

# NEWSLETTER

of

## The American Handel Society

Volume XXIX, Number 1

Spring 2014



*Winton Dean (1916-2013)*

### MEMORIES OF WINTON DEAN (1916-2013)

Winton Dean became part of my life in 1959 when my mother gave me the newly published *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* as a graduation present from high school. It was a revelation, as were many of the performances and recordings that soon followed based on Dean's research and his vision of Handel as a master dramatist. Before that, Handel's oratorios had been represented on disc by a very limited assortment of works, usually cut, reorchestrated, or otherwise distorted by well-meaning but misguided admirers. Thanks to Dean's book the dramatic oratorios at last came into their own, and he soon played a leading role in the revival of Handel's Italian operas. That

*continued on p. 2*

### FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK SPRING 2014

I had the pleasure of attending the Annual Conference of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music held in San Antonio earlier this spring. As one has come to expect from the SSCM, the gathering featured excellent papers, splendid music and convivial company. Members of both societies can now look forward to our joint conference to be held in Iowa City next April. Please see the Call for Papers elsewhere in this issue of the newsletter and put the dates on your calendar. More information will appear in future issues and on the Society's website.

In the short run I am looking forward to attending the Handel Festival and Conference in Halle, Germany in June. The ambitious program is particularly welcome as there was some fear of retrenchment following the unfortunate cancellation of last year's event. Following a longstanding tradition initiated by the late Iter Facio, there will be a report in the summer issue of the newsletter.

Finally, the Secretary/Treasurer would like to thank all members who have paid their dues for 2014 and especially those who have also renewed their Handel Institute and G.F. Händel Gesellschaft affiliations in a timely manner. She would also like to encourage anyone who has not yet renewed to do so in the near future and to encourage all of us to recruit new members.

— Graydon Beeks

effectively started with his Bloch lectures at Berkeley in 1966-67 and culminated in the two massive tomes that now stand on our shelves alongside the oratorio book.

I first met Winton when he came to Berkeley as Bloch Professor while I was a graduate student there. This too was a revelation. I remember saying, somewhat naively, to my mentor Joseph Kerman that I thought it remarkable that someone who did such extraordinary research on Handel should also be passionately devoted to shooting birds. Wrong, said Joe, the remarkable thing is that he does all that research on Handel. Having never before taught a seminar, Winton conducted it in a quite unusual way, simply treating us students as friends who shared all his interests and enthusiasms and who like him saw no distinction between class and the rest of life, as we all frequently gathered at each other's homes to eat, talk, and listen to Handel.

When I came to England the next year to work on a Handel dissertation Winton and Thalia took wonderfully good care of me, and I often had the pleasure, then and later, of visiting them and their son Stephen in Hambledon and in Scotland. It was impossible to spend any significant amount of time with Winton without learning a lot more about Handel and about nineteenth-century opera, another subject on which he was deeply learned. But it was also immensely entertaining, because Winton was a man of tremendous charm, endearing and witty as well as kind. His wit of course pervades his writing. Checking something in *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* the other day, I came across this sentence about *Joshua*: "Morell's first mistake was to seek a libretto in the Book of Joshua, a tedious and bloodthirsty chronicle, from which Jehovah's persistent loading of the dice expels all dramatic and moral interest." Regardless of whether one agrees with this judgment, it is a delicious sentence and pure Winton.

Many of us have fond memories of Winton. One of my own stems from the London Handel festival and conference in 1985. It opened with a concert in Westminster Abbey, complete with two Coronation Anthems and the heir to the throne seated in the head choir stall. Afterwards there was a reception in Inigo Jones's fabled Banqueting House. And there was Winton warmly indoctrinating Prince Charles on the greatness of Handel's operas and the many indignities they had suffered at the hands of modern stage directors. Had Princess Diana not been attending a Live Aid concert that evening, she would surely have received equal treatment.

When the Maryland Handel Festival was launched Winton became a regular guest, making many new American friends. Even for those not lucky enough to get to know him in College Park or London or Halle, he was a powerful presence through his books and other publications. He influenced countless performers, editors, and critics. He transformed Handel scholarship and laid the foundation for much scholarship to come. There was no one like him.

(For a formal obituary of Winton Dean by John Roberts, see the August issue of the Newsletter of the American Musicological Society, <http://www.ams-net.org/newsletter>.)

— John H. Roberts

### 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 applications will be March 1st in even-numbered years.** 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](mailto:rgking@umd.edu)). Paper submissions can also be mailed to Professor Richard King, University of Maryland School of Music, College Park, MD 20742.

# AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY  
FEBRUARY 21-24, 2013

## ABSTRACTS (PART IV)

**Stephen Nissenbaum** (University of Massachusetts):  
“How Handel’s *Messiah* Became a Christmas Tradition”

How did *Messiah* come to be associated with Christmas rather than Easter? After all, just a small portion of the oratorio deals with the Nativity. Every performance of *Messiah* under Handel’s own direction took place in the spring, generally in the weeks before Easter. And the oratorio continued to be performed at Lent well into the nineteenth century. Yet, by the mid-1800s, *Messiah* performances in both Britain and America had morphed into the Christmas rituals they remain today.

The shift took place over the first half of the 19th century, and in two stages—the earlier one between 1815 and 1820, the later one during the mid-1830s. (To be sure, *Messiah* had been presented during the Christmas season in several places back in the 18th century. But, as I shall argue, these were anomalies, inasmuch as Handel’s oratorio itself held no seasonal associations before 1800.) In England, a tradition of annual Christmas performances seems to have begun as early as 1816 (presented by the Cecilian Society of London, an organization of amateurs), while in the U.S. the first complete performance of *Messiah* was famously given two years later in Boston, on Christmas Night, 1818, by another amateur group, the Handel and Haydn Society. (This event—I shall explore it in detail—was actually part of an organized campaign to bring Christmas itself back to New England, where it had long been suppressed by the Puritans.)

But those initial London Christmas performances did not achieve any great popularity. Similarly, in America, after 1818 the Handel and Haydn Society did not present another Christmas *Messiah* for fully fifteen more years, until 1833. It was only *then* that a genuine and lasting association was forged between the holiday and the oratorio. In England as well, it was during the 1830s that Christmas performances of *Messiah* became (and remained) truly popular events. Starting in 1836, these annual Christmas performances were given by a newly formed group of amateurs, the Sacred Harmonic Society of London. And it was *this* group that first deployed the massive choral and instrumental forces which came virtually to define “Victorian” Handel performance

practice. Soon Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society too were using large-scale forces for their own annual Christmas *Messiahs*.

A final point: both the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston and the Sacred Harmonic Society of London were comprised chiefly of religious dissenters—Unitarians in the American case, Methodists in the British one. Those dissenters managed to appropriate *Messiah* from the established Church, which had essentially controlled it through the 18th century and beyond. In the process, they managed to sever the oratorio’s solid association with Easter and to construct its new and enduring connection with Christmas.

**Kenneth Nott** (University of Hartford): “Psalms and Psalm Genres in Handel’s Old Testament Oratorios”

It is well known that Handel’s Old Testament oratorios frequently depart from their source stories. This is understandable enough when one considers that what usually begins as a prose narrative has to be transformed into a series of aria, recitative and chorus texts intended to be sung in a three-act performance lasting roughly three hours. Oftentimes the briefest of verbal clues in the source text forms the basis for extensive oratorio scenes, and even the creation of characters and events not present in the original story is commonplace.

The process of oratorio adaptation is complex and multifaceted. In this paper I would like to explore the role played by psalms and psalm genres in Handel’s so-called Israelite oratorios. Of course, Handel and his librettists had precedents for this approach in Milton’s three masterpieces of biblical adaptation, *Paradise Lost*, *Paradise Regained* and *Samson Agonistes*, where, in the words of one Milton scholar, the poet became “as far as possible a new psalmist himself,” writing “biblical lyric into Bible-based narrative.” (Mary Ann Radzinowicz, *Milton’s Epics and the Book of Psalms*, p. 50) I would suggest that something similar happens in the Old Testament oratorios of Handel.

To keep the scope of this topic within reasonable limits, I will examine scenes from Handel’s *Samson*, *Joshua* and *Susanna* to determine the extent to which specific psalms or elements of psalm genres, such as hymn and lament, have been employed as a means of both structure and interpretation. Broadly speaking, three effects of the use of psalms and psalm genres in the oratorios can be identified: (1) they serve as a practical way of creating musico/dramatic episodes which do not exist or are only hinted at in the source stories; (2) they help slant the stories in the direction of national or communal deliverances, even when the source story is more neutral in that regard; (3) they contribute to a quasi-liturgical or ceremonial atmosphere, which would have made the oratorios more accessible to audiences well versed in

public services, such as coronations, state funerals, etc. which were “staged” as sacred events interspersed with psalmic commentary.

**Ruth Smith** (Cambridge University): “New perspectives on Charles Jennens”

Preparing the Charles Jennens exhibition at the Handel House Museum, London (21 November 2012 – 14 April 2013), afforded fresh insights into Jennens’ achievements and character, which are presented in this paper. The innovative nature of Jennens’ inextinguishable creative energy is exemplified in his pioneering Shakespeare editions, which established new standards used even now by modern editors, and in his commission of a work by Roubiliac which is unique in the sculptor’s output (and for which a new source is suggested in this paper). Jennens’ fidelity to his religious-political principles is shown in the (newly identified) source of his seal ring. Jennens’ addiction to and active pursuit of music, Handel’s in particular, is manifested – and the Aylesford partbooks explained – by his designs for the architecture and furnishing of his country house. The paper connects these evidences of Jennens’ interests to his librettos for Handel.

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## **AGOSTINO STEFFANI: EUROPEAN COMPOSER**

### **AND HANOVERIAN DIPLOMAT AT THE TIME OF LEIBNIZ**

**18-20 SEPTEMBER 2014,  
SCHLOSS HERRENHAUSEN,  
HANOVER, GERMANY**

This is an international interdisciplinary conference, organized by the Department of Musicology of the Hanover Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in collaboration with the Leibniz-Forschungsstelle Hannover of the Akademie der Wissenschaften at Göttingen and the Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz-Stiftung Hannover, and supported by the VolkswagenStiftung.

#### **Inaugural concert**

The event begins with a concert at the Neustädter Hof- und Stadtkirche St. Johannis on Thursday 18 September at 7.30 pm, when Lajos Rovatkay (Hanover) directs a

programme entitled ‘Agostino Steffani (1654-1728) and Music at the Court of Hanover’.

Admission by ticket from the Abendkasse at the church: Rote Reihe 8, D-30169 Hanover (<http://www.hofundstadtkirche.de>).

#### **Conference programme (provisional)**

Admission is free, but prior registration is compulsory: contact Nicole Strohmann (details below).

Friday 19 September

#### **9:30 – 12:30 Steffani and the Church: Music and Politics**

*Colin Timms (Birmingham)* Steffani and Music for the Church

*Bettina Braun (Mainz)* Die Reichskirche im Nordwesten – Steffanis Amt als Weihbischof

*Michael Feldkamp (Berlin)* Steffanis Einordnung in die geistliche Hierarchie und sein religiöser Standpunkt

*Hans-Georg Aschoff (Hanover)* Steffani als apostolischer Vikar des Nordens: Grenzen und Möglichkeiten seines Amtes

*Rashid S. Pegah (Würzburg)* Neuaufgefundene Quellen zu Steffanis Leben und Werk

#### **14:00 – 17:00 Steffani and Hanover: Politics and Court Culture**

*Arnd Reitemeier (Göttingen)* Hannover im europäischen Konzert: das Gewicht Hannovers in Europa vor der englischen Sukzession

*Claudia Kaufold (Oldenburg)* “Unser Envoyé Extraordinaire am kurbayerischen Hofe”: der Diplomat Agostino Steffani

*Nicole K. Strohmann (Hanover)* Der Widerhall politischer Ereignisse in Steffanis Opern – ein komponierender Politiker oder ein politisierender Komponist?

*Helen Coffey (Milton Keynes)* Steffani and the Patronage of the Hanover Court

*Reinmar Emans (Hamburg)* Das Musikerpersonal in Hannover und Wolfenbüttel/Braunschweig: Wechselseitiger Austausch oder Abschottung?

*Margherita Palumbo (Rom)* Il gran negotio. Die theatralischen Konversionsprojekte von Agostino Steffani

#### **17:00 – 18:00 Steffani and Theory: Music and Philosophy**

*Michael Kempe (Hanover)* “Auch der Zitherspieler wird verlacht, wenn er immer auf derselben Saite spielt.” Zur Bedeutung von Musik und Musikmetaphorik bei G. W. Leibniz

*Stephen Rose (London)* The Contest of Reason versus Sense: Steffani and German Musical Thought, 1695-1725

Saturday 20 September

**Steffani and Europe**

**9:00 – 11:30**

*Susanne Rode-Breymann, President of the HMTM Hannover*

Welcome

*Silke Leopold (Heidelberg)* Zwischen den Stühlen, oder Wem gehört Agostino Steffani: Zur Steffani-Rezeption in Italien und Deutschland

*Berthold Over (Mainz)* Steffani und die italienische Kammermusik

*Matthew Gardner (Heidelberg)* Steffani's Italian Opera Singers in Hanover: Recruitment and Vocal Style

*Graham Sadler (Hull)* Steffani and the French Style

**13:00 – 14:00**

*Reinhard Strohm (Oxford)* Musik in Deutschland zur Steffani-Zeit

*Hansjörg Drauschke (Halle)* Steffanis Opern: Herausforderungen an eine Gesamtausgabe

**14:00 – 15:00**

*John Roberts (Berkeley)* Steffani's Hanover Operas as Handel Sources

*Wolfgang Hirschmann (Halle)* Steffanis Rezitativ: ein Modell für deutschen Komponisten?

**15:30 – 16:30**

Studentische Werkstattberichte; Studenten der HMTM Hannover: Vermittlung Alter Musik im iPod-Zeitalter: Werkstatteergebnisse des Seminars von Dr. Nicole K. Strohm im Sommersemester 2014

**16:30 – 17:00 Closing discussion**

**Guided tour of St Clement's Basilica**

Saturday 20 September at 5.30 pm

Martin Tenge, Regional Dean and Provost of the jurisdiction of Hanover in the diocese of Hildesheim, leads a guided tour round St Clement's, which was built and consecrated by Steffani.

Admission free.

**Further information**

Inquiries should be sent to Dr Nicole K. Strohm ([nicole.strohm@hmtm-hannover.de](mailto:nicole.strohm@hmtm-hannover.de)).

## A PUBLICATION OF NOTE

*The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain*  
(Cambridge University Press, 2013)

By Thomas McGeary

## THEODORA IN SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

In January 2014 I had the pleasure of hearing a performance of *Theodora* given by the English Concert under the direction of their current Artistic Director, Harry Bicket, at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts in Orange County. This concert was part of a tour given by the ensemble to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding in 1973; other American performances took place in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and at Carnegie Hall in New York. The choice of *Theodora* was oddly appropriate because it received what must have been its first American performance – although in a highly condensed form – in Southern California under the direction of my teacher, William F. Russell, at Pomona College in spring 1959.

Bicket has thought carefully about every aspect of the music, and the orchestra realized his concept in a stunning demonstration of just how far baroque playing has come in 40 years. Members of the AHS who heard the ensemble last year in concert at Princeton and in the performance of *Radamisto* at Carnegie Hall will have a clear idea of the level of playing. The Choir of Trinity Wall Street, under the direction of Julian Wachner, sang with an ideal combination of beautiful tone, technical security and emotional involvement.

The soloists were a distinguished group by any standards. Dorothea Röschmann, although one of my favorite singers, is not to everyone's taste and even I was surprised at her heavily accented English. However, she never sings with less than total commitment, and her *Theodora* was a force to be reckoned with. David Daniels, who often plays larger-than-life operatic heroes, seemed to be singing with a special sense of self-discipline – almost as if he were attempting through sheer force of will to bring his *Theodora* back from the edge. The chemistry between the two of them in their duets was very moving.

Sarah Connolly was just about the ideal Irene, although the role lies low for her. I had the feeling that towards the end her projection of intense goodness was beginning to fade, but that may be built into the role. Veteran tenor Kurt Streit was a late replacement as Septimius, but sang securely if a bit monochromatically in the pivotal role of the loyal Roman soldier who still has sympathy for his comrade Didymus and his fellow Christians. Bass Neal Davies was all bluster and righteousness as the Roman leader Valens, but I could not help thinking that a more nuanced view of the role should be possible.

Not a perfect *Theodora*, then, but a very distinguished one. It was certainly the only live performance of this oratorio I have heard during which it seemed clear from beginning to end that all the performers were convinced it was a great work. From the response of the audience it was clear that they, too, had been convinced.

— Graydon Beeks

## CALL FOR PAPERS

The Twenty-Third Annual Conference of the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music and the Biennial Conference of the American Handel Society will be hosted as a joint meeting next year by the School of Music at the University of Iowa, 23-26 April 2015.

We welcome proposals on the following topics:

- All aspects of seventeenth-century music and its contexts
- Subjects associated with Handel's music, life, and times
- Issues that cross boundaries and have relevance to both societies.

We especially encourage scholars to submit proposals for plenary sessions that explore the relationship between Handel and his seventeenth-century predecessors and other issues of relevance to both societies.

Presentations may take a variety of formats, including individual papers of twenty minutes in length, lecture-recitals (forty-five minutes), workshops involving group participation, roundtable discussions, and panel sessions. For individual papers, abstracts not exceeding 350 words should clearly represent the title, subject, and argument, and the significance of the findings.

Proposals for presentations in other formats should be of a similar length; they should clearly state and justify the intended format and should indicate the originality and significance of the material to be delivered. Those for lecture-recitals must include recordings of the proposed performer(s) playing examples of the same repertory if not the exact proposed work(s).

All proposals should include either the designation "AHS" or "SSCM" to indicate for which society you feel your paper is best suited. Plenary sessions will be formed from the abstracts submitted to both societies; the program committee reserves the right to move papers from one to another society's session as appropriate.

The Irene Alm Memorial Prize will be awarded for the best scholarly presentation given by a graduate student on a designated SSCM or plenary session.

Proposals should be sent no later than midnight October 1, 2014 to Wendy Heller [ahs.sscm2015@gmail.com](mailto:ahs.sscm2015@gmail.com). Questions about the conference may be addressed to Wendy Heller, Program Chair AHS-SSCM 2015 at [wbheller@princeton.edu](mailto:wbheller@princeton.edu).

### NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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

### 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.

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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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State/Country \_\_\_\_\_ Postal code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail address \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

I agree to have the following listed in a printed Directory of AHS Members (check as appropriate):

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Class of Membership — Circle applicable cell(s) (for current calendar year, unless otherwise specified)	\$	£	€
Regular	25	15	20
Joint (one set of publications)	30	17	25
Donor	40	23	34
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Sponsor	65	38	55
Patron	130	80	110
Life	400	250	320
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<b>TOTAL REMITTANCE</b>			

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

Those paying in dollars should make their checks payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail them to Marjorie Pomeroy Kelly, Secretary/Treasurer, THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, 49 Christopher Hollow Road, Sandwich, MA 02563. Those wishing to pay in Euros should remit to Stephan Blaut, 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 Ms. Sylvia Levi, Hon. Treasurer, The Handel Institute, 254A Kew Road, Richmond TW9 3EG, with the appropriate annotation. Please do not send checks in Euros or sterling directly to the AHS as we are no longer able to process them.

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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## The American Handel Society

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