

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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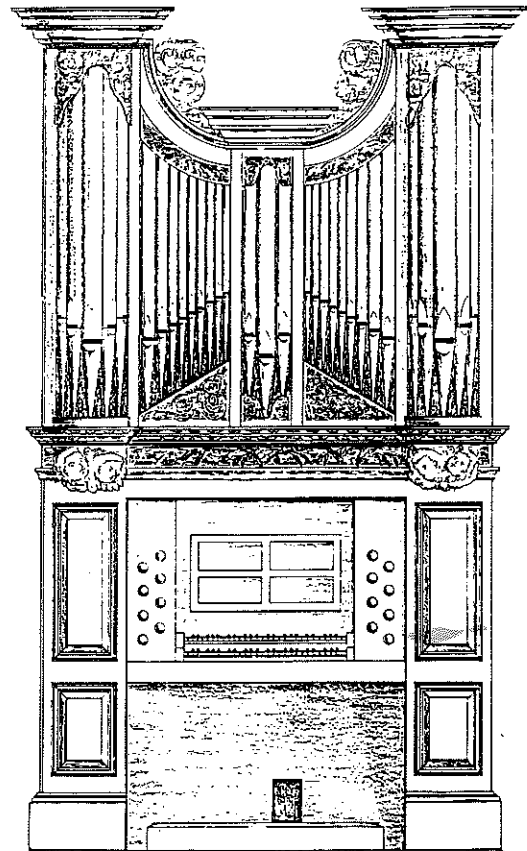
Handelian Keyboards

Two keyboard instruments with Handelian associations have received attention during the first half of this year. The first is a harpsichord by the English builder William Smith, recently acquired by the Bate collection of the University of Oxford. This instrument bears a striking resemblance to the harpsichord pictured in the oft-reproduced portrait of Handel by Philip Mercier now thought to have been painted sometime around 1728 and subsequently given by Handel to his friend Thomas Harris, uncle of the first earl of Malmsbury. The single-manual instrument, labeled "Gulielmus Smith Londini fecit," displays the distinctive skunk-tail sharps and casework similar to that depicted in the portrait.

Michael Cole makes the case for this instrument as the one depicted by Mercier and perhaps owned by Handel in his article "A Handel Harpsichord" in the February 1993 issue of *Early Music*. He also provides a summary of previous efforts to identify Handel's harpsichords and a reappraisal of the native English tradition of harpsichord building represented by such men as Benjamin Slade, Thomas Hitchcock, Francis Coston, and Smith.

The harpsichord, which was in essentially unaltered condition when acquired by the Bate collection, has been restrung in brass throughout, and the two sets of 8' strings have been tuned to $a'=408$. A recording of the first five suites from Handel's collection of *Suites des pieces* has been made by Martin Souter and is available directly from ISIS Records, 2 Henley Street, Oxford OX4 1ER, England (the price is £12/\$18 for compact disc or £6/\$10 for cassette, including postage).

The second instrument is the organ at St. Lawrence Whitchurch, Little Stanmore, in Edgeware, just northwest of London. The former Tudor church was completely rebuilt in the Italian baroque style between 1714-16 by Handel's patron James Brydges, first duke of Chandos, whose estate of Cannons stood adjacent. The organ was built at about the same time by Gerard Smith, nephew of the famous organ builder Bernard "Father" Smith, and originally consisted of a single manual with seven stops in a self-standing case attributed to Grinling Gibbons. This was the organ used in the first performances of Handel's



*The organ at St. Lawrence Whitchurch,
Little Stanmore, Edgeware.*

Report from Germany

On Friday, June 4, the board of directors of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft met and approved a realignment of the Board. John Roberts of the University of California at Berkeley (and vice president of the American Handel Society) joined the board by filling the position vacated by the death of J. Merrill Knapp, and Dr. Klaus Rauen (Oberbürgermeister of the city of Halle) graciously agreed to join the Board by filling a seat vacated (because of other pressing obligations) by Hans Joachim Marx of Hamburg. Prof. Marx was also a vice president of the

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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.

Serse (in English), July 17, 21, 30, August 5, 11, 19, 25, 1993. Frederica von Stade, Dawn Upshaw, Erie Mills, Mimi Lerner, Brian Asawa, Kevin Langan, George Hogan, Kenneth Montgomery, conductor. Santa Fe Opera, Post Office Box 2408, Santa Fe, NM 87504-2408. Tickets: (505) 982-3855.

16th London Handel Festival, November 24-27, 1993. Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music, Prince Consort Road, London SW7. Booking Office, London Handel Festival, 13 Cambridge Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3QE, 081 336 0990.

Second Triennial Handel Institute Conference, November 27-29, 1993. "Handel and the 1730s." The Handel Institute, Prof. Colin Timms, Secretary, Department of Music, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT, Great Britain.

Messiah, December 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11, 1993. Linda Perillo, Elizabeth Anker, Steven Stolen, Leroy Kromm, Baroque Choral Guild (Robert Geary, director). Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan, conductor. Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, 57 Post Street, Suite 705, San Francisco, CA 94104, (415) 391-5252.

Alcina, February 5, 1994. Zurich Opera House, Nikolaus Harnoncourt, conductor.

International Händel-Akademie, Karlsruhe, February 16-March 1, 1994 (see December newsletter for further information).

Händel-Festspiele, Karlsruhe, February 19-28, 1994 (see December newsletter for further information).

Giulio Cesare, March 21, 1994. Ann Murry. Munich Staatsoper, Charles Mackerras, conductor.

Händel-Festspiele, Halle (Saale), June 3-7, 1994. Händel-Festspiele, Halle, Händel-Haus, Grosse Nikolaistraße 5, 0-4020 Halle (Saale), Germany, 2 46 06.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele, June 10-14, 1994. "Handel and the Duke of Chandos." Geschäftsstelle der Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft, Hainholzweg 3-5, 3400 Göttingen, Germany, attn. Frau Eva-Maria Starke, 05 51 / 5 67 00.

Mozart, Vogler, and *Messiah*

Mozart probably first became acquainted with Handel's *Messiah* in 1777, during his visit to Mannheim.¹ In a letter of October 31, 1777, Mozart mentions that he had just returned from a rehearsal of an oratorio by Handel, but he had not stayed to hear it because it was preceded by a psalm-magnificat, by the vice-kapellmeister Georg Joseph Vogler, which lasted an hour. A few days later, on November 4, Mozart wrote a rambling summary of his activities: on Saturday, November 1 (All Saints' Day), he attended high mass at the court chapel, during which time a mass by Vogler was sung; on Sunday, November 2, he heard a mass by kapellmeister Ignaz Holzbauer.² Mozart liked Holzbauer's mass, which displayed "good church style"; he did not, however, have anything favorable to say about Vogler's mass. Siding with the majority of court musicians, Mozart found Vogler and his compositions distasteful, and characterized him as a "dreary musical jester." Later, on November 13, Mozart reports that Vogler wrote a Miserere, which "simply cannot be listened to, for it sounds all wrong."³

Unfortunately, Handel's oratorio gets lost in the midst of Mozart's poorly organized letter and local court politics. The mystery work is identified, however, in Vogler's *Betrachtungen der Mannheimer Tonschule*.⁴ Handel's name comes up in the context of a review on Holzbauer's *Günther von Schwarzburg* (1777), another work that Mozart heard at Mannheim. In the review (quoted in full in the *Betrachtungen*), the Hamburg correspondent criticizes Holzbauer's setting of the German libretto and invokes the "noble simplicity of Handel" ("edlen Simplicität eines Händels") and the "correct proficiency of language of Telemann" ("richtigen Sprachkunde eines Telemanns") as models for German composers. The response, written by an anonymous amateur (possibly one of Vogler's pupils), turns out to be a defense not only of Holzbauer's opera but of the Mannheim school, which he felt was superior to the art of Handel and Telemann: "A Handel, for the sake of his noble simplicity, a Telemann, for his proficiency of language, are elevated at the expense of such spirit, which much exceeds these [composers]. Don't these misapplied, distorted judgements call into question the authority of the reviewer?"⁵

Although it is not clear exactly what quality the critic thought exceeded the "spirit" of Handel and Telemann, it probably has something to do with the complexity of the Mannheim style. After further taunting the Hamburger ("Wo ist Ihre Kapelle? Wir kennen ihre Virtuosen!"), the Mannheimer goes for the jugular: "The first of November

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The American Handel Society

C. Steven LaRue, *editor*

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last year was the day on which the connoisseurs here had the opportunity to judge the simplicity of a Handel. His famous oratorio, *Messiah*, was performed by our best singers and instrumentalists. For all the competition was quite evident, entirely to deserve the rewarded success of the present court; but what happened? All listeners yawned. If this was a sign of corrupt ears, then we Mannheimers have this misfortune with one accord. That it also should not be blamed on the performance has been confirmed by the unanimous testimony of all who know our orchestra.

"What else could it be except the unbearable dullness, not the noble simplicity, that has thus sunk us in this deadly apathy? How striking was the contrast with a psalm-magnificat, which our second kapellmeister [Vogler] set, and this imperfect performance following immediately after not only brought us back to life, but also has provoked in us a delightful sensation, which I have not been able to describe."⁶

About a year later, in the *Betrachtungen*, Vogler himself refers to this performance again, taking the opportunity to attack Handel's music: "Handel's choruses . . . have been performed by us, but only the first part of the oratorio [*Messiah*], the second could not follow; because no listener can endure this dull music."⁷ In his article, "Die Mannheimer Messias-Aufführung 1777," Max Seiffert describes the arrangement of numbers, based on a copy of the Mannheim performance score. Most interestingly, the Mannheim poet Mattia Verazi translated the oratorio into Italian; the work was also reduced and divided into two parts, which followed the basic order of the original except the first part closed with the "Hallelujah" chorus, and the second and third parts were combined.⁸

Perhaps Mozart remembered this performance of *Messiah* when Baron van Swieten commissioned him to do a new orchestration of it a decade later in Vienna. Although he did not comment on Handel's music, Mozart's attempt to bring the older work up to date, by writing more complex and active instrumental parts, does reflect the progressive ideals presented in the *Betrachtungen*. In fact, Mozart could have read this essay in November 1778, when he stopped in Mannheim on his way back to Salzburg. The high praise given the Mannheim performance might have caught his attention. Unlike the local critic, Mozart did not think it was outstanding, nor did Vogler's psalm-magnificat make a good impression on him. Although it is not entirely clear which of the performances he is referring to in his letter of November 4, Mozart praises the orchestra and describes in some detail its size and disposition, but he complains bitterly about the poor quality of the church singers (tired castratos, miserable boys, and tenors and basses "like our funeral singers"). Besides the Italian translation, it would be very interesting to compare the Mannheim arrangement of *Messiah* with Mozart's. Ultimately, it seems that Mozart, like Vogler, apparently felt Handel's "noble simplicity" needed more substance, or at least more notes, in order for his music to be appealing to late eighteenth-century listeners.

Paul Corneilson

1. Several of Handel's oratorios, including *Messiah*, were performed during the Mozarts' visit to London in 1764-65, but there is no evidence that the family attended; see Donald Burrows, "Performances of Handel's Music during Mozart's Visit to London in 1764-5," *Händel-Jahrbuch* (1992):16-32.

2. The order of events is so confused that Leopold, responding to this letter on November 13, asked for clarification. Mozart's letters are available in German and English editions: Mozart: *Briefe und Aufzeichnung*, 7 vols., collected and annotated by Wilhelm A. Bauer and Otto Erich Deutsch (Basel, 1962-75), and Emily Anderson, trans. and ed., *The Letters of Mozart and His Family*, rev. ed. (London, 1985).

3. Vogler was undoubtedly Mozart's principal at Mannheim, and thus it is not surprising that the family thought he had used his influence against him. Vogler, who achieved a strong influence on young musicians through his music school, was an advocate of progress. As an outsider looking for a permanent court appointment, Mozart tried to work through established channels, enlisting the support of Holzbauer, the violinist Christian Cannabich, and the tenor Anton Raaff.

4. (Mannheim, 1778), 1:116-20.

5. "Einen Händel, wegen seiner edelen Simplizität, einen Telemann wegen seiner Sprachkunde, auf Kosten solcher Geist zu erheben, die so weit der jene hervorrangen. Heisst nicht dieses die Erlaubniss des Recensenten, schließ Urtheilen füllen zu dürfen, gemissbrauchet?"

6. "Der erste November des letztverwichenen Jahres [1777] war der Tag, an welchen hier die Kenner Gelegenheit hatten, die Simplizität eines Händels zu beurtheilen. Von unsern besten Sängern und Instrumentisten ward sein so hoch gerühmtes Oratorium, der Messias, aufgeführt. Beyallen war der Wetteifer recht merklich, den belohnenden Beifall des gegenwärtigen Hofes ganz zu verdienen: aber was geschah? Alle Zuhörer gähnten. War dieses ein Zeichen von verderbten Organen; so haben wir Mannheimer alle dieses Unglück mit einder gemein. Dass es auch nicht an der Ausführung gefehlet, mag das einhellige Zeugniß aller derer bewähren, die unser Orchester kennen.

"Was anders, als die unerträgliche Trockenheit; nicht edele Simplizität der Musik, hat also uns in diese tödliche Apathie versenket! Wie auffallend war der Kontrast, als ein Psalm-Magnificat, das unser zweiter Kapellmeister gesetzt, und jener unvollendeten Aufführung unmittelbar nach gefolget, nicht nur uns wieder zum Leben gegeführt, sondern ein Wonnegefühl in uns erregt hat, das ich nicht zu schildern vermag."

7. "Die Händelschen Chöre . . . sind bei uns aufgeführt worden, es bleib aber beim ersten Theil des Oratoriums, der zweite konnte noch nicht folgen; weil diese trockene Musik kein zuhörer aushalten will"; *Betrachtungen* (1779), 2:280.

8. *Jahrbuch der Musikbibliothek Peters für 1916* (1917): 61-71. See also Ludwig Finscher, ". . . gleichsam ein kanonisierter Tonmeister": Zur deutschen Händel-Rezeption im 18. Jahrhundert," in *Kanon und Zensur: Beiträge zur Archäologie der literarischen Kommunikation II*, ed. Aleida and Jan Assmann (Munich, 1987), 271-83.

1994 American Handel Society Meeting

The American Handel Society will meet in conjunction with the Maryland Handel Festival on November 3-6, 1994 at the University of Maryland, College Park. The principal performance will be Handel's *Belshazzar*. The society is planning a scholarly conference and will be inviting proposals for papers. Any topic relating to Handel or his contemporaries is welcome, but those relating to *Belshazzar* will be granted special consideration. Further information concerning deadlines and performance dates will appear in forthcoming newsletters. Inquires should at this time be addressed to Howard Serwer, Secretary/Treasurer, The American Handel Society, Department of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

Borrowing, Copyright, and Proprietary Authorship

When asked at the society's 1992 conference whether or not Handel's borrowing displayed evidence of the composer's "anxiety of influence," I replied that I did not think Handel was anxious about his precursors in the manner of Harold Bloom's theory of reading poetry. To this exchange, John Roberts responded that it was, in fact, modern Handelians who betrayed their anxiety over the issue. Roberts, of course, is absolutely correct, for the reception history of Handel's borrowing is indeed marked by considerable discomfort and misapprehension. The reason for this anxiety is understandable: Handel's liberal use of other composers' material conflicts with modern ideas about plagiarism, originality, and proprietary authorship. But how does Handel's borrowing relate to eighteenth-century conceptions of these matters? To address this question, let us place Handel's borrowing in historical context and consider two important issues of his time, one aesthetic and the other legal. The first concerns multiple and shifting views of authorship and ideas about the relation of creators to their forebears. The second concerns copyright law in England and its pertinence to musical material.

Swift's delightful *Battel of the Books* (1704) caricatures the antithetical notions of authorship which existed in Handel's lifetime through a debate between a bee and a spider. The spider accuses the bee of indiscriminately plundering nature to gather the nectar it needs for its livelihood. In contrast, the spider declares, its own self-reliance is the superior method of production. The bee, in response, asserts that its accumulation of material enriches itself without causing harm to nature. Moreover, says the bee, it is nobler to search carefully and gather good things in order to produce honey and wax ("sweetness and light"), than it is to produce with "over-weening pride" mere "excrement and venom" from one's innards.

This war of words between Swift's insect antagonists supplies an engaging allegory for the contemporaneous aesthetic debate between the Ancients and the Moderns over the proper nature of authorship as well as the proper relation of the past to the present in the creative process. In Swift's satire, the bee (the Ancients) embraces its dependence on nature, i.e., the past, while the spider (the Moderns) flaunts its self-sufficiency, or innovation. The substance of this debate concerns, in part, the propriety of rhetorical imitation, whereby new works are modeled on old ones. The Moderns condemned this use of preexistent matter, insisting on original and individual inspiration; Charles Jennens, Edward Young, and John Dennis, for example, espoused this position. The Ancients advocated the judicious use of models as the fuel for invention; adherents to this view included authors such as Alexander Pope and Richard Hurd, painters such as Jonathan Richardson and Joshua Reynolds, and musicians such as Johann Mattheson and John Potter (to name only a few). In short, there was no universal notion of the proprietary author whose every word and phrase was his or her exclusive and inviolable intellectual property. On the contrary,

conflicting views of authorship uneasily coexisted at the time Handel was borrowing.

The ambiguity surrounding the concept of authorship is further evident in the history of the Statute of Anne of 1710 (8 Anne, cap. 19), which provides that "the Author of any Book or Books . . . and his Assignee or Assigns [i.e., the purchaser of the author's manuscript], shall have the sole Liberty of printing and reprinting such Book and Books for the Term of fourteen Years," a term which was renewable if the author were still alive. As shown by several recent studies, the Statute was not motivated by a concern for authors' rights, but rather was crafted to protect the financial interests of booksellers (i.e., publishers). The impetus for the law was, in fact, a petition by powerful London booksellers who claimed they were losing substantial profits because of unauthorized editions. Indeed, it is important to note that throughout the statute, the term *author* is consistently used in alternation with such terms as *assignee*, *purchaser*, and *bookseller*. The language thus emphasizes the commercial focus of the legislation: the statute explicitly protected only the publisher of a work, be that the author or a bookseller.

The pertinence of the Copyright Act to music publishing was initially unclear, for nowhere in the legislation was music of any form mentioned. The first known legal suit concerning music and copyright was not filed until 1741, when Dr. Arne claimed—apparently without success—that two London printers had illegally published various pieces of his music. The issue of applicability was not resolved until 1777, when the King's Bench ruled in favor of J. C. Bach in a suit brought against Longman & Lukey for their unauthorized publication of Bach's music; this ruling determined that published music could in fact be copyrighted. It should be noted, however, that musical performances were not protected. Indeed, composers frequently were forced to compete against their own works, as Handel did, for example, when his rivals staged a performance of his *Acis and Galatea*.

Perhaps as a way of overcoming the vagueness of the Copyright Act, a royal patent, which had the same effect as a copyright, was sometimes issued to protect material which might otherwise be reproduced without authorization. Three such royal privileges for the exclusive publication of Handel's music were issued: in 1720, 1739, and 1760. The first was granted to Handel himself, while the last two were granted directly to his printer, John Walsh.

The legal issue in both Arne's and Bach's suits (and similar cases involving printed literature), however, as well as that behind the protection of a royal patent, concerned the tangible matter of income from publication. The common use of portions of preexistent material in the creation of new works was not at issue, since it did not involve the loss or gain of a publisher's profit. Indeed, the compositional process of borrowing is irrelevant to the Statute of Anne, which addressed only the matter of printing entire works: borrowing material from other authors or composers thus constitutes no violation of the Act.

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Handel composed in a time of conflicting ideas about authorship and the nature of creativity. Yet we tend to overlook the diversity of thought that existed, instead privileging the view of Swift's spider, since it resembles our legalistic notion of artistic ownership and our rigid criteria for originality. But we would do well to learn the lesson of the bee, for contemporary ideas about imitation and model-based composition can help us better comprehend Handel's borrowing. By doing so, we will position ourselves to reconsider what Gerald Abraham once called "the first great paradox of Handel's music, that . . . he should have needed or bothered to borrow from others." Handel's borrowing, I suggest, represents less a paradox than one composer's adaptation of a time-honored and widespread aesthetic principle.

John T. Winemiller

1. Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York, 1973).
2. Jonathan Swift, *The Battle of the Books*, in *The Writing of Jonathan Swift*, ed. Robert A. Greenberg and William B. Piper (New York), 382-83. The apian metaphor itself is much older.
3. See, for example, Lyman Ray Patterson, *Copyright in Historical Perspective* (Nashville, 1968); John Feather, "The Copyright Act of 1710," *Publishing History* 8 (1980): 19-44; Mark Rose, "The Author as Proprietor: *Donaldson v. Becket* and the Genealogy of Modern Authorship," *Representations* 23 (1988): 51-85; Trevor Ross, "Copyright and the Invention of Tradition," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 26 (1992): 1-27.
4. I am grateful to Ronald Rabin and Steven Zohn of Cornell University for sharing with me their paper on "Dr. Arne at Chancery: Two Eighteenth-Century Copyright Disputes," TMs.
5. On the subject, see David Hunter, "Music Copyright in Britain to 1800," *Music and Letters* 67 (1986): 269-82.
6. See Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (New York, 1954), 105-6, 488-89, and 844.
7. Gerald Abraham, "Some Points of Style," in *Handel: A Symposium*, ed. Gerald Abraham (London, 1954), 262.
8. I discuss these ideas at length in my dissertation, "Aspects of Neoclassicism in Handel's Compositional Aesthetic" (forthcoming Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago).

Recent Publications and Writings

The following list of publications covers the period from the last list published in the August 1992 issue of the newsletter to the present. Neither reviews of performances nor reports of festivals have been included. Readers with information about publications in progress for inclusion in future newsletters should write to the editor.

Articles

Händel-Jahrbuch 38 (1992). Contents: papers read at the 1991 conference—Walther Siegmund-Schultze, "Händel und Mozart"; Donald Burrows, "Performances of Handel's Music during Mozart's Visit to London in 1764-5"; Rudolph Angermüller, "Händel-Übersetzungen des Grafen Heinrich Wilhelm von Haugwitz"; Rudolf Pecman, "Zur Typologie der Gestalten in Händels 'Orlando' und Mozarts 'Die Zauberflöte'"; Klaus Hortschansky, "Zur Klassizismus und Originalgenie (Zu Mozarts Händel-Beziehungen)"; Gerhard Croll, "Wolfgang Amadeus Mozarts Buch- und Händel-Studien 1782"; Bernd

Baselt, "Georg Friedrich Händels 'Ode for St. Cecilia's Day' und ihre Bearbeitung durch Wolfgang Amadè Mozart (KV 592)"; Howard Serwer, "The CooperSmith Copy of Handel's Brookes-Passion: A Haydn-Connection?"; discussion (summary by Klaus Hortschansky); open research papers—Klaus Miehling, "Das Tempo bei Händel"; Wolf Hobohm, "Eine Geburtstagsode von Händels 'Vetter' Christian August Roth"; Günter Hartung, "Johann Friedrich Reichardt, der Musiker und Publizist"; Guido Bimberg, "Spanisches Musiktheater im Zeitalter der europäischen Aufklärung (3. Teil)"; reports; information; newbooks, articles, recordings.

Göttinger Händel-Beiträge 5 (1993). Contents: Festival lecture, 1991—Reinhard Strohm, "Händel und Italien: Ein intellektuelles Abenteuer"; Symposium papers, 1992—Christian Bunners, "Theologische Positionen und liturgische Zusammenhänge in der Kirchenmusik der Händel-Zeit"; Friedhelm Krummacher, "Traditionen protestantischer Kirchenmusik im geistlichen Vokalwerk Händels"; Friedrich Wilhelm Riedel, "Liturgische Funktion und stilistische Merkmale katholischer Offiziumscompositionen im frühen 18. Jahrhundert"; Hans Joachim Marx, "Händels lateinische Kirchenmusik im gattungsgeschichtlichen Kontext"; Donald Burrows, "Theology, Politics, and Instruments in Church: Musicians and Monarchs in London, 1690-1760"; Graydon Beeks, "The Chandos Anthems of Handel, Haym, and Pepusch"; additional articles—Ruth Smith, "Handel's Israelite Librettos and English Politics, 1732-52"; Howard H. Cox, "Character Portraits of the Hebrew Kings in Handel's Oratorios"; Annette Oppermann, "'Wer kennt sie?': Betrachtungen zu Händels Kammerduetten aus editions-geschichtlicher Sicht"; J. Merrill Knapp, "Handel/Lampugnani, *Rossane* (1743)"; Dorothea Schröder, "Diplomat und Opernliebhaber—Auf den Spuren des Kammerherrn Friedrich Ernst von Fabrice (1683-1750)"; Andreas Freitäger, "Händels Beziehungen zum Düsseldorfer Hof des Kurfürsten Johann Wilhelm von der Pfalz"; Juliane Ripe, Carlo Vitali, Antonello Furnari, Benedikt Poensgen, "*Il Piantodi Maria* (HWV 234): Rezeption, Überlieferung und musikwissenschaftliche Fiktion"; Hans Joachim Marx, "Zur Autorschaft des Kammerduetts 'Caro Autor di mia doglia' (HWV 183)"; book review—Hans Dieter Clausen, review of Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music (1719-1728)* (New York, 1989); bibliography of Handel literature.

Milhous, Judith, and Robert D. Hume. "Opera Salaries in Eighteenth-Century London." *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993): 26.

Cole, Michael. "A Handel Harpsicord." *Early Music* 21 (1993): 99.

Dissertations

Willner, Channan. "The Articulation of Form and Rhythm in Handel's Instrumental Music" (forthcoming Ph. D. dissertation, City University of New York).

Winemiller, John T. "Aspects of Neoclassicism in Handel's Compositional Aesthetic" (forthcoming Ph. D. dissertation, University of Chicago).

Händel-Gesellschaft, and the board appointed Howard Serwer of the University of Maryland (secretary/treasurer of the AHS) as his successor.

At the opening ceremonies of the festival that evening, it was announced that the annual Handel prize, which had been in abeyance for a year, was reinstated as two prizes: one to recognize achievement in Handel study and performance, the other to assist a young artist or scholar in his or her studies. The recipient of the 1993 prize for achievement was Nicholas McGegan.

The featured work of the evening was *Orlando* in a performance that was very fine—musically. The Händelfestspiel Orchestra, using modern instruments, played extremely well under the alert conducting of Howard Arman, and the cast was superb: Anke Berndt, Derek Ragin, Axel Köhler, Dorothea Röschmann (who filled in at the last moment for Martina Rüping), and Gregory Reinhart. The work of Berndt, Ragin, and Köhler is well known to many of our readers, and on this occasion they did not disappoint (though afterwards I was told that Berndt was indisposed). However, Dorothea Röschmann, a newcomer to the Handel scene, stole the show in the role of Dorinda, especially when, in the course of a bit of directorial foolishness, she wound up in the lap of a very senior and distinguished musicologist who had the good fortune to be sitting in the first row. Even here, one could not decide which one liked more: the actress singing or the singer acting. So excellent was her performance that it was hard to believe that she had learned the role on very short notice. I expect to hear more of her.

Unfortunately, much of the excellent singing and playing during the first act was buried (as is so often the case these days) under the stage director's conceits. At the very beginning, the orchestra tuned; then silence and a dark stage. A few stage lights come up, revealing large puppets sprawled about; the puppets were instantly recognizable as the characters in the drama. Then soft pastel-colored ropes hanging from the flies start waving languidly. Zoroastro appears, and to the music of the overture he manipulates the ropes and the puppets. How clever—for a junior-high school production! Again and again, the ear was distracted as the eye was compelled to focus on some new piece of foolish business—often upstaging the singing. Yet even this director understood that set changes should take place instantly in full view of the audience and managed to do so in various ways, some of them good and some just silly. In one case his preparations for the following scene upstaged some wonderful music, but at least the show kept going. Fortunately, by the end of act I, the director must have emptied his bag of children's tricks and thereafter mostly stayed out of the way so that we could enjoy Handel's opera.

The other Handel opera presented was *Radamisto*, an unstaged performance directed by Nicholas McGegan (see below). In addition, Halle presented Concentus Musicus Wien (Nicholas Harnoncourt, conductor) in a performance of Joseph Haydn's *L'infedeltà delusa* in a most unlikely venue: the "Dom," that severe, dark, ancient

church where Handel enjoyed his first professional engagement. To make matters worse, the *Festspiele* forgot to provide even a plot summary for this singer of an intrigue-laden opera buffa, a show in which Haydn approaches (dare one say it?) Mozart. Harnoncourt himself cheerfully described the plot before each act, and the singing and playing can only be described as magical. Harnoncourt's pacing was perfect; the orchestral mannerisms that used to mar his work in the past were gone, the recitative went like the wind to the point where it was almost un-sung at times (always the right times), and the singers acted brilliantly with their voices.

The oratorios for 1993 were *Belshazzar* and *Judas Maccabaeus*. Heribert Beissel conducted the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester, the Chur Cölnischer chorus of Bonn, and a group of soloists of variable quality. Readers may remember my (intemperate?) remarks concerning Beissel's performance of *Samson* in 1991. Alas, *Belshazzar* was, if anything, rather worse. Aside from massive cuts that made nonsense of the drama, Beissel had the effrontery to begin the proceedings with the chorus "Behold by Persia's hero made," and thereafter play the overture and scene i. Anyone familiar with the work will realize at once that apart from being just silly, starting with the chorus served to ruin one of Handel's grandest openings, Nitocris's majestic accompagnato "Vain fluctuating state of human empire!" This was so musically and dramatically wrong (and wrong-headed) as to almost constitute a moral lapse on the part of the conductor. That Beissel cut the work to ribbons, that the soloists' English diction ran the gamut from poor to comic, that the recitatives were bellowed at full voice, that the soloists sat grimly through the final tutti, that all the cadences were delayed, . . . these things were as nothing compared to the conductor's impertinence.

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A Collector's *Messiah*

Teri Noel Towe, longtime Handelian and AHS member, has recently had *A Collector's Messiah: Historic Handel Oratorio Recordings, 1899–1930*, his two CD compendium of historic recordings, released by Koch International. Included in the set are performances by Edward Lloyd, W. D. McFarland, John Harrison, Charles Knowles, Elizabeth Dews, Perceval Allen, Sir Henry J. Wood, Elsie Suddaby, Malcolm Sargent, Sir Thomas Beecham, Clara Butt, Rachel Morton, H. L. Balfour, Robert Radford, Evan Williams, and the John Philip Sousa Band.

Both the quality of the recording and the historical interest of this collection will be valued by Handelians and scholars of performance practice. In the future, Towe plans to release CDs of six of Handel's op. 12 concertos in recordings by Ernest Ansermet, Felix Weingartner, Nermann Diener, and Bruno Walter.

Judas Maccabaeus was performed by the Akademie für alte Musik, the RIAS-Kammerchor (both of Berlin), and five very fine soloists under the direction of Marcus Creed. The performance seemed unpromising during the first act, but the second and third acts redeemed the whole. Cut only slightly, the performance ran only a bit longer than the heavily cut performance of *Belshazzar*, once again demonstrating that Handel's large-scale works need not be cut, provided they are well paced.

The Halle Festival included some novelties: one was a program titled "Intermezzo e cantata" in which Handel's cantata, "Qual ti riveggio" (*Ero e Leandro*) was played (as an intermezzo!) between the two *partes* of Johann Adolph Hasse's "intermezzo tragico" *Piramo e Tisbe* at the wonderful little theater at Bad Lauchstadt. Both works were staged simply and acted in an exemplary fashion: while one of the artists was singing, the others on the stage froze. This was a rare opportunity to hear and see a theatrical work by Hasse. *Piramo* was first produced in 1767, and its music is stylistically akin to the music of the young Haydn. That said, one must also admit to a measure of ennui in the course of the performance—not the fault of the performance but of the music itself. Hasse's tunes are agreeable, even touching, but he inflated every aria with yards and yards of machine-made, predictable roudades. The insertion of Handel's "Qual ti riveggio" demonstrated the stylistic and qualitative gulf between the two composers. Michael Schneider conducted *La Stagione* of Frankfurt and four fine soloists.

A further novelty was a concert consisting of sacred works by Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow (1663–1712), Handel's first and only teacher. The concert was presented as part of a seminar in performance practice focussed around the Reichel organ in the Market Church in Halle. (Tradition holds that Zachow instructed the child Handel on this instrument.) From what we know of his music, Zachow was a worthy church musician and composer, but certainly no genius. The five works on the program, all intended for the liturgy, were a bit much taken together, though it was easy to imagine any one of them serving its purpose admirably. Nonetheless, some of them seemed to run on and on, bringing to mind Johann Mattheson's remark to the effect that the young Handel wrote long, long cantatas.

This year's conference was included a colloquium that had as its subject "George Frideric Handel's Illnesses and Death: Recent Medical-Historical Findings." Perhaps the most unusual idea presented in the colloquium came from Dr. William A. Frosch of New York, who suggested that Handel's illness in 1737, usually thought to have been a stroke, was in fact lead poisoning occasioned by his heavy consumption of port wine, which is known to have been heavily contaminated with lead as a result of the process of fortification then used.

Other offerings included a program by the Freiburger Barockorchester that included works by Handel and Purcell, two concerts of chamber music at the Händel-Haus, a program of baroque dance, a "Serenade auf der Saale" (a

boat ride replete with orchestra), and the traditional closing concert in the Galgenbergschlucht (literally "Gallows-hill-gulch"). It is notable that all but a few of the performances employed so-called baroque orchestras; that is, orchestras whose players used old instruments or replicas of the same. In the past, the use of such orchestras was the occasion for defensive (or offensive) comment; today, the opposite obtains. Best of all, the sound and style of the better old-instrument orchestras have begun to inform the playing on modern instruments with highly beneficial results.

Due to a stay in Hamburg, I had to miss Nicholas McGegan's introductory lecture to the Göttingen Festival, "Handel and the House of Hanover," the theme of the 1993 Göttingen Festival. The two principal works presented this year in Göttingen, *Radamisto* and the *Occasional Oratorio* are emblematic of Handel's special relationship to the house of Hanover, which on August 12, 1714 became England's ruling house. *Radamisto* was Handel's first contribution to the Royal Academy of Music, London's opera company founded in 1720 and partially funded by a generous subvention from the crown. The *Occasional Oratorio* was Handel's contribution to the official patriotic fervor aroused in opposition to the Jacobites who threatened the Hanoverian monarchy in 1746. In addition, a chamber music program by the Ensemble le Nuove Musiche of Hanover presented music by Handel and Agostino Steffani (1654–1728) known to have been composed for or at the Hanoverian court.

Nineteen ninety-three was also a year of change for the Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft. Friedrich Riethmüller, chairman of the board of directors of the Gesellschaft for sixteen years, stepped down to assume an executive position in the Ministry of Culture of the state of Anhalt-Sachsen. In his place, the Göttinger Gesellschaft elected Prof. Dr. Hans-Ludwig Schreiber, president of the Georg-August-University of Göttingen. At the same time, Mr. Reinalt Schlemm, long-time member of the Göttingen board and vice-president of the society retired for reasons of health. He was succeeded by Prof. Dr. Gerd Litfin.

The centerpiece of the 1993 Göttingen festival was the staged production of *Radamisto* in its December 1720 version, with the Freiburger Barockorchester and a cast of seven superb soloists, staged and directed by Drew Minter and conducted by Nicholas McGegan. For the original production of April 1720, Handel had a cast of Italian and English singers of mixed quality; for the revival of 28 December of that year, most of the Italian stars of the newly-founded Royal Academy of Music were at hand, and the composer revised the score to take better advantage of their abilities. This is one of the few instances where a revival version of one of Handel's works is clearly superior to that of the first run. No score of the December 1720 version exists, but Terence Best undertook its reconstruction and in the process found himself composing a recitative or two to complete it. To Best's credit, no one could tell when Handel stopped and Best began. (A performance of

the original April 1720 version took place in June at the Connecticut Early Music Festival; see the review in this issue).

The production followed the musical, acting, and stage conventions of Handel's day as closely as a modern theater and the state of our knowledge allow; even the orchestra was disposed as it was in Handel's time. The care and thought given to every historical detail turned out to be far more than an exercise in mere historicism and produced a result that can only be characterized as brilliant. The use of eighteenth-century acting conventions fit perfectly with the style of the music, and indeed, seemed to make it easier for the singers to sing. The disposition of the orchestra made it far easier for McGegan to lead the orchestra and the singers, and easier for the orchestra players to see McGegan and see and hear each other. The pleasure that the singers and players took in the performance was visible and communicated at every turn to the audience. The result was so convincing that, a ramshackle plot notwithstanding (*Radamisto* is not one of the better librettos that Handel had to work with), we really cared about the fate of Radamisto and his sister Polissena. That each act was received with enthusiastic applause and the whole rewarded with a thunderous ovation at the end demonstrates at once that the approach was valid and that Handel's operas, given thoughtful (and respectful) production, are viable in our own time.

The production of the much under-rated *Occasional Oratorio* was not so fortunate. That it took place in the barn-like Stadthalle may have contributed to my dissatisfaction. Christoph Sperling conducted the New Cologne Orchestra, the Cologne Chorus Musicus, and a group of soloists. Sperling has clearly made a study of the work, its textual tradition, and matters of contemporary orchestra/chorus disposition and performance practice. Nonetheless, he found it necessary to conduct the simple recitatives, he paused before (or after) every number (I counted some of ten seconds or more), his tempi were at times dirge-like, and he broke the work for a single intermission in the middle of part two. Afterwards I heard reports of insufficient rehearsal time and last-minute cancellations by singers. It was also reported that this was the last time the Stadthalle will be used by the Göttingen festival. One hopes that Herr Sperling will get another invitation to show what he can do under better circumstances.

Other concerts in Göttingen included a glorious choral program presented by the University of California Chamber Chorus under the direction of John Butt. Butt's reading of the *Funeral Anthem* was one of the most movingly beautiful that I can recall. A "Nachtkonzert" with McGegan, Drew Minter (this time in his more accustomed role as countertenor), David Tayler (theorbo), and David Bowles (cello) presented a program of works from Sigismondo d'India to J. S. Bach. Minter sang almost the whole program and added "Danny Boy" as an encore. The audience loved it.

Iter Facio

Radamisto

In their book *Handel's Operas: 1704-1726* (Oxford, 1987), Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp state that "Radamisto is perhaps the only Handel opera of which a later version has a strong claim to rank with or even above the original" (p. 341). In the same month of this year, Handel's first revised version of *Radamisto* (December 1720) was performed in Göttingen while the original version of *Radamisto* (April 1720) was performed at the Connecticut College in New London under the direction of Will Crutchfield during the eleventh annual Connecticut Early Music Festival.

The introduction to the word book accompanying the Connecticut performance of *Radamisto* asserts that for the December Version, ". . . Handel revised the opera radically, but not always advantageously." However, recognizing that the end of act III is clearly better in the December version (quartet and duet instead of the original aria for Zenobia), Mr. Crutchfield neatly hedges his wager: "But only light editing is required to insert these two numbers into the April score, and that is what we have done for tonight's performance."

Entries and exits were effected between Japanese-style screens set parallel at staggered distances at the rear of the stage. Props were few; audience imagination fitted the sword to the singer's gesture. The two male singers wore business suits and ties (effective in Peter Sellars's staging of *Giulio Cesare*, but not here), while the women were garbed according to the gender of the role—plain if masculine (the three warriors) and fancy if feminine (the two queens). The sounds from the stage, once the singers were warmed up, were mainly lovely and sometimes glorious, as in Radamisto's great aria "Ombra cara," sung by Nova Thomas, who, according to the program insert, ". . . kindly consented to learn the part on short notice." She must be a very quick study. Under the fine control and inspiration of the conductor, the twenty-one piece band performing on "antique originals or their exact replicas" overcame the handicaps of heat and humidity.

Ms. Thomas's splendid singing was matched in other leading roles by Rosalie Rosales (Tigrane), Melanie Helton (Polissena), and Charles Workman (Tiridate). Nancy Herrera (Zenobia) sometimes sounded less inspired than the other singers. The secondary roles of Fraarte and Farasmanes were well sung by Laura Danehower and Nathaniel Watson, respectively.

The performances of *Radamisto* were part of a continuing series of semi-staged Handel operas directed by Mr. Crutchfield at the Connecticut Early Music Festival.

Charles and Janet Farbstein

Chandos anthems and, perhaps, *Esther*. A second manual, with four stops and one-and-a-half octaves of pedals, was added by Hill in 1847. Subsequent rebuilding and expansion of the organ during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries completely altered the character of the instrument, and the additional pipes pushed the location of the organ case further and further into the body of the church.

As the final step in the restoration of the church, which has been carried out with great care over the past decade, it has been decided to restore the organ in such a way that it can both reflect the original instrument which Handel knew and serve the needs of a twentieth-century congregation. The plans for restoration have been developed in consultation with the British Institute of Organ Studies, and the work, which was begun in early July, has been undertaken by Goetze and Gwynn of Worksop.

The restored organ will consist of two manuals and pedals, with the Great division reflecting as closely as possible the character of the instrument as originally built by Smith. The two surviving ranks of original pipes will be incorporated into the Great, and the organ will be housed in the Grinling Gibbons case, which will be returned to its original position against the east well. The space formerly occupied by nineteenth-century pipework will be available for singers and instrumentalists as it was in Handel's time. The original keyboard, which has not been functional for many years, will be preserved for display and study.

Contributions to the project may be made to St. Lawrence Witchurch PCC (Handel's Organ appeal), Whitchurch Rectory, St. Lawrence Close, Edgeware HA8 6RB, England. Technical details of the organ and the work to be done are also available from the same address, together with a full-color guide booklet to the church, for £1 (plus postage and handling).

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