

A Brave Barrel of Oysters

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Lord's Day

Monday 30 January 1659/60

This morning, before I was up, I fell a-singing of my song, "Great, good, and just," . . . and put myself thereby in mind that this was the fatal day, now ten years since, his Majesty died.

Monday 15 January 1665/66

Busy all the morning in my chamber in my old cloth suit, while my usuall one is to my taylor's to mend, which I had at noon again.

Sunday 18 September 1664

By coach to the old Exchange, and so home, and we eat a brave barrel of oysters Mr. Povy sent me this morning, and very merry at supper, and so to prayers and to bed.

Tuesday 1 January 1660/61

[Lord's day.] As to things of State: The King settled, and loved of all. The Duke of York matched to my Lord Chancellor's daughter, which do not please many. The Queen upon her return to France with the Princess Henrietta. We have been lately frighted with a great plot, and many taken up on it, and the fright not quite over. The Parliament, which had done all this great good to the King, beginning to grow factious, the King did dissolve it, and another likely to be chosen speedily.

Sunday 4 March 1659/60

Before I went to church I sang Orpheus' Hymn to my viall.

Sunday 14 September 1662

Thence to White Hall chapel, where sermon almost done, and I heard Captain Cooke's new musique; this, the first day of having vialls and other instruments to play a symphony between every verse of the anthem. The musique was more full than it was the last Sunday, and very fine it is. But yet I could discern Captain Cooke to overdo his part at singing, which I never did before;

Wednesday 13 February 1666/67

a vain coxcomb I perceive he is, though he sings and composes so well. . .

Sunday 22 November 1663

And here I first perceived that the King is a little musically, and kept good time with his hand all along the anthem.

Trials and Tribulations

Friday 9 March 1665/66

Anon all home to Sir [W] Batten's and there, Mrs Knipp coming, we did spend the even together very merry, she and I singing; and God forgive me, I do still see that my nature is not to be quite conquered, but will esteem pleasure above all things; though, yet in the middle of it, it hath reluctances after my business, which is neglected by my following my pleasure. However, music and women I cannot but give way to, whatever my business is. . .

Tuesday 2 January 1665/66

...above all, my dear Mrs. Knipp, with whom I sang, and in perfect pleasure I was to hear her sing, and especially her little Scotch song of "Barbary Allen"...Thence, it being post night, against my will took leave, but before I come to my office, longing for more of her company, I returned and met them coming home in coaches, so I got into the coach where Mrs. Knipp was and got her upon my knee (the coach being full) and played with her breasts and sung, and at last set her at her house, and so good night.

Wednesday 3 January 1665/66

So home, and find all my good company I had bespoke, as Coleman and his wife, and Laneare, Knipp and her surly husband; and good musique we had...and, among other things, Mrs. Coleman sang my words I set of "Beauty retire," and I think it is a good song, and they praise it mightily. Then to dancing and supper, and mighty merry till Mr. Rolt come in, whose pain of the tooth-ake made him no company, and spoilt ours.

Friday 5 January 1665/66

I staid at my stationer's house, and by and by comes my Lord, and did take me up and so to Greenwich, and after sitting with them a while at their house, home, thinking to get Mrs. Knipp, but could not, she being busy with company—but she sent me a pleasant letter, writing herself "Barbary Allen."

Saturday 6 January 1665/66

Thence with Lord Bruncker to a great dinner and much company; Mr. Cottle and his lady and others and I went, hoping to get Mrs. Knipp to us, having wrote a letter to her in the morning, calling myself "Dapper Dicky," in answer to hers of "Barbary Allen," but could not...and I am told by the boy that carried my letter, that he found her crying; but I fear she lives a sad life with that ill-natured fellow her husband. So we had a great, but I a melancholy dinner, having not her there, as I hoped. . .

Thursday 21 June 1660

To-day to my wife, meeting Mr. Blgrave, who went home with me, and did give me a lesson upon the flageolet, and handselled my silver can with my wife and me.

Monday 15 January 1665/66

And so by water to Boreman's by night, where the greatest disappointment that ever I saw in my life, much company, a good supper provided, and all come with expectation of excesse of mirthe, but all blank through the waywardnesse of Mrs. Knipp, who, though she had appointed the night, could not be got to come. By and by we all to supper, which the silly master of the feast commended, but, what with my being out of humour, and the badnesse of the meate dressed, I did never eat a worse supper in my life. At last, very late, and supper done, Mrs. Knipp came undressed, but it brought me no mirthe at all. After all being done, without singing, or very little, and no dancing, Pierce and I to bed together, and he and I very merry to find how little and thin clothes they give us to cover us, so that we were fain to lie in our stockings and drawers, and lay all our coates and clothes upon the bed. So to sleep.

Musings and Musettes

Thursday 27 February 1667/68

Then to the King's House to see "Virgin Martyr" ... not that it is worth much. But that which did please me beyond anything in the whole world was the wind-musique when the Angel comes down, which is so sweet that it ravished me; and ended, in a word, did wrap up my soul so that it made me really sick, just as I have formerly been when in love with my wife; that neither then, nor all the evening going home and at home, I was able to think of anything, but remained all night transported, so as I could not believe that ever any music hath the real command over the soul of a man as this did upon me; and makes me resolve to practise wind-music and to make my wife do the like. . .

Tuesday 24 March 1667/68

Having done here, I out and there met Sir Francis Hollis, who do still tell me that, above all things in the world, he wishes he had my tongue in his mouth, meaning since my speech in Parliament. He took Lord Brouncker and me down to the guard, and there he did, in a handsome room to that purpose, make us drink, and did call for his bagpipes, which, with pipes of ebony, tipt with silver, he did play beyond anything of that kind that ever I heard in my life; and with great pains he must have obtained it, but with pains that the instrument do not deserve at all; for, at the best, it is mighty barbarous musick.

Wednesday 5 June 1661

So home, and it being very hot weather I took my flageolette and played upon the leads in the garden, where Sir William Penn came out in his shirt into his leads, and there we staid talking and singing, and drinking great drafts of claret, and eating botargo and bread and butter till 12 at night, it being moonshine; and so to bed, very near fuddled.

Near Fuddled

Friday 22 November 1661

Within all the morning, and at noon with my wife, by appointment to dinner at the Dolphin, where Sir William Batten, and his lady and daughter Matt, and Captain Cocke and his lady, a German lady, but a very great beauty, and we dined together, at the spending of some wagers won and lost between him and I. And there we had the best musique and very good songs, and were very merry and danced, but I was most of all taken with Madam Cocke and her little boy, which in mirth his father had given to me. But after all our mirth comes a reckoning of 4 pounds, besides 40 shillings to the musicians, which did trouble us, but it must be paid. . .

Monday 16 January 1659/60

Thence we went to the Green Dragon, on Lambeth Hill, both the Mr. Pinkney's, Smith, Harrison, Morrice, that sang the bass, Sheply and I, and there we sang of all sorts of things, and I ventured with good success upon things at first sight, and after that I played on my flageolet, and staid there till nine o'clock, very merry and drawn on with one song after another till it came to be so late.

Saturday 25 July 1663

After dinner by Mr. Gauden's motion we got Mrs. Gauden and her sister to sing to a viall, on which Mr. Gauden's eldest son (a pretty man, but a simple one methinks) played but very poorly, and the musique bad, but yet I commended it. I do find that the ladies have been taught to sing and do sing well now, but that the viall puts them out. I took the viall and played some things from one of their books, Lyra lessons, which they seemed to like well. . .

Friday 17 July 1663

After doing some business at my office, Creed came to me, and I took him to my viall maker's, and there I heard the famous Mr. Stefkins play admirably well, and yet I found it as it is always, I over expected.

Friday 21 August 1663

And so to supper after having this evening paid Mr. Hunt 3 pounds for my viall (besides the carving which I paid this day 10 shillings for to the carver), and he tells me that I may, without flattery, say, I have as good a Theorbo, vial, and viallin as is in England.

Tuesday 12 April 1664

Got a coach, very dear, it being Easter time and very foul weather, to my Lord's, and there visited my Lady, and leaving my wife there I and Will Howe to Mr. Pagett's. There heard some musique not very good, but only one Dr. Walgrave, an Englishman bred at Rome, who plays the best upon the lute that I ever heard man.

Monday 1 September 1662

And so Mr. Pagett being there, Will Howe and I and he played over some things of Locke's that we used to play at sea, that pleased us three well, it being the first music I have played in a great while, so much has my business of late taken me off from all my former delights.

The Merry Monarch

Tuesday 12 February 1666/67

Thomas Killigrew tells me that he hath gone eight or ten times hence to Rome to hear good musique; so much he loves it, though he never did sing or play a note. That he hath ever endeavoured in the late King's time, and in this, to introduce good musique, but he never could do it, there never having been any musique here better than ballads; and yet no ordinary fiddlers get so much money as ours do here, which speaks our rudenesse still. He hath gathered Italians from several Courts in Christendome, to come to make a concert for the King.

Sunday 7 April 1667

I by water to White Hall, and heard the Italian musique at the Queen's chapel, whose composition is fine, but yet the voices of eunuchs I do not like like our women, nor am I more pleased with it at all than with English voices--but that they do jump most excellently with themselves and their instrument, which is wonderful pleasant. But I am convinced more and more, that, as every nation has a particular accent and tone in discourse, so as the tone of one not to agree with or please the other, no more can the fashion of singing to words, for that the better the words are set, the more they take in of the ordinary tone of the country whose language the song speaks.

Wednesday 31 December 1662 / Monday 6 January 1667/68

Mr. Povy brought me to the Duke's chamber, where I saw him and the Duchess at supper; and thence into the room where the ball was to be, crammed with fine ladies, the greatest of the Court, and having extraordinary Musick: two viollins, and a base viollin, and theorbo, the best in towne. By and by comes the King and Queen, the Duke and Duchess, and all the great ones: and after seating themselves, the King takes out the Duchess of York; and the Duke, the Duchess of Buckingham; the Duke of Monmouth, my Lady Castlemaine; and so other lords other ladies. After that, the King led a lady a single Coranto, and then the rest of the lords, one after another, other ladies. Very noble it was, and great pleasure to see.

Then to country dances; the King leading the first, which he called for; which was, says he, "Cuckolds all awry," the old dance of England. Of the ladies that danced, the Duke of Monmouth's mistress, and my Lady Castlemaine, and a daughter of Sir Harry de Vicke's, were the best. The manner was, when the King dances, all the ladies in the room, and the Queen herself, stand up: and indeed he dances rarely, and much better than the Duke of York.

A New Theory of Musique

Sunday 29 March 1668

At home to dinner, whither comes and dines with me Will Howe, and by invitation Mr. Harris and Mr. Banister, most extraordinary company both: the latter for musique of all sorts, the former for everything. Here we sang, and Banister played on the theorbo. Afterwards Banister played on his flageolet, and I had very good discourse with him about musique, so confirming some of my new notions about musique that it puts me upon a resolution to go on and make a scheme and theory of musique not yet ever made in the world. . .

Thursday 26 March 1668

And mighty merry we were till about eleven or twelve at night, with mighty great content in all my company, and I did, as I love to do, enjoy myself in my pleasure as being the height of what we take pains for and can hope for in this world, and therefore to be enjoyed while we are young and capable of these joys.