

To His Royal Highness The Prince Regent

The Memorial of George Colman, David Morris, and  
James Winston, Proprietors of the Theatre Royal in the Haymarket  
Most Humbly Sheweth,

That Your Royal Highness was, last  
Year 1811, implored, with the utmost duty & respect, in a Memorial  
drawn up by George Colman, in behalf of himself and his partners, to  
consider and relieve the above Theatre, which then was, and still is,  
labouring under extreme difficulties.

And your Memorialists humbly shew, that, in the  
above mentioned Memorial of the Year 1811 the nature of the pressures  
against which their property struggle was amply set forth, under the  
following heads:— First, that, in addition to the Surry Theatre,  
Sadlers Wells, & Astleys, various upstart places of nominally limited  
Exhibition have, through Subterfuge, virtually, become Playhouses.  
Secondly, that, the protracted Performances of the Patent Winter Theatres  
(which engage, and then monopolize, favorite Performers who originally  
have established their Merits in the Haymarket) have, at length so  
far swallowed up the annual Licence, graciously granted by the Crown  
to the Haymarket Theatre, that its Season is, now, reduced to about seven  
Weeks, unless it exercise the whole of its grant to its own destruction;  
and, lastly, & particularly, that an annual Licence has been granted,  
from the Year 1809, to the Lyceum Theatre, for the alleged experimental  
purpose of acting New English Operas in the Summer.

And your Memorialists, further, humbly shew, that,  
in the Memorial alluded to, the detailed reasons, and explanations,  
to prove the above circumstances were rapidly tending to the complete  
ruin of the Haymarket Theatre, appeared to impress themselves  
strongly upon Your Royal Highness' consideration; insomuch,  
that it was Your Royal Highness's pleasure most graciously  
to notify to George Colman, through Colonel M. Mahon, Your  
Royal Highness' intention to select, and appoint, certain  
Noblemen & Gentlemen, to investigate the Rights, wages, and  
equitable



equitable Claims of all Theatres, in and about the Metropolis for the purpose, if in Your Royal Judgment, it should seem just, of affording that relief to the Hay Market Theatre of which it stands so much in need.

And Your Memorialists humbly submit, that among the many enumerated increasing pressures against which they have to contend, the late Licence for what are called New English Operas at the Lyceum is most particularly distressing to them: — cramping and most materially impoverishing them, still further: — even in the very few Weeks of a Season which the Winter Houses have hitherto left them clear from opposition, during the emptiness of the Town, and the heats of the Summer.

And it is humbly shewn, that, no longer ago than the Year 1709, His Majesty's then Lord Chamberlain (the late Earl of Dartmouth), granted the above Licence to Mr. Arnold, for opening the Lyceum; — on which grant the chief Proprietor of the Hay Market Theatre respectfully remonstrated, and the Lord Chamberlain was pleased to inform him in writing, that, "Mr. Arnold being in possession of his Licence, it could not be revoked, because he had expended money upon the faith of it:" but adding, that, when he granted it, he did not imagine that it would materially interfere with the interests of the Hay Market Theatre."

But Your Memorialists humbly state, that, if Mr. Arnold's expenditure of money, in a new Scheme, on the faith of his recent Licence, be an abstracted argument in his favor, it is plain à fortiori, that the Proprietors of the Hay Market Theatre have infinitely more serious claims upon consideration, that Theatre having been in possession of its annual Licence since the Year 1778; (Foote had previously held the Theatre under a Patent) and upon this faith of His Majesty's most gracious protection the Proprietors have, (as Mr. Arnold has not), risked their whole fortunes. The avowal, also, that the Licence was given to Mr. Arnold

with



"with no conception that it would materially injure the Hay Market Theatre" involves in it a candid admission, on the part of the late Lord Chamberlain, that the above Theatre should be defended from invasion and ruin.

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And Your Memorialists, further, humbly state one marking circumstance, avowed by Mr. Arnold in his own hand writing:— The Licence for New English Operas was, only, first, asked, and granted in the Summer Season as an experiment for future Winters; But the late Lord Chamberlain, in consequence of the annoying perseverance given by Petitions & Remonstrances, fixed it as a Summer Theatre. Thus, it seems, disgust was excited by the humble prayer of men struggling to preserve their bread, and the Supplicants suffered, for giving offence, by petitioning for protection.

Finally, it is most humbly stated, that, the English Opera rendered the Lyceum, in the first instance, equal to The Hay Market Theatre;— it has since proved superior to it, by the connection of the Holder of the Lyceum, with the Proprietors of Drury Lane; by which he is enabled to blend his double interests, and modify his Summer engagements with nearly whom he chooses of the Winter Company; & thus, both in point of saving and attraction, to command very great advantages. Old Operas, Old Plays, Comedies, and Old Farces, are acted under this grant for New Operas:— The Proprietor of the Lyceum, in his Farewell Address to the Publick, this season openly avows his determination of proceeding upon such principles, and of very much enlarging his Speculations. The Hay Market Theatre has already lost several Thousand Pounds, abstractedly from its other oppositions, through the establishment of the Lyceum.

Your Memorialists, therefore, humbly pray  
Your Royal Highness

First, that they may be relieved from the opposition

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See Colman's Petition.



set up against them at the Lyceum; the Licence for which was not given as a permanant grant but merely as an experiment to ascertain whether New English Operas might proceed without injury to others whose Property has been for Years under the protection of the Crown. — And, Secondly, in consideration of the protracted seasons of the Winter Theatres, in the apprehension of their property being crush'd, and their being reduced to the utmost point of distress, that Your Royal Highness will be pleased to grant them such an Addition, namely Three Months, to their present annual Licence, as may enable them to retain a Company of Performers exclusively; and as the only means of procuring them <sup>that</sup> Subsistence which it was His Majestys gracious intention to afford, when His Majesty originally allowed the Lord Chamberlains Licence but which most gracious intention is now frustrated by the Causes above mentioned.

And Your Memorialists will ever pray &c

Theatre Royal Haymarket

1812