

A NOTE FROM *Johnstone-Music*

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SPECIAL FEATURE on the music-loving KING GEORGE IV (Britain/Ireland)

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George IV, King of Great Britain and Ireland lived from 1762 to 1830. He is included in my 'On this Cello Day' because he was a most serious amateur cellist! Indeed, he was a pupil of then famous English cellist John Crosdil.

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George IV loved state ceremonies as well as enjoying private parties, and both these naturally extended to include music. George IV, when he was Prince of Wales, until the year 1820 (also known as The Prince Regent), was a significant patron of the Austrian composer Franz Joseph Haydn, later introducing him to George III and Queen Charlotte. Haydn wrote about the prince: '*he has an extraordinary love of music*'.

This love was not limited to the cello - as mentioned he gave ample patronage to worthy figures, and he was also known to be a fine singer. He was also a kind-hearted and generous man - wait for this anecdote:

George Bridgetower was a violin prodigy of West Indian/German origins. The Prince Regent - this is, later George IV - took a great interest in Bridgetower and sponsored his continuing musical education. The violinist repaid his support, achieving a high professional level, and later played in the Prince's orchestra in Brighton and London. So that means two hundred years ago in the beginning years of the 19th century the king was even more 'socially modern' than a few of our retrogrades from the 21st century! Hooray for "Multi-racial performers!"

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George had acceded to the throne on 29th January 1820, on the death of his father King George III, at Windsor Castle. But the coronation of George IV as King of the United Kingdom took place at Westminster Abbey, London, on 19th July 1821 (I believe that the delay was due to divorce proceedings!). This coronation was the most extravagant ever staged in Britain up to that point in history. The choirs and orchestra were placed in a large temporary gallery which spanned the east end of the abbey over St Edward's Chapel. One newspaper report stated that there were "*a hundred instruments and twice a hundred voices*". The programme included the Hallelujah Chorus from the oratorio 'Messiah' by G.F. Handel in the king's initial entry.

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But the new king didn't just want musicians for his ceremony and then to be forgotten. No, he gave enormous impulse to 'The King's Band', an orchestra comprising of 46 wind and percussion instruments, was nationally renowned and this was organized directly from the Royal court. They played during dinners, balls, palace strolls and outdoor festivities. Music was both serious and popular.

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Famously in 1823 George IV held a 'Grand Music Party', at which the Italian composer, Gioachino Antonio Rossini, directed the band in selections from his most celebrated operas. Always the king being a great character the story went like this: Rossini arrived in Britain for the very first time in December 1823. Immediately King George IV summoned him to Brighton, he wanted to meet him and get to know him. Rossini was unwell ('under the weather' as we'd say in English) but the King was persistent. After more than a fortnight of waiting, Rossini was finally wheeled in a BATH CHAIR into the King's presence, still not recovered!

"He was the most amiable of all the many monarchs I have known," Rossini said of George. The King was also reportedly "enraptured" with him.

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If only ALL monarchs were like him then I wouldn't be so anti-monarchy, hahahaha!!

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'documenting the cello'

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Also both general musical and cello based articles, directories of famous historical cellists, and many other items of interest

DOWNLOADS - Many downloads on *Johnstone-Music* are now available, for those that are interested, at a *symbolic* payment, which is to help cover the costs of this web site. Some scores/parts are presented in musical edition programmes but generally they are found here in a most “clear” hand-written manuscript copy (the majority to almost a professional copyist standard) and transferred to a PDF file.

As far as *Johnstone-Music* is concerned you are welcome to publicly perform or record any work or piece found in the web; however you DO need to make mention of the name of the composer and the arranger on any printed information (hand programmes, disc covers etc.).

FREE PUBLICITY - If you care to inform us of any public performance (no matter how formal or informal the event is), recording or other uses of the original music or arrangements of David Johnstone or of other musical colleagues included in this web, we are happy to give your event free publicity on the *Johnstone-Music* web.

To take advantage of this, try to write to us three weeks or more in advance with any information. Last-minute entries are certainly better than not writing at all - however, understandably, once we have past the calendar month of the event it is not usually possible to add old items to the calendar. It is very interesting for the promoters of *Johnstone-Music* to have knowledge of your activity - and so in return for your information you will be entitled to a free gift of a work/s for every diary addition you tell us about. To find out more about this, please visit the “*Cello Club*” section in the web!