

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume I, Number 1

April, 1986

President's Message

With this issue of the *Newsletter of The American Handel Society* our fledgling enterprise makes a beginning, even though we have been a kind of private society for some time. As early as 1981 there had been talk of establishing an organization to encourage Handel scholarship and performance, but it took the tricentennial year to provide the needed impetus. The decision to go ahead was taken late in the afternoon on Wednesday, February 20, 1985 in the TWA terminal at Kennedy Airport in New York while waiting for a flight to Germany to attend the tricentennial celebration in Halle. We (Paul Traver, Merrill Knapp, and the undersigned) decided to found The American Handel Society but to wait until Handel's 300th birthday. And so, at ten o'clock on the morning of Saturday, February 23, 1985, as we stood in a light snowfall in Halle's market square watching the people of Halle lay wreaths at the base of statue of their world-famous son, we shook hands all around and constituted ourselves as the three founding members of The American Handel Society. On our return to the United States, we set the institutional wheels turning, and our brochure and this newsletter are the first tangible results of our efforts.

On behalf of our members, I must acknowledge the generosity of the administration of the University of Maryland, College Park in providing initial support—both moral and material. In addition, the founding members are gratified by the encouragement we have received not only from scholars, performers, and other professionals, but from amateurs (in the very best sense) as well. And we have been most encouraged by the willingness of five very distinguished American colleagues to join the founders as members of the Board of Directors of the Society. The composition of our Board is not fortuitous. In keeping with our wish to establish an interdisciplinary society we asked Philip Highfill and Shirley Kenny to join us. Both of them are well-known scholars in eighteenth-century English theatre. Lowell Lindgren represents a special link between musicological and theatrical scholarship. Paul Henry Lang's career has been characterized by his protean

continued on page 4



Courtesy of The Viscount FitzHarris

1985 Halle Festival

The thirty-fourth annual *Händel-Festspiele der Deutschen Demokratischen Republik* took place in Halle/Saale, Handel's birthplace, from Friday, February 22 through Wednesday, February 27, 1985. Normally the Festival is held in June, but because 1985 was the tricentennial year, the directors of the Festival advanced the date so that the composer's three-

continued on page 2

hundredth birthday could be observed during the Festival itself.

The *Händel-Festspiele der DDR*, a music festival in the main devoted to the performance of works by Handel and his contemporaries, draws its artists from East Germany and from abroad. As in meetings of large scholarly societies, two or more events are presented simultaneously, forcing the visitor to choose among them. This year's *Händel-Festspiele* was exceptional only in that it forced on its guests even more choices than usual. The climax was reached at 8:00 p.m. on Sunday when one had to decide among three operas (*Partenope*, *Tamerlano*, and *Amadigi*), an oratorio (*Samson*), and a chamber music concert by the "Camerata musica" of Berlin. Saturday evening required one to choose from only three major works: *Messiah*, *Israel in Egypt*, and *Tamerlano*. Monday compelled a choice between *Alessandro* and *Saul* (if one was not interested in a very fine chamber music ensemble from Dresden or an equally fine one from Budapest). Moreover, there were multiple performances in the afternoons and even one on Sunday morning so that the hardy soul might attend thirteen concerts in six days. But there was even more—performances of *Alcina* in Berlin on Thursday and Monday, a performance of *Giustino* in Berlin on Friday, and two of *Almira* in Leipzig on Saturday and Wednesday. In all, the *Händel-Festspiele* presented nine operas (including an afternoon performance of *Il Pastor fido* not noted above) and eight oratorios, plus chamber music and solo recitals of various kinds, making for a total (by our count) of thirty-three musical events in the space of six days.

The musicological conference of the 1985 *Händel-Festspiele der DDR* was on a scale comparable to that of the musical offerings. Twenty-six papers made it necessary to divide the proceedings into three sections that met simultaneously: "Handel's Personality," "Handel's Works," and "Handel and Posterity" (*Händels Nachleben*). These were preceded by a plenary session, which included addresses by the section chairs framing the topics of the sections as well as three additional papers of general interest. The conference closed with a report by leaders of the sections and a panel discussion.

The papers read at the conference will, as usual, be published by the Martin Luther University in its *Kongress- und Tagungsberichte* series. Among several of particular interest to researchers are "Probleme der Überlieferung im Frühwerk Handels" by Hans-Joachim Marx of Hamburg; "Johann Sebastian Bachs Kopien Händelscher Werke" by Hans-Joachim Schulze of Leipzig; "Händels Cembalo-Ouverturen" by Terence Best of Brentwood, England; "Händel, *Ottone* und Anastasia Robinson" by Siegfried Flesch of Halle; "Handel and the Chapel Royal" by Donald Burrows of Bedford, England; "Thematisches Material aus Werken Johann Kuhnaus in Händels *La Resurrezione* und Sonaten aus Op. 1" by Elwood Derr of Ann Arbor; and "Händel und Alessandro Scarlatti—ihre gemeinsamen Kopisten" by Keiichiro Watanabe of Tokyo.

One of the most pleasant events of the Bach-Handel-Scarlatti-Schütz anniversary year was a meeting in Rome on June 12-15, 1985, sponsored by the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and various Italian governmental bodies. It was devoted to the music of Handel and the two Scarlattis, Alessandro and Domenico.

The Italians were most generous and hospitable to the international gathering who variously represented England, France, Germany, and the United States. Meetings were held at the Palazzo della Cancelleria (formerly the Ottoboni palace, now owned by the Vatican). The group met and talked in the grand reception room where performances of Handel's music undoubtedly took place during his residence from time to time (1707-1709) in Rome.

Aside from several interesting papers by Italian musicologists directly pertaining to the Scarlattis, the Handel papers were: Winton Dean, "Handel's Links with Alessandro Scarlatti"; Ellen Harris, "Harmonic Continuity in the Operas of George Frideric Handel and Alessandro Scarlatti"; J. Merrill Knapp, "Handel's Church Music in Rome"; Graham Dixon, "Handel's Music for the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel: Towards a Reconstruction"; Stefano La Via, "Un'aria di Haendel 'con violoncello obbligato' e la tradizione romana"; Friedrich Lippmann, "Una toccata sconosciuta di Haendel?"; Antonello Furnari, "I rapporti tra Haendel e Tolomeo Saverio Gallio, duca d'Alvito"; Lino Bianchi, "Dall'oratorio di Alessandro Scarlatti all'oratorio di Haendel"; Lorenzo Bianconi, "*Tolomeo e Orlando*, da Via Gregoriana a Haymarket"; Lowell Lindgren, "The Travels of Personnel, Operas, and Stage Designs from Rome to London, 1710-1720." Most of these papers will appear in *Studi Musicali*, edited by Professor Nino Pirrotta, formerly of Harvard, and the guiding spirit and gracious director of this "Convegno Internazionale" in Rome.

Not the least part of the meeting was a large reception held in the salons of the Palazzo Venezia to celebrate the opening of an extensive exhibition, "Cinque secoli di stampa musicale in Europa," which was illustrated by a very handsome catalogue.

For this participant, a visit to the Church of the Madonna di Monte Santo on the Piazza del Popolo, where Handel's so-called Carmelite Vespers took place, and a subsequent lively discussion with two fellow members of the group as to how Handel's music might have been performed there in the existing space, brought home as nothing else could the strong links which can still exist between past and present. It transformed any dry talk of how, where, and why into vivid and delightful reality.

J. Merrill Knapp

As part of the "European Music Year 1985," BASF United Kingdom Ltd. sponsored a "Handel Tercentenary Festival" that consisted of musical performances and a "Handel Tercentenary Conference." Officially the festival ran from July 12 to July 28; thus a performance of *Athalia* by the Academy of Ancient Music at Oxford's Sheldonian Theatre on July 10 was not included in the publicity or the program of the festival itself. This was regrettable inasmuch as the *Athalia* performance took place on the 250th anniversary, to the day, of its premiere.

Of course the Academy of Ancient Music performs on so-called old instruments, but it is a sign of the times that all except one of the performances during the festival proper were also presented on so-called authentic instruments. Even at the opening concert at Westminster Abbey the orchestra used old instruments, a point duly noted and commented on by the Festival's most distinguished guest, H.R.H. the Prince of Wales. The choir, which consisted of twenty boys and fourteen men, managed despite its small size to give a rousing performance of *Zadok the Priest*.

Certain other performances were listed in the program as "associated events," and most of them used old instruments as well. Of particular interest was a production of *Vincer se stesso* ("Rodrigo"), given for the first time, it is believed, since 1707. Until recently this was not possible because all known materials lacked the beginning of the first act and various parts of the third. In 1983 most of the materials for act three turned up in an eighteenth-century copy owned by the Earl of Shaftesbury, who graciously made them available for the performance. The materials missing from act one were reconstructed.

If one had to choose the single best performance of the eight or so heard during the festival, the palm would go to *Israel in Egypt*, presented in Queen Elizabeth Hall by the Taverner Choir and Taverner Players directed by Andrew Parrott. The chorus consisted of thirty-four perfectly rehearsed singers, an orchestra of twenty strings and four winds, and four soloists. The version presented was the original of 1739-40 that included as part one "The Lamentation of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph," a contrafact of *The Ways of Zion do Mourn*, composed for the funeral of Queen Caroline in 1737.

A "Handel Tercentenary Conference" took place at the Royal Society of Arts on July 15, 18, and 19. The program consisted of an inaugural lecture by Winton Dean, "Handel Scholarship 1935-1985," an open forum on Handel's borrowings, a round table on "Performing Practice in Handel," and fourteen papers. The papers were of very high quality, and in particular, we found Hans-Joachim Marx's "A Fresh Look at Handel's Concertos" a revealingly hard-nosed assessment of Handel's non-involvement in the publication of these

continued on page 4

Handel Calendar

The Newsletter of The American Handel Society will print brief notices of coming performances, conferences, and similar happenings of interest to Handelians. We welcome news or leads from our readers about other events. Please write or call the AHS office with details—including, if possible, an address where readers may inquire for more information.

Serse. Members of the Chamber Opera of Pragokonzert (in Italian, costumes in Baroque style). Between 16-20 April, May, and June; between August 15 and 31: Klicpera Theatre, Prague, Czechoslovakia.

Rodelinda. Janáček Opera ensemble (in Czech, modern staging). April 30: Janáček Theatre, Brno, Czechoslovakia.

"Handel with Flair": **Apollo and Daphne** (cantata for s. and b.), **Concerto Grosso** op. 3 no. 5. E. Browne, L. Vote, Wondrous Machine instrumental ensemble. May 18: St. Alban's Church, Washington, DC; May 19: St. Paul's Church, Alexandria, VA. Wondrous Machine, 4048 7th St. NE no. 4, Washington, DC 20017.

Händel-Festspiele der DDR. May 31-June 7: Halle/Saale. May 31: *Floridante*, dir. C. Kluttig. June 4: *Partenope*, dir. Kluttig; *Triumph of Time and Truth*, dir. O. Koch; *Neun deutschen Arien*, J. Claus, sop. June 6: *Broches-Passion*, Capella Cracoviensis; Latin church music, dir. D. Köhler. June 7: *Judas Maccabeus*, Berliner Singakademie, dir. D. Knothe. Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, DDR-4020 Halle/Saale, Grosse Nikolaistraße 5, DDR.

Internationale Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe. June 2-July 4: courses in baroque instruments, vocal music, conducting; artistic dir. G. Könemann. June 30-July 1: colloquia "Opera and Oratorio—Genre and Performance Practice," "Handel's Castrato Today." June 21-July 8: **Händel-Festspiele.** Includes *Orlando* (in German), *Xerxes* (in G.), *Giulio Cesare*, *Pasticcio* (arr. J.-L. Martinoty), dir. G. Könemann; "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day," dir. C. Farncombe. IHAK, D-7500 Karlsruhe, BRD.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele. June 14-17. Works by Handel, Leclair, others; dir. J. E. Gardiner. Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft e.V., D-3400 Göttingen, BRD.

Jephtha (Salzburg Festival). M. Lenz, G. Linos, Y. Simonida, P. Esswood, W. Hollweg, G. Ourth; dir. Ralf Weikert. July 27, 28, 31; August 1: Universitätskirche (Kollegienkirche), Salzburg, Austria.

Giulio Cesare. J. Gall, S. Larson, M. Westbrook-Geha, L. Hunt, R. Hardesty, J. Maddalena, C. Cobb, H. Hildebrand; Craig Smith, music dir.; P. Sellars, stage dir. Revival of 1985 Purchase, NY production. August 27, 30: Edinburgh, Scotland.

A. Caldara, *Il Re del dolore*. With M. Marshall, R. Gambill; dir. A. Curtis. Sept. 23: Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome.

President *from p. 1*

cultural interests and his vast knowledge of the world of music; moreover, it was "PHL" who, long before it became musicologically fashionable, campaigned for serious Handel research. Ellen Harris is engaged in preparing a facsimile edition of all of Handel's opera librettos, and as the editor of a new edition of *Dido and Aeneas*, her interests reach outward from Handel and his world.

Most of those reading this newsletter are members who have joined the Society because they believe in our goals: the furtherance of Handel scholarship and the encouragement of more and better performance of Handel's music. To achieve these ends, we must improve communications among us. Even in advance of the publication of this newsletter, we have received letters from as far away as New Zealand. Our newsletter and, we hope in the not too distant future, an annual will serve to keep our members apprised of Handel scholarship and performance everywhere. To this end we are making plans to prepare a computerized Handel bibliography as an electronic counterpart to the bibliography now in preparation in Halle. We will also establish and maintain registers of projects in progress, of coming events (both scholarly and practical), and of performing materials. Starting with the next newsletter, we will reserve space for readers' inquiries of the kind that appear in the *New York Times Book Review*. Even now a Handel discography is under way, encouraged and supported by our Society.

In order to keep our members informed of matters Handelian, we need your help. Unless you tell us that there is to be a conference on, say, Caldara, we may not hear of it. We can only direct performers to reliable materials if we know about them. Though we plan to follow the literature with care, we may miss something important in an out-of-the-way periodical. We hope you will inform us of any recorded Handel performances not listed in the standard discographic tools. Finally, we can only tell colleagues about your research if you tell us about it. Our success will depend upon you, our members.

Howard Serwer

London *from p. 3*

works. Other papers included a discussion by Malcolm Boyd of a new source of Handel's cantatas in West Berlin, a discussion of the role of Lord Middlesex in the London theatrical world of the late 1730s by Carole Taylor, a paper about the Royal Academy of Music and its directors by Elizabeth Gibson, and a survey of attitudes towards Handel's borrowings from his times to ours by George Buelow.

The other notable event of the Handel Tercentenary Festival was an exhibition presented at the British Library. This chronological survey of Handel's life in autographs and documents opened on July 12 and closed on November 3. Five days later, the National Portrait Gallery in London opened an equally impressive exhibition, "Handel: a Celebration of His Life and Times."

Communication

29 January 1986

To the Editor:

You may like to know of a considerable library of eighteenth-century music centered on Handel, which has been in the possession of a local landed family since an early member of that family, Samuel Hellier, commenced to collect music when a student at Exeter College, Oxford (from 1753). The Handel holdings are numerous in early Walsh editions. But in the case of oratorios and some other works, there are copied instrumental and chorus parts interleaved with the engraved editions. Deriving from the Oxford Handel tradition that started with Handel and was carried on by William Hayes and others, these parts are of very great interest, particularly since some of them (as marked on the copies) were used by a local society—the Stourbridge Musical Society—from 1758.

The collection otherwise has very many English works of the Handel period, including (of special interest) those of composers active in this neighborhood at that time. There are also word-books of oratorios which Hellier attended in London, Oxford, Gloucester, and other places—with some annotations.

I was fortunate to discover this collection, and even more fortunate to be able to persuade the owner, Mr. John Phillips, to place the whole collection on permanent loan in the Music Library of the Barber Institute of Fine Arts in the University of Birmingham (of which University I am a member).

The collection is due to be transferred in the next week or two.

Percy Young, Mus.D.

A report on the collection by Dr. Young will appear in a future Newsletter.



The American Handel Society

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In the last few years, scholars have come to recognize that traditional musicological studies alone cannot provide a clear picture of Handel and his world. The American Handel Society seeks the participation of all scholars—theatre historians, social historians, literary historians and all others whose subject matter is Handel's England. And of course, The American Handel Society welcomes the support and participation of all persons interested in Handel and his world. Activities of The American Handel Society will include

- publication of the *Newsletter of The American Handel Society*,
- sponsorship of meetings of the Society,
- cumulation of a computerized bibliographic data base of writings about Handel and his music and about related subjects,
- maintenance of a register of performing materials for Handel's major works,
- cumulation of a Handel discography,
- publication of an annual containing articles and reviews,
- establishment of an electronic bulletin board/conferencing network to facilitate communication among members and subscribers.

The Founding Members and the Board of Directors of The American Handel Society invite you to become a member. Wide support from scholars and those interested in Handel will help the Society make a strong start in achieving its goals. In 1986 members will receive

- the *Newsletter of the American Handel Society*,
- a 10% discount on scores and books (not restricted to Handel) through Dale Music Company of Silver Spring, Maryland, one of America's leading dealers. In addition, Dale has agreed to make available to our members four recent titles from Cambridge University Press at a 20% discount. See the order form on the last page of this newsletter.
- a descriptive guide to the University of Maryland's Coopersmith Collection, a growing archive of Handel materials that includes microfilms of all of Handel's holograph manuscripts.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY

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