria Theresia Paradis. (She is also the only blind Swiss composer I have encountered.) Unlike many of the other blind composers here mentioned, Velkiers is also said to have had an extensive humanistic education.¹⁹⁴

In the seventeenth century, Jacob van Eyck (1589-1657) was one of the most eminent performers and composers of his time in the Netherlands, particularly for the recorder.¹⁹⁵ Pieter Alewijnszoon de Vois was a blind pupil of Sweelinck in Amsterdam.¹⁹⁶ In the eighteenth century, four virtuoso Dutch blind organists also distinguished themselves. Foremost among them is J. J. de Graff (or Graaf), who was particularly known for his playing of concertos on the organ.¹⁹⁷ The other three are linked by teacher-pupil relationships. Jacob Potholt (1720-82) was, in addition to being an organist, a carillonneur of distinction and a composer; Burney commented on his ability to improvise fugues on a given theme.¹⁹⁸ Potholt was the teacher of Henrik Focking (1747-96) who in turn taught Daniel Brachthuyzer (1779-1832).¹⁹⁹ Like Potholt, Focking and Brachthuyzer were carillonneurs as well as organists.

There is no evidence that Stanley was aware of any of these earlier blind musicians, so many of whom were organists. However, their successful careers laid the cultural groundwork for Stanley and those who came after him. These earlier blind musicians had to negotiate many of the same practical and social hurdles that Stanley did.

In England, and much closer to Stanley are Maurice Greene's blind teacher, Richard Brind (organist of St. Paul's Cathedral) and the blind organists mentioned in Chapter 3: Thomas Grenville, John Purkis, and John Printer. Also close to Stanley were the organists Francis Linley (1771-1800) and Jonas Blewitt (d. 1805).²⁰⁰ These men were all alive at the same time as Stanley. Linley seems to have spent the majority of his life and career in the city of Doncaster. His career does not seem to have intersected with Stanley's, which was firmly rooted in London. Blewitt, on the other hand, lived and worked in London so he was no doubt familiar with Stanley, at least by reputation. Both Linley and Blewitt published texts on playing the organ (see Chapter 2). Neither, however, makes any mention of the blindness of the author nor do they

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/04931>, accessed November 12, 2011; Roland Jackson, "Valente, Antonio." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*,

<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/28910>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁴ Julie Anne Sadie, "Velkiers, Esther Elizabeth." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/2021502>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁵ Thiemo Wind, "Eyck, Jacob van." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/09151>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁶ Mentioned in Randall H. Tollefsen and Pieter Dirksen, "Sweelinck, Dirck Janszoon." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/27205>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁷ Christoph Wolff, et al., "(7) Johann Sebastian Bach." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/40023>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁸ Rudolf A. Rasch, "Potholt, Jacob." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42271>, accessed November 12, 2011.

¹⁹⁹ Rudolf A. Rasch, "Focking, Hendrik." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/42267>, accessed November 12, 2011.

²⁰⁰ Gwilym Beechey, "Linley, Francis." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/16714>, accessed November 12, 2011; Edward F. Rimbault, "Blewitt, Jonas." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/03272>, accessed November 12, 2011

address issues pertaining to blind musicians. Several of the above illustrious company of blind musicians would make an important and interesting study in their own right.

I have not discussed in this study the important continuation into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries of the tradition of blind musicians. Much writing about successful disabled individuals has, until recently, presented them as lone prodigies or even as freaks of nature without a historical or social context. Placing Stanley in this wider context of blind musicians deepens and enriches his story.

Appendix

Poems about Stanley

This study of Stanley's reception has so far explored contemporary historical accounts of the composer as well as secondary sources from after his death which re-tell and re-interpret his story. There remains one different type of material to be examined. In Stanley's lifetime, four poems were written to him as well as one further piece, an epitaph, written shortly after his death. The first poem was written by the librettist and satirist Henry Carey. The second was by Sir John Hawkins; the other three texts are anonymous. In order to provide a wider context for these poems, I will also examine the parallels with the epitaph to J. S. Bach written by G. P. Telemann as well as a number of poems in honor of the most iconic figure in eighteenth-century English musical life, G. F. Handel.

These poems are the textual equivalents of sketched portraits. As a blind scholar, I cannot engage directly with the two known visual portraits of Stanley, or with the Handel iconography, but poems and epitaphs are, for me, portraits in words that share many of the same attributes as visual depictions. They capture an idea of the composer at a particular moment in his career or just after his death. They can be flattering or damning. They can accentuate a particular aspect of the composer while hiding other aspects of his life, career or personality. They can even implicitly or explicitly help to pass the composer off as something he is not. Poetic portraits provide an alternate path along the byways of reception history.

The dedicatory material of the Stanley poems confirms his activities at the time of the poems. They are notable for their rich symbolic language and their evocation of archetypal imagery. These verses have not, to my knowledge, been examined before as documents of Stanley's reception; scholars have merely reprinted them without comment. An analysis of their imagery and rhetoric can flesh out Stanley's place in the consciousness of his contemporaries. I will place them in the context of representations of Stanley's blindness.

They use a variety of rhetorical and cultural devices to represent Stanley's blindness. Tanya Titchkosky, in her book *Disability, Self and Society*,²⁰¹ takes up the important topic of passing. She discusses the ways in which others can collude in the disabled person passing as able-bodied, and draws on her personal experience of living with a blind partner, whom she helped pass as sighted. In a number of these poems to or about Stanley, the authors help him pass as sighted by erasing his blindness in their representations of him.

Two twentieth-century examples of this phenomenon stand out, where cultural representations were used to help a person of a minority group to pass. President Franklin Roosevelt was presented to the American public as able-bodied, despite the paralysis of his legs from polio. In carefully orchestrated photographs, Roosevelt is placed standing between his two sons with an arm around each of their shoulders, whereas his sons were in reality holding him up, giving the impression that he was standing on his own.²⁰² Similarly, the Country Western singer Charley Pride, who is African-American, was the subject of this kind of passing by others. Record producers did not put photographs of him on his early albums so as not to alienate the

²⁰¹ Tanya Titchkosky, *Disability, Self and Society* (University of Toronto Press, 2003).

²⁰² Disability Social History Project, <http://www.disabilityhistory.org/>, accessed 22 November, 2011.

overwhelmingly White-oriented Country music audience. It was only after Pride's music had gained popularity that his racial identity was widely revealed.²⁰³

By contrast, the Stanley poems are more subtle in their erasure of Stanley's disability. However, this idea does help to account for the compensatory narratives of some of the poems and the complete omission of mention of his disability in others. Disclosure or nondisclosure of disability relates to other types of minority status. In her article, "My Body, My Closet", Ellen Samuels explores the intriguing intersection between disability identity and gay identity and the issues of disclosure and closets in both.²⁰⁴ The notion of passing as able-bodied is also taken up by disability scholar Tobin Siebers in an article on "Disability as Masquerade."²⁰⁵

The desire to pass (or to help someone pass) results from an assumption that membership in the dominant group is preferable to membership in the minority group. In disability circles this is referred to as "ableism"; it is a similar phenomenon to what is referred to as heterosexism in Gay Studies.²⁰⁶

Henry Carey, 1729

Henry Carey's is the earliest known poem about Stanley, so it will be dealt with here first.²⁰⁷ The year of this simple quatrain is important since 1729 was the year the seventeen-year-old Stanley received his B.Mus. degree from Oxford. In this context, the dedicatory title is particularly apt. Carey focuses both on Stanley's blindness and his prodigious abilities as a young musician.

To Mr. John Stanley, the wonderful blind youth,
Organist of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

Why do mistaken mortals call thee blind?
Thine Eyes are but inverted to thy Mind;
There thou explor'st ideas unconfin'd,
Whilst we, who look before, are dark behind.

The idea behind this little verse is a simple one that has been present in discussions of blindness for millennia. It plays into a notion about disability that, when one sense or ability is removed, the others become more acute to compensate. In the case of blindness, this idea of compensation is taken further to give the blind person an almost mystical sense to replace mere worldly sight. Sight becomes insight.

²⁰³ David Vinopal, "Biography: Charley Pride," Allmusic, <http://www.allmusic.com/artist/charley-pride-p1772/biography>, accessed 11/16/11.

²⁰⁴ Ellen Jean Samuels, "My Body, My Closet: Invisible Disability and the Limits of Coming-Out Discourse," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 9, no. 1 (2003): 233-255, <http://muse.jhu.edu>, accessed April 20, 2011.

²⁰⁵ Tobin Siebers, "Disability as Masquerade," *Literature and Medicine* 23, no.1 (2004): 1-22.

²⁰⁶ Fiona Kumari Campbell, *Contours of ableism: The production of disability and abledness* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009).

²⁰⁷ Henry Carey, *Poems on several occasions*, 3rd ed. (London: E. Say, 1729), p. 116.

On the surface, Carey's poem seems entirely laudatory. However, modern disability theory teaches us to be wary of praise of a disabled person which negates the disability. Carey states that Stanley is not truly blind. This type of compliment fits into a larger discussion of passing. When someone of a minority is praised for being just like a member of the majority group, the particularity and any possible positive characteristics of the person's minority experience are erased.

As is well documented in disability theory,²⁰⁸ able-bodiedness is highly contingent and temporary. Unlike such minorities as race, gender, or sexual orientation, which are relatively stable, disability is a minority into which anyone may fall at any time. Erasure of difference based on disability helps to allay the ever-present fear among the able-bodied population of being marginalized as "disabled." Much work dealing with the heroic overcoming of disability falls into this category. I myself am often told, "I never think of you as blind". This is intended as a compliment by the speaker, who is apparently impressed with my accomplishments. To understand the negative assumption behind such statements one need only substitute other minority statuses... "You are so accomplished I never think of you as African-American..., female..., gay..., etc." Carey's poem presents an interesting but not uncommon paradox in the reception of disabled people. On the one hand, it puts Stanley's blindness at center stage. On the other, it unconsciously attempts to erase Stanley's blindness by turning his lack of sight into insight. Such a romantic, almost fetishistic, attitude toward blindness is generally more typical of the nineteenth rather than the eighteenth century.²⁰⁹

Carey does not in any way refer explicitly to Stanley's music or his musical abilities, but the reference to "Ideas unconfined" presumably refers implicitly to musical ideas, whether of composition, improvisation or performance. There is a larger musical context for this poem since Carey was himself a musician. The collection in which this poem appeared contains a set of dedicatory poems to nine musicians: Pepusch, Geminiani, Galliard, Roseingrave, Shuttleworth, Stanley, Dubourg, Lampe, Haydon. They are all fairly short, but the one dedicated to Stanley is among the shortest. Carey was also known as a librettist most famous for his libretto for John Lampe's comic opera *The Dragon of Wantley*.

A further interesting note regarding this poem is the fact that it was also printed below Thomas Bakewell's engraving of the composer's portrait. This elevates this poem in Stanley's reception since Bakewell's engraving is one of only two known likenesses of the composer. Inscribing this poem below it has nearly the status of a text inscribed on a monument to a famous person.

Sir John Hawkins, February 1741

Another literary collaborator and sometime friend of Stanley, Sir John Hawkins, was the author of the second poem. It is somewhat longer, being a classical sonnet (with an octet followed by a sestet). It was published in the *Daily Advertiser*.²¹⁰

²⁰⁸ Siebers, "Disability as Masquerade."

²⁰⁹ Edward Larrissy, "The Celtic Bard of Romanticism: Blindness and Second Sight," *Romanticism* 5: 43-57.

²¹⁰ *Daily Advertiser*, February 21, 1741.

To Mr. John Stanley
occasioned by looking over some compositions of his lately published.

No more let Italy with scornful pride,
Our want of taste in arts polite deride.
No more Corelli lead the ravished throng,
Nor famed Scarlatti charm us with his song,
Since thou, o Stanley hast convinced mankind,
Music to foreign realms is not confined.
Purcell did, at first, their empire control,
With airs unknown to them he moved the soul.
Thine was the task the victory to complete.
He made them humble, thou hast made us great.
Long mayst thou live thus kindly to impart,
In moving sounds the influence of thy art,
With melting airs our passions to command,
And spread thy luster o'er thy native land.

The most obvious difference between Carey's and Hawkins's poem is the fact that Hawkins completely ignores the issue of Stanley's blindness. For him, Stanley is simply the savior of English music, no less. By invoking Corelli, Scarlatti, and Purcell, he establishes Stanley as among the giants of the musical canon as it stood in England in the mid eighteenth century. While posterity might not regard Stanley as an equal of Corelli or Scarlatti, or even as a perfecter of Purcell's English musical idiom, this poem gives us an idea of the respect afforded Stanley during his lifetime. More particularly, there is an anti-Italian, nationalistic bias in the opening line of the poem, implying that England is not merely the equal of Italy but has surpassed that country, and that the Stanley is the agent of this proud achievement.

The place of publication also gives this poem a particular importance. The *Daily Advertiser* was a widely read paper in London in the 1740s. This sonnet not only has an important place in Stanley's reception, it also falls into the ongoing debate about English music in the eighteenth century. In the face of the tide of foreign music and musicians coming into London, Hawkins's verse shores up the merits of English music and musicians. In this context of English nationalism in music, Hawkins had a polemical purpose. By comparison with the history of music of his contemporary and rival, Charles Burney, Hawkins's famous history gives much greater attention to English music over a historical span. Burney is more interested in praising contemporary European music.²¹¹

Hawkins seems to have played violin in performances with such professionals as Stanley.²¹² However, the nature and extent of his musical education are unclear. Again, comparing Hawkins's and Burney's histories, Burney includes much more musical analysis. Unlike Burney, Hawkins has left no surviving written music. For Hawkins, knowing that

²¹¹ Percy A. Scholes, "Hawkins, Sir John (i)." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/12604>, accessed November 16, 2011.

²¹² *Ibid.*

Stanley was an English composer of note may have been enough for his nationalistic purpose in this poem.

In England in 1741, Corelli was known largely for his concerti grossi which were extremely popular and served as models for many British and foreign composers, including Stanley and Handel. Also at this time, some of the cantatas of Alessandro Scarlatti were popular in England. This would account for Hawkins's invocation of these two significant continental composers in his poem to Stanley.

The sonnet raises intriguing questions about which of Stanley's compositions Hawkins was considering in 1741. He mentions works "lately published" but a relatively small number of works would seem to warrant that qualification. In 1740, an anthem entitled *Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem* had appeared, as had Stanley's *Eight Solos* for violin or flute. A collection of songs appeared in 1741. Beyond the "lately published works", Hawkins could, I think, also have had knowledge of two other important sets of works by Stanley that would be published the following year: the *Six Concertos in Seven parts* (to which Hawkins may have had access in pre-publication form) and the first set of six cantatas. The texts of these cantatas were by Hawkins himself. It seems likely that in February of 1741, when the sonnet was published, Stanley and Hawkins had already begun work on these pieces, at least enough for Hawkins to have had an idea of their musical characteristics. Stanley and Hawkins were working closely on the cantata project and at this point in their lives were still on friendly terms. Two of Hawkins's comparisons in the poem suggest familiarity with these soon to be published works.

It is curious that Hawkins completely omits reference to something as obvious and noteworthy as Stanley's blindness. Disabled people and those who write about them have a wide variety of strategies for dealing with disability. On the surface, the poems of Carey and Hawkins present two opposite approaches. Carey makes Stanley's blindness the only topic of his verse whereas Hawkins completely ignores it. Did Hawkins avoid the topic of Stanley's blindness because his primary purpose in the poem is to support English music? Did he feel that discussion of such a loaded and rich topic as Stanley's blindness would have distracted the reader from this purpose?

The lack of mention of Stanley's blindness could also have another cause, which relates it to Carey's poem. Hawkins may, like Carey, be trying to erase Stanley's blindness from the reader's consciousness. Such erasure can happen through either completely ignoring the disability or providing sufficient compensation that the blindness is negated.

The London Magazine, December 1741

The third poem is anonymous. It also appeared in a public venue, and at twenty lines (five quatrains) is longer still.²¹³

To Mr. STANLEY, Organist of the Temple,
on his opening the new Organ in the church of
St. Lawrence at Reading, 1741

²¹³ *The London Magazine*, December 1741, 613.

Harmonious *Stanley*! In thy genius we
 A miracle of art and nature see!
 From one extinguish'd sense a hundred rise!
Briareus gives you hands and *Argus* eyes.
 This truth we may, without a fable, tell;
 If not their number, you their pow'r excel.
 You through th' inspired tubes, with artful hand,
 Like *Aeolus*, imprison'd air command;
 But with seraphick sound your part perform,
 You calm the passions, he creates a storm.
 You charm the audience in the house of God,
 And wake the drones that in this service nod.
 Thrice happy we! could we your genius keep,
 To waken them who in our temple sleep
 But when you bid *adieu*, and hasten home,
 To fill with solemn airs your templars dome,
 Ours will in silence mourn, each ravish'd ear
 Will ne'er forget, but ne'er such accents hear!
 So *Phoebus* once the *Oracle* inspired,
 And left it silent, when he thence retired.

Although this poem is anonymous, the timing and location of Stanley's performance which inspired it have an intriguing connection with one of Stanley's closest associates. Since the poem was published in December of 1741, Stanley presumably performed at the church of St. Lawrence, Reading, shortly before then. In 1742, Stanley's first student, amanuensis, and life-long friend, John Alcock, was appointed organist of St. Lawrence, Reading.²¹⁴ Could Alcock himself have written the poem? This does not seem likely since the writer seems already to be attached to St. Lawrence's church. Even if Alcock did not write the poem, there may still be a connection between Stanley's visit and Alcock's appointment. Stanley appears to have been well respected and well received at Reading; he might well have recommended his friend and protégé for the organist's post (as I have speculated earlier Greene might have done for Stanley in 1726, at St. Andrew's, Holborn). Thus this poem suggests the web of social and musical connections that Stanley enjoyed and evokes the many instances in which he helped out his students and fellow musicians.

This author seems more preoccupied with mythological imagery, comparing the composer to Briareus (the creature with a hundred hands) and Argus (the hundred-eyed giant). He also compares Stanley the organist to Aeolus the wind god. At the end, he also compares Stanley to Phoebus/Apollo, the god of music. Such mythological imagery was highly conventional at the time.

The author refers to Stanley's blindness, but only briefly. Like Carey, he alludes to the idea of the loss of one sense leading to compensation with other abilities. If Stanley is like

²¹⁴ Watkins Shaw and Peter Marr, "Alcock, John (i)." In *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/00491>, accessed November 16, 2011.

Argus who had a hundred eyes, that serves to negate the loss of Stanley's two actual eyes. The reference to the hundred-handed Briareus does not relate directly to Stanley's loss of sight. It is presumably a compliment to any skilled keyboardist whose hands seem to be everywhere at once.

The other main theme here is Stanley's ability to move his hearers, emotionally and spiritually, a feature that is not particularly related to his blindness. If we were to remove the single line "From one extinguished sense a hundred rise", the poem would be a conventional poem in praise of an excellent church musician.²¹⁵

The London Magazine, 1749

The fourth poem, a twelve-line verse with four quatrains, is again anonymous.²¹⁶

On Mr. STANLEY, the celebrated blind Organist

While at his birth, the heavenly *Nine*
Use all their sacred skill,
To teach their *Stanley* sounds divine,
And rhapsody at will;
Would you make man a demigod,
Envy malignant cries,
And with her snake envenom'd rod,
Robb'd the young bard of eyes.
Phoebus beheld—and glow'd with ire;
But to redress the blow,
Bid him command the heaven-strung *lyre*,
His deputy below!

This verse again takes up the idea of compensation for the loss of sight, at a more cosmic level. To an eighteenth-century audience, the poem would have likely resonated with the myth of Tiresias, the prophet who was blinded after seeing the goddess Athena naked. In compensation, Tiresias was given the gift of understanding birdsong and thus being clairvoyant. Once again, this raises the idea of the connection between compensation, erasure of blindness and passing. The evocations of the Muses and Phoebus/Apollo are standard tropes used when singing the praises of musicians.

²¹⁵ I am grateful to Professor James Davies for noting that this poem might also be suggesting that Stanley's body is somehow mechanical, or a part of the mechanism of the organ. Stanley's example could perhaps be being used here a model for the "truth" of rationalism, defended by George Berkeley (in his "Theory of Vision"), as opposed to the newer ideas of empiricism of Locke or Hume.

²¹⁶ The London Magazine July 1749, 330.

Morning Chronicle / English Chronicle, June 1786

This survey of the poems dedicated to Stanley concludes with the one known epitaph to him.²¹⁷

Epitaph to the memory of John Stanley, Esq.
Late master of his Majesty's band of musicians

Reader, if ever music charmed thine ear,
Drop on this grave one tributary tear.
Here much loved Stanley lies to worms a prey,
He who so sweetly tuned the festive lai.
Cold are those hands and quenched that vigorous fire,
Which to his monarch's praises waked the lyre.
Impatient to return from whence 'twas given,
His soul harmonious took its flight to heaven.
There joins the angelic band, there sweeps the strings,
In strains celestial to the king of kings
R. W.

Written shortly after the composer's death, this ten-line verse sheds light on how Stanley was perceived at the time of his death. Both in its dedication and in its content, it mentions Stanley's last and most prestigious musical appointment, as Master of the King's Music. In terms of musical satisfaction, this appointment may not have been the most fulfilling of Stanley's life. It involved writing required New Year and birthday odes in praise of the king and queen, to texts by the Poet Laureate, as well as writing light dance music for the court balls. However, in the eighteenth century, royal patronage gave a musician cultural and social status he would otherwise not have had. Handel's patronage first by Queen Anne and then by her Hanoverian successors helped to establish him firmly on the English musical scene. Thus it is not surprising that the author of this epitaph, R. W., should focus on Stanley's royal appointment. The author creates a poetic parallel between Stanley's service to his earthly monarch and his service to the eternal king of kings.

The imagery of this poem, like the others, is conventional. R. W. also omits any mention of Stanley's blindness, an omission that seems especially significant in an epitaph. Epitaphs often attempt to sum up the over-all impression of a life and career. One might have expected Stanley's blindness to appear here, in the form of either pity or heroism. Its omission could have two opposing meanings which may nevertheless co-exist. On the one hand, it could suggest that for R. W., as for others in Stanley's time, his blindness was not his defining characteristic; on the other hand, it could represent the ultimate act of making Stanley pass in that the epitaph enshrines Stanley for posterity as not specifically blind, and R. W. is in effect tacitly presenting Stanley as sighted.

²¹⁷ *Morning Chronicle*, 16 June 1786, and *English Chronicle*, 15-17 June 1786.

These five poems show the variety of ways a blind musician such as Stanley could be and was represented and used in his lifetime. Clearly, Stanley's blindness was not the only aspect of his life and career that stood out for his contemporaries. For Hawkins, Stanley and his music were important ammunition in the battle between English and foreign music. For the writer from St. Lawrence's Church, Reading, Stanley is an exemplar of the effective church musician who can counteract the apathy of an inattentive congregation. Carey and the author of the fourth poem do address Stanley's blindness but in mytho-poetic imagery; and the epitaph deals primarily with Stanley's royal appointment (and its heavenly equivalent).

These poems are all laudatory in their tone. However, raising a disabled person to super-human or mythic proportion is in itself a subtle form of dehumanizing and "othering." Nevertheless, these poems indicate the real respect in which Stanley was held at the height of his career and just after his death. There is a lack of pity, and no freakishness is attributed to him.

Poems about Bach and Handel

To close, I would like to consider some poems in honor of Bach and Handel, both of whom were blind when they died. In 1751 Telemann wrote an epitaph to his friend and colleague J. S. Bach. It is in the form of a sonnet.²¹⁸

Let Italy go on her virtuosi vaunting
Georg Philip Telemann, 1751

Let Italy go on her virtuosi vaunting,
Who through the sounding art have there achieved great fame.
On German soil they also will not be found wanting,
Nor can they here be held less worthy of the name.
Departed Bach, long since your splendid organ playing,
alone brought you the noble cognomen "The Great"
And what your pen had writ the highest art displaying,

²¹⁸ Bach Archiv, Ed., *Bach-Dokumente* 3 (Leipzig: Barenreiter, 1963): 6, no. 626. English translation in Hans T. David et al, *The new Bach reader: A life of Johann Sebastian Bach in letters and documents* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), p. 313. The original is as follows:

Laßt Welschland immer viel von Virtuosen sagen,
Die durch die Klingekunst sich dort berühmt gemacht:
Auf Deutschen Boden sind sie gleichfalls zu erfragen,
Wo man des Beyfalls sich nicht minder fähig act't.
Erblichner Bach! Dir hat allein dein Orgelschlagen
Das edle Vorzugs-Wort des Großen längst gebracht;
Und war für Kunst dein Kiel aufs Notenblatt getragen,
Das wird von Meistern selbst nicht ohne Neid betracht't.
So schlaf! dein Name bleibt vom Untergange frey:
Die Schüler diner Zucht und ihrer Schüler Reyh
Dient, durch ihn Wissen, dir zur schönen Ehrencrone;
Auch deiner Kinder Hand setzt ihren Schmuck daran;
Doch was insonderheit dich schätzbar machen kan,
Das zeigt uns Berlin in einem würdigen Sohne.

Did some with joy and some with envy contemplate.
Then sleep, the candle of your fame ne'er low will burn.
The pupils you have trained and those they train in turn
Prepare you're future crown of glory brightly glowing.
Your children's' hands adorn it with its jewels bright
And what shall cause your true worth to be judged aright
Berlin to us now in a worthy son is showing.

Telemann is a more famous figure than any of the authors of the Stanley poems. Like Hawkins and Carey, he was a personal friend of the subject of his poem. Unlike most of the authors of the Stanley poems, Telemann's musical knowledge cannot be disputed. The opening of his poem parallels the opening of Hawkins's poem to Stanley. Telemann was writing in Hamburg, a city whose musical culture was radically different from that found in London, yet he, like Hawkins, opens his poem with a slight anti-Italian bias. Both Telemann writing about Bach and Hawkins writing about Stanley betray a somewhat defensive tone with regard to their own national musics.

One difference between Telemann's poem and those to Stanley is the fact that whereas the Stanley poems seem to focus primarily on Stanley as a performer, Telemann makes mention of Bach's compositions as well as his skills as a performer. Although Bach, like Handel, lost much of his vision at the end of his life, this did not have a great effect on the majority of his career either as a performer or a composer. Telemann makes no mention of Bach's blindness. He also avoids any of the mythological imagery that is common in the Stanley poems.

As for Handel, his canonic status in England (both in his lifetime and after) caused a significant amount of poetry concerning him to be produced. The most famous author to put his pen to writing about Handel was Alexander Pope. In Book IV of the *Dunciad*, Pope evokes England's most famous foreign musician as follows:

Strong in new Arms, lo! Giant Handel stands,
Like bold Briareus, with a hundred hands;
To stir, to rouze, to shake the Soul he comes,
And Jove's own Thunders follow Mars's Drums.
Arrest him, Empress; or you sleep no more.²¹⁹

Several similarities and differences between Pope's work and the poems to Stanley suggest themselves. Pope here invokes mythological imagery. He even employs the same image of the hundred-handed monster Briareus found in the poem to Stanley by the author from Reading. In addition, Pope invokes "Jove's thunders and Mars's drums". In Stanley's case, the mythological imagery is used in a serious laudatory way, to enshrine the composer among the immortals, whereas Pope uses it humorously, and for satiric effect. In the Stanley poems, these mythic references are intended to flatter; by contrast, Pope's intention was less friendly.

He paints a picture of Handel as loud and bombastic. The *Dunciad* was a satirical work. The section of Book IV that contains the lines relating to Handel satirizes fashionable musical

²¹⁹ Alexander Pope, *The new Dunciad*, 2nd ed. (London: J.H. Hubbard, 1742): 10.

culture in London in general, and what Pope viewed as the vapid, inattentive, tasteless audiences of the time. At one level, Pope targets Handel as one of the most popular and fashionable composers of his time. However, there is also specific criticism of Handel's music, focussing on its noise and bombast. The sonic effects of pieces like the Dettingen *Te Deum*, as well as some of the choruses from the oratorios and coronation anthems, show that Handel could employ a colossal sound, by comparison to other composers of his time working in England.

In Handel's case, poetry was turned to a more vicious personal attack on the composer. He had a serious falling out with his erstwhile scene painter Joseph Goupy. In response, Goupy created a grotesque caricature of the composer that appeared in several forms in the 1740s and 1750s. Ilias Chrissochoidis has traced the fascinating web of friendships, rivalries, and personalities that lead to Goupy creating this extreme portrait and to the two equally unflattering poems which were appended to the two versions of the engraving.²²⁰ In general, the caricature plays on the idea of Handel's over-fondness for food and drink. Both the engravings and the poems suggest that Handel's epicurean excesses caused him to slight both his friends and possible benefactors.

The Charming Broot

The figure's odd, yet who would think
Within this ton of meat and drink
Here dwells the soul of soft desires,
And all that harmony inspires.
Can contrast such as this be found,
Upon the globe's extensive round?
There can, yon hog's head is his seat,
His sole devotion is to eat.

The second poem has a similar theme

Strange monsters have adorned the stage,
Not Afric's coast produces more.
And yet no land, nor clime nor age,
Have equaled this harmonious boor

Finally, at the time of Handel's death, an anonymous epitaph appeared:

An Attempt towards an Epitaph
Beneath this place are repositied the remains of George Fredric Handel
The most excellent musician any age ever produced whose compositions were a
sentimental language rather than mere sounds, and surpassed the power of words

²²⁰ Ilias Chrissochoidis, "Handel, Hogarth, Goupy: Artistic intersections in early Georgian England," *Early Music* 37, no. 4 (2009): 577-596.

in expressing the various passions of the human heart.²²¹

This epitaph differs in several respects from the poems to Handel, Bach and Stanley. It is in prose not verse, and it does not mythologize Handel in the same way as much of the other verse discussed here. The author's description of Handel's music as "A sentimental language" is to be taken as a compliment. The word "sentimental" did not have the negative connotations in the eighteenth century that it was to acquire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Throughout the 1730s, 1740s and 1750s, a great deal of mediocre verse in praise of Handel was produced in England. Most of it is highly conventional, repeating the same stock imagery and concepts. However, one poem stands out for the purposes of this study because it deals explicitly with Handel's blindness. Here I will quote only the beginning and end of the poem.²²²

On the recovery of the sight of the celebrated Mr. Handel
by the Chevalier Taylor

From the hill of Parnassus adjourning in state,
On its rival Mount Pleasant the muses were sate.
When Euterpe soft pity inciting her breast,
Ere the concert begun thus Apollo addressed.
"Great father of music and every science,
In all our distresses on thee our reliance,
Know then in yon villa from pleasures confined,
Lies our favorite Handel afflicted and blind.
For him who hath traversed the cycle of sound
And spread thy harmonious strains the world round,
Thy son Esculapius's (sic) art we implore,
The blessing of sight with a touch to restore.
Straight Apollo replied, "He already is there.
By mortal called Taylor and dubbed Chevalier.
Who to Handel and thousands beside him shall give
All the blessings that sight and old age can receive.

The middle of Taylor's poem not included here extols the blessings of sight without making mention of Handel. The work concludes thus:

They their instruments tuned and begun,
A cantata in praise of their president sun.
Then with Handel concerto concluding the day,

²²¹ *Universal Chronicle*, April 21, 1759, quoted in Christopher Hogwood, *Handel* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988): 231.

²²² *The London Chronicle*, 24 August, 1758, quoted in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A documentary biography* (London, 1955; R New York: Da Capo Press, 1974): 519.

To Parnassus they took their ariel way.

Perhaps the most significant fact to know about this poem is its authorship. The Chevalier Taylor was none other than the surgeon John Taylor (1703-72) who operated on Handel's eyes. The same doctor had operated on J. S. Bach's eyes eight years earlier, in 1750. In neither case was Taylor successful in the restoration of sight. The middle of Taylor's poem refers to all the other patients who had or would regain their sight under his care. Taylor seems to have been guilty not only of bad poetry but also false advertising. The medicalization of disability is more typical of the nineteenth rather than the eighteenth century. It is the only example to my knowledge of the use of blindness in a poem for the purpose of medical self-promotion. Taylor invokes the idea of blind people being pitiable, helpless and confined to make his miraculous cure seem even more dramatic. Since there is no known case of any attempt to cure Stanley's blindness, there is no equivalent imagery used in Stanley's reception.

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