Leeds School of Music. The final event of the conference, the business meeting to decide on the venue for 2010, voted overwhelmingly for Yo Tomita and Queen's University Belfast.

DAVID LEDBETTER

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VAUXHALL REVISITED: PLEASURE GARDENS AND THEIR PUBLICS, 1660–1880
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'Vauxhall' has been an iconic name for places of entertainment since the middle of the eighteenth century. The name conjures up the pleasures of free-flowing music, lush flowers and trees, promenading couples and agile entertainers. To understand what went on in such a context requires the help of many disciplines – history, literature, music, sociology and historical gardening most prominently. The three-day conference put on at Tate Britain, funded by the Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art, let loose infectious interdisciplinary questions. Were the gardens conceived in formal or natural terms? How much, if at all, did high and low social classes interact? How far did *ridotto*, the masquerade, become transgressive? Was much old music performed, indeed canonized? Jonathan Conlin (University of Southampton), who organized the event imaginatively, has written on Vauxhall in both the late eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries.

Some 631 pleasure gardens can be identified, Rachel Cowgill (University of Leeds) informed us, of which 38 offered music, from the Marylebone Gardens in 1659 to Weston's Retreat in Kentish Town in the 1860s. Vauxhall in Lambeth (1661–1859) became the most prominent one, although Ranelagh Gardens in Chelsea (1742–1803) drew the most select public. Peter Holman (University of Leeds) offered a rich programme of music performed at Vauxhall, leading the Linden Baroque Orchestra at the Museum of Garden History next to Lambeth Palace. Two cantatas, *The Morning* (1755) and *Lover's Recantation* (1761), illustrated Thomas Arne's elegant craftsmanship, alongside songs by James Hook (*The Lass of Richmond Hill*) and Charles Dibdin (*Poor Tom*). A series of songs from the first half of the nineteenth century displayed the poignant affects achieved by Henry Bishop, Charles E. Horn, George Alexander Lee and Michael Balfe, key figures in the evolution of the English ballad. The entrancing performances by singers Phillippa Hyde and Amanda Pitt coaxed the audience back into the two epochs.

Historians of gardens opened the meeting by defining the broad physical and conceptual outlines of the pleasure gardens. In his keynote talk, John Dixon Hunt (University of Pennsylvania) argued that, despite the rustic appeal of the pleasure gardens, the shift from the formal to the natural in private landscaping had a limited impact on their design. Instead, the theatricality of the experience – a 'complicity between creator, performer and audience' – helped the gardens eclipse the theatres in public prominence by the 1770s. Michael Symes (Birkbeck, University of London) stressed the economy of design in Vauxhall's thirteen acres and the 'illusionism' produced by large painted prospects at the ends of the avenues. He pointed out that during the nineteenth century a naturalistic approach developed in the experimental planting of non-native species in some pleasure gardens.

Social concepts were advanced by other speakers. Peter Borsay (University of Aberystwyth) defined promenading in Vauxhall as a 'circular social motion' whereby people would see and be seen, bringing about a sense of social harmony thought to be British in nature. Indeed, strolling musicians and hidden ensembles – called 'musical bushes' – lent a musical aspect to the promenading. In a fascinating interdisciplinary paper, Alice Barnaby (University of Exeter) explored the role of illuminations in the gardens, seeing them bring 'a fluctuating dialectic of supply and demand between quantities of light and shade'. The fireworks, back-lit paintings and mirrored rooms revealed a 'shifting tension between wider cultural imperatives of economics, pleasure and morality'. Several speakers mentioned scopophilia – pleasure in looking – as central to the experience.

Concerts held a particular significance at Vauxhall, probably greater than in any other such venue in the eighteenth century. Wolfgang Cilleßen (University of Frankfurt) demonstrated that, even though eight pleasure gardens appeared in Paris between 1763 and 1789, music seems to have been performed only as support to dance numbers. Rachel Cowgill, in her richly detailed keynote talk, showed how central music was to Vauxhall. In 1784 the orchestra platform was rebuilt to be like a concert hall, focused on a singer who stood beneath players held on high scaffolding. She also showed that women sang in glees, unusual at the time, and that the orchestra seemed like a court ensemble for the landowner, the Prince of Wales, but that no music of an orientalist nature was performed to harmonize with the Turkish design of the Prince's Pavillion. Eleanor Hughes (Yale Center for British Art) likewise brought patriotism into the picture: paintings of naval victories were put on dinner boxes near the orchestra platform, victories that composers such as Thomas Arne referred to in their songs.

The pleasure gardens were more important than the theatres to the process by which thousands of songs were published in magazines and editions during the eighteenth century. Bonny Miller (Washington, D. C.) analysed perceptively how this repertory evolved through a filtering process determined by periodicals and the pleasure gardens, about which she is constructing a valuable website. She showed how a song could become a hit if it offered the 'hook' of a catchy phrase (a cascade of thirds, for instance) and received particularly effective delivery by a major singer. Since the magazine's song was often hard to perform, it served as a 'teaser' to induce readers to buy an edition. I myself traced how a canon of theatrical songs evolved in the pleasure gardens around pieces by Arne, Charles Dibdin and William Shield, and then by Bishop and Balfe. This repertory, not often performed in classical-music concerts, appeared widely at benefit and promenade concerts, song-and-supper rooms and ballad concerts throughout the nineteenth century.

Did nobles and bourgeois mingle in the gardens? While the one-shilling charge led some writers to say that 'all classes' of society attended, opinion now tends to restrict the social range considerably more. David Hunter (University of Texas, Austin) drew from his work on the mention of music in account books to argue that the cost of buying a season ticket and dressing appropriately limited the public greatly. The main groups of the public were represented by such figures as Lord and Lady Leigh, relatives of the Duke of Chandos, Daniel Ponton, the magistrate who served as chair of the Lambeth Quarter-Sessions, and Bryant Barrett, a Catholic lace seller who paid for his servants to attend Vauxhall. Hannah Greig (University of York) used the term *beau monde* – the cosmopolitan public living in London during the parliamentary season – to define an elite sociability distinct from that of other visitors. She argued that, given the authority of the *beau monde*, the '"open" access promoted by the gardens did not threaten social prestige'. Penelope Corfield (Royal Holloway, University of London), who chaired this session, has stated in her essay *Vauxhall and the Invention of the Urban Pleasure Gardens* (London: Sean Creighton (History and Social Action Publications), 2008) that the managers aimed at 'a difficult balancing act' of 'keeping an ambience of accessibility without losing social cachet' (13). Lake Douglas (Louisiana State University) told of the practice in New Orleans whereby pleasure gardens admitted contrasting racial groups on different days.

Did people listen during the concerts? This oft-voiced question, raised in the session moderated by Simon McVeigh (Goldsmiths, University of London), led participants to stress that any yes-or-no answer ignores the variety of listening practices in existence at the time. In his diaries John Marsh remarked that vocal music drew sharper attention than did the instrumental. McVeigh noted that people knew the songs so well that many of them paid attention according to the reputations of the singers.

Nights of masquerade, or *ridotto* (as it had come to be called in England), were a major aspect of the illusionism of the pleasure gardens. Aileen Ribeiro (Courtauld Institute of Art) spoke on the dress worn on such occasions. Highland costume was not legal but religious garb was, while the characters ranged from the Domino, Pierrot and Columbine to cross-dressing by men as the witch, fishwife or madwoman. Still, in closing her paper, she asked, 'Do we glamourize this too much?', suggesting that the events became jaded and all but ended in the 1780s. Berta Joncus (University of Oxford) explored the carnivalesque aspect of Ranelagh Gardens in performing pieces (Arne's *Cymon and Iphigenia*, for example) that 'enjoined audiences to imagine rustic scenes of seduction and compliance'. Deborah Nord (Princeton University) deftly brought

the conference into the last decades of Vauxhall in exploring the ambivalent feelings of Keats, Thackeray and Dickens about the phantasmagoria they found there. The decision to open the gardens during the day drew unprecedented crowds to see balloon rides but ended up disillusioning some observers.

In a rich set of concluding comments, John Brewer (California Institute of Technology) reminded us of the 'hegemony of politeness' that historians, led by Lawrence Klein, see emerging as a new cultural order in the early eighteenth century. Separation and accommodation proved mutually interdependent; both processes took place. But Brewer then sketched out the contradictory tendencies he had heard in the papers: on the one hand, sexuality, phantasmagoria and transgressive practices, and on the other hand, green space, royal leadership and patriotism. Brewer was impressed by how adaptable Vauxhall proved in the face of social change, offering the mass society of the 1840s appealing new kinds of scopophilia.

WILLIAM WEBER