



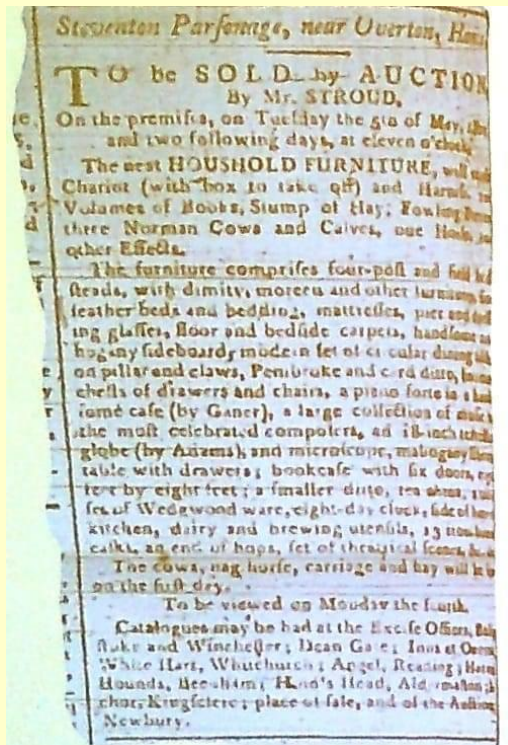
The Austen Family Music Books and Jane Austen's musical relationships

Associate Professor
Gillian Dooley

Flinders University,
South Australia

Steventon Parsonage.

'To be sold by Auction on the premises on Tuesday the 5th of May ...'



'... a large collection of music of the most celebrated composers'

'... a pianoforte in a handsome case (by Ganer)'

The Austen Family Music Books : x +

archive.org/details/austenfamilymusicbooks

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The Austen Family Music Books

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This collection consists of eighteen printed and manuscript music books owned by members of the Austen family, including the writer Jane Austen, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Many are binder's volumes, compiled from separate manuscript or printed sheet music items bound together for an individual user. Others are personal manuscript albums made wholly or principally by a single copyist. Although some volumes were compiled as early as the 1750s, the majority date from Jane A...

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Jenkyns 03 - Binder's volume of printed and

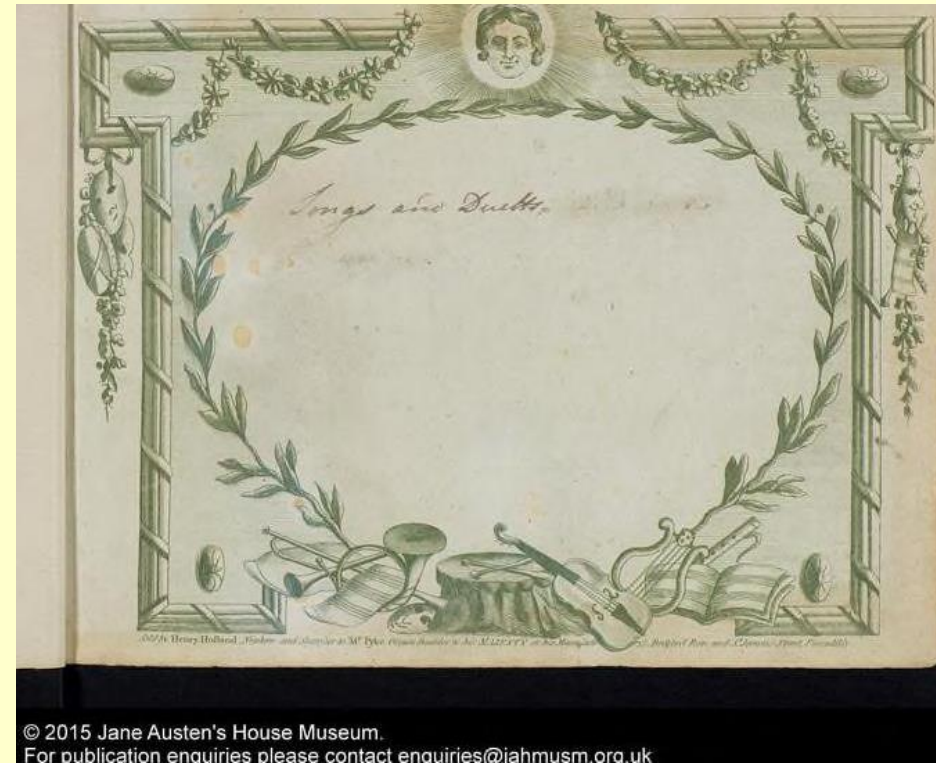
Knight 02 - Binder's

CHWJA/19/6 - Binder's

Jane Austen's Music website -

<https://sites.google.com/site/janeaustensmusic/austen-family-music-books>

Two early Austen MS music books (c.1790-1805)





Jane Austen's 'scrapbook' (above)
and later volume of print and MS music
(right)



Cassandra Jane Knight
October 2nd
1823

Louisa Knight
April 24th
1824

Book of dance music owned
by Cassandra Jane Knight and
Louisa Knight



The Austen Family Music Books : x +

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CHWJA/19/2 - Manuscript of keyboard music, copied

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Jenkyns 03 - Binder's volume of printed and

2,418 1 0

Knight 02 - Binder's

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Jane Austen's Music website -

<https://sites.google.com/site/janeaustensmusic/austen-family-music-books>

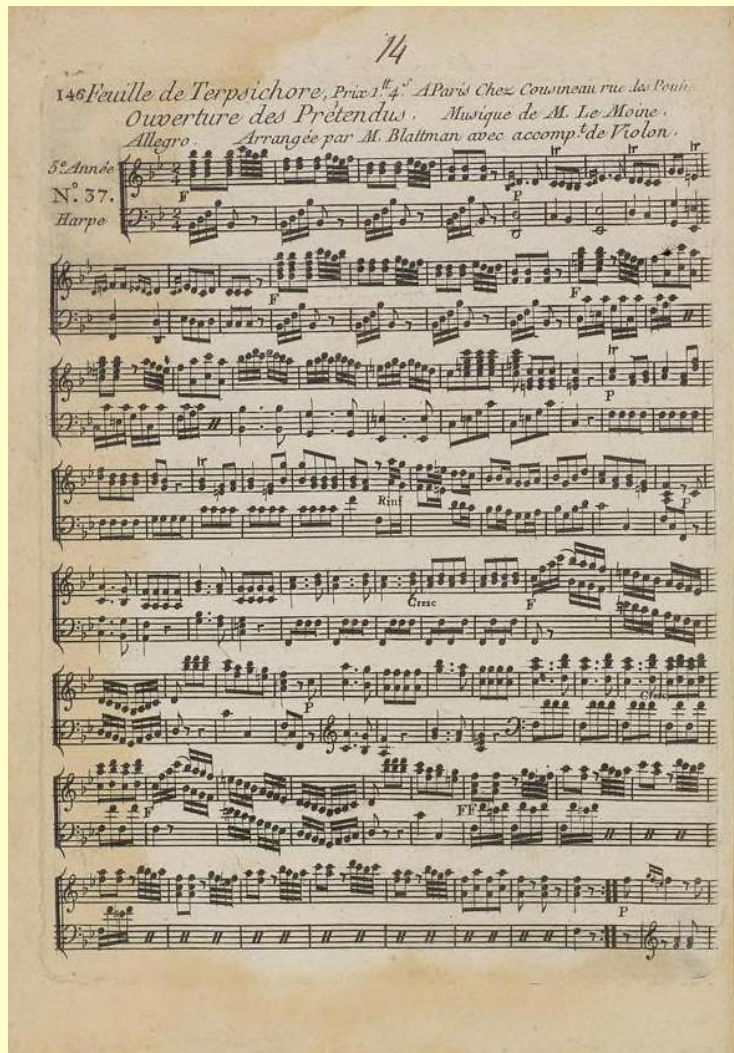
Eliza Hancock with her parents and Indian nurse Clarinda (1765) by Sir Joshua Reynolds



Ouverture des Pretendus by Jean-Baptiste Le Moyne

14

146 Feuille de Terpsichore, Prix 1.^{er} 4.^{re} A Paris Chez Cousineau rue des Poulx.
Ouverture des Pretendus. Musique de M. Le Moine.
Allegro. Arrangée par M. Blattman avec accomp.^t de Violon.
5.^e Année.
N.^o 37.
Harpe



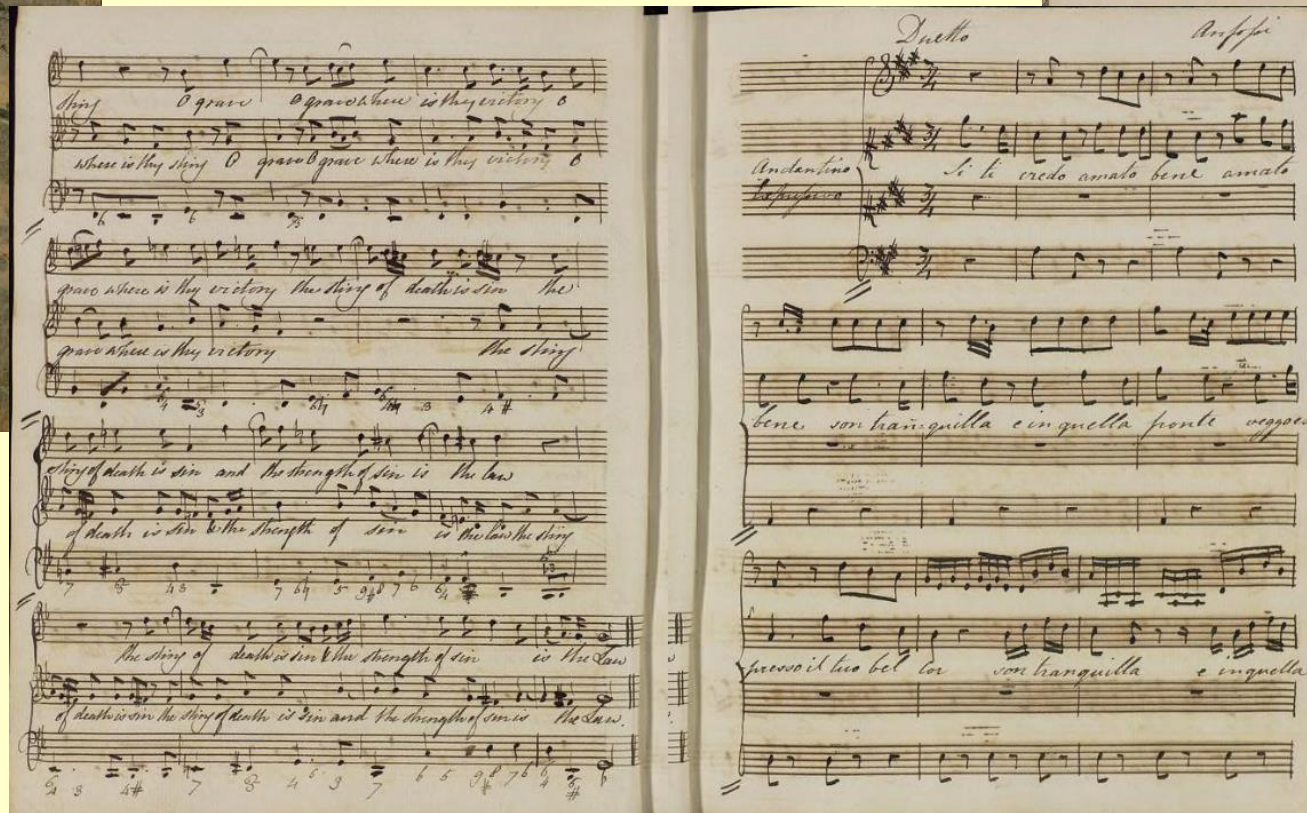
Ouverture des Pretendus



Elizabeth Austen's printed book
of keyboard music labelled
'Cembalo' (CHWJA/19/6)



Dedication from Maria Hester Reynolds'
set of keyboard sonatas



Elizabeth Austen's untitled MS book of vocal music,
copied c. 1790-1799 (Jenkyns/02)

Pages from the Voewood booksellers' catalogue advertising the two Rice manuscript volumes, which were sold in 2020

Jane Austen at the piano. "She played from the manuscript, copied out by herself"

1

[AUSTEN, Jane] Two albums of manuscript music compiled by Jane Austen, two of her sisters-in-law and two of her nieces. c.1798-1835

[3437] £ P.O.A

Two volumes, 295x243mm and 290x243mm. Approximately 550 pages in total. Modern black half morocco and boards and buckram, the former with red morocco label lettered in gilt "Songs, Duets & Glee's", stained in places to the covers. Internally fine.

The first album contains musical scores and lyrics of nearly one hundred songs, four in Jane Austen's hand. Her hand is identifiable from the lyrics but more especially from the way she writes the music and in particular the highly distinctive manner in which she writes the bass clef. The songs as a whole date from c1600 to 1805, many relating to the theatre, including works by Charles Dibdin, Handel, Haydn, Michael Kelly, Thomas Moore and William Shield. The others are in the hands of Jane Austen's sister-in-law Elizabeth Austen (Elizabeth Bridges, who married Jane's brother Edward in 1791), her sister-in-law Eliza Austen (Eliza Hancock, who married Jane's brother Henry in 1797), her niece Fanny Austen Knight (later Lady Knatchbull), and her niece Elizabeth ('Lizzy') Austen Knight (later Mrs Edward Rice), and in three unidentified hands. The watermarks date from 1798 to 1804.

The slightly later album contains musical scores and lyrics of approximately one hundred and fifty pieces, all in the hand of Jane Austen's niece, Elizabeth Austen Knight, including works by Auher, Haydn, Rossini, Rousseau, Sarti, and Weber, and a number of compositions by George Augusta Hill (husband of Jane's god-daughter,



Louisa Austen Knight), and George Cholmeley Oxenden (brother of Mary Oxenden, a friend of Fanny and Lizzy Austen Knight). There are also compositions by Mrs Richard Arkwright (née Frances Kemble), one of the most popular women composers of the day. The paper is watermarked 1818.

The manuscripts were rediscovered in the 1990s by Henry Rice, a great-great-nephew of Jane Austen. Of the manuscript music books associated

with the Austen family, only four can with certainty be said to contain works copied out by Jane Austen. These two books with the four songs written in Austen's hand and securely attributed as such therefore represent a major addition to our knowledge and understanding of Austen's musical interests and the musical life of her and her family. And of course, the two books of manuscripts, taken together provide a valuable insight into amateur music making in Georgian England.

These albums, uniquely, contain entries by all the female musicians in the Austen family of Jane's generation and so, apart from their link with her, they offer a view into the social and cultural interests of women at this time. They are a window onto what was a private world and we can imagine members of the Austen family passing around these manuscripts and using them for musical evenings or for private afternoons at the piano. And, given how much music there is in her novels, Jane must surely have drawn on these family events for inspiration. Jane Austen was very much the musician of her family. Her niece Caroline recalled that "she practised regularly every morning - she played very pretty tunes...much that she played from manuscript, copied out by herself and so neatly and correctly, that it was as easy to read as print". Jane wrote to her sister Cassandra, however: "Elizabeth is very cruel about my writing music, and, as a punishment for her, I should insist upon always writing out all hers in future, if I were not punishing myself at the same time". The choice of songs is interestingly eclectic, encompassing comic songs, sentimental ballads and Methodist hymns.

The four songs in Jane Austen's hand are all in the first volume:

1. Leaf 59 (recto and verso): "No Riches from his Scanty Store", by Johan George Graeff, words by Helen Maria Williams
2. From verso of leaf 83 to verso of leaf 84: "The Cheshire Tragedy" by James Hook
3. Leaf 85 (recto and verso): "Hail Lovely Rose sung by Miss Tyrer in the Farce of Catch him who can" by Mr Hook.
4. From verso of page 107 to verso of page 108: "Before Jehovah's awful throne", by Martin Madan.



Jane Austen's MS

Elizabeth Austen's MS

Two for 2 Soprano's & 2 Bops. with an
Accompaniment for 2 Performers on the Piano. 1846.
Composed by Arthur Schumann. The following piece is from



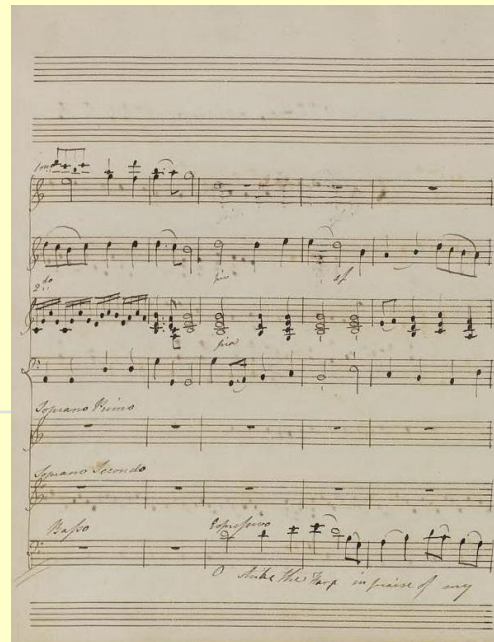
A watercolour portrait of Fanny painted by Cassandra.

Fanny Austen Knight (1793-1882)

by R.J.S. Stevens

in Elizabeth Austen's book of vocal music

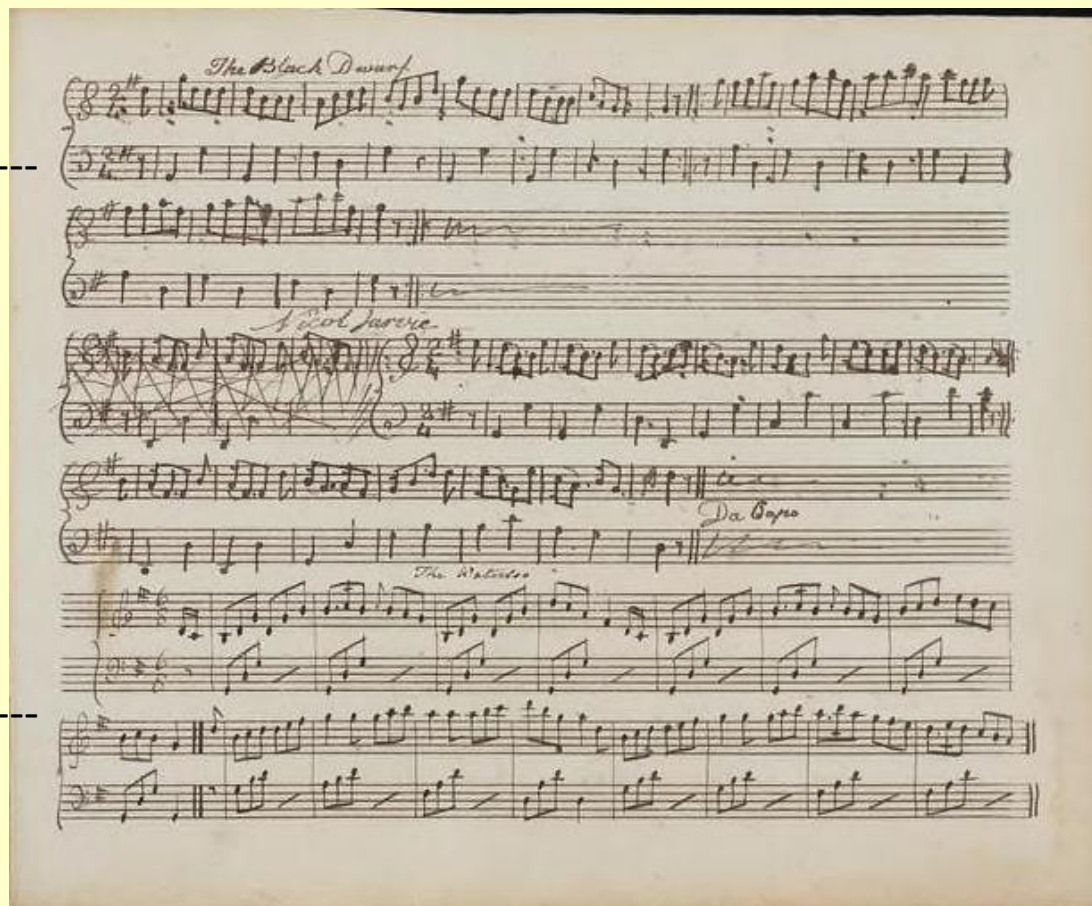
in Elizabeth Austen's book of vocal music



Penultimate page of Austen's later manuscript book (Jenkyns/03)

Fanny's handwriting -----

Jane's handwriting -----



Caroline Austen and Aunt Jane



Aunt Jane began her day with music – for which, I conclude she had a natural taste; as she thus kept it up – tho’ she had no one to teach; was never induced (as I have heard) to play in company; and none of her family cared much for it. I suppose, that she might not trouble *them*, she chose her practising time before breakfast – when she could have the room to herself – She practised regularly every morning – She played very pretty tunes, *I* thought – and I liked to stand by her and listen to them; but the music, (for I knew the books well in after years) would now be thought disgracefully easy.

- Caroline Austen, *My Aunt Jane Austen: A Memoir* (1867)



The Piano Forte often talks of you; – in various keys, tunes & expressions I allow – but be it Lesson or Country dance, Sonata or Waltz, *You* are really its' constant theme. I wish you cd come & see us, as easily as Edward can.

- Jane Austen to Caroline, January 1817



She played
and sang

*Jane Austen
and music*

GILLIAN
DOOLEY

1 The Jane Austen music manuscripts

2 Jane Austen's musical relationships

3 Jane Austen and the music of the
French Revolution

4 'These happy effects on the character
of the British sailor': family life in sea
songs of the late Georgian period

5 Jane Austen, Thomas Arne and
Georgian musical theatre

6 Jane Austen and British song

7 Juvenile songs and lessons: music
culture in Jane Austen's teenage years

8 Marianne and Willoughby, Lucy and
Colin: betrayal, suffering, death and the
poetic image

Manchester University Press, out March 2024

Thank you!

Associate Professor Gillian Dooley

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Gillian.dooley@flinders.edu.au

Jane Austen's Music website

<https://sites.google.com/site/janeaustensmusic/home>