

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XXV, Number 1

Spring 2010



AHS Festival 2011 logo: Handel with Mt. Rainier in the background.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK SPRING 2010

The American Handel Society's redesigned website is up and functioning at <http://www.americanhandelsociety.org> in time to continue the celebration of our eponymous composer's 325th birth year. We owe a vote of thanks to Board Member Marty Ronish for rescuing the domain name and to Vice President Nathan Link and his student research assistant Liz McConnaughey for making the site operational. Liz was largely responsible for the structural design of the new site, and for digitizing and uploading the back issues of the AHS *Newsletter*. Nathan has overseen the project and will continue to serve as webmaster. The goal

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TWO HANDEL ORGAN PROJECTS

There are currently two organ projects underway that may be of particular interest to members of the AHS because of their connections with Handel. In one case he was certainly familiar with the venue. In the other he was most likely familiar with the instrument itself, or at least with part of it.

The Church of St. George's, Hanover Square, was Handel's parish church from the time it was built in 1724 until his death. It is now the home of the London Handel Festival. The church was designed by John James and contains a painting of the "Last Supper" by William Kent and the obligatory carvings from the workshop of Grinling Gibbons. The original organ was built by Gerald Smith, nephew of Bernard ("Father") Smith who built the original organ for the "new" St. Paul's Cathedral designed by Sir Christopher Wren. This organ has been replaced over the years by instruments built by Snetzler, Bishop, Hill and Hope-Jones. The present organ was built in 1972 by Harrison & Harrison.

The church is currently closed until October 2010 for extensive repair and refurbishment. As part of the project it was decided to commission an entirely new instrument, and the contract went to the American firm of Richards, Fowkes & Co. based in Chattanooga, Tennessee. The three-manual, 46-rank instrument will be housed within the original 18th-century case and will draw on late-18th-century north German and Dutch traditions. The specifications will be centered in the Baroque but will be flexible enough to be able to deal with other repertoire, including choral accompaniments. The three manual divisions will be Great, Swell and Choir with the latter two under expression.

Those interested in the history of the church and its American as well as Handelian connections, will find detailed information at www.

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of the website is twofold: to serve the members of the Society and to make the activities of the Society known to the world at large. If you have suggestions for improving the content or functioning of the website, Nathan will be very happy to hear from you (nathan.link@gmail.com).

While on the subject of websites, let me remind you that Marty Ronish has published an excellent website for Handel in Seattle, the 2011 American Handel Festival (<http://www.americanhandelfestival.org/>). Information about Handel in Seattle will be found in this and subsequent issues of the AHS Newsletter, but the website will be updated frequently and will always contain the most current information.

Finally, let me take this opportunity to remind the members of the Society who have not yet paid their dues for 2010 to please do so. The appropriate form is available on the new AHS website, in case you have mislaid the one that was enclosed in the Winter 2009 newsletter. It is particularly important for those (myself included) who wish to pay their 2010 subscriptions for the London Handel Institute and the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft through the AHS to get that money to Marjorie Pomeroy, the Secretary/Treasurer, as soon as possible. This will allow us to balance accounts with our sister societies in a timely manner.

— Graydon Beeks

CONGRATULATIONS!

Recent publications by AHS members:

John H. Roberts, "False Messiah," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63:1 (Spring 2010), 45-98.

David Ross Hurley, Review of *Handel's Operas, 1726-1741*, by Winton Dean, *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 63:1 (Spring 2010), 143-49.

Georg Friederich Händel, *Jephtha*, Oratorio in Three Acts, HWV 70, ed. Kenneth Nott, *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe*, vol. 30 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 2009).

GEORG FRIEDRICH HÄNDEL

Jephtha

ORATORIO IN THREE ACTS

HWV 70

Herausgegeben von

Kenneth Nott



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HANDEL-L

HANDEL-L is a discussion list open to everybody wishing to discuss the music, life and times of George Frideric Handel and his contemporaries. Subscribers are welcome to initiate or respond to a wide variety of topics. "Lurkers" are welcome to monitor proceedings anonymously.

All Handel enthusiasts, at any level of specialisation, are encouraged to provide reviews and feedback concerning recordings, opera productions, concerts, and literature. HANDEL-L combines this appreciation of Handel's music with comments, short reports, and discussion from scholars, performers, and journalists who maintain a serious interest in the composer and his world: the discussion list is a valuable source for breaking the latest Handel news around the world.

To join HANDEL-L visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handel-l/>

stgeorgheshanoversquare.org – see especially the Spring 2010 newsletter which includes a discussion of the goals of the £2,500,000 fundraising campaign. There are opportunities to contribute to the purchase of the organ as well as to other aspects of the project. Those interested in learning more about the organ builder should visit www.richardsfowkes.com.

In the other project it is the organ rather than the church that has connections with Handel. In 1720 Abraham Jordan built an organ for the new Chapel at Cannons in what is now Middlesex, just north of London. It was built for James Brydges, Earl of Carnarvon and First Duke of Chandos, one of the wealthiest men in England. Between mid 1717 and early 1719 Brydges had engaged Handel as a sort of composer in residence and Handel had produced the Cannons Anthems and *Te Deum*, the serenata *Acis and Galatea* and the original version of *Esther*.

The anthems and *Te Deum* were first performed at the parish church of St Lawrence, Little Stanmore, which stood just outside the grounds of Cannons and which Brydges had caused to be rebuilt in the Italian Baroque style. The chapel, which was attached to the main house, was not opened until August 1720, by which point Handel was living in London again. However, he was certainly familiar with Jordan's work and it seems highly likely that he played the organ on one occasion or another, and he may have advised on its design.

After the James Brydges' death in 1744 his son Henry, the Second Duke of Chandos, quickly found himself in financial straits. Finding no buyer for the Palladian mansion that his father had created at Cannons, Henry arranged in 1747 for the house to be torn down and the contents sold. The organ was purchased by the citizens of Gosport, a seaport community adjacent to Portsmouth. It was installed in the west gallery of Holy Trinity church, which had been built and consecrated in 1696 but had never had an organ installed. The work was done by Abraham Jordan's son, who also enlarged the Swell division.

In 1867, in the context of the Oxford movement, the organ was moved from the west gallery to the north east corner by the chancel where it now stands. It was extensively rebuilt and enlarged in 1897 by William Hill as a 32-stop instrument disposed over three manuals and pedal. Fortunately, Hill retained eight complete ranks and one partial

rank of Jordan's pipes essentially unaltered. This is the largest collection of Jordan pipework to be found anywhere, and provides a full *plenum* without mixture on the Great and soft 8' 4' 2' ranks on the Choir. The sound of the Great, in particular, is strong and forthright – very Handelian, one is tempted to say – and it projects well into the church.

Since the organ remains essentially as built by Hill, the church has engaged the firm of Griffiths and Cooper of Portsmouth to restore it to its 1897 condition. This will involve restoration work on damaged pipes and pipes suffering from aging; replacement of the worn-out tubular pneumatic action with electro pneumatic action; the restoration of the chests, soundboards, bellows and wind trunking, and the restoration of the Hill console. Couplers installed in 1972 by Norman and Beard will be retained; the Great 8' Trumpet will be made available from the other two manuals; and a soft 16' Echo Bourdon will be added to the Pedal.

Holy Trinity, Gosport has undertaken to raise £150, 000 by the end of 2010 and there are opportunities to contribute by adopting Jordan pipes. Anyone interested in learning more about the church, the organ and the campaign should visit www.holytrinitygosport.co.uk.

— Graydon Beeks

ANTONY HICKS HANDEL SCHOLAR

*born Swansea, June 26, 1943;
died London, May 26, 2010*

Handelians around the world mourn the loss of a distinguished scholar. A full remembrance of Anthony Hicks's contribution to Handel studies will appear in a future issue of this Newsletter.

HANDEL CALENDAR

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelians. If possible, please include address, telephone number and URL where readers may obtain details. Announcements concerning Handel events from around the world are available by logging onto <http://gfhandel.org/>

“TOILING AT THE LOWER EMPLOYMENTS OF LIFE” or EDITING HANDEL

In 1750 Samuel Johnson completed the first *Dictionary of the English Language*. Having received the commission from five booksellers in 1746 to write the volume, Johnson spent the next four years “editing the citations and choosing the 118,000 illustrative quotations (sometimes by committing the heresy of changing quotes he didn’t like). Finally he completed the definitions of what were to become the 43,500 chosen headwords.”¹ Having just completed my own labor-intensive project, a critical edition of Handel’s last oratorio *Jephtha*, I have oftentimes found myself thinking of Johnson’s massive undertaking especially when in need of a little motivation. (At other times my motivational spur was Dante’s famous journey through Hell, Purgatory and Paradise, *The Divine Comedy*.) The *Preface* to Johnson’s *Dictionary* begins with a rhetorical flourish of enviable eloquence:

It is the fate of those who toil at the lower employments of life, to be rather driven by the fear of evil, than attracted by the prospect of good; to be disgraced by miscarriage, or punished for neglect, where success would have been without applause, and diligence without reward.

Among these unhappy mortals is the writer of dictionaries; whom mankind have considered, not as the pupil, but the slave of science, the pionier [sic] of literature, doomed only to remove rubbish and clear obstructions from the paths of Learning and Genius, who press forward to conquest and glory, without bestowing a smile on the humble drudge that facilitates their progress. Every other authour may aspire to praise; the lexicographer can only hope to escape reproach, and even this negative recompense has been yet granted to very few.²

Substitute in the first phrase of Johnson’s second paragraph “maker of critical editions” for “writer of dictionaries” and in the last sentence of the same paragraph, “critical editor” for “lexicographer” and you have a pretty fair description of how I sometimes felt during the past twelve years.

Yet editing Handel’s *Jephtha* was not entirely “diligence without reward;” it was often

extremely rewarding, sometimes surprisingly so. Since so many colleagues, students and friends have asked me what I actually did to complete this project, I thought I would explain what some of the joys and sorrows of the enterprise are, realizing that there will be readers of this Newsletter who know already from personal experience.

Before describing some of the issues related to editing a Handel oratorio, it might be good to recall that critical editing is one of the oldest scholarly activities in the world and has affected every major verbal and musical text known to humankind since the time of the great fabled library in Alexandria, where the history of the discipline begins.³ Whenever you read the Bible, a play by Shakespeare or a novel by Dickens, the text at hand, whether hard-copy or in e-form, is likely the result of some form of editorial intervention. The accuracy of the text being read depends on the quality of the editing, and whether the work in question is being read for pleasure, as a homework assignment, or is subjected to a close, critical reading, the starting point is the same: an edited text. Consider the following:

The early twentieth-century critic F. O. Matthiessen, in discussing Melville’s *White-Jacket*, made note of the unusual phrase, “the soiled fish of the sea.” According to David Greetham, Matthiessen

built an entire aesthetic and compositional theory upon it. Commenting on the locution “soiled fish of the sea,” Matthiessen claimed that “hardly anyone but Melville could have created the shudder that results from this frightening vagueness some ‘soiled fish of the sea.’ The *discordia concors*, the unexpected linking of the medium of cleanliness with filth, could only have sprung from an imagination that had apprehended the terrors of the deep, of the immaterial deep as well as the physical.” Unfortunately for Matthiessen’s thesis, as Fredson Bowers then pointed out, the *soiled* was in fact a typographical error for *coiled*, and was thus introduced by the compositor, not by the author. Here, a single letter in a text can have enormous critical implications, and a critic’s ignorance of—or more likely indifference to—the historical and technical research of textual criticism can produce erroneous implications. Matthiessen committed suicide not long after Bowers’s exposure.⁴

1 Simon Winchester, *The Professor and the Madman: A Tale of Murder, Insanity and the Making of the Oxford English Dictionary* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), p. 96.

2 E.L. McAdam, Jr., & George Milne, *Samuel Johnson’s Dictionary: A Modern Selection* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1964), p. 3.

3 See D.C. Greetham, *Textual Scholarship: An Introduction* (New York: Garland, 1994), especially Chapter 8.

4 David Greetham, “Textual Criticism” (2005) in *Continuum Encyclopedia of American Literature*. Retrieved from http://www.credoreference.com/entry/amlit/textual_criticism (January 05, 2010)

The lesson of this anecdote is that any meaningful encounter with a verbal or musical text—reading, criticism, performance—must start from a reliable text.

That, in fact, is the first principle behind the new critical edition of Handel's works, the *Hallsische Händel Ausgabe* or HHA. The "Editorial Policy" that is uniformly printed in every HHA volume states that "Handel's intentions will be realized as faithfully as possible, using modern notation. In general, roman type indicates original material and italic type denotes editorial suggestion." Furthermore, each volume includes a sizeable Preface, which places the edited work in its historical context and an extensive Critical Report which allows the edition user to see and evaluate for him/herself the basis for each editorial decision.

In this regard, the HHA represents a significant improvement over the last Complete Works edition of Handel's music published in the nineteenth century under the editorship of Friederich Chrysander.⁵ The main score or text in HHA volumes reproduces, as far as current scholarship allows, the work as created for its first run of performances. The composer's autograph is the main source for this score and readings that are derived from secondary sources are clearly distinguished in the score typographically and fully discussed in the Critical Report. Movements that were eliminated before the first run of performances or added for subsequent revivals are presented in supplementary appendices where scholars can study them or conductors perform them. Thus playing a key role in bringing out such an edition, one that in every way possible is faithful to the composer's intentions, surely constitutes the greatest reward for the editorial diligence of consulting and comparing in detail all relevant sources for the work in question.

But I must stop at this point to clarify something. Samuel Johnson implies in his Preface that his attempt to clear "obstructions from the paths of Learning and Genius" was the work of a single "humble drudge." Johnson's rhetoric here has caused him to be not entirely truthful, for he worked with a team of paid assistants who toiled beside him on the cluttered "paths of Learning

and Genius." For one learns quickly that writing a dictionary or creating a major critical edition, entails coming into contact with a community of scholarly colleagues and students who help in countless ways. This is one of the joys of Handel scholarship. In some scholarly communities the level of acrimony or the implied hierarchy among its members makes it an unpleasant task to seek out help or comment. My experience in editing *Jephtha* has been exactly the opposite. Graydon Beeks, who served as edition monitor faithfully met with me at least yearly at various conferences for nearly a decade to guide the uncertain steps of a novice editor. After expertly playing Virgil to my faltering Dante, he handed me over to Annette Landgraf of the HHA editorial offices (my Beatrice?) who supervised with thoroughness and patience the final stages of the edition. Without their guidance and expert help, the "paths of Learning and Genius," at least exemplified in this edition, would be considerably more cluttered. Yet, they were not the only ones who aided my efforts. Donald Burrows, Terence Best, Hans Joachim Marx, William Gudger and the late Howard Serwer, Anthony Hicks and Siegfried Fleisch all helped in various ways, to say nothing of students who helped prepare the score and Critical Report and acted as sounding boards in my seminars. In every case, these people acted not from self-interest but from a selfless devotion to Handel's music.

Immersion in the materials that form the basis for a critical edition for extended periods of time can teach the editor a great deal. It was during the process of comparing (note-for-note,

HANDEL IN SEATTLE 2011

Pacific Musicworks, the American Handel Society, St. James Cathedral, and Sweet Bird Classics are bringing the 30-year-old American Handel Festival to Seattle in March 2011. This is a three-week, citywide festival, incorporating some 18 concerts and a host of lectures, symposia, and educational activities.

The festival was founded at the University of Maryland in 1981 and held there until 2001, when it began traveling to different cities. The most recent festivals were in Danville KY, Princeton NJ, Santa Fe NM, and Iowa City IA. The idea of a Handel festival in Seattle has captured the city's imagination, and a number of groups have already committed to holding Handel events.

⁵ For a detailed discussion of Chrysander's Handel edition, see Terence Best, "From Walsh to the *Hallsische Händel-Ausgabe*: Handel Editions Past and Present" in Richard King, ed., *Handel Studies: A Gedenkschrift for Howard Serwer* (Pendragon Press, 2009), pp. 5-24.

word-for-word) secondary manuscripts of this three-hour long oratorio that it dawned on me that this is the only oratorio of Handel where the hero who is to deliver Israel is NOT chosen by God, thus allowing the events of the story to unfold in their near-disastrous way.⁶ In the course of the past decade or so, I feel that I have arrived at some understanding of Handel's oratorios which came as a sort of side benefit or "bonus" to the long hours of studying the sources. In a short, provocative essay, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, describes the "suggestive power" that the "notational picture," especially in the form of the composer's autograph, can have for a "sensitive musician." Indeed, Harnoncourt singles out the autograph of *Jephtha* for providing us "with a stirring and inspiring insight into Handel's working method."⁷ My struggle to finish this edition dwarfs in comparison to Handel's struggle with the onset of blindness to finish his oratorio, a struggle eloquently communicated through the "notational picture" of Act III of the autograph score.

Thus editorial diligence has its rewards and in the long run has taught me more than I probably currently realize. But what I currently realize is that, with the generous help of colleagues and students, there is a new edition of one of Handel's greatest works available for performance and study, an edition that represents as far as current scholarship allows the composer's intentions. I have a new found admiration and respect for the efforts of scholars like Chrysander who were amazingly productive without the technological supports of our time. I also have a new found admiration and respect for those colleagues of mine, fellow humble drudges such as Terence Best and Donald Burrows, who have edited multiple volumes of Handel. Who knows—maybe I'll attempt to join their ranks and edit another volume? But for now, I plan on enjoying my time out of editorial hell and, with Dante, "look once more upon the stars."

— **Kenneth Nott**
University of Hartford

⁶ See Kenneth Nott, "Ourselves Must Choose: Handel's *Jephtha* as Variation on a Biblical Theme," *Händel-Jahrbuch*, 52 (2006), pp. 119-28.

⁷ "What an Autograph Can Tell Us" in Nikolaus Harnoncourt, *Baroque Music Today: Music As Speech*, trans., Mary O'Neill (Amadeus Press, 1988), p. 177.

CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Handel Society invites submissions of abstracts for papers to be given at the American Handel Festival, March 24-27, 2011, in Seattle, Washington, in conjunction with performances of *Acis and Galatea* by the Boston Early Music Festival, and *Esther* by Pacific Musicworks. We invite proposals on any topic connected to Handel's life and work, but especially encourage submissions related to the works to be performed. Abstracts of no more than 500 words may be sent by November 15, 2010 to Wendy Heller, AHS Program Chair, wbheller@princeton.edu.

For more about the American Handel Society, or to become a member, go to <http://americanhandelsociety.org/>.

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.

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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The American Handel Society – Membership Form

Please mail the completed form and appropriate membership dues as instructed below:

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Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Regular	30	15	-
Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Student*	10	5	-
TOTAL REMITTANCE			

* - This organization does not have a reduced rate for retirees.

Those paying in dollars or sterling should make their checks payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail them to Marjorie Pomeroy, Secretary/Treasurer, THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, 49 Christopher Hollow Road, Sandwich, MA 02563. Those wishing to pay in Euros should remit to Prof. Dr. Manfred Rätzer, Treasurer, Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, Gr. Nikolaistrasse 5, 06108 Halle (Saale), Federal Republic of Germany, and indicate that the payment is for the account of the AHS. Friends of the London Handel Institute may also pay their AHS dues in sterling by making their checks payable to The Handel Institute and mailing them to Malcolm London, Hon. Treasurer, The Handel Institute, 108 Falcon Point, Hopton Street, London, SE1 9JB, with the appropriate annotation.

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

The American Handel Society

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