



The picture of Anna Maria Crouch by Edward Harding is in the National Portrait Gallery, London, UK

The remains of ANNA MARIA CROUCH. During many years a performer at Drury Lane Theatre. She combined with the purest taste as a singer the most elegant simplicity as an actress. She was distinguished by the powers of her mind. They enabled her when she left the stage, to gladden the life by the charms of her conversation, and refine it by her manners. She was born April 30th 1763 and died 2nd October 1805

This stone is inscribed to her beloved memory by whom she esteemed the most faithful of her friends.



Born in Grays Inn Lane in April 1763, daughter of an attorney named Phillips, Anna Maria was destined to the stage from an early age, giving private performances of her 'fine toned' voice by the time she was ten. At the age of fourteen, she was articulated to Mr Linley of the Drury Lane Theatre for six seasons, earning between £6 and £12 each week and in 1780, she made her début at the theatre playing Princess Mandane in 'The Orphan of China'.



In 1783 she went to Ireland, where she met with and was romantically linked to the actor John Kemble, who was called upon following a performance in Limerick to rescue her, at the point of his sword, from the unwelcome attentions of a group of drunken soldiers. Also in Dublin, one gentleman in the audience threatened to shoot her unless she would receive his addresses. Shortly following this incident she attempted to elope with a young nobleman, but was discovered after a couple of days and returned to London and the Drury Lane Theatre by her parents, appearing as *Emily* in 'The Double Disguise'.

In 1785 she married Mr Crouch, a lieutenant in the navy. She returned to the stage in 1787 to play *Janette* in the opera 'Richard Coeur de Lion' where she attracted the admiration of the acclaimed baritone Michael Kelly. The pair appeared together in the opera of 'Lionel and Clarrisa' later in that year, which was the start of what was to become a lifelong intimacy.

In 1790 Anna Maria played *Polly Peachum*, (with Kelly as Captain Macheath) in the Beggars Opera for the opening season of the Duke Street Theatre in Brighton.