

# An Entrepreneur and the Public Gathering Venue in the Eighteenth Century

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## Introduction

This work is presented as a record of one of the courses rather than wholly an academic paper. A particular course given in the latter half of 2014 needs re-viewing and writing down in some way and I assume this journal is the best as a repository to look back and to make reference available for the future use. One of the main reasons is that the course was my challenge as well as the students'; during the term everything was delivered in English except for one day when we went out for an excursion with a guide speaking in Japanese. The syllabus had made the language matter clear. Not all the students who first gathered were aware of the challenge and accordingly some left, but twelve continued attending. Among the twelve people one was taking the course as an open class; another was an exchange student from France. The course was not a compulsory subject in any sense and they attended purely voluntarily, which deserves admiration and my thanks go to them who cooperated in realizing my plan.

The course was on Vauxhall Gardens which was a remarkable phenomenon in the eighteenth century. Gardens as a symbol of heaven and earth as well as nature and art always represent harmony of contradictory factors. Gardens, accordingly, are fruitful sources of interdisciplinary studies as they involve politics, economy, technology, aesthetics, literature, philosophy and other branches in academic pursuits. Urban gardens, especially, as Vauxhall Gardens was one of them, reinforce the role of space for public gatherings as a civilized and civilizing scene.

A comprehensive study by David Coke and Alan Borg was published in 2011

with generous and beautiful illustrations in large-sized art book format.<sup>1</sup> Coke has constructed a very resourceful website which offers a wide range of Vauxhall resources including archival materials such as the contract document and the proprietor's will as well as the lists of performers etc.<sup>2</sup> Although compact in size and simple in format, Penelope J. Corfield's booklet is as important because it captures the essence of the rise and decline of Vauxhall Gardens.<sup>3</sup> My course and this piece heavily depend on these two books.

Vauxhall Gardens was a kind of a Disneyland with its enormous appeal to people, its philosophy to maintain the prestige as well as popularity and its cultural creativity. It provided the students an opportunity not only to learn its amazing history but also to think about the roles of public space, that is, gardens and parks, in urban planning. In the course of comparing what they learned in the classes with the real layout and circumstances of Sumpu Jo Koen, the history took on exciting feasibility while the merits and problems of the familiar park became the objects for consideration. The excursion, which made the items and events in the written world their own experience, facilitated discussion in English among the students.

The following sections attempt to place the enterprise in the context of the history of the gardens, the development of a metropolis, the rise of a particular enterprising genius, heritage and culture and the inevitable vicissitudes.

## Gardens

In the history of the development of gardens, formal gardens make a convenient starting point. The meticulously artificial symmetrical grounds, for example, the Versailles, provide a striking contrast with the gardens in eighteenth-century Britain. The Versailles gardens are an epitome of the absolute monarch's power and wealth. It was the monarch's triumph over nature and everything was to be controlled. Horticultural skills were engaged to assert control over nature, implying

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<sup>1</sup> David Coke and Alan Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History* (New Haven, Conn. ; London: Yale University Press, 2011).

<sup>2</sup> <http://vauxhallgardens.com/index.html>

<sup>3</sup> P. J. Corfield, *Vauxhall and the Invention of the Urban Pleasure Gardens* (Mitcham: History & Social Action Publications, 2008).

divine king's rule over the world. Not only the owner of the place as divine but its designer, André Le Nôtre (1613-1700) thought he had God-given talents and it was a culmination of the concept of a gardener designing the land imitating the God's creation: "Man sets himself as a little god' when he applies himself to re-designing in his garden a 'nature' sympathetic to him because he has conceived it, and he understands it according to his rules and principles."<sup>4</sup>

The rhythm of patterned layout of the plants was a pleasure to the eye. However, it must be noted that the gardens were laid out for walking. One of the pleasures Louis XIV had was to impress his visitors walking in the gardens.<sup>5</sup>

In contrast with the formal gardens, eighteenth-century landscape gardening mainly in the extensive country estates sought for pretended naturalness enabled by calculation and devices of artificiality.<sup>6</sup> It embodied the picturesque serenity of the Arcadian world. As the formal garden in France was intended to show the conspicuous power and wealth of the owner, the landscape gardens were for the landowners to show off their taste in classical picturesque concepts.

In London, city gardens developed. The main forces in the city gardens were different from those concerning the formal gardens as well as the landscape gardens.<sup>7</sup> One of the extreme examples of the city gardens was Vauxhall Gardens. Alessandra Ponte in her discussion on the development of the design of the urban public parks points to the three principal influences: 'the eighteenth-century landscape park, the botanical garden, and the pleasure-gardens of the sort made famous by Vauxhall Gardens in London'.<sup>8</sup> The layout itself of the gardens in Vauxhall

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<sup>4</sup> R.P. Etienne, *Essay des merveilles de nature et des plus nobles artifices* (Rouen 1629), p.456, quoted in Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, *The History of Garden Design : The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991), pp.136-37.

<sup>5</sup> Mosser and Teyssot, *The History of Garden Design : The Western Tradition from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, p.143.

<sup>6</sup> Hunt discusses the changes in the reigning concept of the picturesque from erudite artificiality to aestheticism of the expressive nature in his "Ut Pictura Poesis': The Garden and the Picturesque in England (1710-1750)" in Monique Mosser and Georges Teyssot, eds., *The Architecture of Western Gardens : A Design History from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, 1st MIT Press ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1991), pp.231-41.

<sup>7</sup> Though Vauxhall Gardens is not featured as a main topic in the development of the urban gardens, Part Four of the garden design history is devoted to the designs in town parks in Mosser and Teyssot, *The Architecture of Western Gardens : A Design History from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, pp.460-68.

<sup>8</sup> Alessandra Ponte, "Public Parks in Great Britain and the United States: From a 'Spirit of the Place'

Gardens was thus influential, yet there are other stories to tell concerning Vauxhall Gardens; its inventor was from the middle ground and it was supported and frequented by people from various walks of life from the royal patron to common people.

## The Rise of Vauxhall Gardens

One of the remarkable features in eighteenth century London was the development of the pleasure gardens. The steady increase in population, from about 500,000 in the mid-1670s, 630,000 in 1715, 740,000 in 1760 and in 1801 census as many as 864,845.<sup>9</sup> The inflow of the population with the expansion of economy enabled novelties in cultural enterprises. The pleasure gardens provided people with what civilization could offer: food and drink, music, visual arts, arbours, plants, entertainments to admire and to get involved and walks to show themselves and see other people.

'Vauxhall' was originally 'Faulke's Hall', which was the residence of Sir Falkes de Breauté (-1226), who served King John (1167?-1216). 'Vauxhall' remains as a place-name in London.<sup>10</sup> An underground station called 'Vauxhall' is on Victoria Line, just one stop from Victoria to the south across the Thames. The headquarters of MI6 is located there. The place is sufficiently close to the court and fashionable residential areas yet it is across the Thames; it was an ideal place to establish a venue easily accessible and at the same time detached from everyday activities. Without the current Vauxhall Bridge or the passing through underground tunnel, people in the eighteenth century used boats to reach the gardens. The transportation over the river meant the beginning of the attractions and the end of the spells.

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to a 'Spirit of Civilization'" in Mosser and Teyssot, *The Architecture of Western Gardens : A Design History from the Renaissance to the Present Day*, p.380.

<sup>9</sup> Just for reference: the population of Yedo in early 1700s was over 1,000,000; Shizuoka-ken has 3,698,679 (1 Sept 2014) and Shizuoka-shi 706,803 (Sept 2014). So London in the first half of the eighteenth century was similar in population size to the present Shizuoka-shi.

<sup>10</sup> 'Vauxhall' is also a car manufacturing company name. A marine engineer Alexander Wilson founded the company there in 1857. It built its first car in 1903. Though it has been part of American General Motors since 1925, Vauxhall cars are regarded as British, providing middle-range cars. The final closure of Vauxhall Gardens was in 1859, two years after Wilson began his business there.

The 'Spring Gardens in Vauxhall' opened in 1661.<sup>11</sup> It was on the 12-acre (4.8ha) site. The recently opened Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, which 2012 London Olympics have left, has 230ha; Sumpu Jo Koen is 18ha in area.<sup>12</sup> So the site of the 12 acres was not very large, but the gardens maintained such big trees as oaks, elms and sycamores, producing woodland effects which the city dwellers could enjoy.

Samuel Pepys (1633-1703) characteristically captured the vogue of the new pleasure. His diary in May 1662 testifies that the gardens that provided the joy of plants and eating out, were for both men and women seeking for natural and wholesome delights. He went to the gardens together with his wife and the servants. He enjoyed 'abundance of roses' and 'cakes and powdered beef and ale' '[a]nd so home again by water, with much pleasure'. In another entry, the place is a little murky with a certain kind of temptation. It is also accompanied by artificial mimic of nature as entertainments. It attracted many people who could afford:

To see how my nature could not refrain from the temptation, but I must invite them to go to Fox-hall, to Spring-garden, ... and I did some of my business; and so after them, and find them there, in an Arbour, and had met with Mrs Pierce and some company with her. So here I spent 20s upon them and were pretty merry. Among other things, had a fellow that imitated all manner of birds, and dogs, and hogs, with his voice, which was mighty pleasant. Stay'd there till night...<sup>13</sup>

... he and I by water to Fox-hall and there walked in Spring-garden; a great deal of company, and the weather and garden pleasant; that it is very pleasant and cheap going thither, for a man may go to spend what he will, or nothing,

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<sup>11</sup> The outdoor gathering places of this kind were called 'gardens'. 'Parks' were originally a legal term designating 'an enclosed tract of land held by royal grant or prescription for keeping beasts of the chase'. In the seventeenth century the royal land for game animals developed into places 'ornamentally laid out and devoted to public recreation'. (OED)

<sup>12</sup> Information on the newly developed Olympic Park in London, see: <http://queenelizabetholympicpark.co.uk/>. For the basic information of the Sumpu Jo Koen, developed by Shizuoka-shi, see the following website: <http://koen.city.shizuoka.jp/detail.php?id=123>. For its plan and purpose, refer to: [http://www.city.shizuoka.jp/000\\_004844.html](http://www.city.shizuoka.jp/000_004844.html).

<sup>13</sup> Samuel Pepys, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: A New and Complete Transcription*, ed. Robert Latham and William Matthews, 11 vols. (London: Bell, 1970-83), VII, p.136, dated 29 May 1666, quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens: A History*, p.21.

... but to hear a nightingale and other birds, and here fiddles, and there a harp, and here a jews trump, and here laughing, and there fine people walking, is mighty divertising.<sup>14</sup>

For a visitor from America, it was in the Spring Gardens that he picked up women of easy virtue:

After dinner I put some things in order and then took a nap till 5 o'clock, when Daniel Horsmanden came and we went to the park, where we had appointed to meet some ladies but they failed. Then we went to Spring Gardens where we picked up two women and carried them into the arbor and ate some cold veal and about 10 o'clock we carried them to the bagnio, where we bathed and lay with them all night and I rogered mine twice and slept pretty well, but neglected my prayers.<sup>15</sup>

For this American, Vauxhall was somewhere to spend an evening, having dinner and taking some rest in company with women. He went there on 29 June 1719:

Then I took a boat and went to Vauxhall and dined upon a roast Chicken at Spring Garden. After dinner I took a nap in the arbor till 6 o'clock and then took a walk and joined three women and gave them Rhinish wine and cheese-cake, but about nine went to London alone and went to Will's Coffeehouse...<sup>16</sup>

Thus, the Spring Gardens at Vauxhall attracted men and women, but when men mention it, it frequently involved dalliance. In fact, one of the main purposes to go there was picking up women to have pleasures later. The dubious reputation accompanied the garden for its shade, arbours and loitering women.

In contrast with the Spring gardens in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, 1729 onwards Vauxhall Gardens was to establish a different reputation.

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<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*, VIII, p.240, dated 28 May 1667, quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.21.

<sup>15</sup> William Byrd, *The London Diary, 1717-1721, and Other Writings*, ed. Louis B. Wright and Marion Tinling (New York: Oxford University Press, 1958), p.140.

<sup>16</sup> Byrd, *The London Diary, 1717-1721, and Other Writings*, p.276.

First of all, the site offered the pleasures of the gardens as green retreat with man-made constructions that imitated nature, grottoes and mazes:

Hail pleasing Shades! O hail thou secret Grove!  
The blest Retreat of Liberty and Love.  
All hail, ye Bow'rs! Ye beaut'ous Silvan Scenes,  
Ye Grotts, and Mazes of fresh blooming Greens;<sup>17</sup>

The dominant feelings there are affection, freedom and harmony:

Here dwells no Care, no matrimonial Strife,  
The peevish Husband, nor the brawling Wife;  
Here's no Restraint to make our Pleasures cloy,  
We part at will, and as we please enjoy.<sup>18</sup>

People whose lives usually take place in different quarters, from the royal court, hack writers and stage performers, shared the place together. A great many people were there:

The walks are fill'd with Throngs of diff'rent Sort,  
From Fleet Street, Drury, and incog., from Court.  
To these fair Shades, see Belles and Beaus advance,  
Some sigh, some sing, some whistle, and some dance.<sup>19</sup>

In addition to these descriptions, visits to Vauxhall Gardens provided topics in diaries, periodicals, novels, prints, drawings and paintings. The proprietors did good work to make it popular, well-talked about and well represented in visual representations. As a result the place became suddenly fashionable instead of dubious.

The proprietors used the burgeoning print industry to their benefits. *A Sketch*

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<sup>17</sup> *The Gentleman's Magazine*, II, June 1732, p.820.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

*of the Spring-Gardens, Vaux-Hall* was published to promote publicity; it defined the roles of the gardens and it was a guide for the visitors.<sup>20</sup> It justifies the pleasures in the diligent Englishman's daily life, referring to the classical authority and distinguishing the English from others on the continent. The text skilfully flatters the vanity of the intellectually and socially ambitious and arouses national pride:

it must be granted... that Diversions, of one sort or another, are absolutely necessary to Mankind; ... without corrupting the Minds, or enervating the Bodies... The wise, rich Men among the Antients us'd to recreate their Spirits, after the Fatigues and Toils of the Day, with a Concert of Music; ... Let all Ranks among us be more or less industrious, but let us not be Goths. The Industry of the Dutch is very much to be commended; but then their Indelicacy deserves proportionable Contempt. The useful and the polite Arts should go Hand in Hand, and be consider'd as Sisters; ... Methinks one of the great Arts of Life is, to pass thro' it with elegant Innocence, ... 'Tis evident, that what is said above, relates only to People of Education, and a polite Turn of Mind.<sup>21</sup>

Special events contributed to add to its popularity. There were prominent events during the first years. In 1731 a fashionable Italian ball was held: 'at Spring-Gardens, Vauxhall, for a Ball after the Italian manner at their Carnivals'. In the succeeding year the event was called in Italian, making it fashionably special; there was a 'ridotto' in April, and then a Ridotto al fresco on June 1732. It cost twenty-one times as much as the usual entrance fee, at a guinea for admission to the gardens because the presence of Frederick, Prince of Wales was announced.

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<sup>20</sup> The booklet was published anonymously. Coke and Borg accepts John Nichols' ascription to John Lockman (p.41). *A Sketch of the Spring-Gardens, Vaux-Hall. In a Letter to a Noble Lord, Etc*, (London: G. Woodfall, 1750).

<sup>21</sup> *A Sketch of the Spring-Gardens, Vaux-Hall. In a Letter to a Noble Lord, Etc*, pp.29-30, quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.42.

## Vauxhall as business

The gardens opened during the summer, usually in the first or second week of May until late August. It was an evening resort with oil lamps lit at dusk, usually at nine o'clock. For example, during the 1736 season, it was from 19 May until 21 August; the concert began every evening at five o'clock, ending at nine.

The ticket system indicates Tyers' knack. Initially it was free and visitors paid for their food and drinks. In 1736 visitors were asked to pay one shilling per admission. In 1737 Tyers announced a new way of paying for admission: a subscription limited to a thousand subscribers at a guinea each.<sup>22</sup> And every subscriber would receive a metal ticket, personally inscribed, which would allow admission for two people to the gardens for the whole season. The limited number of subscribers and the privilege of personally inscribed proof of contribution flattered the vanity of ordinary well-to-do people.

The total the 1000 season ticket holders paid amounts to £ 1,050. The exact number of the visitors is not known but the journalists were interested and they allowed themselves to mention lucrativeness and emphasize Tyers' commercial success. *Evening Lessons* of 1742 estimated the number of visitors there: 'the Number of People that resorted thither [to Vauxhall] was even as the Number of the Sands that is upon the Sea-shore'. *Scots Magazine* in 1739 was kindly engaged in unsolicited counting for Tyers and us: 'not less than one thousand shillings are received each evening of performance during the season'.

John Nicholas (1745-1826), printer and anecdotes collector, testifies Vauxhall Gardens as a very lucrative enterprise: 'About an hundred nights make the season of Vauxhall; and the average of about one thousand persons per night is supposed to make a good season to the proprietors.'<sup>23</sup> He also mentions the great number of visitors and the extreme success of a particular day:

On June 25, 1781, there were more than eleven thousand persons in the gardens, owing to the permission of his Royal Highness the Duke of Cumberland (whom the proprietors justly honour as their patron) to notify his inten-

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<sup>22</sup> One guinea was 21 shillings.

<sup>23</sup> Quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.190.

tion of supping in the gardens with his Duchess; ... This was the most memorable instance, of past or present times, where so many people assembled and paid admission money, where the invitation and entertainment was music.<sup>24</sup>

Someone in 1784 retrospectively and nostalgically remembered the prosperity they had fifteen or twenty years before by recalling that Tyers closed the gardens as early as 10 August because he was tired of making profits which had amounted to £12,000.<sup>25</sup>

John Mullan captures the extraordinary success of the project at Vauxhall Gardens in a review of Brewer's *The Pleasure of Imagination*.<sup>26</sup> He focuses on the commercial exploitation of a royal display that was to celebrate the end of the War of the Austrian Succession in 1749. On 21 April Vauxhall Gardens held a rehearsal of the royal event prior to the official event on 27 April. At Vauxhall Gardens people paid 2 shillings and 6 pence each. 12,000 people gathered. The occasion was a great success with Handel's music. In contrast with the successful commercial rehearsal, the official event turned out to be a fiasco. It was free from such vulgar requirement as admission fee and it was to be a great patriotic show. Handel's *Music for the Royal Fireworks* went well. However, the fireworks did not. In desperate efforts to light the fireworks, they did something wrong and the pavilions caught fire. It was a 'Grand Whim for Posterity to Laugh At'.<sup>27</sup> Mullan reinforces the point Brewer makes that it was the wisdom, tact and might of the growing commercial people that was constructing the arts and culture in the eighteenth century Britain by emphasizing the success of Vauxhall Gardens.

## Jonathan Tyers

In 1729 Vauxhall Spring-Gardens was to be sublet to Jonathan Tyers (1702-67) by Elizabeth Masters, a widow, for the next thirty years at £ 250 per annum.

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<sup>24</sup> Quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.190.

<sup>25</sup> Dated 28 August 1784, quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.191.

<sup>26</sup> John Mullan, "Cultivating Cultivation," *London Review of Books*, 18 June 1998.

<sup>27</sup> A satirical broadside published by T. Fox (1880,1113.2364) at the British Museum.

Tyers purchased part of the site for £3800 in 1752 and the rest later in 1750s.<sup>28</sup>

Tyers turned the old-fashioned tavern garden into the respectable urban gardens, offering high-quality entertainments. He was a man who could earn a lot with his inventiveness. When he signed the 1729 document, he was a 'fellmonger', kind of craftsman and merchant; in 1734 he described himself as a 'yeoman', independent freeholder. He was climbing up the social ladder by his flair for innovation and business. A family portrait (1740) by Francis Hayman (1707 or 1708-1776), shows Jonathan Tyers with his family: Elizabeth Tyers (1700-1771), his wife, Elizabeth Tyers (1727-1802) and Margaret Tyers (1724-1786), his daughters, and Jonathan Tyers Jr (circa 1728-1792) and Thomas Tyers (1726-1787), his sons. One of the daughters is pouring tea. The tea-set does not look gorgeous aristocratic one but the tea scene for family portrait was fashionable. The eldest son, Thomas, is in gown and with mortar-board. Tyers was successful enough to endow his son with higher education. There is a profile medallion over the fireplace of Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-51). The prince, who was a great connoisseur in arts, was his patron.

Just as tea maintained the status of luxury at the same time that of familiar everyday use, Tyers's enterprise was a royal and aristocratic occasion as well as attracting ordinary people who could afford a relatively small sum of the entrance fee. He was good at asking for royal and aristocratic patronage; people of high rank were present at the site. However, he was also egalitarian with his gardens open to anybody.

Tyers was an entrepreneur very enlightened, ambitious, innovative and intelligent. With his plans and clever execution, the Spring Gardens with a shade of murky reputation were turned into the place of moral order and civilization. It was important to be positive about pleasures in contrast with the prohibition and the reaction in the previous century. He saw to it that the gardens provided pleasures of art; for visual art, the walls of the box seats were exhibition space; for the ears, singers and orchestra offered songs and tunes.

He created jobs for singers, composers, instrument players, interior designers, painters and engravers. His patronage of music performers, artists, designers and

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<sup>28</sup> DNB entry by Warwick William Wroth.

craftsmen provided them to show their skills in public and give them opportunities to meet potential customers.

Charles Burney (1726-1814), a well-known musicologist, organist and composer, around 1745-1750, testifies Tyers' good taste and social adeptness. He compares the Vauxhall Gardens to a costly and elaborate machine; this comparison points to remarkably well-organized comprehensiveness of the whole schemes:

a man of strong parts & good taste with a considerable portion of Wit. Of his origin I know nothing, but that he must have had some patrimony to have enabled him to live in the great world, with wch he seemed well acquainted, & to set such an expensive & complicated machine [as Vauxhall Gardens] a going ... Mr Tyers was very powerful in conversation;<sup>29</sup>

## Artists and Literature

A great many people were engaged in getting the business of the gardens going. The most famous was definitely Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759). He was born in Germany, moving to London and getting naturalized as a Briton in 1727. It was for the sake of patronage in London and accordingly his great commercial success there. Lord Burlington and Duke of Chandos were among the influential patrons. Handel had a commission to compose anthems in 1727 for George II. Frederick, Prince of Wales was also a celebrated supporter. On his death Handel got special treatment to be buried in Westminster Abbey.

A life-size marble statue of Handel by Louis François Roubiliac was commissioned by Tyers to be placed outdoors in the garden. The style was both grand and familiar typically in Tyers style. It was grand because usually those kind of big statue was for kings, nobility and military heroes. The sculptured Handel had a pose and clothes that were familiar and relaxed. The slipper on his left foot was even dangling. This Handel with his lyra greeted guests at the Vauxhall Gardens.<sup>30</sup>

Handel is just an extraordinarily popular and well-known example and there were other musicians who were lucky enough to sing and play there or compose

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<sup>29</sup> Quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.36.

<sup>30</sup> It is now at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

for the performances in the gardens. Among the composers whose pieces were played at the gardens were Thomas Augustine Arne (1710-1778) and Tommaso Giordani (c. 1733-1806). Maria Theresa Bland (1769-1838), Ann Catley (1745-1789), Charles Incedon (bap. 1763, d. 1826), Margaret Martyr (1761/2-1807), William Thomas Parke (1761-1847), William Michael Rooke (1794-1847) and Isabella Vincent (1734/5-1802) were among the singers and performers at Vauxhall Gardens. The last Vincent was a milkmaid-turned-singer whom Tyers gave musical education. Other entertainers included Henry Tracey Coxwell (1819-1900), a balloonist, and Edwin Croueste (1841-1914), a clown.

In visual arts, painters such as Francis Hayman (1708-76), Peter Monamy (1681-1749) and sculptor Louis Francois Roubiliac (1702-1762) were publicized by the works exhibited at the Gardens.

The legend has it that William Hogarth (1697-1764) was the one to help Tyers and the arts in Britain. At the beginning of his business, Tyers got stuck. In despair, he was wondering which method would be better, hanging or drowning. Hogarth pulled him back from the rash pessimism of suicide, suggesting display of art work at the Gardens. Fortunately, the project based on Hogarth's advice turned out to be popular. In an early nineteenth century drawing by John Thomas Smith, Hogarth draws one of his renowned piece, 'Morning', in a supper box in front of Tyers. The situation is not based on the fact, but it captures the importance of their ideas and skills as well as the significance of the place.

In gratitude Tyers gave Hogarth a perpetual season ticket to the Gardens, which was a medallion in gold, featuring two female figures, Virtus and Voluptas, who symbolized the virtuous pleasures offered there.<sup>31</sup> For young artists the supper-box gallery became a showcase. The Vauxhall gardens served as a nursery bed for the British art and from the viewpoint of potential purchasers and patrons it was a school for connoisseurship and cultural investment. It eventually contributed to

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<sup>31</sup> The medallion was given to the British Museum early in the twentieth century. The solid gold medallion allowed entry to Hogarth and 'coach-full of people' who accompanied him. After he died, his widow left it to Mrs Mary Lewis, who left it to Mr Hast and then to Mr John Tuck successively in their wills. "The obverse is embossed with the figures of Virtue (Virtus) and Pleasure (Voluptas) above the inscription 'Felices Una' ('One of the Blessed'). The reverse is engraved Hogarth in perpetuum Beneficii memoriam ('Hogarth, in perpetual memory of his favour everlasting')" ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/pe\\_mla/w/william\\_hogarth's\\_gold\\_admissio.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/pe_mla/w/william_hogarth's_gold_admissio.aspx))

expand the possibilities of art and art market.

Reference in literature includes *The Spectator*, no.383 (1712), Henry Fielding's *Amelia* (1751), Charlotte Lennox's *The Female Quixote* (1752), Charles Dickens's *Sketches by 'BOZ'* (1836) and W. M. Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* (1847) to name but a few. Vauxhall Gardens found its way in the works of literature for its description by the writers interested in the voguish phenomenon and for its compound nature at the forefront of culture. Indeed, it was a suitable tool to discuss the world in a satiric way. Among them, *The Expedition of Humphry Clinker* (1771) by Tobias Smollett presents pros and cons on the pleasure gardens.<sup>32</sup>

## The Decline

As anything in this world has its course, Vauxhall Gardens had its heyday between 1732 and 1786. Corfield perspicaciously puts it: 'there were signs that Vauxhall risked becoming a victim of its own success'.<sup>33</sup> There were rival enterprises such as Raneragh and other gardens, water and seaside resorts as well as Crystal Palace exhibition in 1851. London Zoo opened in 1847 and Alhambra Music Hall in Soho was from 1854. The entertainment facilities were being diversified. Vauxhall Gardens' decline in late eighteenth century lasted long and it was finally closed in 1859. During the decline it tried various kinds of attractions: performance on a tight rope, balloon ride, ballet etc.

According to Thomas Creevey (1768-1838) the sorts of people who frequented there in the previous century had gone: Vauxhall in 1822 'was very beautiful but thinly attended, and the Company damned low indeed'.<sup>34</sup> Edmund Yates (1831-94) remembered Vauxhall in his youth and wrote that 'the aristocracy had deserted it, and no wonder'; 'It was a very ghastly place: of actual garden there was no sign'.<sup>35</sup> George Stevens, who started working as an assistant gardener, becom-

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<sup>32</sup> Literature on Vauxhall Gardens will be discussed elsewhere.

<sup>33</sup> Corfield, *Vauxhall and the Invention of the Urban Pleasure Gardens*, p.21.

<sup>34</sup> Thomas Creevey, *Creevey's Life and Times. A Further Selection from the Correspondence of Thomas Creevey* ed. John Gore (London: John Murray, 1934), p.151, quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.251.

<sup>35</sup> Edmund Hodgson Yates, *Edmund Yeates : His Recollections and Experiences*, 4th. ed. ([S.l.]: Richard Bentley and son, 1885), (no page number shown in the endnote) quoted in Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.251.

ing the director and lessee, in 1840 was nearly in despair:

No Manager

No Artists

No singing

No Music

No Fireworks and

No Money<sup>36</sup>

### The Public Venue for the Future

Vauxhall Gardens pursued novelty successfully at least in Tyers' time. He explored and developed new attractions and new customers. His attempts to create innovative venue involved ambitious brilliant people in construction, paintings sculptures, plaster work, lighting, interiors, tableware, publicizing literature and others. He also created mass market for promising contemporary art. Indeed, the site was for the pleasure of the visitors and for the future of the cultural development. Although the very pursuit of novelty stifled the business in the end, it was the entrepreneurs' constant search for harmony between town and country, between exclusivity and accessibility, between the fashionable society and the commercial innovation, between the tasteful refinement and popular entertainments, between mirthful pleasures and disciplined organization.

The main question at the beginning of the course was: 'What do you expect from the parks and gardens?' Additional questions were: 'What do you do there?', 'Where are they? Urban? Rural?', 'Who goes there? Men? Women? Students? Children? Family?', 'Would you pay for the visit?' and 'What kind of dangers do you have to expect?' The most serious hazard concerning Vauxhall Gardens was the danger of being successful, one might say. I hoped I could encourage the students to appreciate the eighteenth century enterprise fully. They know that it did more than they had expected.

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<sup>36</sup> Coke and Borg, *Vauxhall Gardens : A History*, p.333.

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