

George P. Bridgetower and the Kreutzer Sonata

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Mr. Charles Harry Moody, the present organist and master of the choristers, was born at Dennis Park, Stourbridge, on March 22, 1874. A pupil first of the late Mr. G. W. Bates, organist of Stourbridge Parish Church, he was afterwards articled to Mr. T. Westlake Morgan, late organist of Bangor Cathedral. From Sir John Stainer he received many valuable hints, especially in the important matter of accompanying the choral service, and Sir John, up to the time of his death, took the greatest interest in the career of his young friend.

After gaining rich experience as deputy organist of Worcester Cathedral, organist of St. Michael's College, Tenbury, and (in 1894) acting-organist of Wells Cathedral, Mr. Moody, at the age of



MR. C. H. MOODY.

ORGANIST AND MASTER OF THE CHORISTERS OF RIPON CATHEDRAL.

(*Photograph by Mr. J. H. Bayley, Ripon.*)

twenty-one, became organist of Wigan Parish Church in December, 1895, and was appointed conductor of the Wigan and District Choral Society. In 1899 he was appointed organist of Holy Trinity Church, Coventry, and in January, 1902, on the resignation of Dr. Crow, to Ripon Minster. Mr. Moody is Lecturer in Music at the Ripon and Wakefield Diocesan Training College. He conducts the Ripon Choral Society, and also the Festival Choir, the latter sustaining the monthly oratorio services held in the cathedral. He established annual cathedral performances of Brahms's 'Requiem' and Bach's 'St. Matthew' Passion, and his organ recitals are much appreciated.

As a composer his principal contribution to Church music is a festival Magnificat in A, sung at the Triennial Festival of North-Eastern Cathedral Choirs in York Minster on July 4, 1902. He has also written several songs, and he contributed incidental music, for chorus and orchestra, for the Ripon Pageant of 1906.

Mr. Moody is a keen antiquary. He has been prominently identified with the flourishing local branch of the British Empire Shakspeare Society since its formation five years ago, and he holds a commission in what till recently was the 1st Volunteer Battalion, Prince of Wales's West Yorkshire Regiment, now merged into the Territorial Army.

For kind help in the preparation of this article the writer desires to express his thanks to the Rev. E. H. Swann, M.A., Precentor, for the use of his excellent photographs; to Mr. E. W. Winsor, the Dean's Verger; and to Mr. C. H. Moody, organist and master of the choristers; also to Mr. G. Parker, author of 'Historic Ripon,' a useful guide to the city and cathedral, for the use of his photographs; and to Messrs. George Bell & Sons for the illustration on page 294.

DOTTED CROTCHET.

GEORGE P. BRIDGETOWER AND THE KREUTZER SONATA.

An element of mystery, and more than an element of interest, surrounds the career of the mulatto violinist so intimately associated with Beethoven's Kreutzer Sonata. Let us endeavour to tell this curious life-story, linking up the various incidents with information hitherto unknown.

George Polgreen Bridgetower is said to have been born at Biala, in Poland. The year of his birth may be approximately given as 1779. An official document of identity, dated 'London, 18 July, 1817,' and signed 'Hugh Hammersley,' a member of the banking firm of that name, reads:

I hereby declare that I have known Mr. G. P. Bridgetower for a number of years as the son of Mr. John Frederick Bridgetower & Maria his wife, & I never heard of their having any other children.

As we shall presently see, Bridgetower Senr. was known in England as 'The African Prince,' a designation which hardly accords with his Christian names. And then may not 'Bridgetower' have been an assumed patronymic? Thayer, in his 'Beethoven's Leben' (vol. ii., p. 385) raises this question, and adds 'Whether Bridgetower found his way to Biala and married a German or Polish lady, is all a mystery.' On the other hand it is stated (*Musical World*, December 4, 1858, p. 771, *note*) that he was 'supposed by his friends to be the son of an Indian princess,' while the 'Dictionary of Musicians' (1825) states that he 'is said to be a descendant of an Indian prince'! One thing is certain, from whichever parent he obtained his dark-hued visage, he was a mulatto.



GEORGE POLGREEN BRIDGETOWER.

1782?—1860.

Master Bridgetower studied under Barthélemon Giornovich, Thomas Attwood, and — Haydn! Where he passed the earliest years of his childhood is unknown, but, assuming the correctness of the statement (to be presently given) that he was a pupil of Haydn, he must have been in the neighbourhood of Vienna before he had completed his tenth year.

Bridgetower did not make his first public appearance in London, as has been stated, but in Paris, at the Concert Spirituel of April 13, 1789. In a transcript of what appears to be the announcement of that music-making, he is thus described :

Instruments :

MR. GEORGES BRIDGETOWER - - - Violon.
(Début de Mr. Georges Bridgetower, né aux colonies anglaises, âgé de 9 ans.

MR. PERRET - - - - - Basson.
(The singers were M. Laïs, Mdme. Todi, Mlle. Maillard, and Mlle. Lillette.)

That invaluable French periodical publication, *Le Mercure de France*, thus records the début of the 'English colonial' in these words :

Un début curieux, & qui a infiniment intéressé, c'est celui de M. Bridge-Tower, jeune Nègre des Colonies, qui a joué plusieurs concertos de violon avec une netteté, une facilité, une exécution & même une sensibilité, qu'il est bien rare de rencontrer dans un âge si tendre (il n'a pas dix ans). Son talent, aussi vrai que précocose, est une des meilleures réponses que l'on puisse faire aux Philosophes qui veulent priver ceux de sa Nation & de sa couleur, de la faculté de se distinguer dans les Arts.

In the following month—May 27, 1789—there was announced a 'Concert à la Salle du Panthéon à Paris, donné au bénéfice du jeune G. Bridgetower.'

The young gentleman then crossed the Channel, and, on the authority of his father, we next hear of him at Windsor Castle, playing before King George III. and his Court. Bath, then the fashionable rendezvous of 'The Quality,' is where we can next trace the child fiddler and his paternal relative. In the *Morning Post* of November 25, 1789, under 'Bath,' we gain the following curious information: 'Amongst those added to the Sunday promenade [*i.e.*, along the South Parade] were the African Prince in the Turkish attire. The son of this African Prince has been celebrated as a very accomplished musician.' Why that dusky African should don 'Turkish attire' as his 'Sunday best' is not quite obvious, unless he wanted to make an advertisement impression in favour of his violinist son. Another extract from the *Morning Post* of December 8, 1789, may also be given :

BATH.

The young African Prince, whose musical talents have been so much celebrated, had a more crowded and splendid concert on Saturday morning than has ever been known in this place. There were upwards of five hundred and fifty persons present, and they were gratified by such skill on the violin as created general astonishment, as well as pleasure. Rauzzini was enraptured, and declared that he had never heard such execution before, even from his friend La Motte, who was, he thought, much inferior to this

wonderful boy. The father was in the gallery, and so affected by the applause bestowed on his son, that tears of pleasure and gratitude flowed in profusion. The profits were estimated at two hundred guineas, many persons having given five guineas for each ticket.

The Bath newspapers of the day furnish us with some interesting information concerning the English début of Master Bridgetower. His first concert is announced thus in the *Bath Chronicle* of December 3, 1789 :

AT THE NEW ASSEMBLY ROOMS.

For the Benefit of

Master GEORGE AUGUSTUS FREDERICK BRIDGTOWER, a youth of Ten Years old, Pupil of the celebrated HAYDN.

On Saturday morning next, the 5th of December, will be a GRAND CONCERT of Vocal and Instrumental MUSICK ; when Master BRIDGTOWER will develop his talents on the Violin.

Act I. Overture. Haydn.—Song, Miss Cantelo.—Quartetto, Pleyel.—Song, Mr. Harrison.—Concerto Violin, Master Bridgtower, Viotti.

Act II. Concerto Piano Forte, Mrs. Miles (late Miss Guest). Song, Mr. Harrison.—Concerto Violin, Master Bridgtower, Giornowich.—Song, Miss Cantelo.—Full Piece.

To begin precisely at Twelve o'Clock.

Tickets 5s. each, to be had at the New Assembly-Rooms, Pump Room, Lintern's Musick Shop, at the Libraries, and of Mr. Bridgtower, at Mr. Phillips's, No. 10, Duke Street.

It will be observed that the boy's christian names as above given are the same as those of the then Prince of Wales, afterwards King George IV. Whether this was part of an advertising trick, or for some other reason, the use, on this début occasion, of that royal combination of names is somewhat of a mystery. The concert was noticed in the following terms :

The amateurs of music in this city received on Saturday last at the New Rooms the highest treat imaginable from the exquisite performance of Master Bridgtower, whose taste and execution on the violin is equal, perhaps superior, to the best professor of the present or any former day. The Concert Room, Recesses and Gallery were thronged with the very best of company, and scores went away without being able to procure a hearing. Those who had that happiness were enraptured with the astonishing abilities of this wonderful child—for he is but ten years old. He is a mulatto, the grandson (*sic*), it is said, of an African Prince. The greatest attention and respect was paid by the nobility and gentry present to his elegant Father, who is one of the most accomplished men in Europe, conversing with fluency and charming address in its several languages.

A correspondent observes, that he hopes whilst every attention is paid to the extraordinary merits of the above phenomenon, it will not be forgotten that he was invited to this city by Rauzzini, whose attention to the public entertainment on every occasion and whose real goodness and disinterestedness of heart should meet with an encouragement equal to his deserts.—*The Bath Journal*, Monday, December 7, 1789.

In the same issue appeared the following 'vote of thanks' from the pen of the 'African Prince' :

To the NOBILITY, and GENTRY, Visitors, and Residents of that wonderful city—BATH !

MR. BRIDGTOWER would wish to express his feelings with that Gratitude which is due to Generous and Noble-minded Britons.

The peculiar distinction with which his son and himself have been honoured on this blessed Island—the AZYLE of the unfortunate, and which the poor wandering Strangers from the neighbourhood of the Tropic, have experienced with the purest and sincerest delight.

The Talents of his Son have now been honoured with the gracious approbation of the first Nobility and Gentry of this Kingdom, being his first Performance in Public in Great Britain—excepting before their Majesties at Windsor, and to their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, and the Duke of Cumberland. Let Thanks flowing from a heart full of infinite acknowledgments be acceptable to the Ladies, Noblemen, and gentlemen who have so warmly interested themselves in his Favour! His Son, whose little heart is as sensibly touched with the applause his Talents have produced and the liberal encouragement they have received, unites with MR. BRIDGTOWER in this Testimony of Gratitude. Whilst they exist the City of BATH shall be foremost remembered in their Prayers and Praises.

Duke St., No. 10, Saturday Evening, Dec. 5.

In addition to the above concerts, Bridgetower played 'A concerto on the violin between the 2d. and 3d. Acts' of a performance of the 'Messiah' given (at Bath) on Christmas Eve, 1789, for the benefit of Rauzzini. In the meantime the boy had given a concert at Bristol (December 18, 1789) when, according to *Felix Farley's Journal*, 'he led the band with the coolness and spirit of a Cramer to the astonishment and delight of all present.' He gave a second concert at Bristol on New Year's Day, 1790, which caused some unpleasantness in regard to procedure, the account being too long and involved to be given here.

Having conquered Bath, Master Bridgetower laid siege to London. He made his first appearance in the metropolis at one of the Lenten Oratorio performances, Drury Lane Theatre, February 19, 1790, when he played a solo between parts 1 and 2 of the 'Messiah.' In referring to the Lenten performances of that year, W. T. Parke, the gossiping oboist, says, in his 'Musical Memoirs': 'Concertos were performed on the oboe by me, and on the violin, for the first time, by Master Bridgtower, son of an African prince, who was attended by his father, habited in the costume of his country [!] The youth displayed considerable ability, and was much applauded.' The following criticisms on the boy's London début appeared in two newspapers of the day:

Sufficient as the *Messiah* would have been for an high treat, the Managers had provided an additional dish in a Concerto on the Violin by Master Bridgtower son to the African Prince, a youth, as he appeared, not fourteen, but apparently a complete master of the violin; we say, apparently, as it would be arrogantly presumptuous in us to decide on musical abilities.—He gave the utmost satisfaction in his performance, and we imagine the more he is known, he will be more admired.—(*Public Advertiser*, February 20, 1790)

Master Bridgtower, son to the African Prince, who has lately figured away so much at Bath on the violin, performed a Concerto with great taste and execution; his father dwelt on every note with rapture, and seemed highly gratified by the reiterated plaudits so warmly bestowed on the young Prince.—(*London Chronicle*, February 20, 1790.)

Later in the season he joined Clement, another violinist prodigy, in giving a concert, under the patronage of the Prince of Wales, at the Hanover Square Rooms on June 2. The Abbé Vogler, who was present on that occasion, records that the united ages of the performers in the string quartet were under forty years, the first violin player (Clement) being only eight and a-half and the second violinist, 'Bridgetower from Africa,' ten years old.

At the Handel Commemoration of 1791, held in Westminster Abbey, Bridgetower and Hummel sat on each side of Joah Bates at the organ, when these two boys, clad in scarlet coats, pulled out the stops for him. In the same year we find him among the violinists at the Haydn-Salomon concerts. He appeared at several of the Lenten Oratorios, given at the King's Theatre, in 1792, and on May 28 he played a concerto by Viotti at Barthélemon's concert, the announcements stating that 'Dr. Haydn will preside at the Piano Forte.'

In the following year the boy was engaged to play at a lecture given by Charles Clagget, which is best described from a little book entitled:

'A DISCOURSE ON MUSIC' to be delivered at Mr. Clagget's Attic Concert at the King's Arms, Cornhill, October 31, 1793. On this Evening, various Pieces will be performed, and Songs accompanied on Clagget's Aïuton; or Ever-tuned Organ; an instrument without Pipes, Strings, Glasses, or Bells, which will never require to be Retuned in any Climate. Many pieces will also be performed on HIS PERFECT PIANO FORTE; And it will then be proved, they admit of regular Modulation through Twenty-nine Keys, every one of which are as harmonious as any of the few Keys we have to boast on common Keyed Instruments.

To be had at the King's Arms, Cornhill; and at the Musical Museum, Greek-street, Soho.

Price One Shilling.

In this publication Clagget describes himself as:

Harmonizer of Musical Instruments, Inventor of the Aïuton, or ever tuned Organ, and of the ever tuned Piano Forte, without Strings, of the Royal Telechordon Stop, for Harpsichords, & Grand Piano Forte, also of the Cromatic Trumpet & French Horn. Constructed to be performed upon the keys in use Major & Minor Without Crooks, or undergoing any Change whatever.

Clagget's 'Night's Entertainment' included a Haydn Quartet, played by 'Master Bridgtower, Atwood Jun., and others,' in addition to the 'Eleventh solo of Corelli on the violin,' played by Master Bridgtower, and accompanied on the Royal Telechordon. Concerning the latter piece Clagget's little book says:

The eleventh Solo of Corelli, which Master Bridgtower will now perform on the Violin, is composed in E major. It will be accompanied in regular thorough bass on the Telechordon. Upon common keyed instruments the thorough bass could not be played to *more than six bars*, although the Solo consists of near five folio pages, nor can they accompany *one bar of the first Adagio*. This is the true state of our Keyed instruments, and nothing is more easy than to prove that their imperfections are much more numerous than we have this night stated them to be.

Bridgetower seems to have settled down in London more or less as an orchestral player, as in 'A Musical Directory for the year 1794' (a scarce book) we find his name appears thus :

Bridgetower, George, *Violin*, Ora DL, Abb.—No. 20, Eaton-Street, Pimlico.

the abbreviations standing for 'Oratorios Drury Lane' and 'Abbey Westminster, Grand Performances in.' He was one of the first violinists of the Prince of Wales's private band who divided their time between the Prince's residences in London (Carlton House) and Brighton (the Pavilion).

From letters addressed to him there can be no question that in his prime Bridgetower occupied a good position in London musical circles. That he was on intimate terms with some of the leading musicians of the time is proved by his being addressed as 'My dear George' by Viotti (who held him in the highest esteem), François Cramer, Thomas Attwood and Dr. Charles Hague, Professor of Music at Cambridge University, at whose concerts the mulatto violinist often played. The letters addressed to him by Samuel Wesley and printed in the April issue of THE MUSICAL TIMES (p. 236) show that he was on friendly terms with that distinguished Bach-loving musician; moreover, it is interesting to find that Bridgetower's name is in the list of subscribers to the first English edition, that of Wesley and Horn, of Bach's 'Das wohltemperirte Clavier,' published between the years 1810 and 1813. And has not Wesley left the following appreciation of his friend ?

George Bridgetower, whom they used to denominate the African Prince, is justly to be ranked with the very first masters of the violin. He practised much with the celebrated Viotti, and imbibed largely of his bold and spirited style of execution. It was a rich treat for a lover of the instrument to hear him perform the matchless and immortal solos of Sebastian Bach, all of which he perfectly retained in memory and executed with the utmost precision, and without a single error. Indeed, whatever the composition, or whoever the author whose music he undertook to perform, he treated in so perfect and masterly a manner as to yield entire and universal delight and satisfaction to every auditor.—(British Museum, *Add. MS.* 27,593, f. 109.)

In 1802 Bridgetower obtained leave of absence from the Prince of Wales (afterwards King George IV.) to visit his mother, then residing at Dresden—where he gave concerts on July 24, 1802, and March, 1803—and to take the baths at Teplitz and Carlsbad. His connection with the English Court enabled him to obtain valuable letters of introduction to influential persons abroad, so much so, that at Vienna he had a most brilliant reception among the highest musical circles in the Austrian capital.

From Dresden he made his way to Vienna, where he not only enjoyed the friendship of Beethoven, but he induced the master to compose something for his concert. With what result?—the Sonata for pianoforte and violin in A (Op. 47), known the world over as the 'Kreutzer Sonata.'

The concert took place in the Augarten, Vienna, at eight o'clock in the morning of probably May 24, 1803 (the exact day cannot be determined). As the time drew near for the concert, Bridgetower became anxious about the new work, the composition of which Beethoven had put off until the eleventh hour. Ferdinand Ries tells us that Beethoven called upon him at half-past four on the morning preceding the concert, and asked him to copy out with all speed the violin part of the first *Allegro* (his regular copyist being otherwise engaged) of which the pianoforte part was only sketched. The lovely variations were literally finished at the last moment, and Bridgetower had to play his violin part as best he could from the more or less illegible manuscript of the composer. The last movement was ready in good time, as it originally formed the *finale* of the Sonata in the same key (Op. 30), dedicated to Alexander I., Emperor of Russia.

Bridgetower recorded on his copy of the Sonata a very interesting incident in connection with the first performance of this magnificent work. In Thayer's 'Beethoven's Leben' it is given in a German form, but through the kindness of Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, of New York, the English editor of the new edition of Thayer's book, we are enabled to give the note exactly in Bridgetower's own words. He says :

'When I accompanied him [Beethoven] in this Sonata-concertante at Wien at the repetition of the first part of the *Presto*, I imitated the flight at the 18th bar of the pianoforte part of this movement thus :

'He jumped up, embraced me, saying, "Noch einmal, mein lieber Bursch" ["Once more, my dear fellow"]. Then he held the open pedal during this flight, the chord of 6 as at the ninth bar.

'Beethoven's expression in the *Andante* [variations] was so chaste, which always characterized the performance of all his *slow movements*, that it was unanimously hailed to be repeated twice.

'GEORGE POLGREEN BRIDGETOWER.'

An interesting and important light upon the dedication of the Sonata is to be found in the *Musical World* of December 4, 1858. In a

letter written to the editor by J. W. Thirlwall, a well-known violinist of that time, he says :

In respect to the Kreutzer Sonata, Bridgetower told me, that when it was written, Beethoven and he were constant companions, and on the first copy was a dedication to his friend Bridgetower ; but, ere it was published, they had some silly quarrel about a girl, and in consequence Beethoven scratched out the name of Bridgetower and inserted that of Kreutzer—a man whom he had never seen.

In confirmation of the statement that the composer and the mulatto violinist were friends, there are two short letters from Beethoven to Bridgetower couched in the most genial terms, in addition to the letter which we give in facsimile as one of the extra supplements to the present issue. The following is an English translation of a letter of introduction in which it will be observed Beethoven spells his friend's name 'Brischdower'!

To Monsieur Baron Alexandre de Wezlar.

At home, March 18th.

Though we have never spoken, I take the liberty of recommending to you the bearer of this note, Mr. Brischdower, a very skilful virtuoso and master of his instrument. He plays his Concertos and Quartets excellently, and I much wish that you would procure him some acquaintances. With Lobkowitz, Fries, and all other distinguished amateurs, he has become acquainted with advantage.

I think it would not be a bad plan were you to take him one evening to Theresa Schönfeld, where, I know many friends are in the habit of going, or to receive him yourself.

I know that you yourself will thank me for having procured you this acquaintance. Good bye, Herr Baron.

Yours obediently,

BEETHOVEN.

In his application to the Vienna police for permission to give his concert, Bridgetower signed his name 'August Bridgetower.' Those who purchased tickets included the British Ambassador (50), Prince Esterhazy (10), Prince Lobkowitz (20), Count Rasomousky (5), Princess Liechtenstein, and others; some of these names will be recognised as among those in Beethoven's aristocratic circle, the total amount realized by the sale of tickets being 1,140 florins. Czerny appears to have been present, as he records that 'Bridgetower played so very extravagantly as to cause laughter,' but as the composer of the pianoforte studies was then a boy of only twelve years of age, his judgment should not be taken too seriously.

Bridgetower returned to London *via* Dresden, his passport (dated July 27, 1803) from the latter place describing him as 'a musician, a native of Biala (Poland), aged twenty-four years, medium height, clean shaven, swarthy complexion, dark brown hair, brown eyes, and straight, rather broad nose.' On May 23, 1805, he gave a concert in London, which was announced thus in the *Morning Chronicle* of that day :

NEW ROOMS, HANOVER SQUARE.

Under the patronage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales.

MR. BRIDGTOWER begs leave to inform the Nobility, Gentry and his Friends, that his Concert will take place this evening. Mrs. Billington and Mr. J. Cramer have kindly offered to play the same Duett as at Messrs. Cramer's concert on Monday last.

Act I. Overture, Zauberflöte—Mozart ; Song, Sig. Morelli—Cimarosa ; Concerto, Violoncello, Mr. F. Bridgtower—Romberg ; Song, Sig. Viganoni—Paer ; Sestetto for Violin, Tenor, Violoncello, Clarinett, Horn, Bassoon, and Double Bass by Messrs. Bridgtower, Shield, F. Bridgtower, Kramer, Rehn, Malsh, and Dragonetti—Beethoven ; Song, Mrs. Ashe ; Concerto, Violin, Mr. Bridgtower—Bridgtower.

Act. II. New Grand Symphony—Beethoven ; Scena, Miss Parke—Guglielmi ; New Grand Duet for two Piano Fortes, Mrs. Billington and Mr. Cramer—Cramer ; Duet, Miss Parke and Sig. Viganoni ; Finale ; Piano Forte, Mr. G. Smart.

Tickets, Half-a-Guinea each, to be had of Mr. Bridgtower, 4, Great Ryder Street, St. James's ; Birchall's New Bond Street ; Monzani, Old Bond Street ; Clementi & Co., Cheapside ; and Bett's, Royal Exchange.

The violoncellist, 'Mr. F. Bridgtower,' in the above advertisement was doubtless a brother of the subject of this biographical sketch.

For the next few years Bridgetower seems to have lived in London. An important event in his life was the taking of the degree of Bachelor of Music at the University of Cambridge. For this he composed an exercise to words written by F. A. Rawdon, which began :

By faith sublime fair Passiflora steers
Her Pilgrimage along this vale of tears,
The hopes of Heaven alone her thoughts employ,
Christ is her glory, and the Cross her joy.

The exercise was performed, accompanied by a full band, at Great St. Mary's Church, Cambridge, on Commencement Sunday, June 30, 1811, in the presence of the Chancellor of the University, H.R.H. the Duke of Gloucester, then on a visit to Cambridge. *The Times* of July 2, 1811, in a notice of the doings connected with the royal visit, referred to the 'anthem composed by Mr. Bridgtower, the celebrated violinist, as an exercise for his Bachelor's degree in music,' adding 'The composition was elaborate and rich ; and highly accredited to the talents of the Graduate. The trio struck us, particularly, by its beauty ; but Master Hawes was not equal to his solo parts.'

In the following year he received a letter dated '2, Duchess Street, April 30, 1812,' from Dr. Crotch, which reads :

MY DEAR SIR,—As I find you are frequently in company with the Prince Regent, could you do me the favor to mention my Oratorio to his R.H., or if that is disagreeable to you would you be so kind as to inform me what is the regular way of proceeding in such cases. It is to be repeated May 26th, and the Patronage of H. R. H. would add much eclat to ye business.

I am Dear, Your most sincerely
WM. CROTCH.

The oratorio above referred to is 'Palestine,' produced at the Hanover Square Rooms, April 21, 1812.

Although Bridgetower was not one of the original members or associates of the Philharmonic Society, his name appears in the programme of the fourth concert of the first season (May 3, 1813), as leader

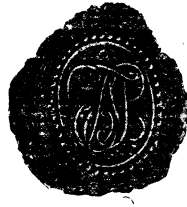
Facsimile of a letter written by Beethoven to Baron Alexandre de Wexlar.
Reproduced from the original in the possession of Mr. Arthur F. Hill, F.S.A., and by his
kind permission.

Ihre Güte
den ich zu mir
—

Wegen des unß zinnere
Personen, so ungen ist der
Ihre einem ungen ihm
den überbringer dieß zu.
Brockdower einen Jahr
geschickten und, einen recht
nem so ganz unrichtigen
Zie. ungen — es sind
wider einen Conceden ein
hochachtungsvoll gewartet, ist
einigen Jahr, der 3. 1. 1808
von ungen, ungen, ungen
ungen, ungen und
der 3. und allen überbringer
Chorenführer etc. als

Ich an. Wie Sie das
 Besten wissen. —
 Ich glaube, Sie sind
 nicht über ein paar
 Monate aus dem Hause
 zu sein. Ich hoffe
 Ihnen ein gutes
 Leben zu wünschen.
 Ich weiß, wie sehr
 ich für Sie bin. Ich
 bin nicht ganz
 gesund. Ich bin
 sehr schwach.
 Ich bin sehr
 dankbar für
 Ihre
 Aufmerksamkeit.

St. Michaels
Barn & Wagon
de Westland



of Beethoven's 'Quintett,' his colleagues being F. Cramer, Moralt, H. Gattie, and Lindley; at the sixth concert (May 31, 1813), he played second violin in a Quartet by Mozart. At that time he was probably an Associate, as he was re-admitted to the Society on November 6, 1819, being then married, for Mr. Watts, the Secretary, wrote to him saying that, 'by a vote of the General Meeting [held April 14, 1819] Mrs. Bridgetower is invited to accompany you as usual to the concerts, &c., until the usual forms can be gone through for your re-admission.' He seems to have had a connection with the Professional Society during 1815, an organization which was a short-lived rival to the Philharmonic Society.

The remaining years of Bridgetower's life were more or less passed in obscurity. So far as is known he appears to have lived abroad from about 1820 to 1843. He was at Rome in 1825 and 1827,

evidently moving in aristocratic circles. We find him in London in August, 1843, through a letter addressed to him by Vincent Novello, who signs himself 'your much obliged old pupil and professional admirer'; that Novello studied under Bridgetower is a new biographical fact. John Ella has recorded that he met the mulatto violinist in Vienna in 1845; he was again in London in 1846, and there are letters in the collection of Mr. Edward Speyer which prove that Bridgetower was at St. Cloud, Paris, in 1848.

No biographer has hitherto discovered the date and place of Bridgetower's death, the nearest approach thereto is that 'he is believed to have died in England between 1840 and 1850.' We have, however, been able, through a curious chain of clues, to obtain definite information on this point. Subjoined is a certified copy of the register of his death as obtained from Somerset House:

Certified Copy of an Entry in a REGISTER OF DEATHS,
(6 & 7 Wm. IV., cap. 86.)



Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE,
SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON.

REGISTRATION DISTRICT <u>Camberwell</u>									
1860. DEATHS in the District of <u>Peckham</u> in the County of <u>Surrey</u>									
No.	When and Where Died.	Name and Surname.	Sex.	Age.	Rank or Profession.	Cause of Death.	Signature, Description, and Residence of Informant.	When Registered.	Signature of Registrar.
373	Twenty ninth February 1860 8 Victory Cottages Bedford Street Montpellier Road	George Polegreen Bridgetower	Male	78 years	Gentleman	Synocha 10 days Calculus of long standing Certified	X The mark of Ann Chapman Present at the Death Neptune Cottage Park Street Camberwell	Second March 1860	Chas. Jno. Nicolles Registrar

CERTIFIED to be a true Copy of an Entry in the Certified Copy of a Register of Deaths in the District above mentioned.

Given at the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE, LONDON, under the Seal of the said Office, the 3rd day of March, 1908.

Seal

It will be observed that the informant of Bridgetower's death was an illiterate woman who could not write; this will doubtless account for the phonetic spelling of his second name. As the mulatto violinist died in a back street at Peckham, it may be assumed that he had 'come down in the world.' In the year 1860, No. 8, Victory Cottages was apparently known as '8, Norfolk Street,' the name of the occupier being entered in the rate-book as 'Bridge,' without any Christian name. Neither the name of Bridge, nor that of Bridgetower, appears in the Post Office Directory (London Suburbs) of 1860, which contains the names of only three residents in Norfolk Street, all of them tradesmen—a grocer, a beer retailer, and a dairyman.

With regard to the discovery of Bridgetower's place of burial, application was successively made to the Superintendents of three cemeteries

in South London without success. Then that great walthalla of literary and musical celebrities, Kensal Green Cemetery, was tried, with the result that the remains were found to be interred there in 'Compartment 9, Vault 39, Catacomb B. (No. 15,780).' The coffin bears the following inscription:

George Polegreen Bridgetower Esq.
Died 29th February, 1860.
Aged 78 years.

A few months before his death—on September 10, 1859—Bridgetower made a will in which he bequeathed the whole of his property to a married sister of his late wife, whose maiden name was Drake. The will was proved on July 3, 1860,

by the executor, the testator's friend 'Samuel Appleby, Esq., Solicitor, of 6, Harpur Street, Red Lion Square,' the estate being sworn 'under £1,000.' The will is signed 'G. P. Bridgetower,' but the preamble gives his name as 'George Polgreen Bridgetower, of Peckham,' followed by the words 'being about to go to Paris.' It is more than probable that he inherited some property left by his mother, who died soon after his visit to her in 1803, judging from the following legal notice which appeared in *The Times* of October 23, 1832:

Notice to Heirs and others—All persons who have any claim on or to Property, amounting to about 800 Saxon Dollars, left by the late Mary Ann Bridgetower, who died at Budissen on the 11th of September, 1807, are hereby directed to make known and prove the same by themselves, or their attorneys, at the sittings of the magistrates of the said town, on or before the 12th of March, 1833, or they will forfeit all right and title to the said property—Dated at Budissen, in the kingdom of Saxony, 8th August, 1832. By order of the Sitting Magistrates.

As a composer, Bridgetower is unknown to fame. In the new edition of Grove's 'Dictionary of Music and Musicians' (art. Bridgetower, vol. i., p. 402, *note*) it is stated that there are 'some MS. compositions' by him in the British Museum, but this needs correction by substituting the word 'printed' for 'MS.' The chief of these published compositions by Bridgetower is 'Diatonica Armonica for the pianoforte' (1812). This work, 'dedicated to his pupils,' consists of forty-one studies, in scale passages, for the instrument. There is also a ballad entitled 'Henry,' which was 'sung by Miss Feron and humbly dedicated with permission to Her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales,' the said permission having been given in a letter dated 'December 11, 1810.' The song is signed, by the composer, 'G. H. P. Bridgetower,' a form of his name which agrees with that given in the *Gentlemen's Magazine* of 1811 in connection with the Cambridge event above referred to. Here it may be observed that the various spellings of and discrepancies in Bridgetower's name are puzzling in their variety. In the British Museum are two printed books of 'Minuets, &c., for the violin, mandolin, German flute, and harpsichord, composed by an African,' who may be Bridgetower. They are inscribed respectively 'to his Grace Henry, Duke of Buccleuch,' and to the 'Right Honble. John Lord Montagu, of Boughton.' Three of these dance tune compositions are scored for horns, violins, and basses.

The fresh information contained in the foregoing biographical sketch has largely been obtained through the interesting collection of letters addressed to Bridgetower, and other documents relating to him, now in the possession of Mr. Arthur F. Hill, F.S.A., who has generously and unreservedly placed them at the disposal of the present writer. To him special thanks are also due for the loan of the only known portrait of Bridgetower—presented by the mulatto violinist to

Dr. Hague, of Cambridge, in the year 1805—with permission to reproduce it, together with the Beethoven letter as two of our extra supplements, both for the first time.

Thanks are also due to the following gentlemen for their kind help: Mr. Thomas Burgess, Superintendent of Kensal Green Cemetery; Mr. J. D. Davis, a well-known musician of Bath, for searching and copying extracts from old Bath newspapers; Mr. H. E. Krehbiel, of New York; Mr. Edward Speyer; and Mr. C. William Tagg, Town Clerk of Camberwell, for searching the old rate-books of that Borough.

F. G. E.

Occasional Notes.

*The year's at the spring,
And day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;
The snail's on the thorn;
God's in His heaven—
All's right with the world!*

ROBERT BROWNING.

How the heart of Samuel Wesley would have rejoiced had he lived in this year of grace 1908! Why? Because he would have seen the rich fruition of the Bach-seed he sowed, in season and out of season, a century ago. Here, in the present issue of THE MUSICAL TIMES, we have the satisfaction of recording no fewer than *five* performances of the great B minor Mass—in London, at a northern suburb of London, Dublin, Leeds, and Newcastle-on-Tyne. Moreover, the work was given twice on December 16 last—in London, and, for the first time in Scotland, at Edinburgh; also at Oxford and Cambridge during the past term, making a total of nine performances within four months in various parts of the United Kingdom.

It should not be forgotten that Wesley was a very practical propagandist of the works of THE MAN, as he designated his great hero. Nearly a hundred years have run their course since he introduced Bach's vocal music into England. It was at Wesley's 'Musical Morning Party,' given at the Hanover Square Rooms on June 3, 1809, that the motet 'Jesu, meine Freude' ('Jesu, Priceless Treasure') was performed, and that within six years of its first publication in Germany. Why the great B minor Mass had to wait till the year 1876 before it received its complete interpretation in this country is a mystery, and, at the same time, a serious reflection on the Bach lovers who came after Wesley. Now we are atoning for this neglect, and performances are sure to be given in places where the sublime strains have not hitherto been heard. To quote from a letter written by Wesley on December 8, 1808, and addressed to Benjamin Jacob, organist of Surrey Chapel: 'Depend on it there is nothing more necessary to render his divine Strains the Chief delight and solace of all *truly harmonized Souls*, but an assiduous cultivation of them.' Perfectly true!