

some time in February, stated: Mr Congreve . . . hath written a Comedy, which will be acted in a little time, and is to be call'd, *The Old Batchelor* (p. 28). The *Gentleman's Journal*, February 1692/3 (issued in March 1693): The success of Mr Congreve's *Old Batchelor* has been so extraordinary, that I can tell you nothing new of that Comedy; you have doubtless read it before this, since it has been already printed thrice. And indeed the Wit which is diffus'd through it, makes it lose but few of those Charms in the Perusal, which yield such pleasure in the Representation. Mr Congreve will in some time give us another play; you may judge by this how acceptable it will be (p. 61). In addition, a reference in the Epilogue indicates that it was produced during Lent, and since the third edition was advertized in the *London Gazette*, No. 2856, 23-27 March 1693, early March seems the most likely date for the premiere. According to *The Female Wits* (ca. 1696), *The Old Batchelor* was acted fourteen days successively. John Barnard of Yale University states that Narcissus Luttrell's copy of *The Old Batchelor* in the Newberry Library bears the notation: "10d Mar. 16 1692/3."

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BM Add. Mss. 4221 (341) *Memoirs Relating to Mr Congreve Written by Mr Thomas Southern* (in Macdonald, *Bibliography of Dryden*, p. 54n): When he began his Play the Old Batchelor haveing little Acquaintance with the traders in that way, his Cozens recommended him to a friend of theirs, who was very usefull to him in the whole course of his play, he engag'd Mr Dryden in its favour, who upon reading it sayd he never saw such a first play in his life, but the Author not being acquainted with the stage or the town, it woud be pity to have it miscarry for want of a little Assistance: the stuff was rich indeed, it wanted only the fashionable cutt of the town. To help that Mr Dryden, Mr Arthur Manwayring, and Mr Southern red it with great care, and Mr Dryden putt it in the order it was playd, Mr Southerne obtained of Mr Thos: Davenant who then governd the Playhouse, that Mr Congreve should have the privilege of the Playhouse half a year before his play was playd, wh. I never knew allowd any one before.

The music for the play was composed by Henry Purcell. See Purcell's *Works*, Purcell Society, XXI (1917), iii-v.

THE WARY WIDOW; or, Sir Noisy Parrat. [By Henry Higden.] Edition of 1693: No actors' names. The Prologue, Written by Sir Charles Sydly. Epilogue, Spoken by Mrs Lassells.

Late March  
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COMMENT. The United Company. The date of the first production is not known, but the *Gentleman's Journal*, February 1692/3 (issued in March) makes clear that it followed Congreve's play: We have had since a Comedy, call'd, *The Wary Widow, or Sir Noisy Parrot*, by Henry Higden Esq; I send you here the Prologue to it by Sir Charles Sedley, and you are too great an Admirer of Shakespeare, not to assent to the Praises given to the Fruits of his rare Genius (p. 61). The play was announced in the *London Gazette*, No. 2875, 29 May-June 1693. The music for one song, "All hands up aloft," was by Berenclow, and the song appears in D'Urfey, *Wit and Mirth*, 1699.

Dedication, edition of 1693: But now it is forced to beg for your Protection from the malice and severe usage it received from some of my Ill natured Friends, who with a Justice peculiar to themselves, passed sentence upon it unseen or heard and at the representation made it their business to persecute it with a barbarous variety of Noise and Tumult.

Gildon, *The Life of Mr Thomas Betterton* (p. 20): The actors were completely drunk before the end of the third act, and being therefore unable to proceed with this "Pleasant Comedy," they very properly dismissed the audience.

CONCERT.

COMMENT. *London Gazette*, No. 2854, 16-20 March 1692/3: The Consort of Musick in Charles-street, Covent-Garden, will begin again on Thursday next, being the 23th Instant.

Thursday 23  
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