

# NEWSLETTER

of

## The American Handel Society

Volume XIII, Number 1

April 1998

### The Hero in Drag: Omphale, Dejanira, and the Emasculation of Hercules

Thomas Broughton's libretto for Handel's *Hercules* cites just two works as sources—the *Trachiniae* of Sophocles and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*—and for two centuries scholars took Broughton's claim at face value. When Anthony Hicks suggested in his program notes for the Maryland Handel Festival performance of *Hercules* on November 1, 1992, that Seneca's *Hercules Oetaeus* also seems to have influenced the libretto, it became clear that Broughton drew upon (or at least was influenced by) other texts in addition to those he acknowledged. The purpose of this article is two-fold: first, to explore a work recently identified as an influence upon Broughton's text by Todd Gilman—Peter Motteux's libretto for *Hercules*, a masque for John Eccles originally performed in Motteux's play *The Novelty* in 1697,<sup>1</sup> and second, to identify yet another ancient text that served both Motteux and Broughton as a source: Ovid's *Heroides*.<sup>2</sup>

Broughton's text for Handel relates the tale of the death of Hercules by his wife Dejanira. She believes that Hercules has sacked Oechalia because he is enamored of Iole, who is now his captive. Broughton's libretto differs profoundly from its classical sources in that Hercules is innocent, presumably of any adulterous acts, and the central theme has become Dejanira's unfounded jealousy.<sup>3</sup> In a foolish attempt to win back his love, Dejanira sends Hercules a robe which has been poisoned by the centaur Nessus, which brings about his death.

While Broughton maintains the serious atmosphere of the Greek tragedy on which his text is based (with the exception of act 2, scene 5, which will be discussed below), Motteux's libretto for Eccles (whose music is lost) offers a predominantly comic version of the story, even though it relates details of Hercules's demise.<sup>4</sup> The masque opens with a chorus welcoming Hercules to Lydia. Hercules's attention is diverted by Omphale, a different love interest whom he attempts to please by offering any favor. She asks him to learn to spin, which is followed by a spinning scene in which Omphale's attendants strip Hercules of his lion's skin, replacing it with a white hood, a night-rail, and a white bib-apron. Dejanira enters with children and other atten-



Portrait of Handel by Philippe Mercier. Courtesy of Viscount FitzHarris.

dants and upbraids Hercules for making "ev'ry Whore but your poor Wife a Mother." After some weeping by their children and Hercules's snide comments about the merits of married life, Dejanira gives him a shirt and vest to put on. As soon as he does he feels a sudden heat and begins to rave, and finally flings himself into a heavenly fire.

Motteux's text conflates two episodes from the career of the mythical Hercules. The death of Hercules in Trachis described by Sophocles and Ovid is familiar to Handelian from Broughton's re-telling. Motteux apparently transplants the story to Lydia, and attributes

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## Handel Calendar

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handeli-ans. If possible, please include the address and telephone number where readers may obtain details. Much of the information listed below has been taken from the web site "Hear Handel," to the organizers of which the Newsletter is much indebted.

**Dixit Dominus.** April 1, 1998. Auditorium Maurice Ravel, Lyon, France. The King's Consort, Robert King, conductor. Also May 22 at the Royal Scottish Academy, Glasgow, UK, and May 24 at Bainton Church, Driffield, Beverley, UK.

**Deidamia.** April 4. Tribeca Performing Arts Center, New York. Concert version. Will Crutchfield, conductor. Also April 5 at Caramoor, Katonah, NY.

**Acis and Galatea.** April 14, 15. Teatro Cultura Artistica, São Paulo, Brazil. Acis: Paul Agnew; Galatea: Sophie Daneman; Damon: Adèle Eikenes; Corydon: Paul Kirby; Polyphemus: Alan Ewing. Les Arts Florissants; William Christie, conductor. Also April 18: Sala Cecilia Meireles, Rio de Janeiro; April 21: Teatro Colón, Buenos Aires, Argentina; April 23: Teatro Municipal, Santiago, Chile; and May 20: Cremona, Italy.

**Giustino.** April 15, 27, May 9, 18. Komische Oper, Berlin.

**Rodelinda.** April 16, 18, 21, 23, and 25. First Church, Garden St., Cambridge, MA. Cambridge Lieder and Opera Society. Rodelinda: Cassandra Norville; Grimoaldo: Daniel Brenna; Edwige: D'Anna Fortunato; Bertarido: Susan Cooke; Garibaldo: Mark Risinger; Unulfo: Susan Forrester. Michael Beattie, conductor; Daniel Sullivan, director.

**Tolomeo.** April 17. Kunstmin Theatre, Dordrecht. Tolomeo: Jonathan Peter Kenny; Seleuce: Anne Cambier, Elisa Marie-Noëlle de Callataÿ; Alessandro: Steve Dugardin; Araspe: Werner van Mechelen. Il Fondamento, Paul Dombrecht, conductor; Lindy Hume, producer.

**Belshazzar.** April 20, 22, 26, June 24, 29. Semperoper, Dresden. Birgit Fandrey, Claudia Kunz, Angela Liebold, Iris Vermillon, Jochen Kowalski, Tom Martinsen, Rainer Busching, André Eckert, Jorg-Peter Weigle, conductor; Wolfgang Gussmann, Reinhard Heinrich, sets; Harry Kupfer, director.

**Belshazzar.** April 29. St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Akron, OH. Belshazzar: Benjamin Butterfield; Nitocris: Tamara Matthews; Cyrus: Steven Rickards; Daniel: Jeffrey Strauss; Gobrias: Michael McMurray. Apollo's Fire, Jeannette Sorrell, Musical Director. Also April 30: St. Christopher's Church, Rocky River, Cleveland, OH; May 1, 3: St. Paul's Church, Cleveland Heights, Cleveland, OH; May 2, presented by the Renaissance and Baroque Society of Pittsburgh. Information and tickets, 1-800-314-2535

**Music for the Royal Fireworks.** May 5. Kulturhaus, Heiligenstadt. MDR-Kammerphilharmonie, Sebastian Weigle, conductor.

**Deidamia.** May 10, 21, June 13, 14. Theater Hagen, Hagen, Germany. Norbert Bierman, conductor; Angela Brandt, producer.

**Jephtha.** May 11. De Doelen, Rotterdam. Jephtha: Mark Padmore; Iphis: Mhairi Lawson; Storge: Hilary Summers; Hamor: Jonathan Peter Kenny; Zebul: Julian Ckarjsib. Barokorkest van de Nederlandse Bachvereniging; Koor van de Nederlandse Bachvereniging; Paul McCreech, conductor. Also May 13: Westerkerk, Amsterdam; May 14: Groote Kerk, Naarden.

**Alcina.** May 16. Staatstheater, Stuttgart. Alan Hacker, conductor.

**Imeneo.** May 17. Wladislaw Hall, Prague Castle, Prague. Imeneo: Marc Niubó; Tirinto: Karolína Berková; Rosmene: Zuzana Vrbová; Clomiri: Martina Stecherova; Argenio: Lukas Hynek-Kraemer. Capella Accademia Praha, Ondrej Marek, conductor. Also June 28: Church of the Raising of the Cross, Moravsky Beroun in the North Moravian district of Bruntal.

**Serse.** May 20. Arsenal, Metz. Serse: Susan Bickley; Romilda: Sandrine Piau; Arsamene: Brian Asawa; Elviro: Stephen Richardson; Atalanta: Alison Hagley; Amastre: Hilary Summers; Ariodate: Christopher Purves. Gabrieli Consort Orchestra, Paul McCreech, conductor. Also June 5: Caen; June 6: Théâtre de Poissy, Poissy.

**Giulio Cesare.** May 26, 28, 31, June 2, 4, 6. Teatro Dell'Opera, Rome. Bernadette Manca di Nissa, Cecilia Gasdia, Kathleen Kuhlmann, Debora Beronesi, Paolo Coni, Giovanni Furlanetto. John Nelson, conductor; Alberto Fassini, producer.

**Göttingen Händelfestspiele.** May 28–June 2. Göttingen, Germany. **Alexander Balus** (May 29, 30); **Tolomeo** (May 28, 30; June 1, 2).

**Samson.** June 2, 3. Covent Garden Festival at Freemason's Hall, London. Samson: Thomas Randle; Dalila: Lynda Russell; Micah: Catherine Wyn-Rogers; Harapha: Jonathan Best. The Symphony of Harmony And Invention, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers, conductor. 44 171 420 0171

**47th Händelfestspiele.** June 4–9, 1998. Halle, Germany. **Ballet Music** (June 7); **Barockmusik I–IV** (chamber music, June 5, 6, 7, 8); **The Choice of Hercules** and **Hasse's Alcide al Bivio** (June 7); **Dafne** by Bontempi and **Peranda** (June 5); **Ezio** (June 4, 6, 7); **Fireworks Concert** (June 9); **Italian Vespers** (June 5); **Messiah** (June 6, 7); **Ode for St. Cecilia's Day** (June 6); **La Passione di Gesu Christo** by J. F. Reichard (June 5); **Poro** (June 4, 7); **Catone** and **Semiramide riconosciuta** (selections, June 8).

**Rodelinda.** June 13, 17, 19, 22, 25, 27, 30, July 3, 5, 12, 14, 20, 24. Glyndebourne, Lewes, UK. Rodelinda: Anna Caterina Antonacci; Bertarido: Andreas Scholl; Grimoaldo: Kurt Streit; Edwige: Louise Winter; Unulfo: Artur Stefanowicz; Garibaldo: Umberto Chiummo. Orchestra Of The Age of Enlightenment, William Christie, conductor; Jean-Marie Villegier, producer.

## Handel Calendar, *continued*

**Solomon.** June 13. Santa Fe (Berkshire Choral Festival).

**Solomon.** June 24. York Minster (York Early Music Festival).

**Giulio Cesare.** July 10, 15. Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich.

**Tolomeo.** July 21–August 2. Horsham, Surrey, UK. Raglan Baroque Players, Nicholas Kraemer, conductor.

**Solomon.** July 27. Royal Albert Hall, London. Solomon: Andreas Scholl; Queen of Sheba: Susan Bickley; Zadok: Charles Daniels; Levite: Peter Harvey. Gabrieli Consort Orchestra, Paul McCreech, conductor (BBC Proms Festival).

**Partenope.** July 28, 31, August 2, 8, 10, 16, 20, 22. Glimmerglass (Alice Busch Opera Theater), Cooperstown, NY. Partenope: Lisa Saffer; Arsace: David Daniels; Harry Bicket, conductor; Francisco Negrin, producer.

**Semele.** August 16, 18, 20, 22. Tiroler Landestheater, Innsbruck, Austria. Jeffery Francis, John Bowen, Tomsa

Tomasson, Quentin Hayes, Graham Pushee, Patricia Bardon, Deborah York, Rosemary Joshua. Akademie für Alte Musik, RIAS Kammerchor, René Jacobs, conductor.

**Athalia.** August 30. Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia. Athalia: Deborah Riedel; Joad: Graham Pushee; Josabeth: Sara Macliver; Mathan: Michael Terry; Abner: Peter Axford. The Melbourne Chorale and Orchestra, Graham Abbott, conductor.

**Israel in Egypt.** September 11. Bremen Musikfest, Germany. Les Arts Florissants. Also September 12: Poissy, France; September 14: Warsaw Festival, Poland; September 16: Metz; September 20: Ambronay.

**Partenope.** September 11, 16, 19, 22, 26. New York City Opera, New York. Glimmerglass production, George Manahan, conductor.

### 1998 American Handel Society Conference Call for Papers

The 1998 Meeting and Conference of The American Handel Society will take place November 6–8 at the University of Maryland, College Park, in conjunction with the Maryland Handel Festival. The theme of the conference is "Handel's Women" and the featured works of the festival will be Handel's *Alexander Balus* and *Joshua*. The Society invites proposals for papers pertaining to but not restricted to the featured topic and works. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent by April 1, 1998 to Professor Ellen Rosand, Chair, AHS Program Committee, Department of Music, 143 Elm Street, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520.

### The Handel Institute Awards

Applications are invited for Handel Institute Awards (up to £1,000) in support of research projects involving the life or works of Handel or his contemporaries. Deadline September 1, 1998. Further details from:

Professor Colin Timms  
Department of Music  
University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham B15 2TT  
United Kingdom  
Tel/fax: 0121-4145781  
Email: C.R.Timms@bham.ac.uk

### HANDEL-L on LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU

HANDEL-L is a list sponsored by The American Handel Society at the University of Maryland, College Park. The list offers a forum for discussion of the life, times, and works of George Frideric Handel as well as related topics. HANDEL-L is open to all and welcomes comments, questions, and short reports from scholars, performers, and others interested in Handel.

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Howard Serwer serves as owner and moderator of HANDEL-L. In that capacity he reviews all postings for relevance and suitability and communicates with submitters if necessary. Serwer's electronic address is [hs7@umail.umd.edu](mailto:hs7@umail.umd.edu).

## Recent Handel Recordings

### **Agrippina (HWV 6)**

Della Jones  
Alastair Miles  
Derek Lee Ragin  
Michael Chance  
Donna Brown  
English Baroque Soloists  
John Eliot Gardiner, conductor  
Philips 438 009-2 (438 010-2—438 012-2)

### **Alexander Balus (HWV 65)**

Lynne Dawson and Claron McFadden, sopranos  
Catherine Denley, mezzo soprano  
Charles Daniels, tenor  
Michael George, bass  
The Choir of New College, Oxford  
The Choir of the King's Consort  
The King's Consort  
Robert King, conductor.  
Hyperion CDA67241—CDA67242

### **Arias (selections)**

Bryn Terfel, bass-baritone  
Scottish Chamber Orchestra  
Sir Charles Mackerras, conductor  
Deutsche Grammophon 453 480-2

### **Ariodante (HWV 33)**

Anne Sofie von Otter  
Lynne Dawson  
Ewa Podles  
Veronica Cangemi  
Richard Croft  
Denis Sedov  
Luc Coadou  
Choeur des Musiciens du Louvre  
Les Musiciens du Louvre  
Marc Minkowski, conductor  
Archiv 457 271-2 (457 272-2—457 274-2)

### **Ariodante (HWV 33)**

Edith Mathis, Norma Burrowes, sopranos  
Janet Baker, mezzo-soprano  
James Bowman, countertenor  
David Rendall, Alexander Oliver, tenors  
Samuel Ramey, bass  
London Voices  
English Chamber Orchestra  
Raymond Leppard, conductor  
Musical Heritage Society 534426k (reissue)

### **Blind Love, Cruel Beauty: Vocal Duets of George Frideric Handel (HWV 179, 181, 186, 188, 189, 192, 197, 199)**

Pamela Murray, soprano  
Pamela Dellal, mezzo-soprano  
Michael Beattie, harpsichord  
Daniel Ryan, baroque cello.  
Favella Lyrica  
Koch International 3-7298-2-H1

### **Concerti grossi Op. 6 (HWV 319-324)**

Collegium Musicum 90  
Simon Standage, conductor  
Chandos CHAN 0600

### **Organ Concertos (HWV 289-294, 306-311)**

Paul Nicholson, organ  
Frances Kelly, harp  
Choir of Clare College, Cambridge, Timothy Brown, director  
Brandenburg Consort  
Roy Goodman, conductor  
Hyperion CDA 67291/2

### **Four Coronation Anthems (HWV 258-261), Dixit Dominus (HWV 232), Foundling Hospital Anthem (HWV 268), Utrecht Te Deum & Jubilate (HWV 278, 279)**

Choir of King's College, Cambridge  
David Willcocks, Stephen Cleobury, directors

Choir of Winchester Cathedral, David Hill, director  
Choir of Christ Cathedral, David Hill, Simon Preston, directors  
London 455 041-2 (reissue)

### **Harpsichord suites (HWV 426-433)**

Anthony Newman, harpsichord  
Sony Classical SBK 62834 (reissue)

### **Herakles (i.e., Hercules, HWV 60)**

Kari Lovaas, soprano  
Doris Soffel, Hebe Dijkstra, mezzo-sopranos  
Eberhard Buchner, tenor  
Hermann Christian Polster, bass  
Rundfunkchor Leipzig  
Rundfunk-Sinfonie-Orchester Leipzig  
Wolf-Dieter Hauschild, conductor  
Berlin Classics 0091132BC (reissue)

### **Hercules (HWV 60)**

Jennifer Smith, soprano  
Sarah Walker, Catherine Denley, mezzo-sopranos  
Anthony Rolfe Johnson, tenor  
John Tomlinson, Peter Savidge, basses  
Monteverdi Choir  
English Baroque Soloists  
John Eliot Gardiner, conductor  
Archiv Produktion 447 689-2; 447 690-2; 447 691-2 (reissue)

### **Israel in Egypt (HWV 54)**

The Sixteen  
Orchestra of the Sixteen  
Harry Christophers, conductor  
Musical Heritage Society 524435X

### **Italian Secular Cantatas: Clori, mia bella Clori (HWV 92); Armida abbandonata (HWV 105); Delirio amoroso (HWV 99)**

Ann Murray, mezzo-soprano  
Symphony of Harmony and Invention  
Harry Christophers, conductor  
Collins Classics 15032

### **Messiah (HWV 56)**

Dorothea Roschmann, soprano I  
Susan Gritton, soprano II  
Bernarda Fink, contralto  
Charles Daniels, tenor  
Neal Davies, bass  
Gabrieli Consort & Players  
Paul McCreesh, conductor  
Archiv: Deutsche Grammophon 453 464-2 (453 465-2—453 466-2)

### **Messiah (HWV 56)**

Midori Suzuki, soprano  
Yoshikazu Mera, alto  
John Elwes, tenor  
David Thomas, bass  
Bach Collegium Japan  
Masaaki Suzuki, conductor.  
BIS CD-891/892

### **Messiah (HWV 56)**

Huddersfield Choral Society  
BBC Philharmonic Orchestra  
Harry Christophers  
BBC MM64-65; BBC Music Magazine, vol. 6, no. 4-5  
"CD includes a multimedia CD-ROM Extra program for Windows PCs."  
Brian Pidgeon, Max and Sarah Philips, producers

### **Music for the Royal Fireworks (HWV 351); Concerto in F major (HWV 331); Concerto in D major (HWV 335a); Passacaille, gigue and menuet from HWV 399 (arr.); Occasional suite in D major (arr.)**

The English Concert  
Trevor Pinnock, arranger, conductor.  
Archiv 453 451-2

### **Rinaldo (HWV 7)**

Ileana Cotrubas (Almirena)  
Carolyn Watkinson (Rinaldo)  
Jeanette Scovotti (Armida)

Paul Esswood (Goffredo)  
Charles Brett (Eustazio)  
Ulrik Cold (Argante)  
La Grande Ecurie et la Chambre du Roy  
Jean-Claude Malgoire, conductor  
Sony Classical SM3K 34592 (reissue)

**The Rivals Queens: Opera Arias and Duets, from Admeto (HWV 22); Alessandro (HWV 21); Riccardo primo (HWV 23); Siroe (HWV 24); and Tolomeo (HWV 25)**

Catherine Bott  
Emma Kirby  
The Brandenburg Consort  
Roy Goodman, conductor  
Hyperion CDA66950

**Rodrigo (HWV 5)**

Il Complesso Barocco  
Alan Curtis, conductor  
Accademia Musicale Chigiana: Monte dei Paschi di Siena

**Samson (HWV 57)**

Lynda Russell, Lynne Dawson, sopranos  
Thomas Randle, Mark Padmore, tenors  
The Sixteen  
The Symphony of Harmony and Invention  
Harry Christophers, conductor  
Collins Classics 70382

**Samson (HWV 57)**

Alexander Young, tenor  
Martina Arroyo, soprano  
Norma Proctor, contralto  
Thomas Stewart, bass  
Ezio Flagello, bass  
Helen Donath, soprano  
Sheila Armstrong, soprano  
Jerry J. Jennings, tenor  
Munchener Bach-Chor  
Munchener Bach-Orchester  
Karl Richter, conductor  
Musical Heritage Society 534666M (reissue)

**Saul (HWV 53)**

Donald McIntyre (Saul)  
Ryland Davies (Jonathan)  
James Bowman (David)  
John Winfield (Abner)  
Margaret Price (Merab)  
Sheila Armstrong (Michal)  
Stafford Dean (Apparition of Samuel)  
Gerald English (An Amalekite, High priest)  
Leeds Festival Chorus  
English Chamber Orchestra  
Sir Charles Mackerras, conductor  
Musical Heritage Society 534832K (reissue)

**Sonatas for violin and continuo (HWV 358, 359a, 361, 364a, 368, 370, 371, 372, 408, 412)**

Rachel Barton, violin  
David Schrader, harpsichord  
John Mark Rozendaal, cello  
Cedille Records CDR 90000 032

**Tra le fiamme: Italian cantatas. Tra le fiamme (HWV 170); Armida abbandonata (HWV 105); Ah! che pur troppo e vero (HWV 77); instrumental music**

Ellen Hargis, soprano  
Byron Schenkman, harpsichord  
Margriet Tindemanns, viola da gamba  
Seattle Baroque Orchestra  
Wildboar WLBR 9604

**Water music (HWV 348-350; plus Telemann, Wasser-Ouverture)**

The King's Consort  
Robert King, conductor  
Hyperion CDA66967

**Water & Fireworks music (HWV 348-351)**

London Classical Players  
Roger Norrington, conductor  
Virgin Veritas 7243 5 45265 2 7

**Where're you walk (selections)**

John Aler, tenor  
Julianne Baird, soprano  
D'Anna Fortunato, mezzo-soprano  
William Watson, tenor  
Peter Castaldi, baritone  
John Ostendorf, bass-baritone  
Edward Brewer, harpsichord  
Brewer Chamber Orchestra  
Rudolph Palmer, conductor  
Newport Classic NPD 85610

*Compiled by Richard G. King*

## The J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship

The Board of Directors of the American Handel Society invite applications for the 1998 J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship, an award of \$1,500 to be granted to an advanced graduate student or a scholar in an early stage of his or her career. This fellowship may be used on its own or to augment other grants or fellowships, but may be held no more than twice. The fellowship is intended to support work in the area of Handel or related studies. The winner of the award is given the opportunity to present a paper at the biennial meeting of the American Handel Society.

In awarding the fellowship, preference will be given to advanced graduate students; to persons who have not previously held this fellowship; to students at North American universities and residents of North America; and to proposals on specifically Handelian topics.

Applicants should submit a resume, a description of the project for which the fellowship will be used (not to exceed 750 words), a budget showing how and when the applicant plans to use the funds, and a description of other grants applied for or received for the same project. In addition, applicants should have two letters of recommendation sent directly to the Society at the address below.

Applications for the 1998 Fellowship must be post-marked no later than March 15, 1998 and should be sent to:

Professor William Gudger  
Department of Music  
The College of Charleston  
Charleston, SC 29424-0001

Applicants will be notified of the decision by May 15, 1998.

Dejanira's jealousy to an earlier adventure of Hercules involving a different woman. Omphale, daughter of Iardanus, was a queen of Lydia who succeeded her husband Tmolus to the throne.<sup>5</sup> She bought Hercules when he was sold into slavery, and he performed many great tasks for her, including overcoming the Cercopes, killing the outlaw Syleus, destroying the city of Itoni, and slaying a great snake that was ravaging Lydia. These adventures are described in Apollodorus's *Library of Greek Mythology* (II.6)<sup>6</sup> and Didorus Siculus's *Library of History* (IV. 31).<sup>7</sup> More significantly, according to certain Roman writers, Hercules was made to wear women's dress and spin during his servitude to Omphale (see the *Fasti* and *Heroides* of Ovid), and this is the story that Motteux has used.

In spite of profound differences between the two libretti, Broughton's *Hercules* in two scenes echoes certain of Motteux's lines. One of these scenes is that of Hercules's death, which Gilman singles out as particularly dependent upon Motteux.<sup>8</sup> When Hercules suffers the effects of the poisoned robe he has put on, we read in Broughton (act 3, scene 2):

Or, Neptune, kindly pour  
Ocean's collected Flood  
Into my Breast, and cool my boiling Blood!<sup>9</sup>

Broughton's rhyme might derive directly from Motteux's text:

Help! Water! Rivers! Pour a Flood!  
A Deluge scarce will quench the Fire that drinks  
my Blood!

More interesting for our purposes, however, is the possibility that the scene between Hercules and Omphale in Motteux provided material for an important confrontation in Broughton's libretto, act 2, scene 5. Believing that Hercules has been unfaithful to her with Iole, Dejanira taunts her husband in an aria that accuses him of effeminacy for falling in love:

Resign thy club and lion's spoils  
And fly from war to female toils!  
For thy glittering sword and shield  
The spindle and the distaff wield:  
Thund'ring Mars no more shall arm thee;  
Glory's Call no more shall warm thee;  
Venus and her whining Boy  
Shall all thy wanton Hours employ.

Here both the dramatic situation and the image of spinning (aptly depicted in Handel's music) seem to echo Motteux's *Hercules*:

*Omphale*: Then learn to spin; 'tis all I ask.  
*Hercules*: For Hercules a very pretty Task!

'Tis odd, 'tis odd, 'tis wondrous odd!  
Malicious Love, resistless God!  
But I have sworn, and then I burn,  
And now my Club must Distaff turn.  
I know by this I'm turning Fool,  
And so we're all, while Women rule.

Moreover, Dejanira's recitative lines preceding her aria ("O glorious Pattern of heroic Deeds! The mighty Warrior, whom neither Juno's Hate, / Nor a long Series of incessant Labours, / Could ere Subdue, A Captive Maid has conquer'd. / O Shame to Manhood! O Disgrace of Arms!") seem to pick up upon Hercules's own lines in Motteux when he first sees Omphale ("Why sing my Triumph, when a single She, / A single Look has vanquish'd me?"). It is perhaps no accident, then, that the scene in which Dejanira and Hercules confront each other contains comic elements that seem to set it apart from the rather serious context of Handel's oratorio at large: these comic elements might reflect the scene's origins in Motteux's libretto.

Motteux was not the first to present Omphale as a cause of Dejanira's jealousy, however. In chapter nine of Ovid's *Heroides*, a work which turns out to be of great importance to both libretti, Dejanira addresses Hercules. She is thankful that Oechalia has been added to his list of honors, but complains that the victor has yielded to the vanquished. This opening line of chapter 9 of *The Heroides* is practically quoted by Broughton at the beginning of act 2, scene 5 of the libretto ("Yes, I congratulate your Titles swell'd / With proud Oechalia's Fall—But, O! I grieve / To see the Victor to the Vanquish'd yield."), which suggests that Broughton may have possessed direct knowledge of Ovid's work. In the *Heroides* Dejanira remarks that Venus, more than Juno, has been Hercules's bane (the B section of "Resign thy Club" refers to this: "Venus and her whining boy / Shall all thy wanton hours employ"). She proceeds to complain of two women, Omphale and Iole, and it is Omphale who receives the bulk of her attention:

But there is one love—a fresh offense of which I have heard—a love by which I am made stepdame to Lydian Lamus. The Meander...has seen hanging from the neck of Hercules—the neck which found the heavens but slight burden—bejewelled chains!...You have no shrunk from binding your shaggy hair with a woman's turban! More meet for the locks of Hercules were the white poplar. And for you to disgrace yourself by wearing the Maeonian zone, like a wanton girl...They say that you have held the wool-basket among the girls of Ionia, and been frightened at your mistress' threats. Do you not shrink, Alcides, from laying to the polished wool-basket the hand that triumphed over a thousand toils; do you draw off with stalwart thumb the coarsely spun strands, and give back to the hand of a pretty mistress the just portion she weighed out...You are as much less than she [Omphale], O greatest of men, as it was greater to vanquish you than those you vanquished. To her passes the full measure of your exploits—yield up what you possess; your mistress is heir to your praise. O shame that the rough skin stripped from the flanks of the shaggy lion has covered a woman's delicate side! You are mistaken, and know it not—that spoil is not from the lion, but from you; you are victor over the beast, but she over you. A woman has borne the darts blackened with the venom of Lerna, a woman scarce strong enough to carry the spindle heavy

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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, see the subscription notice inserted in this month's *Newsletter*.

NEWSLETTER  
of  
The American Handel Society

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The Editor welcomes comments  
and suggestions for future issues.

# The American Handel Society

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