

NEWSLETTER

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Almira's coronation: Ulrike Hofbauer (Almira) and Christian Immler (Consalvo) in BEMF's 2013 production of Handel's Almira. Photo: Kathy Wittman

HANDEL'S ALMIRA AND THE BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2013

Every two years, the Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) presents a feast of music that runs Sunday to Sunday the second week of June and includes a centerpiece opera along with Festival concerts, master classes, workshops, and lectures. From Wednesday to Saturday, there is also a major exhibition of instrument makers, performing groups, music programs, publishers, book dealers, CDs, sheet music, and scores. The main Festival presents three evening concerts Monday through Saturday, generally scheduled at 5, 8, and 11 p.m., as well as four performances of the opera (the Festival opening and closing with Sunday matinees). A now wholly integrated Fringe Festival, running Monday to Saturday from about 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., includes concerts by music groups, conservatories, and universities (more than eighty by my rough count) that are performed around Boston and Cambridge. It is impossible to attend all, or even most, of what is on offer. Every year the Festival has a theme. This year's Festival was titled Youth: Genius and Folly

BEMF's goal, as stated in the large program book, is to "present lesser-known baroque operas performed by the world's leading musicians armed with the latest information on period singing, orchestral performance, costuming, dance,

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FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

As the AHS continues to bask in the afterglow of "Handel in Princeton" (see the second installment of abstracts from that conference elsewhere in this issue of the Newsletter), it is appropriate once again to thank all the people who were involved in its success. We should especially thank and congratulate Board Member Wendy Heller who not only oversaw the entire project but somehow managed at the same time to shepherd through the press her new book *Music in the Baroque* which has just been published this summer by W.W. Norton as part of their series "Western Music in Context: A Norton History."

This is also an appropriate moment to congratulate longtime Board Member and former AHS President Ellen Harris who has been elected President of the American Musicological Society. She will serve a year as President Elect before beginning a two-year term as President – after which she will serve an additional year as Past President. I am sure that the members of the society wish her well in this arduous but rewarding undertaking. Mention should also be made of her new book *Handel: A Life with Friends* to be published next summer by W.W. Norton.

The Secretary/Treasurer urges the members of the society who have not already done so to pay their membership dues for the current year. Please remember that these can be paid online at the AHS Website using PayPal. Because the Handel Festival in Halle was cancelled this year (see the brief article elsewhere in the Newsletter), we have not yet settled accounts with our sister societies. Nevertheless, all AHS members who wish to become Members of the G.F. Händel Gesellschaft and/or Friends of the London Handel Institute for this year are urged to pay their monies as soon as possible. This can also be done online at the AHS Website.

Finally, members of the society will be saddened to learn of the death of longtime member the Hon. Edwin Alley. Judge Alley was a distinguished jurist and an enthusiastic lover of Handel's music, and it was always a pleasure to see him at Handel events in different parts of the world. His family has suggested that donations in his memory be made to the AHS.

— Graydon Beeks

and staging.” The centerpiece opera this year was Handel’s *Almira* (Hamburg, 1704), which is unique among Handel’s surviving operas. Like Hamburg operas in general, *Almira* is a cosmopolitan mixture of Venetian, German, and French styles. The prominent use of ceremonial scenes and dance reflects French operatic tradition, as does the frequent use of short, dance-style arias. The influence of Venetian opera can be heard in the use of virtuosic da capo arias. Although the libretto is predominantly in German, a good proportion of the da capo arias are actually in Italian. The recitative, written in pervasively rhymed German verse, is more heightened musically than the quick recitativo semplice of Italian opera or the *récit* of French opera that closely follows the prosodic rhythms of the text, and it sometimes incorporates the extremes of range and vocal ornamentation. As a result it is easy for a short German aria to pop up in the middle of the recitative without any of the structural meaning attached to the longer Italian da capo arias, which typically mark the end of a scene and lead to an exit.

Designed and directed by Gilbert Blin, BEMF’s production of *Almira* was set in sixteenth-century Spain, following the setting of its libretto in Valladolid, Castile. The Cutler Majestic Theater at Emerson College, the performance venue for most of BEMF’s operas, is a stunningly restored Beaux Arts theater from 1903, previously used for vaudeville shows. Having worked with BEMF since the 2007 production of Lully’s *Psyché*, and since 2008 as Stage Director in Residence, Blin has perfected the miracle of turning the very shallow stage of the Cutler Majestic into a stunning baroque set, enhanced by the sensitive lighting of Lenore Dooxsee. The use of perspective scenery, which narrowed the stage space from front to back, created the space (there are no wings to speak of) for three sets of side flats at the rear of the stage: in this case the public square in Valladolid, the palace, and a forest, each paired with its own backdrop. The front of the stage had built sets with first floor balconies and double doors at far left and right. A set of open arches that descended at mid-stage enabled the set to be broken in half front and back, sometimes with an interior space in front opening onto a garden in the back. Lowered in conjunction with a wall, the arches created an interior short set for palace rooms or the prison. In the system designed by Gordon Manson, Technical Director, the side flats are hung, making their movement completely silent. The set changes, as a result, were fluid and choreographic.

The costumes, designed by Anna Watkins in conjunction with the setting, reflected the Spanish flavor with a dark palette. The women soloists, chorus members, and dancers all wore similarly designed dresses in ivory, brown, russet, and dusky blue brocades with low necklines and long, full skirts, and with ruffs at the neck and wrists. The men’s costumes varied more by status, reflecting images of the older aristocratic gentleman (Consalvo), young capitán (Osman), and male secretary (Fernando), as well as the traditional black-and-white costumes of fencing masters (lead dancers), and male servants (dancers). Of course, Raymondo, King of Mauretania, was distinctive in his more exotic dress. The comic servant, Tabarco, although primarily a servant to Fernando, was played as a Spanish jester, someone who is not a low servant, but rather a person with special privileges to be present at court, speak directly to the aristocracy, and make rude comments in their presence (as happens in the libretto).

As the opera contains three extended scenes with ballet (the coronation that opens Act I, the *Assemblée* and *Ballo* that closes Act I, and the Procession of the Continents

in Act III), and other opportunities for dance throughout, the choreography, created by Caroline Copeland and Carlos Fittante, was essential to the effect of the work. The set dances were splendid, with opportunities for some formal swordplay in the coronation scene, and social dances in the ball scene, but the Procession of the Continents was truly spectacular in all regards—costumes, staging, and dancing. Taking no more than fifteen or twenty minutes in all, the procession of the three continents of Europe, Africa, and Asia, sung by Fernando, Osman, and Consalvo, offered a miniature aristocratic masque (with the singers and their dancing retinue actually masked), only to be followed by the unexpected entrance of Tabarco as Folly and his retinue (also masked), whose antimasque brings chaos to the proceedings and leads the whole company off stage in a circular dance. This sequence was always received with applause. But as remarkable as were the specific dances throughout the opera, even more notable was the movement of the entire cast in a choreographic manner. The action on stage flowed with grace.

The libretto for the production was prepared by Blin in conjunction with Matthias Zins and Ellen Hargis. It was based on a close reading of Christian Feustking’s libretto, in comparison with texts in the manuscript score of the opera in Berlin and the collection of arias from *Almira* recently discovered by Rashid-Sascha Pegah in Jever, with reference as well to the Italian libretto of Giulio Pancieri on which Feustking’s libretto is based. The score was created by Robert Mealy (Concertmaster) and Paul O’Dette and Stephen Stubbs (Music Directors); O’Dette composed orchestral parts for the aria “Ingrato, spietato,” that survives in the Jever manuscript with only its melody and bass line, and Stubbs composed out the quintet “Hoffe nur,” for which only the end of the B section and the opening of the return to the A section survive in the Berlin manuscript. The inner parts for some of the dances were “collaboratively reconstructed.”

The BEMF orchestra consisted of a tightly constructed group of strings (4-3-2-3, with some use of double bass), 2 oboes doubling recorders, bassoon, percussion, and continuo. Some cost savings included the substitution of oboes for trumpets in the one movement in which they appear in the score: the chorus “Viva, Almira.” Also, despite the instructions in the libretto, no musicians appeared on stage: not only was there very little room, but the decision avoided the extra cost of costuming the orchestra members. BEMF is famous for its continuo sound. O’Dette and Stubbs both play theorbo and guitar, but in addition to harpsichord and cello, the continuo group also included baroque harp and viola da gamba. The variety of continuo sound was essential to an opera that includes so many continuo arias, not just in the avoidance of repetition, but also, more positively, in the beauty of the variation. A harpsichord was placed at both ends of the pit: one was associated with the principal cellist (and cello section) on audience left; the other was connected with the larger continuo forces (theorbos, harp, gamba—and hurdy-gurdy for the entrance of Folly) and percussion on audience right. The dancers sometimes played castanets and finger cymbals. The orchestra sat around a long table, the first violins and oboes facing the stage with concertmaster Mealy in the middle. The precision and beauty of the orchestral sound established the sound structure of the opera from the beginning.

The singing was never less than very good; sometimes it was remarkable. Two days into rehearsal, it turned out that the announced singer for the title role, Veronica Cangemi, would not be coming. Now *Almira* is not like *Traviata*, where you can look around for any number of singers who already

know the role. BEMF chose to ask the German soprano Ulrike Hofbauer, who had arrived to sing the role of Princess Bellante, if she would take on the title role of Almira, and she agreed. The young American soprano Valerie Vinzant was then hired to play the smaller role of Bellante. The result was a cast of three sopranos, each distinctly different and appropriate to the role she played. Amanda Forsythe was the embodiment of Princess Edilia, who wears her emotions on her sleeve and rages and laments with equal passion. Her two rage arias, “Proverai di che fiere saette” in Act I and “Der Himmel wird strafen” at the end of Act II, both exit arias, elicited cheers and thunderous applause. Her Act III lament, “Quillt, ihr überhäuften Zähren” (which Handel later used as the basis of arias in *Rodrigo* and *Il pastor fido*) was no less stunning, but too closely embedded in the scene to allow for a similar audience response. Almira, in contrast to Edilia, is forced to constrain her emotions, as her love for Fernando cannot be expressed. Hofbauer beautifully portrayed the vulnerable queen. Her rage arias displayed her facility with coloratura and extraordinary vocal range (she frequently ornamented by taking lines into a rich, lower register as well as into the stratosphere) and similarly won applause from the audience, but I was particularly struck with her rendition of “Geloso tormento” in Act I, whose evocative accompaniment Handel transferred into *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* for the aria “Urne voi” (and continued using for years). Here Hofbauer’s ability and sensibility seemed to me perfectly matched. Vinzant sang the role of Bellante with beautiful tone and grace. Her performance of “Der Mund spricht zwar gezwungen: Nein,” when she is forced by social hierarchy to refuse an invitation to join Osman at the *Assemblée*, turned a simple aria into a moment of beauty and pathos.

The three tenors were equally distinct. Colin Balzer’s Fernando offered a rich and lyric tenor. His rage aria “Ob dein Mund wie Plutons Rachen” (later used in both *Rodrigo* and *Apollo e Dafne*, as well as *Rinaldo*) demonstrated his facility for virtuosic coloratura, but the aria in which Fernando offers to give up his love, “Schöne Flammen, fahret wohl,” provided a stunning example of his experience and ability in the art of the German Lied: it was for me the most poignant moment in the opera. Zachary Wilder offered a lighter, “French” tenor sound in the role of Osman. The *New York Times* complained that Blin’s direction made Osman into a “sap,” but the character is clearly more in love with himself than with either Edilia or Almira and behaves childish—using deception to get his way, having a rant when he doesn’t, and simply stalking off stage when he can’t add a bon mot. I would say, more fop than sap, and Wilder played this beautifully using both his fine vocal ability and acting skills to make the point. The role of Tabarco was played by tenor Jason McStoots in madcap comic form. His sweet high tenor, heard later in the week in BEMF’s Charpentier double bill of *La Couronne de Fleurs* and *La Descente d’Orphée aux enfers*, was at times sacrificed here to the comedy, but the inherent quality of the singing was never forfeited. Tabarco’s solo scene, moved by Feustking from the middle of Act II to the end, was in this production separated altogether and played as an *intermezzo*, allowing Amanda Forsythe to end Act II with her rage aria, “Der Himmel wird strafen.”

Baritone Christian Immler was a marvelous Consalvo—his rich vocal timbre signaling the dignity of his social position while his acting demonstrated the character’s foolish vanity. Raymondo, King of Mauretania, sung by baritone Tyler Duncan, only makes his first entrance at the beginning of Act II, and his exotic presence immediately enlivened the action,

causing fear and desire among the ladies and jealousy among the men. Duncan was capable of both absolute authority and melting lyricism: his evening serenade, “Edilia, du bleibest mein,” for which the lighting was especially beautiful, rang with heartfelt longing, while his put-down of Osman, “Quel labro di coral” was appropriately brusque and definitive.

Although the reviews were consistently strong, a few reviewers searched for a way to make some criticisms: some questioned the amount of humor in the production (never, however, parodic of the work); others pointed out that after all this was young Handel and his later works are more mature (which seems a pretty obvious comment); and some others gave differing marks to the singers. But these were quibbles. In all, this was an astonishing production, not only one of the very best ever mounted by BEMF, but also revelatory to most audience members who were unaware of how fully formed Handel’s musical powers were before he left Germany. Even those of us who have argued for Germany’s indelible impact on Handel’s music, were a little surprised by the full force of the musical riches. If you’ve ever wondered how the young Handel was able to write something as sustained and beautiful as *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* at the age of 22, look no further than Almira.

I have emphasized Handel’s Almira as I thought it would be of greatest interest to readers of this Newsletter, but the Festival had many other delights. One of importance to Handelians was the first American appearance of Fabio Bonizzoni’s group *La Risonanza*, three of whose seven CD’s of Handel’s Italian cantatas with instrumental accompaniment won the Stanley Sadie Recording Prize. The program, entitled “Handel: From England to Italy” featured the soprano Roberta Invernizzi and included Ana Liz Ojeda and Claudia Combs, violin, and Caterina Dell’Agnello, cello, as well as Bonizzoni on harpsichord. It had the unusual conceit of starting in England and moving backwards into Italy, offering what was called a “journey looking back.” This worked reasonably well with the cantatas, which were heard in the order “Mi palpita il cor,” “Alpestre monte,” and “Notte placida e cheta,” but less so with the chamber music, which moved in the opposite direction, from the Trio Sonata in B minor, Op. 2, no. 1 (HWV 386b) to the Trio Sonata in G major, Op. 5, no. 4 (HWV 399). Invernizzi sang with her normal passion and style, although I was surprised that she seemed tied to a score throughout, and the musicians offered beautifully detailed readings. Unfortunately, this was one of only two concerts that ran in direct competition with a performance of Almira (the other one, presented by the Hilliard Ensemble, I missed when I decided to attend the opera another time). That conflict, and the relatively little-known profile of *La Risonanza* in the United States, led to a smaller audience than one might have hoped. I was also sorry that the arrangement with BEMF did not permit the use of a larger group of *La Risonanza* musicians, which would have enhanced the color spectrum of the concert. I hope that there will be an opportunity for *La Risonanza* to return to the United States in the near future for a more extended tour.

One change that I have noted in attending over the years is that the main events increasingly feature members of the BEMF orchestra, and this was particularly clear this Festival. With very few exceptions, the concerts not in direct competition with an opera performance featured members of the BEMF ensemble; this was the case in all the performances I was able to attend. The Monday night concert by the Mozarteum Foundation Quartet, anchored by Kristian Bezuidenhout, principal harpsichordist of BEMF, on fortepiano, featured the

use of Mozart's own violin and viola brought to the United States for the first time. Although one would not expect Mozart to have owned particularly valuable instruments, and the viola has been significantly altered since Mozart's time, it was a little magical to think that they had been held and played by the composer. The musicians, with special kudos to Eric Hoerich on clarinet, presented the all-Mozart concert with a particularly deft touch that captured the combination of formality and insouciance that so often marks Mozart's style. Tuesday was the first evening to have three scheduled concerts. At 5 p.m., *Symphonie des Dragons*, led by Gonzalo X. Ruiz, principal oboist of the BEMF orchestra, offered seven oboes, one English horn, two tenor oboes, and three bassoons playing mostly military music from the Philidor Collection, but they also offered Handel's *Trio Sonata in G minor, Op. 2, No. 5*, for two oboes and bassoon (no harpsichord)—which they described as the only trio sonata by Handel that can be performed this way without any alteration; it worked perfectly well. Then came a concert of Dowland by Emma Kirkby and Paul O'Dette, co-music director of BEMF, which offered a stunning evocation of this beautiful music. And finally, the 11 p.m. concert Tuesday night featured a solo recital by Bezuidenhout, substituting at the last minute for Kenneth Weiss, who was unable to travel due to illness; the concert included Louis Couperin, Froberger, and a harpsichord transcription of Bach's *Partita in A minor* for solo violin, as well as three movements in D minor taken from Handel's suites (HWV 428 and 437).

On Thursday night, the first concert (5 p.m.) was presented by The Newberry Consort, David Douglass (BEMF violinist) and Ellen Hargis (Assistant Stage Director of *Almira*), Artistic Directors. The program, presented in conjunction with the vocal ensemble *Exultemus*, offered a selection from the thirteenth-century *Cantigas de Santa Maria* in which the repetitive structure of the verse narratives was enlivened by the use of dialogue and greatly enhanced with beautiful projected images of illuminations from the manuscripts, relating either to the story being told or to the performing musicians. The second concert (8 p.m.) presented the BEMF orchestra. Given the focus on Handel in the opera production, it should be no surprise that their performance of the overtures to *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno* and *Agrippina* was first rate. I also greatly enjoyed the suite from Blow's *Venus and Adonis*. A selection of movements by Lully gave the BEMF dancers another opportunity to shine (Caroline Copeland, Carlos Fittante, Karen Modigh, and Michaël Bouffard). The final concert (11 p.m.) featured the group *Atalante*, Erin Headley (BEMF gambist), Director, in a semi-staged concert of seventeenth-century Roman laments rather darkly lit on the altar stairs of Emmanuel Church. One knows the extravagant and fantastical laments of Luigi Rossi and Mazzocchi, but Marco Marazzoli was something of a revelation in these haunting performances.

Saturday at the 8 p.m. concert, BEMF reprised its beautifully staged double bill of Charpentier's *La Descente d'Orphée aux Enfers* and *La Couronne de Fleurs* in which the director Gilbert Blin has solved the problem of the unfinished score of *La Descente* by adding it to the stories the shepherds and shepherdesses tell one another in *La Couronne*. This production was originally mounted as one of BEMF's autumn chamber operas, fully staged but without scenery and with the orchestra on the stage. If anything, I found this performance even more moving than the premiere in 2011. Special mention must be made of the passionate singing of Aaron Sheenan in the role of Orphée. BEMF will be making an audio recording

this performance this summer for release in winter 2014.

The final 11 p.m. concert brought Stephen Stubbs's group *Tragicomedia* to the stage with other "friends" to present a loosely organized story about the interaction of national styles in the Baroque. The lively and amusing program included four songs from Telemann's *Singe-, Spiel- und Generalbass-übungen*, followed by the arrival of an "Italian" soprano (Amanda Forsythe) with Handel's (complete) *Sarei troppo felice* (which BEMF first prepared for performance at the conference on the patronage of the Pamphilj at Boston College in 2010). This diva then indoctrinates the "German" soprano (Lydia Brotherton) in the Italian style with Monteverdi's "*Chiome d'oro, bel tesoro*," and the "German" tenors (Jason McStoots and Zachary Wilder) try to prove (rather unsuccessfully) that the *contrafacta* by Schütz, "*Guld'ne Haare, gleich Aurora*" is just as good. The French style is introduced with selections from Lully's *Le bourgeois gentilhomme*, including dances for the harlequin (Caroline Copeland) and drinking songs for the men (baritone Christian Immler and the tenors). Finally, scenes from Mattheson's *Cleopatra* demonstrate the mixed national style of Hamburg opera (Immler, McStoots, and Valerie Vinzant).

Because of lectures, panels, and symposia (and simple fatigue), I missed some of the main Festival events, most of the master classes, all of the Fringe Festival, the Keyboard Mini-Festival at the Museum of Fine Arts (MFA) which made use of the fine instruments in the Museum's collection (Fabio Bonizzoni played a recital on "The Art of Variations" on the 1736 Hemsch French double-manual harpsichord), and the Organ Mini-Festival played this year at The First Lutheran Church of Boston, organ by Richard, Fowkes & Co., *Opus 10* (2000) in the North German Baroque style. The Boston Early Music Festival offers a real opportunity to immerse oneself in Early Music in all of its aspects. It is a great pleasure to be able to attend it on a regular basis, and every Festival is different. This year, despite all the riches on offer, the centerpiece was certainly Handel's *Almira*. I only wish the performance was going to be made available on DVD.

— Ellen T. Harris

SPECIAL OFFERS FROM THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY

The American Handel Society is offering sets of back issues of the *Newsletter* for the price of \$10 per year (three issues each), going back to the first year, 1986. All volumes are available, but some numbers are in short supply. We reserve the right to supply photocopies of individual numbers where necessary. In addition, the AHS has a limited number of copies of *Handel and the Harris Circle* at the price of \$7. This attractive and important booklet, written by Rosemary Dunhill, provides a useful introduction to the rich Harris family archive, recently deposited at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester and discussed by Donald Burrows in the December 1996 issue of the *Newsletter*. For further details, contact the *Newsletter* Editor.

AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY
CONFERENCE
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
FEBRUARY 21-24, 2013

Abstracts (Part II)

Luca Della Libera (Conservatorio di Musica di Frosinone / Università di Roma Tor Vergata): “Renaissance roots and Baroque *affetti* in the sacred music of Alessandro Scarlatti”

Alessandro Scarlatti’s sacred music, might, at first glance, be divisible into two basic groupings: those works in the concertato medium, and those in a more conservative vein, scored only for voices or voices and continuo. The purpose of this paper is to focus on this second category, and the very particular style of two scores that have not yet been studied but are now available in modern edition. The first work, a *Salve Regina*, was composed in Rome in February 1703. This piece, for four voices (SATB), without organ or basso continuo, according to RISM, is one of the few *Salve Regina* settings of that period with this scoring. It is composed, on the one hand, according to Renaissance models, and includes a cantus firmus drawn from the Gregorian antiphon. But, on the other hand, Scarlatti also uses the Baroque topos of lamento (the descending tetrachord bass) and a harmonic language with a strong “theatrical” expression, including chromatic passages for significant phrases of text, such as “In hac lacrimarum valle” and “Suspiramus gementes et flentes.”

The second work is the *Missa defunctorum* (1717), for SATB voices and basso continuo. This piece, which is far more contrapuntally involved, is very different from all the Italian *Requiems* settings of that period. Scarlatti has drawn some solutions from the model of the “cyclic mass” — hence the presence of the same musical material in different sections of his *Missa*. But the topos of lamento is also employed systematically, for such phrases as “Dona eis, Domine,” “Dona eis requiem,” “Dona eis pacem,” and “Lacrimosa.” Scarlatti uses a plethora of Baroque rhetorical figures of many kinds: repetition, wide intervallic leaps, and “descriptive” musical passages for texts such as “Et de profundo lacu” and “Ne cadant in obscurum.” Like the *Salve Regina*, the *Missa defunctorum* nevertheless has a very “modern” harmonic language, with passionate suspensions and daring seventh and ninth chords.

This paper will also explain the physical history of these manuscripts, because they have some connection to Handel and his entourage. The *Salve Regina*, now preserved in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, probably belonged to the library of Cardinal Ottoboni that was acquired by Handel’s agents in Rome. The *Missa defunctorum*, now preserved in the Biblioteca Donizetti in Bergamo, belonged to the English organist John Stanley.

Fred Fehleisen (The Juilliard School / Mannes College The New School for Music): “Musical Figures, Thematic Parallelisms, and Phrase Rhythm in Handel’s *Grand Concerto in G Minor*, Op. 6, no. 6”

The purpose of this paper will be to explore thematic relationships, rhythmic expansions and possible meanings in a purely instrumental work by Handel that may have been performed between the acts of one or more of his theatrical works. The paper will concern itself not only with Handel’s

musical style, but also with notational practices that were available to him and their possible implications. Handel’s *Grand Concerto in G Minor*, Op. 6, no. 6 is somewhat unusual in that the composer presents the listener with a set of musical figures that link its movements, both affectively and thematically. The resulting relationships are particularly interesting to consider because the third movement happens to be a *musette* – unique within Op. 6 – that evokes pastoral imagery through its use of drones, phrase expansions and metrical reinterpretations. In the *musette*, for instance, we find a subtle interplay between musical figures and expansions of phrases into larger hypermetrical units that seem to evoke meaning even though there are no words. In discussing these above mentioned features I will attempt to show that Handel uses them to enrich the concerto’s musical content, and how an aural recognition of them might enhance our experiences and performances of the work.

Matthew Gardner (Ruprecht Karls Universität, Heidelberg): “An English Singer of Italian Opera: Handel and Anastasia Robinson”

Anastasia Robinson (1692–1755) holds a unique position as the only female English soprano (later contralto) to perform significant roles in Handel’s Italian operas. Following her education with William Croft and Pietro Giuseppe Sandoni her first appearance in a Handel opera was in the 1714–15 revivals of *Rinaldo*, and in the same season she performed the role of Oriana, which Handel composed for her, in *Amadigi di Gaula*. Following revivals of *Amadigi* and *Rinaldo*, various engagements in other non Handel operas and pasticcios, and a brief stint at Drury Lane in 1719–20, she was engaged by the Royal Academy of Music on its foundation in 1719 and went on to sing in the first six of Handel’s operas for the Academy, including *Radamisto* (1720), *Il Floridante* (1721), *Flavio* (1723) and *Giulio Cesare* (1724), often performing a major role. Additionally she sang in works by the other Academy composers, Attilio Ottavio Ariosti and Giovanni Bononcini, and was promoted to prima donna in Bononcini’s *Griselda* in the 1721–2 season.

This paper explores the development of Robinson’s career from her first role in a Handel opera in the 1714/15 revival of *Rinaldo* to her last in *Giulio Cesare* (1724), making reference to her working relationship with Handel and her influence over his creative process, as well as placing her in the context of the star culture which surrounded the Royal Academy of Music.

Ellen T. Harris (MIT): “Taking the oaths: The directors of the Royal Academy of Music swear allegiance to King and Country”

In reading through the voluminous correspondence of John Percival, later 1st Earl Egmont, at the British Library, one of my greatest surprises was the discovery that the directors of the Royal Academy of Music were required to take the oaths of allegiance, supremacy and abjuration, to declare that there was no transubstantiation in the sacrament of the Last Supper, and to supply a certificate of conformity to the Church of England. Percival notes that he was elected a director of the Academy in February, 1720, and he writes on 24 April 1720: “I qualified my Self for Directorship of the Royall Accademy of Musick, by takeing the Oathes this day at Guildhall before the Ld Mayor & SrWm Thomson Recorder, & then delivred into Court my Certificate of having taken the Sacrament at St James Church Westminster.”

Various oaths of allegiance had been required for different sections of the population from the sixteenth century. In the early years of the reign of George I, office holders under the crown were required to take their oaths at one of the central courts of law: Chancery, King's Bench, Common Pleas, or Exchequer. Others generally took the oaths at the county courts in Middlesex or Westminster during Quarter Sessions. Records of the former survive at The National Archives (TNA), the latter at the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). Percival specifically mentions taking his oath in the City of London from the Mayor, and this set of records has now been transferred from the Corporation of London Archives to the LMA as well.

Initial examination of these records has confirmed Percival's statement and led to further discoveries about the oath taking of the other directors. Percival's Certificate of Conformity is preserved at the LMA, dated 13 March 1720, and the record of his taking the oath in the City is recorded on 25 April with his signature. Some directors took their oaths in the county courts. For example, John Arbutnot, Thomas Smith, and James Bruce went together to get their Certificates of Conformity on 10 January 1720 to St. Martin in the Fields, each certificate witnessed by the other two directors present. They signed the oaths together 14 January at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions. Those with high court positions, such as Stanhope and Kent, seem to appear only in the records of the Petty Bag Office in the court of Chancery at TNA.

In this paper, I plan to describe the oaths and the sources, examine the records for some of the directors, and consider, at least briefly, the perceived political nature of the opera librettos in light of the requirement that directors of the Academy take the oaths. I expect to include many visual images of the sources.

REPORT FROM HALLE

The 2013 Handel Festival in Halle, with its attendant scholarly conference and related meetings, was cancelled when the city and regional authorities declared a state of emergency in the face of the threat of flooding along the Saale River after torrential rains hit Eastern Germany and parts of Central Europe over the preceding weeks. The conference and the meetings of the Editorial Board of the *Hallsche-Händel-Ausgabe* and the Vorstand and General Membership of the *Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft* have been rescheduled for the weekend of November 14-17, 2013 as part of a small festival entitled "Händel im Herbst" ("Handel in the Autumn") which will also include a preview concert for next year's festival by Les Arts Florissants and a performance of this year's Handel opera, *Almira*. Additional information is available on the Händel-Gesellschaft website (www.haendel.de).

Planning is underway for next year's Handel Festival, scheduled for June 5-15, 2014. Further information will be forthcoming on the Festival website (www.haendelfestspiele.halle.de/en/). AHS members and others who would like to support the Festival financially may do so through the Account #38 031 92 94 sort code 800 537 62 at the Saalesparkasse, using the reference "Spende Händel-Festspiele." Next year's scholarly conference on the topic "Händel und die Musikgeschichte des Hauses Hannover" ("Handel and the History of Music for the House of Hannover") will take place June 10-11, 2014.

— Graydon Beeks

FORTHCOMING PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE:

Music in the Baroque (W.W. Norton, 2014)
By Wendy Heller

Handel: A Life with Friends (W.W. Norton, 2014)
By Ellen T. Harris

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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The Editor welcomes comments, contributions,
and suggestions for future issues.

THE J. MERRILL KNAPP RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Board of Directors of The American Handel Society invites applications for the J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship to support scholarly projects related to Handel and his world. One or more fellowships may be awarded in a calendar year up to a total of \$2,000. Requests for funding may include, but are not limited to, purchase of microfilms, travel for research, and production expenses for publication. This fellowship may be used on its own or to augment other grants or fellowships.

In awarding the Knapp Fellowship, preference will be given to graduate students, scholars in the early stages of their careers, and independent scholars with no source of institutional support.

The deadline for the 2014 award will be March 1, 2014. There is no application form. Each applicant should submit an outline of the project, a budget showing how and when the funds will be used, and a description of other funding for the same project applied for and/or received. In addition, applicants should have two letters of recommendation sent directly to the Knapp Fellowship Committee. Electronic submissions are preferred; letters of recommendation as well as the application itself can be emailed to Richard King (rgking@umd.edu). Paper submissions can also be mailed to Professor Richard King, University of Maryland School of Music, College Park, MD 20742.

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Donor	40	23	34
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Sponsor	65	38	55
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Life	400	250	320
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Online payment options are available at <http://americanhandelsociety.org/Join.html>.

Payments in dollars for GFH or HI memberships must be received before 1 June.

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