

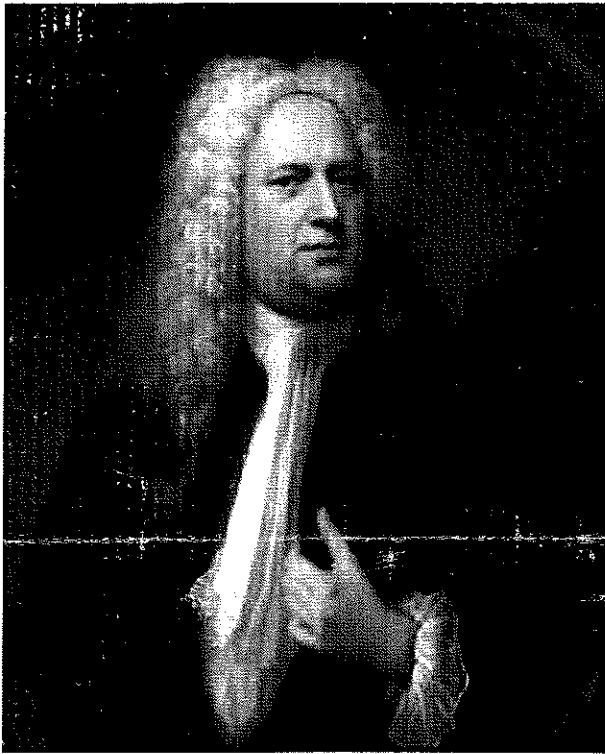
NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XXIV, Number 2

Summer 2009



G.F. Handel, portrait used on Centre College Handel Festival program cover.

MUSIC IN GOOD TIME AND THE HANDELIAN DISCORD IN 1745

In January 1745, a month short of his 60th birthday, Handel confronted the utmost challenge in his career. In an extraordinary statement, the closest he ever came to an artistic credo, he announced the suspension of his season (1744-45) and the return of three quarters of his subscribers' money.¹

Several factors led to this outcome. Handel's excessive ambition should rank first (chronologically at least). Substituting a full opera season with unstaged dramas, mostly oratorios, was unsound business, as Charles Jennens rightly observed.² The late arrival to London of the Nobility and gentry, Handel's chief clientele, exposed the problem and suppressed much needed revenue for the winter. Thus any boycott on *Hercules* (5 January), the season's first peak, was likely to undermine the whole scheme.

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REPORT FROM HALLE

In 2009 the annual Handel Festival in Halle and its attendant scholarly conference were organized around the theme of "Handel the European." Both were expanded for this anniversary year which made it even more difficult than usual for one person to attend anywhere near all the events. The festival was particularly strong in staged productions of Handell's operas and oratorios ! five in all ! but all genres were represented. In addition, attention was paid to Purcell and Haydn, both also celebrating major anniversaries. There was also the opening of the new permanent exhibition in the spruced-up Händel-Haus, as well as special temporary exhibitions on the City of Halle around the Year 1700, Music and the University of Halle-Wittenberg, Handel in Halle's Theaters, and the Role of Orphanages in the Early Modern Period.

The Festival opened on Thursday, June 4 with the Festakt and Festkonzert in the G.F. Händel-Halle, as has become traditional in recent years. The singers of the Händelfestspielchor am Händel-Haus and the Händelfestspielorchester der Staatskapelle Halle, under the direction of Christopher Moulds, presented the third act of the *Occasional Oratorio* HWV 62, preceded by its Overture. The performance showed the benefit of efficient rehearsal, and the performers clearly enjoyed working with their young conductor.

Christopher Moulds returned the next evening to lead the premiere performance of *Floridante* at the opera house, using performing material from the new HHA edition by Dr. Dieter Clausen of Hamburg. Musically the performance was very strong, with excellent playing the Festspielorchester and outstanding singing from the mostly young cast of singers. The staging by Vincent Boussard was efficient but puzzling, with the action taking place in front of a giant mirror and around, under and on an oversized table. There was no attempt to make a political statement or to do anything other than tell the story of the opera, but I had the curious sense that the singers, as well as they performed the music, never quite inhabited the drama. Perhaps

continued on p. 4

Handel did face organized opposition in that period, as the documentary record amply shows (to claim the opposite one would need counter evidence, not hermeneutic revolutions). Its predominantly female cast naturally invites feminist scrutiny and helps account for the misogynistic topoi (Maenads, Hecate) in contemporary Handel literature. Yet it could hardly matter for the composer and his box office.

Far more impressive is the strength of this opposition. That Handel resumed his performances in March and nearly completed his season is proof of survival but not a mark of success.³ In 2007, I offered evidence that Belshazzar's premiere (27 March), too, was targeted by his opponents/competitors, thus justifying Tobias Smollett's censuring of anti-Handelism (Advice, 1746).⁴ Music in Good Time, a ballad from September 1745, strengthens my points still further.⁵ Mined so far for its allusions to the entertainments of the Ruckholt house and Monticelli's return to Britain,⁶ it has yet to be introduced in Handel studies. Of the handful extant copies in the British and Bodleian libraries in Britain and the University of Kansas, Lawrence, and the Huntington, in America, I have used the latter for this first full transcription:⁷

MUSIC IN GOOD TIME

A

New BALLAD.

[woodcut]

LONDON:

Printed for G. LYON<> near St. Paul's. 1745.

[2]

[blank page, 3]

[double line]

MUSIC in Good Time.

A

New BALLAD.

[ribbon]

I.

WHILE threaten'd with Ruin at Home and Abroad,
By French and by Spaniards bang'd, bully'd, and aw'd;
No Hopes of Assistance from Russians or Dutch,
To keep up our Spirits, we can't sing too much.

Derry down, &c.

II.

Ye Fiddlers, and Pipers, — and Poets unite,
The first to set Music, to what the last write;
For e'er we to Business more serious advance,
We'll have (as Bayes has it) — a Song and a Dance.

Derry down, &c. [4]

III.

Oh L—c—n, oh C—ke, and each Belman appear,
With your Songs and your Sonnets to charm ev'ry Ear;
To spin Catches and Odes, and your Past'ral fine,
Assist them Grub-Phoebus, assist Bunters Nine.

Derry down, &c.

IV.

That Vaux-Hall, and Ruckholt, and Ranelagh too,
And Hoxton and Sadler's, both Old and the New,
My Lord Cobham's Head, and the Dulwich Green-Man,
May make as much Pastime as ever they can.

Derry down, &c.

V.

Not Hockley in th' Hole shall a Past'ral 'scape,
But Solomon's Cantic set Folks all a-gape;
And the Laureats of Tyres, shall make the Grovering
With Odes dull and loyal, in Praise of the King.

Derry down, &c. [5]

VI.

Leave Guns, Drums and Trumpets, that Music of Hell,
To the Frenchmen so bold, and the Spaniards so fell;
Our Great Men (God bless them) to lulling incline,
And manage Affairs to a Tune — very fine.

Derry down, &c.

VII.

The French King and Tencin may torture their Pates,
How to plague and distress all the Neighb'ring States:
No Matter, brave Boys, — for, hark in your Ear,
We've hir'd fresh Singers, — there's an Op'ra this Year.

Derry down, &c.

VIII.

Most nobly we've sped with Venetian Allies,
What tho' they refuse us all useful Supplies;
Who shall dare banter our grave Negotiation,
Since for Money with Songstress they'll furnish the
Nation.

Derry down, &c. [6]

IX.

What tho' our Troops, with their gallant Commanders,
Have made such a pitiful Figure in Flanders;
Our Ladies at Home, in a Campaign more glorious,
Have routed poor Handel, and his Oratorio's.

Derry down, &c.

X.

Our serious Concerns, they're safe, let me tell ye,
Since ev'ry Hour we expect Monticelli:
And what have we lost by our last Overthrow?

Since, to pleasure the Mob, we have still Beard and
Lowe.

Derry down, &c.

XI.

The Nobles of France, who for Honour expose
 Their Persons, so gay and gallant, 'gainst their Foes;
 'Midst Music and Dancing their Conquests advance,
 Nor will sell for a Song the Glory of France.
 Derry down, &c. [7]

XII.

Our Nobles of Britain, of Taste more refin'd,
 To ev'ry Pleasure devote all their Mind;
 'Midst Music and Dancing their Moments they spin,
 But still with regard to a precious whole Skin.
 Derry down, &c.

XIII.

The Cits of the Court, and the Nobles of the City,
 The former grown foggy, the last sadly witty,
 With uniform Taste the Land shall confound,
 By damning all Sense, and preferring all Sound.
 Derry down, &c.

XIV.

Then, hey my dear Friends, since plainly we're sinking,
 Still let us be gay, and damn all dull Thinking;
 And if we must go, we'll still raise our Notes,
 And die, like the Swans, with our Songs in our Throats.
 Derry down, &c. [8]

XV.

The Scotch are in Arms, and the English quite poor,
 And Pop'ry waits, like the Wolf at the Door:
 The halloo, Boys, halloo, let's laugh, dance and sing,
 Like Beggars so merry, — and God save the King.
 Derry down, &c.

FINIS.

[woodcut]

One of countless ephemera sprouting in the wake of the 1745 Jacobite rebellion, the ballad is unique in pitting music against patriotism. At a time of national peril, entertainments of any sort lead to inertia and escapism (by suggestion, also treason). England's traditional enemies (even the French) are portrayed as manlier than the nation's elites, who are preoccupied with the resumption of Italian opera and the imminent arrival of a castrato (Monticelli).⁸

The reference to Handel in stanza IX precedes that in Smollett by more than half-a-year and might have served as its source. In turn, the use of 'rout' might have come from the poem 'To Mr. HANDEL' (January 1745)⁹. Aside from his long association with the Hanoverian monarchy, Handel represents here native culture suffering from agents of foreign taste. Also, the stress on female opposition is meant to embarrass the British peerage: the ladies are more resolved and effective in their cultural campaigns than their spouses are in the battlefield. This evokes Lady Brown's statement to Lord

Essex a decade ago: 'if Lady Essex and I, had been of the Conference at Vienna, I believe we should have given fewer Pensions to the Spaniards, and others, and apply'd that money to maintain in Italy the Troops that would have been sufficient for the preservation of more Countreys. your Lordsp sees what a great Politician I am'.¹⁰

As a Handelian source, Music in Good Time reminds us how tightly knit Handel's career was to Georgian politics. If Italian opera served as a cultural proxy of political division during the 1720s and 1730s, English oratorio became a new focal point for those championing Britain's religious and cultural heritage. The new source demonstrates that the 1745 Rebellion helped polarize the rift between the two genres. This in turn would provide Handel with a stepping-stone to launch the most stable and profitable period of his career, indeed the one that propelled him to immortality.

— Ilias Chrissochoidis

1 *The Daily Advertiser*, no. 4442, Thursday 17 January 1745, [1]; *Handel Reference Database* <ichriss.ccarh.org/HRD>, 1745: Jan 17.

2 *HRD*, 1745: Feb 21.

3 "How is the hero fall'n!": New Light on Handel's Darkest Hour (1745)," 2007 American Handel Festival, Princeton University, 19-21 April 2007.

4 [Tobias Smollett], *Advice: A Satire* (London: George Freer, 17[46]), 13n. David Hunter has recently scrutinized the claims of the poem in his "Puppet Politics: Tobias Smollett, Charlotte Charke, and Theatrical Opposition to Handel," *Theatre Notebook* 58/1 (2004): 7-17.

5 It is listed in the September issue of *The Gentleman's Magazine* 15 (1745), 504. See also D. F. Foxon, *English Verse, 1701-1750: A Catalogue of Separately Printed Poems with Notes in Contemporary Collected Editions*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 1:491 (item M567).

6 *The Gentleman's Magazine* 84/2 (July-December 1814), 11; Thomas McGeary and Xavier Cervantes, "From Farinelli to Monticelli: an opera satire of 1742 re-examined," *The Burlington Magazine*, vol. 141 ([no. 1154, May] 1999), 287-289: 289.

7 Shelfmark, Rare Books 283550.

8 Margaret Brown in Venice to Lord Essex in Turin, 3 April 1734: British Library, Add. Ms. 27733, f. 47v.

9 *The Daily Advertiser*, no. 4445, Monday 21 January 1745, [1]; William C. Smith, "Handel's Failure in 1745: New Letters of the Composer," *The Musical Times* 77 ([no. 1121, July] 1936): 593-98; reprinted in his *Concerning Handel His Life and Works* (London et al.: Cassell, 1948), 153-55.

10 Margaret Brown in Venice to Lord Essex in Turin, 3 April 1734: British Library, Add. Ms. 27733, f. 47v.

IN THE NEXT ISSUE

Announcement of Handel Festival
 Spring 2011

Including a Call for Papers

longer acquaintance with this unfamiliar opera will solve that problem.

On Saturday afternoon, for reasons I cannot remember, I managed to hear only the second half of a concert of cantatas written by Handel on his visit to Naples in 1708. *Nell'africane selve*, that remarkable *tour de force* for bass voice, was well dispatched by Jörg Gottschick, who was then joined by sopranos Anna Korondi and Jörg Waschinki in the chamber trio version of *Se tu non lasci amore*. The program was devised by Olaf Brühl, who provided commentary between pieces.

Saturday evening brought a concert of oratorio excerpts in the Marktkirche, with the VocalConsort Berlin and the kammerorchesterbasel under the direction of Paul Goodwin and featuring soloists Nuria Rial, soprano, and Lawrence Zazzo, alto. The highlight of the program were three choruses and the original version of the overture to *Samson*, all of which were cut before the first performance and will appear in the Appendix of Hans-Dieter Clausen's forthcoming HHA edition of the oratorio. The remainder of the program consisted of arias and choruses from *Messiah*, *Belshazar*, *Theodora*, *Alexander Balus* and *Solomon*.

Sunday afternoon brought a performance of *Serse* in the lovely Goethe Theatre at Bad Lauchstädt. The cast of young singers sang well but were undercut by the hodge-podge staging of Andre Bückner, the point of which I failed to understand. Particularly annoying was the video drawn from 20th-century newsreels that played constantly on a screen suspended at the back of the stage. The playing of the Lautten Compagnie Berlin, under the extrovert direction of Wolfgang Katschner, was to my ear brutally aggressive. It should be said, however, that I was seated in the balcony very close to where the Weimar Court would have sat, and court theatres – especially those designed primarily for the spoken word – were designed to focus the sound from the stage on that very spot with an emphasis on volume rather than mellowness. The sound may have been much better downstairs, as it was for me when I returned to hear *Alcina* the following Thursday.

On Sunday evening the Handel Prize of the City of Halle was presented to Jordi Savall, a great local favorite, in the context of a concert of music by Purcell and Handel given by his ensemble Les Concert des Nations in the overly resonant acoustic of the Dom.

Monday marked the beginning of the Scholarly Conference, expanded in this anniversary year to three days with dual paper sessions. The Keynote Lecture was given by Professor Reinhard Strohm of Oxford, and was followed by papers given by scholars from at least ten countries. Members of The American Handel Society

were well represented both on the platform and in the audience, and the 2010 and 2011 volumes of the *Händel-Handbuch* will display the variety of the offerings.

On Monday evening Robin Blaze joined Florilegium under the direction of Ashley Solomon in a concert of music by Vivaldi, Handel, Telemann and Purcell in the Ulrichskirche. The 18th-century fared best, especially the cantatas 'Fra pensieri qual pensiero' and 'Qualor crudele, si, mia vaga Dori' by Handel and 'Cessate omai, cessate' by Vivaldi. Somehow the Purcell items failed to convince, which may have been owing in part to the anachronistic presence of the double bass and a too-heavy reliance on the charms of the recorder.

On Wednesday evening I attended a concert in a venue that was new to me, the small church of St. Bartholomew in Giebichstein where Handel's maternal grandfather was once pastor and in whose cemetery Johann Friedrich Reichardt is buried. The program, entitled *L'Orfeo Britannico*, consisted entirely of music by Purcell performed by the Marais Consort, consisting of four gambas of various sizes and cembalo, together with soprano Karolina Brachman. Six of Purcell's Fantasias and two Pavans – all composed in 1680 when the composer was just 20 – received strong performances on the instruments for which they were intended. The chronologically later excerpts from *Dioclesian* and *The Fairy Queen* suffered surprisingly little from being performed by viols rather than by members of the violin family. The only drawback to the evening was the singing of Miss Brachman, whose English was eccentric and whose voice was not endearing.

Thursday evening saw the second of four performances of *Alcina* at Bad Lauchstädt in a production that had been premiered in October 2008 as part of the Winter Opera season in Potsdam. The Kammerakademie Potsdam ! limited in size by the tiny pit at the Goethe Theater ! was led by Andrea Marcon in a highly dramatic and generally very musical performance. From where I sat downstairs the sound was well modulated and the balance with the singers good. The staging by Ingo Kerkhof was set in what looked like a country estate fallen on hard times in the 1950s. *Alcina*'s hold over Ruggiero was psychological – he was enchanted by her. On its own terms the staging was consistent and the director and the singers clearly took the drama seriously. The story was essentially that set by Handel, for which one must be grateful these days. I personally missed the traditional elements of enchantment which make this one of Handel's most Shakespearean works, and I wasn't convinced by the rather forced ending. Nonetheless, it was a gripping performance and the young singers, led by Maria Laura Martorana in the title role, acquitted themselves with honor.

Friday evening brought a very strong performance of *Theodora* in the Market Church led by another local favorite, Trevor Pinnock, who clearly had the measure of the work. The singing of Tenebrae and the playing of Trevor Pinnock and Friends were outstanding. The best of the soloists was Susan Bickley as Irene. Geraldine McGreevy failed to make a convincing case for the title heroine while Lawrence Zazzo seemed to find the role of Didymus less congenial than the heroes he has sung so well in operas like *Riccardo Primo*. Nicholas Mulroy and Henry Waddington were accomplished but a little faceless as Septimus and Valens. Nonetheless, the remarkable nature of *Theodora* came across.

On Saturday The English Concert under the direction of Harry Bicket was joined by soprano Elisabeth Watts for a concert of music by Handel, Albinoni and Vivaldi. The various concertos were stylishly done, but the real star of the evening was Watts who lived up to her advance publicity. She ended the first half with a fiery performance of Vivaldi's motet *In furore iustissimae irae* and concluded the evening with a virtuosic account of Handel's motet *Silete venti*.

For me the Festival ended on Sunday afternoon with a spirited performance by the Burney Players, Ensemble in Residence at the Handel House Museum in London. Appropriately the concert took place in the recital hall of the Händel-Haus in Halle and the program ranged from a Suite and Pavan by Purcell to the Piano Trio in G Minor, Hob XV:19 by Haydn – here with the harpsichord taking the keyboard role. In between were solo and trio sonatas by Handel, Arne and the ensemble's eponymous composer Charles Burney, whose composition stood up very well in the company. I must confess to a certain partiality here, as the cellist, Harriet Wiltshire, is a friend of long standing. Nonetheless, I predict a bright future for the ensemble, which also includes recorder player Ian Wilson, baroque violinist Nadja Zwiener, and harpsichordist Kasia Tomczak.

There were, of course, far more events than one person could take in, including repeat performances of *Ariodante* and *Belshazzar* from previous years, the annual *Messiah*, two Festival Church Services, indoor and outdoor concerts, music and activities for children and families, excursions to historic sites, and, of course, the grand finale with fireworks. Next year's Festival, from 4-13 June 2010, will be under new leadership as Dr. Philipp Adlung, current Director of the Stiftung Händel-Haus, becomes Director of the Beethoven-Haus in Bonn, and Dr. Hanna John, long-time Director of the Handel Festival, moves on to other projects. In the tradition of my predecessor, Iter Facio, I look forward to it with anticipation.

– Graydon Beeks

THE J. MERRILL KNAPP RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Board of Directors of the American Handel Society invites applications for the 2010 J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship, an award of up to \$2,000 to be granted to an advanced graduate student or a scholar in the early stages 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 studies or other related research. 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 *curriculum vitae*, 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 recommendations sent directly to the address below.

Applicants for the 2010 Fellowship must be postmarked no later than March 15, 2010 and should be sent to:

Richard King
School of Music
University of Maryland
College Park, MD 20912

Tel: (301) 405-5523

Fax: (301) 314-9504 (fax, to the attention of Richard King)

(Applications and letters of recommendation may be sent via e-mail to rgking@umd.edu.)

Applicants will be informed of the Board's decision by May 15, 2010.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK SUMMER 2009

As we head into the Fall season I suspect that many of us are eagerly anticipating the remaining events of this multiple Anniversary year, whether as participants, spectators, auditors – or all three. I am particularly looking forward to participating in the Conference “Purcell, Handel and Literature” to be held in London on St. Cecilia’s Day. It will be jointly sponsored by the Institutes of Musical Research and English Studies of the School of Advanced Study, University of London; the Departments of Music and Literature of The Open University; The Handel Institute; the Purcell Society; and the Royal Musical Association. Several members of the AHS will be giving papers and we will have a report in the Winter 2009 issue of this newsletter. Before the conference begins there will be a meeting of the Editorial Board of the *Hallische-Händel-Ausgabe*, and on the following weekend the Foundling Museum will host the 25th-anniversary “Music in 18th-Century Britain” conference.

While these events are happening in London, the Los Angeles Opera will perform *Tamerlano* with Placido Domingo singing the role of Bajazet – an event that would have been unimaginable not so many years ago and an indication of how things have changed since the last Handel Anniversary in 1985. Domingo has previously performed the role in Barcelona and Washington, D.C., and a video of the former is likely to be on many holiday wish lists including my own.

Looking beyond this Anniversary year, the AHS Board of Directors will meet in Philadelphia during the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society to consider future plans for the society. Among other items of business will be a discussion of the AHS Festival and Conference in 2011, and I anticipate there will be an announcement in the Winter issue of the newsletter.

– Graydon Beeks

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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The Editor welcomes comments, contributions,
and suggestions for future issues.

HANDEL-L

HANDEL-L is a discussion list open to everybody wishing to discuss the music, life and times of George Frideric Handel and his contemporaries. Subscribers are welcome to initiate or respond to a wide variety of topics. “Lurkers” are welcome to monitor proceedings anonymously.

All Handel enthusiasts, at any level of specialisation, are encouraged to provide reviews and feedback concerning recordings, opera productions, concerts, and literature. HANDEL-L combines this appreciation of Handel’s music with comments, short reports, and discussion from scholars, performers, and journalists who maintain a serious interest in the composer and his world: the discussion list is a valuable source for breaking the latest Handel news around the world.

To join HANDEL-L visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handel-l/>

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, contact the *Newsletter* Editor.

HANDEL CALENDAR

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelian. If possible, please include address, telephone number and URL where readers may obtain details. Announcements concerning Handel events from around the world are available by logging onto <http://gfhhandel.org/>

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

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Payments in dollars for GFH or HI memberships must be received before 1 June.