

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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Winter 2015



“HANDEL AND HIS EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY PERFORMERS” THE HANDEL INSTITUTE CONFERENCE, LONDON NOVEMBER 21–23, 2015

The Handel Institute (the British equivalent of the AHS) organizes a conference every three years, and in late 2015, scholars from across the globe gathered in London for three days of papers and discussion mostly centering on the main theme of the conference “Handel and His Eighteenth-Century Performers.” The first two days were hosted by the Foundling Museum (also home of the Gerald Coke Handel Collection) and the final day was at the Open University’s regional center in Camden. Across the three days, a total of 24 papers were presented, many of which concentrated on Handel’s London-based singers.

The first day opened with a short welcome from Donald Burrows, Chairman of the Handel Institute Council, followed by a session on “Singers and Players” with papers by Graydon Beeks and David Hunter. Beeks’s paper on Handel’s performing forces at Cannons considered the individual members of the Cannons Concert for whom Handel wrote the Cannons Anthems and *Te Deum*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *Esther*. Discussing both the instrumentalists and singers, it emerged that many of the instrumentalists had been members of the Italian opera orchestra which had been disbanded in

EXHIBITION: “HANDEL: A LIFE WITH FRIENDS” HANDEL & HENDRIX IN LONDON JULY 1, 2015 – JANUARY 10, 2016

The opportunity to curate an exhibit for the Handel House Museum (now re-baptized as Handel & Hendrix in London) gave me a special opportunity to think in a new way about the documents and objects that had played a role in the research for my book *George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014). In the following, I’ve chosen a few examples from the exhibit to illustrate the kinds of discussions and fact-finding that occurred before and after the installation.

I would say that the *pièce de résistance* of the exhibit is the 1731 painting by William Hogarth of *The Wesley Family* (with Anne Donnellan) from the Wellington Collection, Stratfield Saye House. This is one of two objects in the exhibit that I had only seen previously in reproduction, and it is an image of great importance. Not only does it show us Donnellan on the brink of song in a domestic setting among her cousin’s family, but it also introduces us to the extended family of Richard Wesley (1690-1758). Born Richard Colley, he changed his name after receiving a large bequest from his cousin Garret Wesley (1665-1728). This inheritance fell to him, one supposes, through the early death of his elder brother, Henry Colley (1685-1724), a fact of importance to Handeliens as his widow, née Lady Mary Hamilton, is the rarely identified Lady Mary Colley mentioned by Mary Delany as a frequent companion at musical and theatrical events. Richard’s later-born son, Garret Wesley (1735-1781), created 1st Earl of Mornington and Viscount Wellesley in 1760 (and the family’s surname was altered yet again to reflect this title), was a well-known composer of glees (see “Mornington, Garret Wesley, 1st Earl of” in *Grove Music Online*) and godson of Mary Delany. His son Arthur Wellesley (1769-1852) was the 1st Duke of Wellington. The 9th Duke of Wellington, Charles Wellesley, who graciously loaned the family portrait to

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1717 and re-established in 1719, while others were non-professional musicians who were also servants – something not wholly uncommon in the eighteenth century. The singers were either ex-cathedral choristers who had not yet gained an adult position in one of the London choirs, or young men with some experience of singing in the theater. Hunter’s paper entitled “To preposition singers: with whom do they work for, against, near, among, with, opposite, without, around, alongside, despite, contrary to, until?,” which in part drew on material from his recently published book *The Lives of George Frideric Handel* (Boydell & Brewer, 2015), served as an ideal introduction to the remainder of the day which was made up of three sessions on “Singers and Opera in the 1720s.” This included papers firstly on specific singers such as a comparison of the roles sung by Giuseppe Maria Boschi in Handel’s and Antonio Lotti’s operas (Adriana De Feo); Senesino and accompanied recitative (Liam Gorry); “The other Senesino,” i.e. Francesco Bernardi (Randall Scotting); and the limitations of how singers could exert influence on their parts, using the soprano Francesca Cuzzoni and the role of Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* as a case study (Hans-Dieter Clausen). Secondly, the papers focused on the ties between opera performances and Germany, with Konstanze Musketa speaking on Johann Gottfried Riemschneider, a “Zachow’s scholar and Handel’s singer,” and Wolfgang Hirschmann on performances of Handel’s operas in Hamburg using the example of *Riccardo Primo* which was performed in an adaptation by Christoph Gottlieb Wend and Georg Philipp Telemann as *Der misslungene Braut-Wechsel oder Richardus I., König von England*.

The second day opened with a continuation of the previous day’s main theme, now however looking at “Singers and Opera in the 1730s.” John H. Roberts began by giving a detailed analysis of the relationships between singers, composers, and impresarios in the production of the two *pasticcio* operas *Ormisda* (1730) and *Venceslao* (1731) that were performed in the 1730–31 season. As Roberts argued, Handel was only involved in the two works as a performer and not as the compiler – the arias were probably provided by Handel’s singers, drawing on their own repertoire, and the recitatives may have been written by Pietro Castrucci, the leader of the Haymarket Theatre orchestra. In any case, the project was probably the brainchild of Handel’s partner in the management of the London opera company at the King’s Theatre, John Heidegger, rather than Handel. After Judit Zsovár presented her interpretation of the interchange between the development of Anna Strada’s voice and Handel’s compositional thinking, Graham Cummings spoke on the castrato Giovanni Carestini and his involvement in the 1734–5 opera season, outlining the music Handel

wrote for the star castrato, how this contributed to his battle with the rival opera company, the Opera of the Nobility, and to what extent Handel’s music for Carestini in *Ariodante* and *Alcina* compares to the music composed by Johann Adolph Hasse, Nicola Porpora, and Riccardo Broschi for the singer’s counterpart, Farinelli (Carlo Broschi), at the rival company. This was followed by my own paper on Gioacchino Conti, Carestini’s immediate replacement in April 1736 after Carestini had left London at the end of the 1734–5 season, exploring the singer’s working relationship with Handel, including the adaptation of old music and creation of new parts to suit the singer’s abilities.

The afternoon sessions moved on to new territory, with two papers more loosely associated with the conference theme, including contributions from David Hurley on “The ‘altered da capo’ aria in Handel’s *Alexander Balus*,” and Natassa Varka discussing “Charles Jennens’s version of *Joseph and his Brethren*.” Jennens’s numerous alterations are preserved in a heavily annotated manuscript score owned by Jennens, which was then used as the basis to create a second surviving score and parts. The version which Jennens created differs so significantly from the original intentions of Handel and his librettist James Miller that it should be described as Jennens’s version of *Joseph and his Brethren*. Varska’s enthusiastic and clear description of select alterations made the complex source situation presented in this paper easy to follow, while also enabling her to draw conclusions on Jennens’s approach to adapting the oratorio, as well as his wider beliefs and commitments.

The final session of the day embraced the topic of “Vocal Style.” Jonathan Rhodes Lee’s paper had been advertised as being on “Cibber and Frasi: Singers of Sentiment,” however owing to time constraints, he limited himself to only Giulia Frasi, considering the management of her career on and off stage, drawing on histories of British theater that describe how singers and actors could shape the professional and personal identities. Lee promoted the idea that Frasi specialized in the character type of the sentimental heroine. This was followed by Suzanne Aspden on the Handelian sound in the later eighteenth century. Relying on the writings of the Burney family while also using Frasi as an example, she established what was meant by a “sweet and affecting” style of Handelian singing after the composer’s death.

The final day of the conference moved on to the topic of “Singers and Oratorio in the 1740s and 1750s.” Following an account from Andrew Shryock of Handel’s recruitment of the tenor Thomas Lowe, David Vickers delivered a fascinating and highly detailed paper on Frasi in context, discussing her roles not only for Handel but also the music she sang by other composers such as John Christopher Smith (Junior), John Stanley, Baldassare

Galuppi, Christoph Willibald Gluck, Porpora, and Hasse amongst others, demonstrating the changes in style and taste that occurred over her thirty-year career in London. Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, whose work on singers in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London is well known, discussed the question of “Who was Mr Brent?” the singer who according to Walsh’s edition (published in April 1752) of Handel’s oratorio *Jephtha* (1751) sang the part of Hamor. It has been previously assumed that this must have referred to Charles Brent, however, Baldwin and Wilson showed that he had no previous career as a singer and was aged 58 or 59 when *Jephtha* was performed, making it highly unlikely that he sang the role. Based on an extensive investigation of the available sources, Baldwin and Wilson suggested that the most likely explanation is that the “Mr” should be a “Miss” and that it may well have been one of the first appearances on the London stage of Charles Brent’s 17-year-old daughter Charlotte Brent. While Baldwin and Wilson admitted that there is no documentary proof for this, they convincingly argued that if the singer for the part of Hamor was called Brent it can only have been Charlotte and not Charles as previously stated in literature on the oratorio. Patricia Howard’s paper on the castrato Gaetano Guadagni served as a timely reminder that the most reliable evidence for what a singer might actually have sounded like or why a singer might have appealed to a particular composer, is found in the surviving music that was written or adjusted for them, rather than in circumstantial contemporary reports.

The afternoon papers offered a glimpse into two further important areas of Handel performance in the eighteenth century – “Performing for Pleasure and Profit” and “Leading Performance.” Alison DeSimone spoke on the use of Handel’s music in eighteenth-century benefit performances, using the singer Ann Turner Robinson and oboist Jean Christian Kytch as examples to highlight that their use of Handel’s music was to identify themselves with the composer’s “greatest hits” in London at a time when it would serve the advancement of their own careers. Berta Joncus’s paper extended this theme to include Handel’s music at the Ranelagh Garden concerts, referring particularly to John Beard and Giulia Frasi, the use of the composer’s music in the early concert programs for the Gardens, and how this helped the Gardens secure popularity and increase the celebrity profiles of the singers. Following a discussion of “Handel and the notion of an orchestra leader” by Eduardo Sola Chagas Lima, the conference was brought to a close with Peter Holman’s paper on Handel’s role as musical director, discussing various aspects of Handel’s methods of direction based on anecdotes and documentary evidence about his working relationship with his performers.

In addition to the wealth of academic scholarship, the conference program also included an opportunity to view a selection of materials on display in the Coke Collection, some of which had been discussed in the papers, as well as an enjoyable conference dinner. A particular highlight was the concert at St. George’s Church, Bloomsbury Way on November 21, which included a program of music for St. Cecilia (whose feast day is November 22) most of which was under the leadership of Laurence Cummings. However, Handel’s *A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day* (1739) was directed by Donald Burrows, offering a seldom opportunity to hear a performance directed by a leading Handel scholar. Thanks are due to the Handel Institute Council Members for ensuring the smooth running of the conference, as well as to Katharine Hogg and Colin Coleman at the Foundling Museum for their support during the first two days of the conference.

— Matthew Gardner

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 1, 2016. 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 Roger Freitas (rfreitas@esm.rochester.edu). Paper submissions can also be mailed to Professor Roger Freitas, Musicology Department, Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs St. Rochester, NY 14604.

Handel House for the exhibit, had not previously been aware of any connection with Handel among his family, and, as I only learned at the preview of the exhibit from the Archivist at Stratfield Saye House, this painting had never before been exhibited publicly.

Other things related to the painting also became clearer. I had already doubted Jeremy Barlow's description of the painting (*The Enraged Musician: Hogarth's Musical Imagery* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2005), 35-6) in which he describes the family (Mr. Wesley, his two daughters, and cousin Donnellan) as actively performing (with Mr. Wesley perhaps playing pizzicato) and Mrs. Wesley clapping. I thought rather that they were on the brink of performing but had not yet started: the father, two daughters, and Donnellan poised to begin and Mrs. Wesley giving the beat (*George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends*, 137-8). Only after the exhibit opened did I receive a private correspondence from Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson who explained that Mrs. Wesley is in fact knotting, "holding the knotting shuttle in her right hand, and over her left arm is draped the handle of the decorative bag containing the thread she has already knotted—you can see the knotted thread going across from the shuttle towards it." And they kindly sent me a copy of their article, "Purcell's Knotting Song" (*The Musical Times*, 128/1733 (1987): 379-81), with which I was not familiar. On close examination, they are, of course, exactly right, although I still suspect from the intensity with which the family and Donnellan seem to be watching her hands, that Mrs. Wesley is using her shuttle to give the beat to begin.

The other "new" object to me was the description of Elizabeth Peacock (later Elizabeth Palmer, one of Handel's legatees) written by the 1st Earl Verney on the back of a letter in February 1747. I had found this document, which served to open the door on the identity of Elizabeth Palmer, while reading the Verney letters in the 60-reel microfilm collection of Verney correspondence from the Clayton House (using the copies in the British Library and the Princeton University Library). As anyone who has worked extensively with microfilm knows, it is a very special pleasure to meet up finally with the real object. The letter was kindly loaned to the exhibit by Sir Edmund Ralph Verney, 6th Baronet, from the Clayton House Trust.

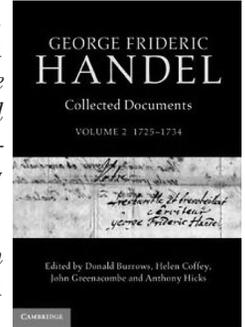
Another very special object in the exhibit for me was the watercolor *Dye Works -Old Ford* (1890) by A. G. Stout. I was not able to reproduce this painting in my book. The identity of A. G. Stout could not be factually documented, and, therefore, there was a potential copyright problem: If Stout had been, say, twenty years old when he painted this image in 1890 and then lived until he was eighty, he would have died in 1950, and the work would still be within the original

copyright protection of seventy years after death. I spent a good deal of time chasing down A. G. Stout in hopes of resolving this issue. By consulting the Death Index for England and Wales, the National Probate Calendar, and Census Records, I came to the conclusion that

RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF NOTE

Books:

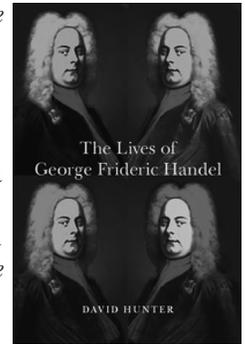
Burrows, Donald, Helen Coffey, John Greenacombe, and Anthony Hicks, eds. *George Frideric Handel: Collected Documents, Volume 2: 1725—1734*. Cambridge University Press, 2015.



Carter, Tim. *Understanding Italian Opera*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2015.

Feldman, Martha. *The Castrato: Reflections on Natures and Kinds*. Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2015.

Hunter, David. *The Lives of George Frideric Handel*. Rochester, NY: Boydell & Brewer, 2015.



Articles:

Aspden, Suzanne. "'Sancta Cæcilia Rediviva.' Elizabeth Linley: Repertoire, Reputation and the English Voice." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 27/3 (2015): 263-87.

Bucciarelli, Melania. "Senesino's Negotiations with the Royal Academy of Music: Further Insight into the Riva-Bernardi Correspondence and the Role of Singers in the Practice of Eighteenth-Century Opera." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 27/3 (2015): 189-213.

Desler, Anne. "'The little that I have done is already gone and forgotten': Farinelli and Burney Write Music History." *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 27/3 (2015): 215-38.

Irvine, Thomas. "Handel at the Queen's Hall Promenade Concerts, 1895—1914." *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 16 (2015): 55-75.

Kim, Minji. "The Amalekite Case and the Portrayal of Saul in Handel and Jennens's Oratorio *Saul* (1739)." *Journal of Musicological Research*, 35/1 (2016): 45-60.

Pink, Andrew. "Solomon, Susanna and Moses: Locating Handel's Lost Librettist." *Eighteenth-Century Music*, 12/2 (2015): 211-22.

the artist was Ambrose Gilbert Stout (1876-1926) of 36 Pekin Street in the Poplar district of London, who was unmarried and (like his unmarried brother, a musician) lived in the family home his entire life. He made his living as a carpenter. According to the census records, this home had one room and a workshop on the first floor unfurnished, which could have served as both a workshop and studio. After the exhibit opened, I discovered that A. G. Stout illustrated his father's two manuscript books (1902) on the history of Limehouse, where his father was born. Other than these illustrations, the ten watercolors by him that survive in the Tower Hamlets Local History Library and Archives, the Hackney Archives, and the London Metropolitan Archives are of buildings in East London (Limehouse, Bethnal Green, Shoreditch, Blackwall, Poplar, Bromley, Bow, and Old Ford). At the time I was finishing the book, I could not draw a direct and documented line from the A. G. of the paintings to the Ambrose Gilbert of the census and probate records (something I believe can now be done through the Limehouse books of A. G.'s father). So, reluctantly, I had to forego using the painting of the Dye Works in Old Ford in my book. In the exhibit, however, it was possible to bring together Stout's image and the description of James Hunter's dye works in the insurance records of the Hand-in-Hand Fire & Life Insurance Society. The derelict buildings depicted by Stout in 1890 closely match the description in the insurance record in terms of the number of buildings and even the number of chimneys in the residence. Again in this case, one cannot draw an absolute connection between Stout's image and Hunter's dye works, but at the very least, the image and the insurance record provide a good sense of the size of Hunter's establishment and make it clear that he was not up to his elbows in dyeing vats himself, but bought in 1745 what in effect was a factory. I am grateful to the London Metropolitan Archives for loaning the Stout watercolor to the exhibit.

Among the many other objects contained in this exhibit, I will limit myself to mentioning only three more. I was happy to include Elizabeth Batt's music book from the British Library as it had been the subject of a very fruitful email correspondence with Andrew Woolley. I had thought the manuscript might have been copied by Batt's teacher, but Woolley demonstrated in his Ph.D. dissertation, "English Keyboard Sources and Their Contexts, c. 1660-1720" (University of Leeds, 2008) that this manuscript was copied from prior sources imitating the notational features of each model; he argued persuasively that the owner/student had laboriously copied the music herself. I attributed the book to Elizabeth Batt (later Elizabeth Mayne, one of Handel's legatees), who would have been nine or ten when she started the book. Woolley had at first thought it belonged to her mother, also an Elizabeth Batt (who



would have been thirty and a mother of two when the book was begun), but this now seems unlikely to us both.

I was particularly pleased to include one of the ledgers from Gosling's private bank (showing the account of Anne Donnellan), loaned to the exhibit courtesy of Barclays Group Archives in Wythenshawe, outside Manchester. I have a sense that the Bank of England ledgers are now being searched more regularly for the repository of information they include, but the records of the private banks are sometimes even more informative, with much more detailed information about the recipients of payments made on behalf of the account holder (rather than the repetitive "To Cash Him" found so often in Handel's Bank of England cash accounts). The archivists at the Barclays Group Archives can often provide information on whether there is an account for a specific individual and, if so, its location within the ledgers.

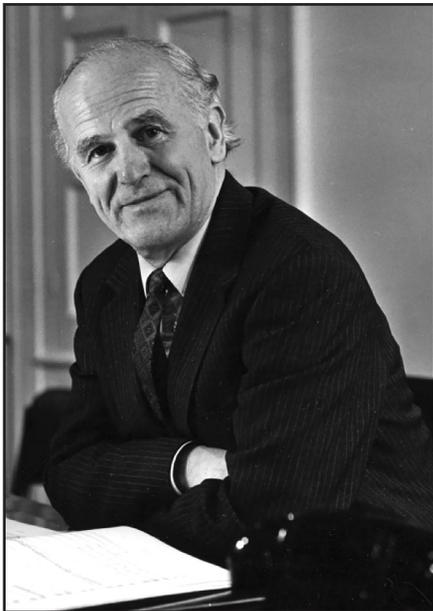
Finally, I was delighted to include one of Mary Delany's original flower mosaics. Although these have become very popular in recent years, many people have only ever seen them in photographic reproductions where they look like paintings. It is only when one sees an original that the 3-D quality and extraordinary detail of these paper mosaics becomes evident. I am grateful to the British Museum for loaning this work of art.

It was a real pleasure to work on this exhibit for the Handel House Museum. I am very grateful to the former Director, Sarah Bardwell, for suggesting I guest-curate an exhibit on the topic of my research and to Martin Wyatt, Deputy Director, for overseeing the entire project, from ordering the objects I requested, to choosing the final design for panels and labels, and for "hanging" the exhibit (a lot of which, of course, does not hang). I am also grateful to Claire Davies, Head of Learning and Participation, and to Ella Roberts, Communications Officer, for their active engagement in projects related to the exhibit.

— Ellen T. Harris

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Secretary/Treasurer would like to remind the members of the Society that membership dues are calculated on a calendar-year basis, and it will soon be time to pay your dues for 2016. It would be helpful if dues could be paid as early in the calendar year as possible, and those members who pay dues to the G.F. Händel Gesellschaft and/or the London Handel Institute through the AHS are reminded to submit their payment before June of each year. Payments may be made through the AHS website or by using the Membership Form found in the Newsletter. Please note that the Händel Gesellschaft has increased its membership dues beginning with 2016, and those increases are reflected on the AHS Membership Form and Website. Please also note that there are now additional opportunities to support specific activities of the AHS.



Sir David Willcocks (1919 - 2015).
Photo by Taylor Photographics.

Members of the Society will have been saddened to hear of the death in September 2015 of Sir David Willcocks. During his long career as director of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, The Bach Choir, and the Royal College of Music in London, he conducted a substantial amount of Handel's music, and many of us will have been introduced to Handel's works through his recordings of the Coronation and

Chandos Anthems, *Messiah*, *Dixit Dominus*, *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, and *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato*.

The Society also notes the passing in November 2015 of Brian Trowell, retired Heather Professor of Music at University of Oxford and before that, King Edward Professor at King's College London, in which capacities he supervised the work of countless students. His interests ranged from music of the 15th century to that of Edward Elgar, and included opera of all periods – he was Director of Radio Opera for the BBC in the 1960s. He published significant articles on Handel – including one on “Handel as a Man of the Theatre” (*Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association* 88 (1961): 17–30), and another on the genesis of *Acis and Galatea* (in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean* (Cambridge, 1987)) – and was the founding President of the London Handel Institute.

— Graydon Beeks

MEMBERS' NEWS

Ellen T. Harris received **The 2015 ASCAP - Nicolas Slonimsky Award for Outstanding Musical Biography** in the concert music field for her book *George Frideric Handel: A Life with Friends* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 2014).

Jonathan Rhodes Lee joined the faculty at the **University of Nevada, Las Vegas School of Music** as Assistant Professor.

Zoe Vandermeer, soprano and harpist, will accompany her singing on Welsh Triple Harp in the program, *Handel's Voice, Handel's Harp*, at the American Harp Society National Conference early July 2016 in Atlanta, GA. Ms. Vandermeer won First Place in the Barry Alexander International Vocal Competition, and had her operatic debut in Carnegie Hall's Weill Hall, October, 2014. She is on the Roster of the Connecticut Commission of Culture and Tourism, and specializes in performing Baroque, Classical and early Bel Canto repertoire. www.sopranoandharp.com

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY

The Newsletter is published three times a year (Spring, Summer, and Winter). The Editor welcomes submissions in the following categories for future issues:

- Short articles (1500-2000 words);
- News of recent Handel-related events, presentations (special lectures or conference papers), and concerts organized and/or performed by members of the Society;
- Reviews of performances and recordings of Handel's music;
- Information about awards and honors presented to members of the Society;
- News of recent publications;
- Abstracts for dissertations in progress on a Handel-related topic.

Please submit your contributions to the Editor, Minji Kim (minjik@gmail.com)

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

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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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