

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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April, 1994

Roubiliac's Handel

The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery is fortunate to possess several outstanding pieces of sculpture executed in England in the eighteenth century, the most distinguished period in the history of English sculpture. This important part of the art collection, built up over the last few decades, is relatively little known to visitors. Periodic notices in the Calendar, such as the description of the art gallery's acquisition of two retrospective busts by Rysbrack (May-June, 1981), will attempt to remedy this situation.

Various factors, such as the lack of academies for artistic training, contributed to the marked provincialism of most English painting and sculpture prior to the second quarter of the eighteenth century. Between about 1725 and the post mid-century flowering of grand-manner portrait painting in the works of Reynolds and his contemporaries, the most accomplished and adventurous artistic achievements were often in sculpture, particularly in the area of portraiture, the English obsession. During this period, innumerable portrait busts were commissioned to adorn the homes of the newly culturally-conscious English upper class. The most talented and successful sculptors were two emigrants trained on the continent, Michael Rysbrack from Flanders and Louis François Roubiliac from France. Roubiliac's plaster bust of Handel in the short north hall off the main hall of the art gallery reveals the distinctive characteristics of the sculptor's exuberant rococo style. This piece and the bust of Sir Peter Warren and his bacchanal group are probably the Huntington's most notable examples of English rococo art.

Louis François Roubiliac (1702-62) was born in Lyons and received his artistic training in Paris and Dresden, where he encountered leading proponents of the newly developing rococo style. He moved to England after 1735 and soon became one of the prominent sculptors of the day, receiving numerous commissions including seven monuments for Westminster Abbey. The Huntington's marble bust of Sir Peter Warren is associated with one of these memorials. His work was admired and respected by his fellow artists, including his good friend William Hogarth.

Roubiliac's first great success came with his statue of the seated Handel in the Vauxhall pleasure gardens in



*Plaster bust of Handel by François Roubiliac.
Courtesy of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery.*

Report from Karlsruhe

On February 20, the board of directors of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel Gesellschaft met in Karlsruhe. Apart from a discussion of the 1994 Händel-Festspiele (see the Handel Calendar), the members of the board asked Dr. Hanna John, vice president of the society, to continue to serve as acting president through June, 1995, at which time the society will elect a new board of directors. The board also discussed the Händel-Jahrbuch; the 1993 volume will appear in June, and a double volume covering the conferences for 1993 and 1994 will appear in June 1995. The delay in publication has been caused by the illness and death of Dr. Bernd Baselt, editor of the Jahrbuch, and the death of Dr. Ulrich Tank, its publisher (the board has since entered into an arrangement with a new publisher).

The Karlsruhe Handel Festival and Academy celebrated its tenth program this year. In addition to a series of concerts, the academy conducts a series of short courses and master classes in baroque performance presented by well-known specialists, including Reinhard Goebel (violin), Helmut Hucke (oboe), and Paul Esswood (countertenor). This year's program also included a symposium

Handel Calendar

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelians. If possible, please include the address and phone number where readers may obtain details.

Händel-Festspiele, Halle (Saale), June 3–7, 1994.

Flavio, June 3 (Händelfestspielorchester, Howard Arman, conductor); *Solomon*, June 3 (Carolyn Watkinson, Norwegian Soloists Choir, Musica juventa, Halle, Shalev Adel, conductor); *Almira*, June 4, 5 (Patrizia Rosario, Ann Monoyios, Christoph Elsner, Douglas Nasrawi, Hein Meens, Harry van der Kamp, Michael Schopper, Ensemble Weser-Renaissance, Fiori Musicali—Ensemble für Alte Musik, Thomas Albert, conductor); works by Telemann, Vivaldi, and Handel, June 4 (John Turner, recorder, Stadtssingechor Halle, Camerata Manchester, Nicholas Kraemer, conductor); works by Handel, June 4 (University of Maryland Chorus, Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Halle, Paul Traver, conductor); *Giustino*, June 5 (Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan, conductor); works by Handel and Rameau, June 5 (Les Musiciens du Louvre, Marc Minkowski, conductor); many additional concerts. Scholarly conference on the topic of performance sources and performance practice, June 4. Händel-Festspiele, Halle, Händel-Haus, Große Ulrichstraße 51, 06108 Halle (Saale), Germany, 2 46 06.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele, June 10–14, 1994.

"Handel and the Duke of Chandos." *Giustino*, June 10, 12, 13 (Dawn Kotowski, Dorothea Röschmann, Michael Chance, Jennifer Lane, Mark Padmore, Michael Dean, Kammerchor Cantamus Halle, Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan, conductor, Drew Minter, stage direction); *Esther*, June 11 (Juliana Gondek, Michael Dean, Ralf Popken, Guy de Mey, Rufus Muller, Kammerchor Cantamus Halle, Männerchor Bouquet vocalis Halle, Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan, conductor); *Acis and Galatea*, 12 June (Barbara Schlick, Thomas Stückemann, Christian Elsner, Michael Schopper, Ensemble La Stagione Frankfurt, Michael Schneider, conductor). Geschäftsstelle der Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft, Hainholzweg 3-5, 37085 Göttingen, Germany, attn. Frau Eva-Maria Starke, 05 51 / 567 00.

L'Allegro ed Il Penseroso, June 12. Julianne Baird, Christen Brandis, Robert White, Jan Opalach, Connecticut Early Music Festival chorus and orchestra, Albert Fuller, conductor. Connecticut Early Music Festival, P.O. Box 329, New London, CT 06320. (203) 444-2419.

Xerxes, (in Italian with English supertitles; semi-staged concert version) July 22, 29, August 5. Catherine Robbin, Mika Shigematsu, Rosa Lamoreaux, Karen Clift, Linda Childs, Daniel Lichti, Burr Phillips; Carmel Bach Festival Chorus and Orchestra, Bruno Weil, conductor. Carmel Bach Festival 1994, P.O. Box 575, Carmel, CA 93921. 1-800-513-BACH.

Handel Institute Awards 1994

Applications are being accepted for the Handel Institute awards. These awards are given to assist in the furtherance of projects involving the music and life of George Frideric Handel and are financed from funds made available by European Music Year. One or more awards (up to a total of £1,000) will be given.

Applicants should send an outline of their proposed project, a breakdown of the anticipated expenditure, a note of any other funding applied for or received, and two references to Professor Colin Timms, Secretary, The Handel Institute, Department of Music, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, Great Britain. The deadline for receipt of applications is September 1, 1994. All applicants will be contacted as soon as possible thereafter.

1994 American Handel Society Meeting and Conference

The American Handel Society will meet in conjunction with the Maryland Handel Festival on November 4–6, 1994. The featured performance of the festival will be Handel's *Belshazzar*. The conference sessions will focus on *Belshazzar* as well as the topic of "Handel and His Librettists." Details of the festival and conference programs will be published in the August newsletter.

Changing AHS Officers and Board

At its meeting in Montréal in November, 1993, the board of directors of the American Handel Society elected officers for the two-year period beginning in January 1994. Reversing their previous roles, John H. Roberts has become president and Graydon Beeks vice president. Howard Serwer continues as secretary/treasurer, David Ross Hurley was chosen as a new member of the board, and Nicholas McGegan was elected an honorary board member.

Three members of the board have retired after long and distinguished service. Professor Philip Highfill of George Washington University was part of the original board formed in 1985 and was responsible for local arrangements for the very successful 1991 conference in Washington, D.C. Professor George J. Buelow of Indiana University joined the board in 1988 and served as vice president from 1989 to 1991. Professor Lowell E. Lindgren of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, another member of the original board, served as chair of the program committee for both the 1991 and 1992 conferences. The members of the society owe a great debt to these three people for their hard work and wise counsel over many years.

The new members of the board will be profiled in the August issue of the newsletter.

Recent Handel Recordings

This list contains recordings released since the last list was printed in the April 1993 newsletter or for which information is only now available. Rereleases in compact disc format of older recordings have been included only if they seem of particular interest.

Selections from *Il Pastor Fido* (HWV 8a)

Katalin Farkas, soprano
Derek Lee Ragin, countertenor
Capella Savaria and Chamber Choir
Nicholas McGegan, conductor
Hungaroton 31193
(performed on period instruments)
[also on disc: selections from *Alcina* (HWV 34)
and *Ariodante* (HWV 33)]

Deborah (HWV 51)

Catherine Denley, soprano
Susan Gritton, soprano
Yvonne Kenny, soprano
James Bowman, alto
Michael George, bass
The King's Consort
The Choir of New College Oxford
Choristers of Salisbury Cathedral
Robert King, conductor
Hyperion CDA-66841 (2 discs)

Messiah (HWV 56)

Ruth Holton, soprano
Vanessa Williamson, mezzo-soprano
James Griffett, tenor
Laurence Albert, bass
Urban Walsler, trumpet
Gioia della Musica Praha
Mark Brown, conductor
Allegro 1068 (2 discs)

Messiah (in German; Mozart orchestration, K. 572)

Lynne Dawson, soprano
Bernarda Fink, contralto
Hans-Peter Graf, tenor
Chris DeMoor, bass
Stephen Varcoe, bass
Le Grand Ecurie & La Chambre du Roy
Chamber Choir of Namur
Jean-Claude Malgoire, conductor
Astrée E8509

Semele (HWV 58)

Kathleen Battle, soprano
Marilyn Horne, soprano
Samuel Ramey, bass
John Aler, tenor
Sylvia McNair, soprano
Michael Chance, countertenor
Ambrosian Opera Chorus
English Chamber Orchestra
John Nelson, conductor
Deutsche Grammophon 435782-2 (3 discs)

Dixit Dominus (HWV 232)

Taverner Consort, Choir & Players
Andrew Parrott, conductor

EMI Classics CDC-54926

[also on disc: J. S. Bach, *Magnificat*]

Silete Venti (HWV 242) and *Laudate Pueri* (HWV 236)

Sylvia McNair, soprano
English Baroque Soloists
Monteverdi Choir
John Eliot Gardiner, conductor
Philips 153820
[also on disc: Mozart, *Exsultate Jubilate*]

16 Concerti for Organ and Orchestra: nos. 1–6 (op. 4) (HWV 289–94), nos. 7–12 (op. 7) (HWV 306–11), and nos. 13–16 (HWV 295, 296, 304, and 305a)

Franz Haseböck, organ
Capella Savaria
Pál Nemeth, conductor
Hänssler Classics 98940

5 Organ Concerti: op. 4, no. 2 (HWV 290), op. 7, nos. 3–5 (HWV 308–10), Concerto in F (HWV 295), and *The Cuckoo and the Nightingale*

Simon Preston, organ
The English Concert
Trevor Pinnock, conductor
Archiv 150066

Concerto for Oboe and Strings in Bb (HWV 302a) and g (HWV 287)

Brynjar Hoff, oboe
English Chamber Orchestra
Ian Watson, conductor
Victoria VCD-19083
[also on disc: works of Albinoni, J. S. Bach, and Pergolesi]

Concerti Grossi, op. 6, nos. 1–6 (HWV 319–24)

Boston Baroque Orchestra
Martin Pearlman, conductor
Telarc CD-80253

Concerti Grossi, op. 6, nos. 1–12 (HWV 319–30)

Handel & Haydn Society
Christopher Hogwood, conductor
L'Oiseau-Lyre 436845-2 (3 discs)

Water Music (HWV 348-50) and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (HWV 351)

Orpheus Chamber Orchestra
Deutsche Grammophon 435390-2

Suites for Harpsichord, nos. 1–4 (HWV 426–29)

Glenn Gould, harpsichord
Sony Classical SMK-52590 (remastered for CD)
[also on disc: J. S. Bach, *Preludes and Fuges*, nos. 9 and 14]

Gregory C. Wrenn

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C. Steven LaRue, *editor*

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1738 (now in the Victoria and Albert Museum). He also created a portrait bust of Handel in 1739, undoubtedly in response to the widespread popularity of the Vauxhall work. This portrait bust was produced in various media: one in marble (now in the Royal Collection, Windsor), one in terracotta (now in the Thomas Coram Foundation for Children, London), and five in plaster (one of which is now in the Huntington). Later in his career Roubiliac created additional sculptures of Handel, including his funerary monument in Westminster Abbey.

Roubiliac's Handel portraits were novel in their informal and realistic treatment of this popular composer. The Huntington plaster bust, rather than presenting a typical idealized type, depicts Handel in slightly disheveled, informal attire, wearing a nightcap instead of a formal wig. The composition is organized to enhance the sense of vivacity. Roubiliac turns the head sharply to one side, creating an impression of momentary movement which is counterbalanced by the turned-down lapel and further enlivened by diagonal folds in the garment and nightcap. The firm, broad planes of the face assist in the vivid characterization of this forceful, rather strong-willed musician, while the short, staccato diagonals which activate the whole create a transitory, animated mood, very apt for this energetic man. Constant variations in the fluid modeling, particularly in the handling of the fabrics, add to the liveliness. Light and shadow flicker over these rapidly changing forms creating an excited sense of flux and movement. As Hogarth would say, the eye is led a "wanton kind of chase" over the entire surface of the piece. It is just this aspect of Roubiliac's style which links his work to that of his friend. An animated, decorative rococo style predominates in the works of both, although in varying degrees: a more subdued, typically English version of the rococo characterizes Hogarth's paintings and prints, while a more ebullient, full-blown rococo style associated with eighteenth-century continental art typifies Roubiliac's sculpture.

Roubiliac also differs from his English contemporaries in his sculptural techniques, which probably reflect his French training. He would begin with several preliminary sketch models leading to a model in clay from which he would make the final marble version and, in many cases, a mold. From this mold he would then make terracotta or plaster casts, completing each piece by hand. For example, the sale of Roubiliac's effects in 1762 records one mold in plaster, one terracotta, and five plaster versions of the 1739 Handel bust. The Huntington Handel, which is the only one of these plaster busts currently known, was formerly part of the Gambier Parry collection, most of which was bequeathed to the Courtauld Institute of Art in London in the late 1960s. Acquired for the art gallery in 1972, Roubiliac's bust of Handel enriches the Huntington's fine, representative collection of eighteenth-century English sculpture.

Shelley M. Bennett

Reprinted by permission from the *Huntington Calendar* (September-October, 1982).

(on the subject of dance in baroque theater) and the film *Engel wider Willen—Die Welt der Kastraten* (Unwilling Angels—the World of the Castrati).

The occasion for the symposium on dance was a production of the November 1734 version of Handel's *Il pastor fido*. Handel set an adaptation of Giovanni Battista Guarini's pastoral play of the same name in 1712 and in the spring of 1734 reworked it. In the fall of the same year, he reworked the production yet again, this time to accommodate the famous French dancer, Marie Sallé. For the occasion, he composed a prologue, *Terpsichore*, as a vehicle for Sallé and her company. In addition, he inserted dances in the course of the opera itself.

The Karlsruhe production was based on one done at the Drottingholm (Sweden) court theater, one of the few theaters that still boasts stage machinery of the kind used in baroque opera. The Badisches Staatstheatre, a new facility in the modern style, adapted its stage to convey the intimacy of feeling of a much smaller house by means of a kind of proscenium arch upstage of the main proscenium. This had the double benefit of making a very large stage quite a bit smaller and of creating a spacious fore-stage typical of baroque theater. Better still, the theater made the sets move more or less in the eighteenth-century manner, contributing to a beautifully paced production.

Charles Farncomb, one of the pioneers in the production of Handel opera in England, conducted the Deutsche Händel-Solisten, who together with Farncomb were costumed as eighteenth-century musicians, perukes and all. Costuming an orchestra carries the risk of distracting attention from the stage, but the orchestra played so well that they disappeared from sight.

The dancing, meticulously founded on all that we know of baroque theatrical dance, demonstrated that such dance could be surprisingly expressive. Claire Bonzom, the prima ballerina, and the dance company brought to life the baroque dances that most of us know only as instrumental works.

The singing was uniformly beautiful, but Graham Pushee, who sang the roll of Apollo in *Terpsichore* and Mirtillo in the opera itself, brought down the house with some of the most stylish singing that I can remember. The other members of the cast were superb as well. The stage directing was scrupulous; only rarely was a singer upstaged by gratuitous activity around him or her. For the most part, the acting followed eighteenth-century acting conventions and in so doing was able to convey all of the archness, all of the mock tragedy and mock heroics vital to the pastoral genre.

Other events at Karlsruhe this year included concerts by the Deutsche Händel-Solisten orchestra, a production of Handel's *Tamerlano*, a choral concert by the Clare College (Cambridge) choir, an organ recital by Barry Rose, a recital by Paul Esswood (countertenor) and Bob van Asperen (harpsichordist), and the oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus*.

Iter Facio

Report from Montpellier

One year after *Hercules*, Montpellier's sixth mini-baroque festival opted for Handel's *Acis and Galatea*. Well-known and ever-popular as this delightful pastoral is, it was still a pleasure to hear it once again. Catherine Bott's charming, not-too-boyish voice was as efficient as ever in the role of Galatea. It was a pity that her exquisite trills and other ornaments were partially lost in the vastness of the concert hall, the acoustics of which did not meet the requirements of what is first and foremost an intimate chamber-like piece. Charles Daniels as Acis had slight problems of intonation, and his singing was sometimes marred by rough edges. He did not prove up to the task, especially in the demanding "Love sounds th' alarm." Roger Covey-Crump's Damon was much more

satisfactory, and his soft-focused, even-toned, warm voice did wonders in "Consider, fond shepherd." Michael George's rustic but impressive bass was particularly suited to Polyphemus' rage aria as well as to his love song.

The instrumental playing of the King's Consort, directed by Robert King, was, as one might have expected, flawless. These players recorded *Acis* a few years ago (Covey-Crump and George were already among the cast), and their conception of the work does not seem to have evolved much since then. However, it was a pleasant surprise to hear the da capo arias more ornamented (but always tastefully) in concert than in the recording.

Xavier Cervantes

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