

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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Handel and Queen Anne

In recent years a good deal of information has been made available which helps to clarify Handel's relationship to the court of Queen Anne. This has been primarily owing to the research of Donald Burrows, the results of which are found in his doctoral dissertation *Handel and the English Chapel Royal during the reigns of Queen Anne and King George I* and his article "Handel and Hanover" in *Bach, Handel, Scarlatti: Tercentenary Essays*, edited by Peter Williams and published by Cambridge University Press in 1985. Most of this new material is conveniently summarized in Burrows's *Handel*, published by Oxford University Press in 1994 as part of The Master Musicians series.

It is now clear that Handel composed the music for the celebrations of the Peace of Utrecht—the so-called Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate, HWV 278–279—at the request of the Queen, and that her granting to him of an annual pension of £200 in December 1713 was at least partially in recognition of the fulfillment of this commission. Handel began writing the music in early 1713, completing the Te Deum on January 14 and the Jubilate probably sometime in February. The music was publicly rehearsed on March 5, 7, and 19, and at least once more in May before being performed in St. Paul's Cathedral at the official Thanksgiving Service on July 7. Queen Anne, whose health was always an issue during this period, initially planned to attend the service in St. Paul's but in the end celebrated privately in the Chapel Royal at St. James's Palace.

Handel also composed an Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday, *Eternal Source of Light Divine* HWV 74, which makes reference to the Peace of Utrecht in its refrain "The Day that gave great Anna birth /Who fix'd a lasting peace on earth." Burrows's studies of paper types and rastra indicate that it may also have been composed in January 1713, presumably in anticipation of a performance at Windsor for the Queen's birthday on February 6. It seems unlikely that it was actually performed then, since the Queen was suffering from a severe attack of gout, and Burrows suggests that it may

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Tamerlano at Glimmerglass

An intimate, 900-seat house with warm acoustics, the Alice Busch Theater in Cooperstown, New York makes a perfect venue for the Glimmerglass Festival's annual forays into the pre-Romantic repertory. The summer of 1995 featured Handel's *Tamerlano*, produced by Jonathan Miller and Jane Glover along with many of the same singers who had appeared in the previous year's luminous performance of *The Coronation of Poppea* by Monteverdi.

Director Miller's work with the singers had focused upon the emotional development of Handel's characters, which made for a dramatically convincing production. John Conklin's handsome (if static) unit set in burnished gold and terra-cotta set off the gorgeous Judy Levin costumes that made a good ensemble and at the same time delineated the Ottoman, Byzantine, and Turkish origins of the characters. Jane Glover's

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Handel Calendar

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

Belshazzar, January 18, 25, 30; May 22; June 5, 8, 20, 1996. Joerg-Peter Weigle, Claudia Kunz, Jochen Kowalski, Dresden Opera, Harry Kupfer, director.

Orlando, February 9, 10, 12, 13, 1996. Patricia Bardon, Rosa Mannion, Hilary Summers, Harry van der Kamp, Rosemary Joshua, Les Arts Florissants, William Christie, director. Brooklyn Academy of Music Ticket Service, 30 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11217 (718) 636-4100; FAX: 718-257-2021.

Handel-Festspiele in Karlsruhe, February 23–March 5, 1996. Geschäftsführer Wolfgang Sieber, Baumeisterstrasse 11, D-76137 Karlsruhe.

Xerxes, March 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 17. Boston Lyric Opera, 114 State Street, Boston, MA 02109-2402 (617) 248-8660.

Tamerlano, April 1, 3. Manhattan School of Music Handel Project, William Crutchfield, director (212) 749-2802, ext. 469.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele, May 31–June 3, 1996. Geschäftsstelle der Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft, Hainholzweg 3–5, 37085 Göttingen, Germany, attn. Frau Eva-Maria Starke, 05 51 / 567 00.

Händel-Festspiele Halle, June 7–11, 1996. Händel-Festspiele, Halle, Händel-Haus, Grosse Ulrichstrasse 51, 06108 (Saale), Germany, 2 46 06.

The Handel Institute Conference, "Handel and his Rivals," November 30–December 1, 1996. King's College London. Professor Colin Timms, Department of Music, University of Birmingham, Edgabaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.

Tamerlano at Glimmerglass from page 1

approach to the work was at times slightly more placid than I like, particularly in act 1—consisting of a succession of contemplative arias—which was lovely but unexciting. Acts 2 and 3, however, cracked as she and the cast responded to the mounting drama.

David Daniels's astounding performance as Tamerlano ignited act 3. The role of Tamerlano is extremely demanding in terms of range and agility, and Daniels executed the part thrillingly; he displayed a rich and fully supported lower register well joined to the solid middle and brilliant top, with the kind of full-voice facility at coloratura that one associates with the heroic Handel of Marilyn Horne. Daniels is a quantum leap from the "normal" countertenor, perhaps closer to the descriptions of the voices of castrati with their combination of power, buoyancy, and brilliance. The vengeance aria demanded tremendous virtuosity from Daniels, and the shouting, foot-stamping ovation he received was well deserved. Benjamin Butterfield's performance in the great tenor part of Bajazet was secure and moving, and did not lack virtuosity. Second countertenor Jonathan Peter Kenny needed time to warm up, but he ultimately displayed his attractive voice in a stylish manner. Although Dana Hanchard's mezzo was at some disadvantage in the higher reaches of Asteria's soprano range, she is a very musical singer and a committed actress; she gave the audience much pleasure. Phyllis Pancella's deep mezzo doesn't admit much in the way of ornamentation but sounds wonderfully warm and effortless. The shearing away of many of bass Stephen Morscheck's da capos was particularly disappointing. His rich, youthful voice moved with ease; he possesses both depth of tone and fluency and should have been given more chance to stand forward. With such a strong cast, the lyrical quartet for two countertenors, contralto, and bass at the end of the opera was a very beautiful moment indeed.

Bill Fregosi

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

David Ross Hurley, *editor*
5514 S. Blackstone Avenue, #201
Chicago, IL 60637

Anna Strada del Pò: Handel's "New" Soprano

Richard King has discovered two letters from Princess Amelia, second eldest daughter of King George II, concerning the arrival in London in October 1729 of Anna Strada del Pò, who was to be the leading soprano in Handel's company. These letters, together with King's comments about possible involvement of members of the Royal Family in the affairs of the Second Academy, are printed in the 1994/1995 volume of the *Händel-Jahrbuch* on pages 169–171. They reveal that she arrived in advance of the other new singers for the 1729–1730 season, and that her singing and manner pleased the members of the Royal Family.

Strada remained Handel's principal soprano until the summer of 1737 and alone among his company of Italian singers did not join the Opera of the Nobility in 1733. There is evidence that this may not have been entirely of her own volition, since the Earl of Delawarr, writing to the Duke of Richmond in January 1733, reported that the General Court of the rival opera company "gave power to contract with any Singer Except Strada." Her exclusion may have stemmed, at least in part, from her refusal to sing in a serenata by Bononcini proposed for performance in June 1732. This refusal is documented in a curious public letter to the "Nobility and Gentry" from her husband printed in *The Daily Post* of June 9, 1732, in which he explains that the denial of Bononcini's request was "for Reasons best known to the said Aurelio del Pò and his Wife."

It seems probable that Strada, like Handel, may have been considered too independent and insufficiently subservient to the wishes of the "Nobility and Gentry" who were the greatest supporters of Italian opera in London. She may also have antagonized Senesino, who was a supporter of Bononcini and on increasingly bad terms with Handel. No place was found for her in the company which presented Italian opera at the King's Theatre during the 1737–38 season following the collapse of the Opera of the Nobility, even though Handel provided some of the operas (e.g. *Faramondo*, *Serse*, and the pasticcio *Alessandro Severo*). Having agreed to participate in Heidigger's proposed season of 1738–39, only to have it cancelled for lack of subscribers, Strada left London on June 17, 1738 to return to Italy via the Netherlands, where she honored an invitation from Anne, Princess of Orange, King George II's eldest daughter, whom she had previously visited in the summer of 1736.

Strada is often viewed in the shadow of Cuzzoni, with whom she was sometimes compared unfavorably at the time. Although Princess Amelia thought her "beyond all her predecessors," others, including Paolo Rolli, were less pleased. Even Handel's supporter Mary Pendarves (later Mrs. Delany) commented that "her voice is without exception fine, her manner perfection, but her person very bad, and she makes frightful mouths." According to Charles Burney, who is unlikely

to have heard her in person and refers to the opinions of "the friends of Handel," Strada possessed a "fine and brilliant shake" and had so profited from her work with Handel that "by the care he took in composing for her, and his instructions, from a coarse singer with a fine voice, he rendered her equal at least to the first performer in Europe."

She must have been a remarkable singer, indeed, possessing a voice which combined dramatic weight with impressive agility, and an ability to sing in English as well as Italian. Handel wrote for her some of his most memorable music, including the title roles in *Alcina*, *Atalanta* and *Deborah*, the parts of Ginevra in *Ariodante*, Angelica in *Orlando*, and Josabeth in *Athaliah*, and all but one of the soprano solos in *Alexander's Feast*. All of these roles and several others are currently available on fine recordings, and with the recent release on Harmonia Mundi of *Giustino* under the direction of Nicholas McGegan, there is finally an opportunity to hear Strada's role of Arianna as sung by the splendid soprano Dorothea Röschmann. In the absence of commercial recordings of other complete operas from this period, including *Lotario*, *Ezio*, *Arianna* and *Berenice*, perhaps Ms. Röschmann and Mr. McGegan can be persuaded to record an album of "Arias for Strada" and include excerpts from these operas as well.

Graydon Beeks

Awards for Research Handel Institute Awards 1996/97

Applications are invited for Handel Institute Awards, financed from funds made available by European Music Year, to assist in the furtherance of projects involving the music or life of George Frideric Handel. One or more awards may be offered, up to a total of £1,000.

Applicants should send to the Secretary of the Handel Institute, Professor Colin Timms, Department of Music, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT (England), an outline of their proposed project, a breakdown of the anticipated expenditure, and a note of any other funding applied for or received. They should also ask two referees to write on their behalf (references will not be solicited). The deadline for the receipt of applications and references is 1 September 1996. All applicants will be contacted as soon as possible thereafter.

Any materials such as microfilms that are bought with an award will become the property of the Handel Institute when the successful applicant has finished using them.

The J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship

The Board of Directors of the American Handel Society invite applications for the 1996 J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship (formerly called The American Handel Society 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 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 and/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 1996 Fellowship must be postmarked no later than April 1, 1996 and should be sent to:

Professor Olga Termini
Department of Music CSULA
5151 State University Drive
Los Angeles, CA 90032

Applicants will be notified of the decision by May 15. The winners of the award since it was founded in 1989 are listed below.

1989	David Hurley	University of Chicago
1990	Richard G. King	Stanford University
1991	John Winemiller	University of Chicago
1993	Michael Corn	University of Illinois
1993	Channan Willner	City University of New York
1995	Mark Risinger	Harvard University

American Handel Society Conference Call for Papers

The American Handel Society will hold its 1996 Meeting and Conference at the University of Maryland, College Park, in conjunction with the Maryland Handel Festival. The featured performance of the Festival will be Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* and the conference sessions will focus on the topic "Politics and Arts in the Reign of George II."

The Society extends a call for papers pertaining to but not restricted to the featured topic and work. Applicants should submit a paper proposal of not more than 500 words to:

AHS Program Committee
c/o Eleanor Selfridge-Field
525 Middlefield Rd., Suite 120
Menlo Park, CA 94025

In addition to sending copies to the above address, duplicates should, if possible, be sent by electronic mail to:

esf@ccrma.stanford.edu

Proposals must be received by March 20, 1996. Applicants will be notified of the program committee's decision by May 1. The committee for the 1996 meeting consists of Eleanor Selfridge-Field, John Winemiller, and John Walter Hill.

Joshua in Boston

Among the first events this autumn in the 87-year-old but newly renovated Jordan Hall at the New England Conservatory was The Boston Cecilia performance of *Joshua*. The Hall was virtually full for this splendid beginning of Cecilia's 120th season, during which nearly all of its 71 unpaid chorus members sang from the Novello vocal scores that had been purchased 120 years ago for a Handel and Haydn Society performance of the work. Since 1981, Cecilia has ordinarily performed one Handel oratorio or masque with period instruments each year—and they have already scheduled *Joseph and his Brethren* for next year. For me the evening was especially meaningful, because the twenty students in my "Vivaldi, Bach, Handel" class (note that Handel culminates it) were all there, pens in hand, because they had been assigned to write reviews of the performance. I was seated two rows in back of them, because Lloyd Schwartz, Pulitzer Prize winning critic for *The Boston Phoenix*, was directly in front of me. During the first interval, I was conversing in the lobby with Richard Dyer, critic for *The Boston Globe*, and Craig Smith, conductor of Emmanuel Music (who will continue his series of Handel performances with *Xerxes* this spring, then with either *Ariodante* next fall or a staged version of *Theodora* in spring 1997), when Ellen T. Harris approached and handed us AHS membership brochures, which she was distributing to all "likely suspects!" In sum, it was an auspicious occasion for a festival performance.

After the performers had assembled onstage, one chorister—Harvard Professor Stephen Jay Gould—stirringly recalled the previous day's assassination of Yitzak Rubin, and solemnly dedicated the performance to the cause of lasting peace. *Joshua* (1748) is not, of course, a hymn to peace, since it has one of the militaristic librettos that Thomas Morell created in response to the Scots rebellion of 1745. Perhaps Donald Teeters, the conductor of Cecilia since 1968, had decided to downplay the militarism, for—as one of my students declared—"he was anything but fierce, stern, or even demanding; he looked like a very gentle man." Handel's fourteen choruses illustrate Morell's texts brilliantly, and the group of 71 performed them with admirable clarity—though not with the precision that a far smaller group could muster. The chorus was joined by two natural trumpets, two natural horns, and Baroque timpani at the beginning of act 2, then by a large military drum for "See the conqu'ring hero comes," the penultimate chorus in act 3—which once again conquered one and all.

The orchestra, which consisted of free-lance professionals, included Kinloch Earle, concertmaster; Christopher Krueger, flute; Stephen Hammer, oboe; and Suzanne Cleverdon, harpsichord continuo. On the whole it played exceedingly well, though there were a few rough pitches. Nothing was unpolished in the vocal solo parts, sung by Frank Kelley, tenor

(Joshua); and Robert Honeysucker, baritone (Caleb). Baker's crystal clarity shone through her first air, "Hark! 'tis the linnet and the thrush," and her amazing agility thrilled us through her last, "Oh! had I Jubal's lyre." Gall's indelible interpretations of texts came through in all his recitatives, five airs, and two duets with Baker, and he was in splendid voice, though—perhaps to be consistent with the rest of the troupe—he did not astonish us with ornamentation, as he has done on previous occasions. Kelley's dulcet voice negotiated all difficulties with ease, but sounded unheroic until it rang out like an alarm for "With redoubled rage return" in the middle of act 2. Honeysucker was imposingly heroic throughout, and proved to be the favorite singer for my students, who seem unconvinced by even the possibility that mellifluous tenors and piercingly high countertenors could sound heroic. They have been informed of Baroque convention (the youths in love are a soprano and alto, the virile hero is a tenor, and the aging warrior is a bass); yet it's not "their world," but presumably that of the "middle-aged people" and "high-class ladies and gentlemen" they noted in the audience. Nevertheless, at the end, thanks (I believe) to Handel's great choral writing, addition of majestic brass in act 2, and provision of superb tunes in act 3, even they joined the "hallelujahs" for the triumphant piece and excellent performance.

Lowell Lindgren

HANDEL-L on LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU

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not, in fact, have been performed until the next year, when there was a ball in the evening and a "splendid entertainment."

The question remains as to whether Queen Anne ever heard any of the music which Handel wrote for her in 1713, but a new piece of information may indicate that she did. Andrew Ashbee, in his *Records of English Court Music*, vol. II (Snodland, 1987), prints on page 150 a record of payment from the Treasurer of the Chamber's Declared Accounts which reads:

22 September 1714 to 4 November 1714

To John Eccles, Master of Her late Ma[jes]ties Musick, for the Travelling Charges of himself and 22 other of Her said Ma[jes]ties Musicians, being Commanded to perform the Te Deum at Windsor on the 19th of Nov[embe]r 1713 and for their attendance there on Her said Ma[jes]ties Birthday Febr[uar]y the 6, 1713 [i.e. 1714], being out in all 9 days at 5s. p. *diem* to the Master and 3s. p. *diem* for each of the other[s], amounting to

£31. 19s. 0d

This record confirms a much less specific Warrant from the Lord Chamberlain dated May 21, 1714 and printed by Ashbee on page 116.

The wording of the document is at the least suggestive. Only the Queen, who was enjoying remarkably good health during the autumn of 1713, could have commanded a performance of the Te Deum at Windsor which required the presence of the full complement of her instrumental musicians to augment the members of the Chapel Royal who were already in residence. The settings of the Te Deum and, presumably, Jubilate performed could have been those by William Croft, Senior Composer to the Chapel Royal. These had been written in 1709 but Burrows has argued convincingly that Croft revised them in response to having heard Handel's Utrecht settings—although probably not until shortly before they were performed on 20 January 1715 at a Thanksgiving service at St. Paul's for George I's "Peaceable and Quiet Possession of the Throne." It seems much more likely, however, that it was Handel's own setting which the Queen had commissioned but had not yet heard. Her granting of a pension to Handel in December 1713 can be seen as a response to this performance. The opportunity for a second performance might also explain Handel's revisions to the word setting in bars 28–35 of the Jubilate noted by Burrows.

The date of November 19 is also interesting, and one wonders whether it was intended as a revival of the tradition of performing orchestrally accompanied canticles to celebrate St. Cecilia's Day. November 22 fell on a Sunday in 1713, and the Queen may have felt it would be inappropriate to schedule such a celebration

on that day. In addition, there are indications elsewhere that Croft and at least some of the Court musicians were committed to participating in the St. Cecilia's Day celebrations at Oxford that year.

The presence of the entire Queen's Musick at Windsor for the Birthday celebrations in 1714 is also suggestive, and a "splendid entertainment" involving them could surely have included Handel's Birthday Ode. A large-scale celebration of the Queen's birthday might have been considered politically desirable, since the Queen had been seriously ill the entire month of January and a run on the Bank of England had only been halted by her open letter to the Lord Mayor of London on February 1, announcing her recovery. It may be significant that the Italian opera, which normally performed on Saturdays, was dark on February 6, 1714; in fact, there were no performances between Wednesday, February 3, and the following Tuesday, February 9. This would have permitted the participation at Windsor not only of the members of the Queen's Musick who were also members of the opera orchestra, but also of the soloists "Mrs. [Anastasia] Robi[n]son" and "Mrs. [Jane] Barbier," both members of the opera company, who are named in Handel's autograph. It would also help to explain the reference to "being out in all 9 days," since there must have been rehearsals *in situ* for both events. Presumably a 1714 date for the performance of the ode would also explain Handel's revision of movement 4, "Let flocks and herds," which is written on an inserted folio of a different type of paper.

Graydon Beeks

1994 American Handel Society Recording Prize

The American Handel Society Recording Prize for a 1994 release goes to Nicholas McGegan and the Freiburger Barockorchester's recording of *Radamisto* on the Harmonia Mundi France label (HMU 907111-907113). The recording features Ralf Popken (*Radamisto*), Juliana Gondek (*Zenobia*), Lisa Saffer (*Polissena*), Dana Hanchard (*Tigrane*), Monika Frimmer (*Fraarte*), Michael Dean (*Tiridate*) and Nicolas Cavallier (*Farasmane*).

The prize recognizes a musically superlative performance of a work that constitutes a significant contribution to Handel's recorded oeuvre. The performance recorded here (the centerpiece of the 1993 Göttingen Festival) is the first of the December 1720 version of *Radamisto* since Handel's time. McGegan enlisted Terence Best and the Center for Computer Assisted Research in the Humanities at Menlo Park to help him get through the tangle of the sources. The result is an excellent recording of what is widely considered to be the best version of one of Handel's

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greatest operas. The orchestra plays with spirit and remarkable accuracy. The cast is even throughout, and the recorded sound is nothing short of brilliant. The use of solo archlute to accompany some recitatives and arias not only furnishes welcome variety; it provides a viable answer to a question for which we have little historical evidence: what exactly did the archlute do in Handel's opera performances?

This year's committee consisted of Richard King (chairman), Donald Burrows, and John Sawyer. A committee is presently at work on the 1995 prize; readers who wish to nominate any recording not in the discography in the April 1996 Newsletter should write to David Hurley, 5514 South Blackstone Avenue, Apartment 201, Chicago, Illinois 60637. The winners of the prize since it was founded in 1991 are listed below.

- 1991 *Giulio Cesare* (Harmonia Mundi France HMU 901385.87) Jennifer Larmore, Barbara Schlick, Bernard Fink, Marianne Rorholm, Derek Lee Ragin, Furio Zanasi, Dominique Visse, Olivier Lallouette. Concerto Köln, Rene Jacobs, conductor.
- 1992 *Judas Maccabaeus* (Hyperion 66641/42) Jamie McDougall, Emma Kirkby, Catherine Denley, Michael George, James Bowman, Simon Birchall, Choir of the New College, Oxford. The King's Consort, Robert King, conductor.
- 1994 *Radamisto* (Harmonia Mundi France HMU 907111-907113) Ralf Popken, Juliana Gondek, Lisa Saffer, Dana Hanchard, Monika Frimmer, Michael Dean, Nicolas Cavallier. Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan, conductor.

The American Handel Society

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___ Friends of the Handel Institute: £10/\$16; students £5/\$8.							

Those paying in dollars should make their checks payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, Department of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. Those paying in sterling should make their checks payable to Howard Serwer and mail to the society at the above address. Those wishing to pay in DM should remit to Dr. Siegfried Flesch, Treasurer, Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, Gr. Nikole Str. 5, O-4020, Halle/Saale, Federal Republic of Germany, and indicate that the payment is for the account for the AHS.