

## Captain Cook's Country Dance \*

Heather Blasdale Clarke

ABSTRACT: James Cook was born into a working class family and rose to become a national hero, one of the greatest explorers of all time. He was celebrated in the popular culture through dance, music, song, and theatre. Today little is remembered of these highly esteemed works, although they remained well known in the 19th century.

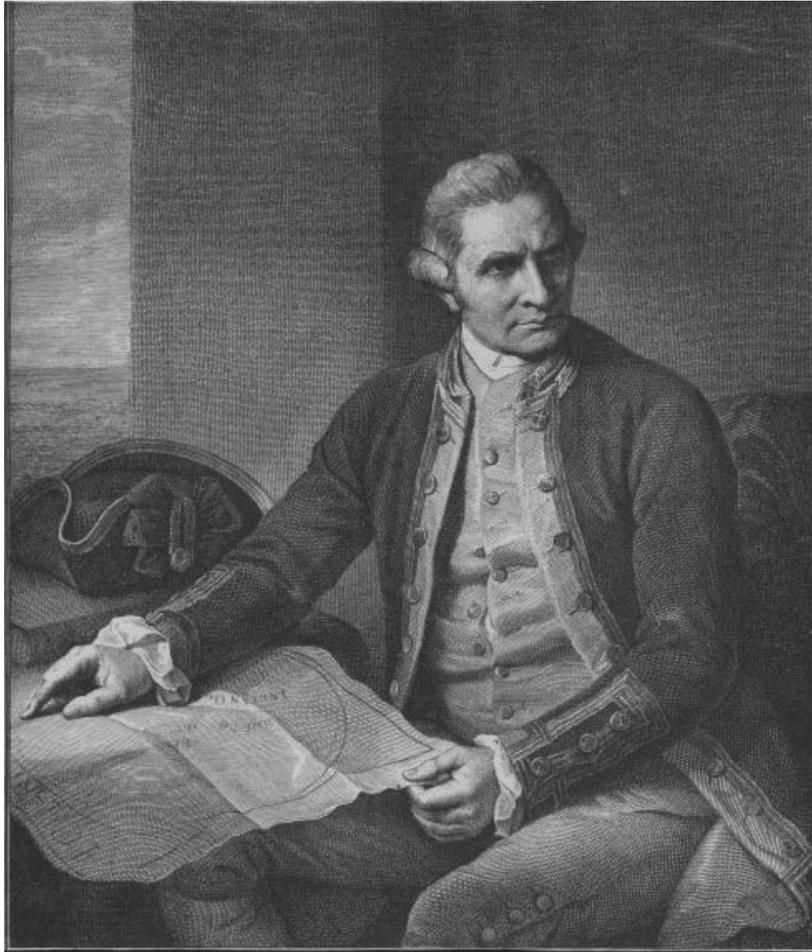
Dance and music in the 18th century held a far greater significance in every day life than we now imagine. Current affairs, political events and famous people all were celebrated in social dances. Through the dance books of the period, we can trace many of the happenings which were part of the popular culture. It is fascinating to read the history of the discovery and settlement of Australia through the indexes of dance manuals, beginning in 1726 with the dances *South Sea*, *South Sea Ladies* and *Batavia*, inspired by William Dampier's account of his voyage into the Pacific. *A Trip to the World's End* (1763) was prompted by Commodore John Byron's voyage to 'make discoveries of countries hitherto unknown' in the Pacific. Cook's own journeys generated a number of country dances including *The Island of Love* (Tahiti), *The Transit of Venus*, *The South Seas* (a new version), and *Omai* (a native of Tahiti). *Botany Bay* was published in 1788 and *Port Jackson* in 1796. People influential in the Australia's early history had dances and places named in their honour, examples include *Lord Sydney's Fancy*, *Lord Howe's Jig* [Lord Howe Island, Cape Howe], *Admiral Keppel's Delight* [Great Keppel Island], *Lord Castlereagh's Waltz* [Castlereagh township, and the river], *Lord Liverpool's Waltz* [Liverpool township, now a Sydney suburb]. Significant events celebrated in dance were the *Glorious First of June*, a great naval battle where both Matthew Flinders and William Bligh served with the Royal Navy, and the *Siege of Seringapatam* in India where Lachlan Macquarie and his regiment fought.

For a genteel person, the art of dance was an essential aspect of education. It allowed one to move with grace and elegance, qualities which reflected good breeding and social refinement. This accorded with

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Plato's philosophy, still revered at that time, and which stated that, to be in harmony with the universe, one needed to dance well. No one could be properly civilised without a thorough grounding in both music and dance.



*Captain James Cook, explorer, navigator, cartographer, and Captain in the Royal Navy. 'I had the ambition to not only go farther than man had gone before, but to go as far as it was possible to go.'*<sup>1</sup>

For the lower orders, dancing had always been popular—in celebration of weddings, harvests and gatherings, but also as a regular activity to escape the drudgery of everyday existence. People sang, danced, drank. The dances of the common people were not well

<sup>1</sup> Captain James Cook, F.R.S. After the portrait by Nathaniel Dance. / nla.pic-an9186279-v. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/43395090>. Courtesy of National Library of Australia

documented; perhaps they enjoyed more simple dances than did their better educated contemporaries. However, there was a strong tradition of travelling dancing masters teaching steps and figures, which were further disseminated in communal dances. There are records of Irish peasants dancing the minuet barefoot in barns, and of masters from London travelling to learn dancing steps from Scottish Highlanders.

The British Navy had a long tradition of dancing on board ship. Records from 1585 describe sailors dancing on a voyage in search of the North-West Passage. In 1671, sailors were noted dancing around the mainmast (in place of a maypole) and dancing the country dance *Portsmouth*. As a young man, Cook served in Admiral Boscawen's Fleet where dancing took place every evening to the music of fiddle, fife and drum.

James Cook, as a commander, became renowned for his care of his crew. His ships were noted as happy places. On the final leg of his first voyage, the sailors composed the following shanty in his honour:

We were all hearty seamen no cold did we fear  
And we have from all sickness entirely kept clear  
Thanks be to the Captain he has proved so good  
Amongst all the Islands to give us fresh food.<sup>2</sup>

The regime for the men's excellent health included encouragement to dance regularly boosting their morale and sense of well-being. The majority of ships carried an official trumpeter and drummer and were generally able to assemble a diverse band from the crew. Cook ensured he had musicians on board and on his later voyages employed a highland piper and French horn players to enhance the regular band.

It seems that sailors loved dancing; the most accomplished dancers were the top-men, those men with the greatest strength and agility who would climb the rigging to the highest sails. Amongst the seamen they were held in the greatest esteem, with dancing ability a significant component in establishing the hierarchy on the ship.

The hornpipe began as a theatrical dance, but was adopted by sailors in the late 1700s. The earlier hornpipe tunes were in triple time (3/2) but in the 1740s the common time (4/4) version was devised. It was this new rhythm which inspired the sailors' dance. The hornpipe developed as an occupational dance with the steps mimicking everyday activities on deck; movements included hitching trousers, climbing the riggings, hauling and coiling ropes, pumping, and looking out to sea. Cook was one of the first specifically to record sailors dancing hornpipes. By 1829, few English

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<sup>2</sup> *The Journals of Captain James Cook on his Voyages of Discovery*, edited by J. C. Beaglehole (Cambridge, UK: Hakluyt Society at the University Press, 1969).

seamen were to be found who were not acquainted with the hornpipe and it became regarded as the national dance of England.



*A young woman of Otaheite dancing. Dance was the art form which most impressed early visitors to the Pacific.<sup>3</sup>*

As he travelled the Pacific, Cook encountered many native people who welcomed and entertained him with music and dance. Cook was able to reciprocate. His sailors performed hornpipes and country dances which the islanders enjoyed imitating. The music delighted many of the chiefs he visited, and in particular, the bagpipes were often requested. In this Cook had been guided by a List of Hints compiled by Lord Morton, President of the Royal Society. This memorandum provided an enlightened and humanitarian view to approaching and interacting with the primitive people he would encounter:

Endeavour by every fair means to cultivate a friendship with the Natives and to treat them with all imaginable humanity.

<sup>3</sup> A young woman of Otaheite dancing [picture] / J. Webber del.; J.K. Sherwin [London : s.n., 1784] Bib ID 2929816. <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-vn2929816>. Courtesy of National Library of Australia.

The Natives should not at first be alarmed with the report of Guns, Drums, or even a Trumpet. – But if there are other Instruments of Music on board they should be first entertained near the Shore with a soft Air.<sup>4</sup>

Cook attempted wherever possible to treat the natives with respect and was distressed when they were harmed; unfortunately this occurred in a number of situations where defensive actions became necessary to protect his men.



Every meeting with indigenous peoples in the Pacific was recorded and accounts of their music and, more especially, dance generated considerable interest on Cook's return to England. In time these accounts, illustrations and memories were employed to recreate scenes for the theatre. The theatre played a vital role in presenting current affairs to the populace and re-enactments of important events were often portrayed there. The first of the theatrical performances presenting Cook was the pantomime, *Omai, or A Trip Around the World*.

*Omai, the South Sea Islander who travelled to England with the second expedition of Captain Cook, 1776*<sup>5</sup>

On Cook's second voyage he collected a young Tahitian named Omai (Ma'I or Jack, as the sailors called him) and took him back to England. British scientists and philosophers were keenly interested in Omai, 'an Object of Curiosity' whom they regarded as an 'ideal man', untainted and uncorrupted by learning or civilisation. Through the writings of the philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau, intellectuals had developed the

<sup>4</sup> James Douglas, fourteenth Earl of Morton (1702–1768) Hints offered to the consideration of Captain Cooke, Mr Bankes, Dr Solander and the other gentlemen who go upon the expedition on board the Endeavour 10 Aug 1768. Manuscript Collection, MS 9. National Library of Australia.

<sup>5</sup> Omai, a native of the island of Utietea. Artist: Jacobe, Johann, 1733-1797 <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an6016285>. Courtesy of National Library of Australia.

concept of a utopia where ‘noble savages’, untouched by greed and class, ‘lived in a state of nature, without property, without inequality and without dissension, in absolute freedom including freedom in love.’<sup>6</sup> Tahiti appeared to be such a place. The explorer Bougainville had taken the Tahitian Ahutoru to Paris in 1769 to great acclaim; in the competitive scientific world, the British were delighted with their own exotic visitor.

During his two year stay, Omai became much admired within London society. Renowned for his charm, quick wit and exotic good looks, he quickly became a favourite of the aristocratic elite. He was introduced to King George III and Queen Charlotte, invited by Joseph Banks to dine with the Royal Society, and was feted by members of the nobility, including the Duchess of Devonshire, Lord Sandwich and the Duke of Manchester. Distinguished artists, Joshua Reynolds, Nathaniel Dance and William Parry painted his portrait.

Joseph Banks, the famous and wealthy botanist who accompanied Cook in Endeavour, had not accompanied Cook on his second voyage of discovery. The Admiralty had refused to accommodate Bank’s large entourage which, in addition to artists and fellow scientists, included an orchestra attired in blue and gold livery. Banks was extremely annoyed at this and withdrew from the expedition. However, he was delighted when Cook returned with the young Tahitian and took care of Omai during his visit to England.

It was rumoured that during his visit to Lord Sandwich, a notorious libertine and member of the hellfire Club, Ma’I had been introduced to ladies of leisure, his companions reporting he preferred slender English women with ruddy complexions. After the house party broke up, Banks and Ma’I went off to Leicester where they attended the races and a performance of Handel’s Jephtha, organised by Lord Sandwich, who performed on the kettledrums with bravura. According to a spectator, throughout the concert Ma’I stood in ‘wild amazement’. At Leicester a ‘sprightly agreeable lady’ gave him dancing lessons, and in the tea rooms he gallantly handed cake and bread and butter to the ladies....Afterwards Banks took him to the theatre, where Ma’I sat [quietly] through the first two acts but was enchanted by the pantomime at the end...<sup>7</sup>

Omai was celebrated in all the best circles and provided inspiration for literary and dramatic works. In 1785, nine years after Omai returned to Tahiti, the stage version of Cook’s voyages in the Pacific was produced: the pantomime, *Omai, or, A Trip Around the World*.

<sup>6</sup> Anne Salmond, *Aphrodite’s Island: The European Discovery of Tahiti* (Viking (Penguin) NZ, 2009) 119-121.

<sup>7</sup> Anne Salmond, *The Trial of the Cannibal Dog. Captain Cook in the South Seas* (London: Allen Lane, an imprint of Penguin Books, 2003), 293-298.

At the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden,  
 This present THURSDAY, April 20, 1786.  
**The CASTLE of ANDALUSIA.**  
 Fernando by Mr. JOHNSTONE,  
 Spado by Mr. QUICK,  
 Pedrillo by Mr. EDWIN,  
 Ramirez, Mr. DAVIES, Philippo, Mr. BRETT,  
 And Alphonso by Mrs. KENNEDY,  
 Victoria by Mrs. BANNISTER,  
 Catalina (First Time) by Mrs. BROWN,  
 And Lorenza by Mrs. BILLINGTON,  
 Being her FIRST Appearance in THAT Character.  
 To which will be added (for the 44th Time) a NEW PANTOMIME called

**OMAI:**  
 Or, A Trip Round the World.  
 TOWHA, the Guardian Genius of OMAI's Ancestors, by Mr. HELM F.  
 OTOO, Father of OMAI, by Mr. DARLEY, OMAI by Mr. BLURTON,  
 HARLEQUIN, Servant to OMAI, by Mr. KENNEDY,  
 OEDIDEE, Pretender to the Throne, by Mrs. KENNEDY,  
 OBEREA, an Enchantress, by Mrs. MARTYR,  
 Don STRUTTOLANDO, Rival to OMAI, by Mr. PALMER.  
 CLOWN, his Servant, by Mr. STEVENS, BRITANNIA by Mrs. INCHBALD,  
 LONDINA, the Comfort destined to OMAI, by Miss CRANFIELD,  
 COLOMBINE, Maid to LONDINA, by Miss ROWSON,  
 Native of TONGATABOO by Mr. WEWITZER,  
 And An English Sailor (with a SONG) by Mr. EDWIN.

**With a PROCESSION**  
 Exactly representing the Dresses, Weapons, and Manners, of the Inhabitants of Otabeite,  
 New Zealand, Tanna, Marquesas, the Friendly, Sandwich, and Easter Islands; Tichutaki,  
 Siberia, Kamtschatka, Nootka Sound, Onalafika, Prince William's Sound, and the other  
 Countries visited by Captain COOK.  
 The Pantomime, and the Whole of the Scenery, Machinery, Dresses, &c. Designed and  
 Invented by Mr. LOUTHERBOURG, and executed under his Superintendance and  
 Direction by Messrs. RICHARDS, CARVER, and HODGINGS, Mr. CATTON, Jun.  
 Mr. TURNER, and a CELEBRATED ARTIST.  
 The MUSIC entirely NEW, composed by Mr. SHIELD.  
 Nothing under FULL PRICE will be taken.

To-morrow, will be presented the Comic Opera of FONTAINELEAU.  
 To which will be added the Burletta of MIDAS.  
 For the Benefit of Mrs. KENNEDY.

*Playbill for  
 Omai, or, A  
 Trip round the  
 world, Theatre  
 Royal, Covent  
 Garden,  
 Thursday, April  
 20, 1786.<sup>8</sup>*

Strict theatre licensing laws in England prevented many theatres from having spoken dialogue, this led to the development of the pantomime. Pantomimes presented the story as a visual spectacle with song, dance and mime and became a major popular form of entertainment. With recitatives, airs, duets, trios and choruses written by the Irish playwright, John O'Keefe, and the musical composer, William Shield, *Omai* was instantly successful. Phillippe Jacques de Louthembourg, recognised as the greatest technological innovator of the eighteenth-century stage, drew

<sup>8</sup> Playbill for a performance of *Omai, or, A Trip Round the World*, Theatre Royal, Covent Garden, Thursday, April 20, 1786. <http://trove.nla.gov.au/version/28349500> <http://nla.gov.au/nla.pic-an9786478>. Courtesy of National Library of Australia.

upon the talents of John Webber, the artist who had accompanied Cook on his third voyage, to create exceptionally impressive and authentic scenery and costumes. *The Times* theatre critic, wrote:

The stage never exhibited such a combination of superb and various scenery – enchanting music and sheer fun. The scenes, characters and dresses being, except a few, novel and foreign to this country, contribute much to heighten the delight.<sup>9</sup>

‘The pantomime’, wrote another critic, ‘was a beautiful illustration of Cook’s voyages.’<sup>10</sup>

The plot had very little regard for historical accuracy: Omai is transformed into the son of Tu, the King of Otaheite and is transported by Britannia to England, where he woos the beautiful Londina, wins her from a Spanish rival and carries her in triumph to his island home. In the grand finale, where Omai is crowned King of Otaheite, the backdrop shows a royal palace with ships anchored in the foreground and boats of all the different islands bringing ambassadors to greet the new ruler. After Omai’s coronation, celebrated with dancing, wrestling and boxing matches, he and Londina are married, to the joyous acclaim of their people. The pantomime concludes with a grand procession of sixty-seven chiefs, warriors and women from over a dozen of the countries visited by Cook. Although the character of the Captain never appears in the cast, at the final moment a giant portrait of Cook lying on a cloud, supported by Britannia while an angel salutes him with her trumpet, descends into the eternal light of fame.

*Omai* was enormously popular. King George attended many performances at the Theatre Royal where it played from December 1785 for more than 30 months into the summer of 1788; so it was running when the First Fleet sailed for Australia.

Plays commonly had associated country dances as was the case with *Omai*. Members of the cast would perform the dance in the course of the play and, depending on the popularity of the performance, the dance would subsequently be published. In other instances, dances were published to exploit the fame of the production. The dance, *Omai* was published in *Campbell’s 2nd Book of New and Favourite Country Dances* c.1786. It is a simple country dance typical of the era containing the figures: set, hands four, promenade and poussette.

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<sup>9</sup> Greg Denning, *Mr Bligh’s Bad Language: Passion, Power and Theatre on the Bounty* (Cambridge University Press, 1992), 269.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

## Omai

*Campbell's Second Book of New and Favourite Country Dances and Strathspey Reels for the Harp, Pianoforte and Violin*

Arranged by Roland Clarke 2014

*Omai*, the country dance from *Campbell's 2nd Book of New and Favourite Country Dances* c.1786.<sup>11</sup>

The script and orchestral score for the Omai pantomime are available through the National Library of Australia. Drawings of the impressive costumes, and a collection of playbills and reviews are available on-line. The Victoria and Albert Museum has a beautiful collection of the set designs for *Omai* which can also be viewed on-line.

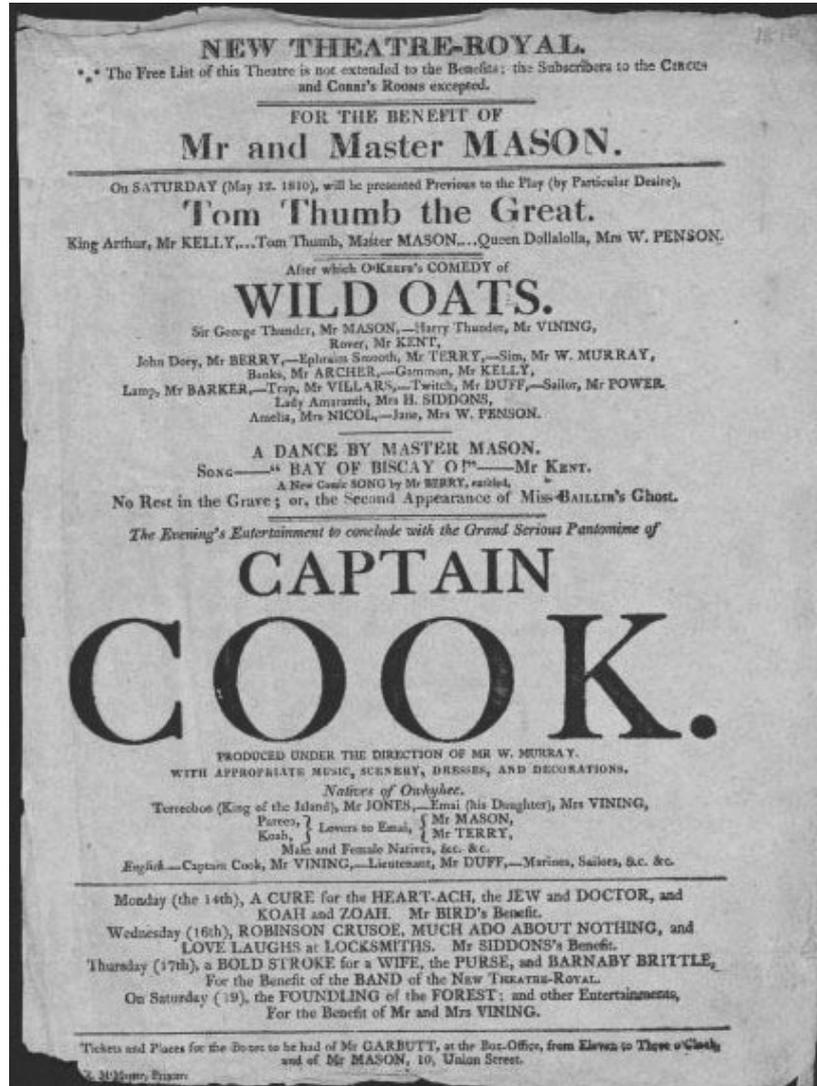
In the age before electronic news media, the theatre filled the role of the newsreel where people could learn about current events. In 1789, a staged “an exact representation of the convicts landing in Botany Bay”<sup>12</sup> along with a newly composed dance *The New Hollanders* was performed at the Royal Circus. When news of the disaster of the colony’s supply ship, *Guardian*, reached England, it was presented as a nautical drama, a ‘living picture’ at Sadler’s Wells in 1791. The Mutiny on the *Bounty* was likewise portrayed in the theatre as *The Pirates, Or, the Calamities of Capt. Bligh*.

After the news of Cook's death in Hawaii in February 1779 reached Europe, his achievements—and death—were immortalised in an outpouring of creative tributes. Remarkable amongst these productions was the *Grand Serious Pantomimic Ballet, The Death of Captain Cook*. This dramatic performance opened in Paris as *La mort du Capitaine Cook à son troisième voyage au nouveau monde* in October 1788 to

<sup>11</sup> *Campbell's 2nd Book of New and Favourite Country Dances and Strathspey Reels for the Harp, Pianoforte and Violin*. Kidson Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.

<sup>12</sup> *The Times* (London, England), Wednesday, April 22, 1789; Advertisement for Royal Circus, p. 1; Issue 135. Courtesy of National Library of Australia.

‘uncommon applause’. The play by M. Arnould with music by Jean-Baptiste Rochefort offered fifty-eight different musical items including dance pieces, processions, storms and battles.



*Playbill for a performance of Tom Thumb the Great, Wild Oats and the Grand Serious Pantomime of Captain Cook, New Theatre Royal on Saturday May 12, 1810.*<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *Playbill for a performance of Tom Thumb the Great, Wild Oats and the Grand Serious Pantomime of Captain Cook, New Theatre Royal, Saturday May 12, 1810.* nla.pic-an9579662

The scene is set in Hawaii and the plot is a romanticised account of the events leading to Cook's death. In the pantomime, Cook assists the King of Hawaii to defeat his enemies. The ruler wishes to put the prisoners to death, but the merciful Cook is able to save them. Nevertheless, once liberated his foes attack and murder the gallant captain as they regard him as being responsible for their downfall.

Ballet of this period was quite unlike the misty, romantic dance generally considered today as the traditional form. In the late 18th century there was an unprecedented interest in the art, as a succession of exceptionally talented dancers performed at the London Opera House. These *ballets d'action* often featured noble heroes with strong manly qualities, fighting evil foes. They were designed for moral enrichment as well as entertainment. One can easily imagine the illustrious Captain Cook as the hero in such a spectacle.

The following year, 1789, the English version of *The Death of Captain Cook* was produced in London, where tears and hysterics were reported at Cook's fatal stabbing. It was extremely popular. Stories attached to the production include one concerning an actor named Ratchford: while playing the role of a marine, he was inadvertently run through by a real sword which had been accidentally left on stage. It was reported that his death throes received particularly great applause by the unknowing audience. Another famous actor, Carlo Antonio Delpini, was seriously injured during a performance of the ballet in 1789 and his career as a dancer ruined.

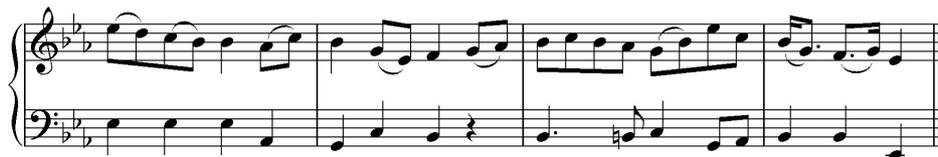
The English version was largely based on the French production using the original music by Rochefort. Another version was printed in Limerick in 1790, mentioning performances in London, Dublin, and Paris. Typically the entertainment would open with a lighter piece, often a comedy, followed by a dance and a song, before the sensational climax, *The Death of Captain Cook*.

By the next year performances with local actors were delighting audiences around the United Kingdom in major cities and provincial centres. In May 1789, the *London Times* advertised *The Death of Captain Cook* at Covent Garden at the same time as the Royal Circus was continuing to stage 'the exact representation of the convicts arriving at Botany Bay'.

There were many performances of the ballet throughout Europe, confirming the extent of Cook's fame. A rare playbill from the prestigious La Scala, the newly opened opera house in Milan, lists several distinguished Italian dancers involved in the production. This glamorous theatre was one of the largest in Europe with a huge stage and seating for three thousand patrons.

## The Death of Captain Cook

*The Scots Musical Museum, Vol 3-4, 1790-1792*



Arranged by Roland Clarke 2014

*The tune 'The Death of Captain Cook' was used by Robert Burns for his song 'Mary, Dear Departed'. The Scots Musical Museum, 1790-1792<sup>14</sup>*

By 1793, *The Death of Captain Cook* had reached America and was playing in the John Street Theatre, New York. Playbills exist for productions in Boston (1802) and Charleston (1808), as well as further performances in New York between 1793 and 1808.

Playbills and newspaper advertisements testify to the continued success of the ballet well into the 19th century. These provide a tantalising glimpse of the continuing fascination with Captain Cook with billings describing 'the historical ballet of action', 'that admired superb pantomimic spectacle', 'the splendid nautical melo-drama' and 'the tableau of the expiring moments of the circumnavigator.' The *European Magazine* of 1819 reported that the ballet was 'revived with much éclat,' and still seemed to retain much of its original attraction. The last playbill promoting the ballet is from the Theatre Royal, English Opera House dated November 1836.

<sup>14</sup> *The Scots Musical Museum* (Edinburgh, Scotland: James Johnson & Co., 1790-1792). Glen Collection, National Library of Scotland.

Scotland's favourite son, the poet Robert Burns, used the tune *The Death of Captain Cook* for his song, *Mary, Dear Departed* published in *The Scots Musical Museum*, 1790-1792. The National Library's *Scottish Melodies* (1866) includes the same song with a more elaborate arrangement of the tune under the title *Thou Ling'ring Star*.

Shortly after the ballet was introduced to England, it was adapted for the newly created Astley's Circus. This circus featured John Astley, renowned for his 'pleasing Feats of great Agility and the most amazing Equilibrium whilst the Horse is on a Gallop' as he 'dances and vaults, &c. also plays an Air on the Violin.' All the performances presented 'Manly Exercises, With the Horse, from the Horse, and on the Horse'.<sup>15</sup>

Mr. Astley was now enabled to give his entertainments by candle-light; and one of the first pieces that he produced, however successful it may have been to the treasury, had a curious-sounding title, from an equestrian point of view; it figured in the bills as "A Grand Equestrian Dramatic Spectacle, entitled *The Death of Captain Cook*." The sensation caused by the discoveries and death of Captain Cook was then fresh in the minds of the people; and Astley, seizing upon the principal events connected with that tragic affair, placed them on the stage in such a manner that the piece was most successful, and formed a very important step in the ladder by which the quondam sergeant-major was enabled to rise to fame and fortune.<sup>16</sup>

The National Library holds a copy of *The Celebrated circus tunes perform'd at Edinburgh this season* (179-?) which includes two pieces from the pantomime *The Death of Captain Cook*—the *Duke of York's March* (2/4), and the *Pursuit* (6/8). These tunes are attributed to Shroeter, not Rochefort the original composer, leading to the conclusion that they were specifically composed for the circus. This book of music is particularly interesting as one of the subscribers was Miss Eliza Campbell of Airds. Miss Campbell married Lachlan Macquarie, and as the governor's wife, became a leading figure in early colonial society.

Two other European productions attest to the enormous respect in which the great explorer was held after his death. The German ballet *Cook, oder die Engländer auf Otahaiti: ein historisch-pantomimisches Ballet in 5 Acten* [Cook, or, the English in Tahiti] by Lauchlin Duquesney was published in Berlin in 1796, 1800, and 1801, and the Spanish, *La Cokiada: tragedia nueva en tres actos* [Cook: a new tragedy in three acts] by Leonardo Timonel published in Malaga, 1796.

<sup>15</sup> Walford, Edward, *Old and New London: Volume 6*, 1878, pp 383-407, British History online. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=45288#n15>

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

**Cap<sup>n</sup> Cook**

N<sup>o</sup> 7

The image shows a musical score for a dance titled 'Cap'n Cook', numbered 'N<sup>o</sup> 7'. It consists of three systems of music, each with a treble and bass staff. The first system is in C major and 3/4 time. The second system changes to B-flat major and 3/4 time. The third system changes to A minor and 3/4 time. The music is written in a simple, rhythmic style typical of 18th-century dance music.

Change sides & back again, Hands across half round, back  
again, lead down the middle, up again, Allemand.

*Captain Cook's Country Dance from Twenty Four New Country Dances.  
Dedicated to the Nobility & Gentry. for the year 1797. Published by Corri,  
Dusseck & Co.<sup>17</sup>*

There are no recorded Australian performances of *Omai, or, A Trip Around the World* or the *Grand Serious Pantomimic Ballet, The Death of Captain Cook*. Both productions demanded elaborate sets and costumes, which would have been quite beyond the scope of early Australian theatre companies.

Given the extended popularity of *The Death of Captain Cook* it is a little surprising that it has fallen into obscurity. The music is available in the French National Library in Paris; the text is obtainable on-line both in English and French. The National Library has copies of the painting of Neptune raising Captain Cook to Immortality, which appeared at the conclusion of the play. It also has an admirable collection of playbills and several pictorial works relating to the ballet. Unfortunately none of the choreography has been preserved.

In 2001 Richard Divall and the State Orchestra of Victoria produced the CD *Australia Unite! The Road to Federation. Songs and Dances of Colonial Australia*. This unique recording includes *Captain Cook's March and Procession of the Natives from Omai, or A Trip Around the*

<sup>17</sup> 24 New Country Dances, with their proper figures for the harp, pianoforte & violin. Published by Corri, Dussek & Co, 1797. © The British Library Board, b.54.(3), title page and p. 7.

*World (With Captain Cook)*, and *Tambourin* from *La Mort du Capitaine Cook*.

Lastly we come to *Captain Cook's Country Dance*. This dance was published in London, 1797 by the eminent composers Corri and Dussek. Jan Ladislav Dussek was a most fashionable professor, a favourite of Marie Antoinette. He was classed as one of the finest composers of the day and some of his music is still in print. His father-in-law, Domenico Corri, later staged the ballet *Pitcairn Island* in 1815 when news reached England of the discovery of the surviving Bounty mutineers on Pitcairn Island.

*Captain Cook's Country Dance* is a simple, elegant dance in the style typical of the time. A work of great significance, it definitely merits a place in Australia's cultural heritage.

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Although Cook died in 1779, we see that his memory was revered in a variety of artistic works that remained in circulation for some fifty years afterwards. Music and dance featured significantly in his life and it is appropriate that his achievements were commemorated in those related artistic fields. As a dance historian, discovering the two country dances, *Omai* and *Captain Cook's Country Dance*, with such tangible links to James Cook has been tremendously exciting and rewarding. This form of dance, the English country dance, is readily accessible even to people who claim to have two left feet. Whereas most other forms of historical dance are either so simple as to be boring, or so complicated or athletic as to be reserved for experts, these fascinating dances can easily be enjoyed by all.

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