

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XIII, Number 3

December 1998

Handel, John Hughes and Mary, Countess Cowper

While Handel was preparing to depart England for the Continent in the spring of 1719 to hire singers for the first season of the Royal Academy of Music, he received an invitation to perform at the home of Mary, Countess Cowper, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. The invitation came via John Hughes, the poet, librettist, critic and secretary to the Commissioners for Appointing Justices of the Peace. Hughes reports to his patroness in a letter dated May Day 1719¹:

Madam

Mrs Barbier's Time being so very uncertain, I have engag'd another of my Musical Acquaintance, Mrs Robinson, the Daughter of Dr Turner, who will be proud of the Opportunity of waiting on your Ladyship tomorrow in the Evening. Her late Improvement has I think plac'd her in the first Rank of our English Performers. Mr Robinson begs leave to send his own Harpsichord, that of your Ladyship's being, as I remember, not exactly of the Consort Pitch. I have likewise sent to Mr Hendel, who if he is not engag'd will, I am sure, be very glad of the Same Opportunity. I wish it may be any way in my Power to contribute to your Ladyship's Entertainment or Satisfaction, & am very sorry it is only in Trifles I can express the very great Sense I have of Obligations which can never be acknowledg'd as they ought by

Madam

Your Ladyship's most dutifull
& most obedient humble Servt

The Cowpers occupied important positions in London. William Cowper had been Lord Chancellor, the chief officer of the justice system and speaker (presiding officer) of the House of Lords. He resigned the Great Seal in April 1718 having apparently lost the confidence of the King, who considered that Cowper had sided with the Prince of Wales in the dynastic feud that so occupied London in those years. The Cowpers were in an unenviable position, as Lady Mary was Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, Caroline of Ansbach. A frequent theater-goer (accompanying the Princess), she was at the opening night of *Radamisto* (27 April 1720) which had a "Great Crowd," as she reported in her diary.² Unfortunately, the diary from late 1716 to early 1720 is no longer extant because she destroyed what she considered might be incriminating comments concerning the relationship between the Prince of Wales and his father, so we cannot confirm that the house concert took place, who attended, or how the performers acquitted themselves. Lady Cowper was an accomplished harpsichordist. She was charged by a rival for her husband's affections as "playing the best upon the harpsichord of any Woman in England," thereby having an excuse to stay home and invite men to visit.³ Thankfully, her husband regarded her talents on the harpsichord as being greatly in her favor. On 30 May 1720, after the royal reconciliation had been effected, she reports



that she played the instrument at an evening entertainment for the King and his daughter-in-law Caroline. Lord Cowper died 10 October 1723 and she only three months later on 5 January 1724 though twenty years his junior.

Jane Barbier was an English contralto who had performed in several of Handel's stage works, including *Rinaldo*, *Il pastor fido* and *Teseo*. She had also sung *Telemachus* in Galliard's *Calypto and Telemachus*, the libretto of which was by Hughes, who had portrayed her in his poem *The Hue and Cry* as good looking and headstrong.⁴ The article in *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians* asserts that her 1718-19 season under John Rich was "an extremely busy one," so she may well have been unavailable.⁵

Mrs. Robinson was a soprano just beginning her career.⁶ According to *A Biographical Dictionary* she received two benefit concerts at the King's Theatre in February 1719.⁷ At Drury Lane Theatre in October 1719 she sang Ariosti's cantata *Diana on Mount Latmos*. During the first season of the Royal Academy she sang in the opening opera—Porta's *Numitor*—Scarlatti's *Narcisso*, and Handel's *Radamisto*. Her husband John was an organist and

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HANDEL CALENDAR

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

22ND LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL. March 23 - April 28, 1999. Works to be performed include **Lotario**, **Ero e Leandro**, **Filide e Aminta**, **The Triumph of Time And Truth**, **Deborah**, and "**The Song of Moses**" (Part II of **Israel in Egypt**). Performers include James Bowman, Charles Daniels, Catherine Denley, Emma Kirkby, Joanne Lunn, Ian Partridge, James Rutherford; the London Handel Choir and Orchestra, the Choir of St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle; Denys Darlow, Paul Nicholson, Michael Rosewell, Jonathan Rees-Williams, conductors. Advance booking by post to: The Booking Office, London Handel Festival, 13 Cambridge Road, New Malden, Surrey KT3 3QE, England (booking opens 1 February 1999).

HÄNDEL-FESTSPIELE, GÖTTINGEN, GERMANY. May 27 - June 1, 1999. **Arianna in Creta**. Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Nicholas McGegan, conductor; **Theodora**. Ann Monoyios, Rufus Müller, Fiori musicali, Thomas Albert, conductor; **Terpsichore**, **Apollo e Dafne** and **Ero e Leandro**. La Stagione, Michael Schneider, conductor. For information, write Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft e.V., Hainholzweg 3-5, D-37805, Göttingen.

48TH HÄNDEL-FESTSPIELE, HALLE, GERMANY. June 4 - 13, 1999. This year the Händel-Festspiele runs for ten days. Works to be performed include **Acis and Galatea**, **Admeto**, **Agrippina**, **Alexander's Feast**, **Neun Deutsche Arien**, **Poro**, and **Samson** by many of the world's foremost artists. For information call the Händel-Festspiele offices at 0345-500 90 222, or fax at 0345-500 90 416.

Susanna. February 10. Kölner Philharmonie, Cologne. Ruth Holton, Xenia Meijer, Michael Chance, John Elwes, Harry van der Kamp. Collegium Cartusianum and Kölner Kammerchor, Peter Neumann, conductor.

Giulio Cesare. February 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 27. Opéra de Bordeaux, Bordeaux, France. Giulio Cesare: Nathalie Stutzmann; Cornelia: Kathleen Kuhlmann; Sesto: Isabel Cals; Cleopatra: Mireille Delunsch; Tolomeo: Brian Asawa. Jane Glover, conductor. Stephen Langridge, producer.

Giulio Cesare. February 19; March 19, 24, 30; April 6, 8, 18. Stadttheater Basel, Basel, Switzerland. Giulio Cesare: Graciella Araya/Anne Mason; Curio: Martin Snell; Cornelia: Leandra Overmann; Sesto: Annette Markert; Cleopatra: Sonia Theodoridou; Tolomeo: Kai Wessel; Achilla: Lynton Black; Nireno: Sibyl Zanganelli/ Dorian Wijn.

Poro. February 19, 21; June 11. Opernhaus Halle, Halle, Germany. Revival of the 1998 production.

Aminta e Filide and **Apollo e Dafne.** February 23. Opernhaus Halle, Halle. Händelfestspielorchester.

Acis and Galatea. March 6. Concertgebouw, Amsterdam. Christiane Oelze, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Toby Spence, Peter Rose. Combattimento Consort and Collegium Vocale, Jan Willem de Vriend, conductor. Also March 7, Konzerthaus, Vienna.

Ariodante. March 9, 10. Canberra Festival, Australia. Graham Abbott, conductor.

Alcina. March 10, 12, 14, 17, 19, 21. Teatre Nacional de Catalunya, Barcelona. Rinaldo Alessandrini, conductor. Herbert Wernicke, producer. Deutsche Oper am Rhein (Theater Basel) production.

Solomon. March 21. St Maria im Kapitol, Cologne. Collegium Cartusianum and Kartäuserkantorei, Peter Neumann, conductor.

Israel in Egypt. March 23. St Thomas Church, New York. Julianne Baird, Marcia Young, Dana Marsh, Greg Carder, Philip Cutlip, Glendower Jones. Concert Royal.

Samson. March 23, 24. Gordon Center for the Performing Arts, Owings Mills, Maryland. Samson: Gran Wilson; Dalila: Sara Seglem; Manoah: John Shirley Quirk; Harapha: Thom King; Micha: Deidra Palmour; Israelite Woman: Faith Okkema. New production, semi-staged. The Kimberly Mackin Dance Company, Full Chorus and Orchestra of the Baltimore Choral Arts Society, Tom Hall, conductor, John Lehmyer, stage director.

Alcina. March 26. Hans Otto Theater, Potsdam.

Giulio Cesare. March 26, 28, 30; April 1. Opéra-Comédie, Montpellier, France. Giulio Cesare: Sara Mingardo; Cornelia: Laura Polverelli; Sesto: Brigitte Balleys; Cleopatra: Laura Claycomb; Tolomeo: Hilary Summers; Achilla: Roberto Scaltriti. Les Talens Lyriques, Christophe Rousset, conductor. Willy Decker, producer. Also April 6, Théâtre des Champs Elysées, Paris. Giulio Cesare. March 27, 29, 31; April 3. Portland Opera, Portland, OR. Stewart Robertson, conductor. Ken Cazan, producer.

Giulio Cesare. March 28 - April 4. Montpellier, France. Les Talens Lyrique, Christophe Rousset, conductor.

La Resurrezione. April 1, 2, 3. Ottawa, Canada. David Fallis, conductor. Marshall Pynkoski, producer.

La Resurrezione. April 4. Barbican Centre, London. Gabrieli Players and Gabrieli Consort, Paul McCreech, conductor. Also April 11, Abbaye Royale de Fontevraud, France.

Serse. April 4, 8, 13, 16, 20, 24. Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich. Serse: Ann Murray; Romilda: Yvonne Kenny; Arsamene: Christopher Robson; Elviro: Jan Zinkler; Atalanta: Julie Kaufmann; Amastre: Nadja Michael; Ariodate: Umberto Chiummo. Ivor Bolton, conductor. Duncan Martin, producer.

Selections from Admeto, Giulio Cesare, Radamisto, Rodelinda, and Serse. April 9. Cité de la Musique, Paris. Andreas Scholl. Akademie für Alte Musik. Also April 21, Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels.

Giulio Cesare. April 10, 14, 17, 21, 24. Metropolitan Opera, New York. Giulio Cesare: Jennifer Larmore; Cornelia: Stephanie Blythe; Sesto: David Daniels; Cleopatra: Sylvia McNair; Tolomeo: Brian Asawa; Nireno: Daniel Taylor; Curio: Mariusz Kwiecien; Achilla: Julien Robbins. John Nelson, conductor (revival of 1988-89 production).

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NEWS & NOTES

The American Handel Society and its *Newsletter* have seen some changes over the past few months. To begin with, we are pleased to announce the addition of three new board members: Professor Philip Brett, of the University of California; Professor Robert Ketterer, of the University of Illinois; and Dr. Brad Leissa, of Bethesda, MD.

At the meeting of the Board of Directors in November, 1998, founding member Howard Serwer announced his retirement from active duty, and the Board acknowledged his immense contribution to the Society by electing him an Honorary Director. Dr. Serwer was also fêted at the Society's dinner, where he was presented with an engraving of the Houbraken portrait of Handel. Brad Leissa has agreed to serve as Secretary/Treasurer of the Society.

Bridget Brown, of Madison, Wisconsin has retired as the *Newsletter's* typesetter. Over the last several years she has done a splendid job, and it is largely thanks to her careful work that the *Newsletter* has maintained its quality and accuracy. We are sad to see her go, and wish to take this opportunity to thank her for her service. We are presently experimenting with other typesetters and printers and ask the Society's indulgence as we move into a new era.

The Maryland Handel Festival and Conference was a great success this year. In particular, the conference sessions and lectures, which the American Handel Society organized in conjunction with the Festival, were very well attended. Each day's session of papers drew approximately 75 audience members, and the lectures by Anthony Hicks and Ellen Rosand were each attended by more than 100. The oratorio performances were of the usual high quality, and a special treat was provided on Saturday evening, when the Pittsburgh early music group Chatham Baroque played a stunning program of string music by Jenkins, Matteis, Purcell and Handel.

The Maryland Handel Festival plans to present *Susanna* and *Solomon* in Spring, 2000, followed by performances of *Theodora* and *Jephtha* in the new Maryland Center for the Performing Arts in Spring, 2001. The future of the Festival after that is presently being negotiated. We will keep the members of the Society posted.

Finally, the Society's web page has been reconceived and updated by Brad Leissa. Members are urged to explore the new version at the following address:

<http://www.intr.net/bleissa/ahs/>

THE J. MERRILL KNAPP RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Board of Directors of the American Handel Society invite applications for the 1999 J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship, an award of \$1,500 to be granted to an advanced graduate student or a scholar in an early stage of his or her career. This fellowship may be used on its own or to augment other grants or fellowships, but may be held no more than twice. The fellowship is intended to support work in the area of Handel or related studies. The winner of the award is given the opportunity to present a paper at the biennial meeting of the American Handel Society.

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

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

Applications for the 1999 Fellowship must be postmarked no later than April 15, 1999 and should be sent to:

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

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

HANDEL CONFERENCE "Great Among The Nations"

Handel and the various national styles of his period is the theme of the next Handel Institute Conference, to be held in London on 20-21 November 1999. The timetable will run on a half-hourly basis, so papers will be restricted to 20-25 minutes.

Proposals and abstracts (about 100 words) are now invited and should be sent by 1 April 1999 to Dr. Elizabeth Gibson, 15 Pyrland Road, Highbury, London, N5 2JB. All offers will be carefully considered and proposers notified as soon as possible.

1998 MARYLAND HANDEL FESTIVAL AND AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

DAVID ROSS HURLEY, "*Hercules in Drag*"

Thomas Broughton's libretto for Handel's *Hercules* cites two works as sources—the *Trachiniai* of Sophocles and Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. When Anthony Hicks suggested in 1992 that Seneca's *Hercules Octaeus* also seems to have influenced the libretto, it became clear that Broughton drew upon other texts in addition to those he acknowledged. My paper examines two "new" sources for Handel's *Hercules*. The first was recently identified as an influence upon Broughton's text by Todd Gilman—

Peter Motteux's libretto for *Hercules*, a masque for John Eccles originally performed in Motteux's play *The Novelty* in 1697. The second, identified here for the first time, is yet another ancient text that served both Motteux and Broughton: Ovid's *Heroides*. These new texts disclose a newcomer to the world of Handel's women, Omphale, queen of Lydia and former lover of Hercules. Her existence—or more precisely, the question of Dejanira's knowledge of it—has important ramifications for understanding Handel's libretto.

In act 2, scene 5 of Handel's *Hercules* Dejanira upbraids her

husband (who is actually innocent) for having fallen in love with another woman, Iole. In her aria "Resign thy club and lion's spoils," Dejanira accuses the hero of effeminacy for having fallen for Iole and suggests that he put aside his club, clothing, sword, and shield and take up the spindle and distaff. In so doing, Dejanira refers to one of her husband's earlier erotic interests: according to a number of sources, Hercules had been sold in slavery to Omphale, who forced him to wear women's clothes and spin for her. This episode is the basis of one of the important scenes in Motteux's *Hercules*, where Omphale and her attendants are the immediate cause of Dejanira's jealousy. The ultimate source for the spinning Hercules, however, is Ovid's *Heroides* (available to both Motteux and Broughton in English translation), where Dejanira's suspicions about Iole are fueled by her knowledge of Hercules's enslavement to Omphale. Broughton's act 2, scene 5 not only seems to have been influenced by Motteux, but also quotes directly from the *Heroides*. Dejanira's reference to Hercules's "female toils" for Omphale thus challenges the traditional view that in Handel's musical drama Hercules's character is entirely pure and Dejanira's jealousy is entirely unfounded.

SUSANNE DUNLAP, "*The magic of Alcina: Transformations of the Sorceress from Caccini to Handel*."

Throughout the history of opera, composers set many different themes that were derived from the great Renaissance epic poems, especially Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* and Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*. Handel himself followed this tradition by composing three different operas on stories from *Orlando furioso*. One of them, Alcina's enchantment of the hero Ruggiero, was first treated operatically by Francesca Caccini in her work *La liberazione di Ruggiero dall'isola d'Alcina* in 1625.

This paper examines the way in which Alcina is presented in Caccini's and Handel's operas, comparing the personality of the sorceress as she emerges in the text and music of each. The paper explores issues such as the differences from Ariosto's original story, the divergent historic backdrops of the two works, and musical questions such as tonality and vocal style. The differences in Alcina's textual and musical personality help to illustrate not only the differences between the two musical styles, but also a similarity in the way both composers used the available musical vocabulary to imbue Alcina with a distinct quality of "otherness."

KENNETH NOTT, "*Injur'd Queen, L'indigna usurpatrice: The Portrayal of Athalia in Eighteenth-Century Oratorio*."

The story of Athalia was a favorite of oratorio composers during the eighteenth century. In addition to Handel's justly admired setting of 1733, there exist versions by Caldara, Marcello and J.C. Bach, to name but a few. These oratorios represent the work of three librettists: Samuel Humphreys (Handel), Apostolo Zeno (Caldara and Marcello) and Pietro Metastasio (J.C. Bach). The librettos by Humphreys and Zeno draw upon Racine's play of 1691 and represent in general outline, if not in specific details, what could be called the Racinian version of the story. Metastasio's libretto tells a very different story and is, as he claimed in a letter, completely independent of Racine.

A fruitful study of these two main Athalia traditions could center on the portrayal of the character of Athalia. In the Racinian versions, Athalia is a woman of great strength. She is an "evil" character by virtue of her unlawful and murderous seizure of the throne of Israel, but she is also a sympathetic character. She feels guilt for the slaughter of her grandchildren, she is haunted by a dream of her downfall and she even, albeit momentarily, feels a certain familial warmth towards the sole surviving grandson who will ultimately prove her undoing. When faced with defeat, she remains defiant even to the point of cursing the new boy-king, accurately predicting his later apostasy. She is truly, as she describes herself in Handel's last act, an "injur'd queen," an impressive character of genuinely tragic stature.

Metastasio's Athalia is a very different person. Raymond Monelle has written that "Metastasio was least good at creating malvagi, really villainous characters." Furthermore, "his dramas, far from being heroic passages of spiritual conflict are based on intrigue, disguise, mistaken identity . . ." In Metastasio's *Gioas, Rè di Giuda*, Athalia plots to keep her throne through trickery. Though haunted by fear and madness, guilt and familial love have no place in her heart. She is, in comparison to the Racinian Athalia, weak and unsympathetic, in the words of Sebia, "l'indeg-

na usurpatrice."

This comparison raises questions which merit further investigation. How are villains and particularly villainous women portrayed in eighteenth-century oratorio and opera? Is the portrayal of Athalia as a weaker, more marginalized character simply the result of Metastasio's desire to separate himself from Racine, or is it a sign of a Metastasian world-view which is ruled by reason and reasonable (male) monarchs and has no place for powerful, sympathetic, tragically flawed women?

KEN MCLEOD, "*Masculine Anxiety in Handel's Semele*."

In defining "Women" Nathan Bailey's *Dictionnarium* (1736) includes the following illustrative proverb: "Women, Wealth, and Wine have each two Qualities, a good and a bad . . . they are either a blessing or a curse, according to the use we make of them." Such a definition resonates with traditional constructions of women as duplicitous and disruptive objects. Eighteenth-century English plays and music dramas are rife with depictions of male fears of cuckoldry, shrewish women, and women who transgress sexual boundaries and who are punished due to misplaced aspirations of power over men. These images are almost invariably the products of male authors and testify to the perceived necessity of maintaining a discourse of gendered difference and hierarchy. They also belie an ongoing level of masculine anxiety and desire to maintain patriarchal order in the face of potentially disruptive feminine power during this period.

Many of Handel's dramatic texts reflect such negative characterizations of women, but perhaps the most negative portrait of female empowerment occurs in the oratorio *Semele*. Deceitful female behavior and the consequences of desiring power over men are evident in Congreve's original plot summary: "Juno, after many contrivances . . . assumes the Shape and voice of Ino . . . by the Help of which Disguise and Artful Insinuations, she prevails [with Semele] to make a Request to Jupiter, which being granted must end in her utter Ruin." Depictions of male impotence also abound as in Jupiter's "thunder of the smallest size," and Juno's directive to Somnus, "Obey my will, thy leaden rod resign." Semele's mirror scene, Ino's "Thou hast undone me!" and "The heavenly sphere turns round" further testify to the duplicitous and disruptive portrait of women. Focusing on *Semele* in the context of prevailing attitudes towards women in English society and literature, I discuss the negative images of women within the text and Handel's reinforcement of female vanity and duplicity through juxtaposition of keys, open forms, and excessive ornamentation.

WENDY HELLER, "*The Pleasures of Self-Sacrifice: Handel's Admeto on the Journey from Venice*."

The ability to transform myth is perhaps one of opera's most undervalued contributions: throughout the history of the genre, composers and librettists, with the apparent complicity of audiences and producers, acquired from the start an extraordinary license to reshape our most basic legends, altering them not only to accommodate the idiosyncrasies of music and stagecraft, but also to reinforce new ideals in a pleasurably digestible form. While this is scarcely an unexpected occurrence for the most dangerous mythic women such as Medea, Alcina, and Deianira, who are almost invariably rehabilitated in their operatic transformations, scholars have been less enthusiastic about the treatment accorded one of the most dutiful and heroic women of all mythology by Handel and his Italian predecessors: Alcestis, whose wifely devotion and embrace of female virtue was so great that she chose death and a descent to hell that she might spare her beloved husband King Admetus from further suffering and death. As a seventeenth-century Venetian opera heroine (Aureli and P. Ziani: 1660; 1670), transformed twice—once for Hanover and again for Handel's London in 1727—Alceste's self-sacrifice, albeit noble, is draped in comic overlay, mitigated by jealousy, deception, transvestitism, and even violence in the carnivalesque play that was the Venetian legacy to the genre.

In the context of its Venetian and Hanoverian ancestors as well as Euripides's play *Alcestis*, this paper will examine the *Alcestis* myth as transformed in Handel's *Admeto, Re di Tessaglia* (1727). I demonstrate the ways in which the oft-criticized peculiarities of the original libretto by Aurelio Aureli maintained in the Handel setting—including the addition of a subplot and second primary female character—can be better understood as serious responses both to fundamental themes underlying

Euripides's representation of Alcestis and to Venetian conventions for the treatment of female heroines in opera. Finally, I argue that this intersection between Handelian and Venetian sensibilities is of critical importance for understanding the treatment of women in other "Venetian-born operas," such as *Seerse* or *Giulio Cesare*, and perhaps the source of their special appeal for modern audiences and critics.

ELLEN ROSAND, "Handel's Oratorical Narrative"

Handel's oratorios, in which "the Solemnity of Church-Music was agreeably united with the most pleasing Airs of the Stage," promised their audience the musical delights of the opera house leavened by the instruction and moral uplift of a church service. Intended as something of a corrective, they were designed to speak more directly than opera to their audience. They differed from opera not only in language (English rather than Italian), musical style (simpler forms, more direct, syllabic text-setting), subject matter (usually biblical rather than profane), and moral impact, but in the very nature of their dramatic development. In opera, music, stage action and costumes combine to present a coherent and usually continuous story, with most of the action taking place within view or at least earshot of the audience. Oratorio drama, in contrast, relying on the audience's familiarity with the biblical story and willingness to comprehend its potential allegorical implications, often lacks continuity, presenting instead a series of events that leave space for emphasis of the moral message. Unstaged, its characters uncostumed, oratorio is a drama of the mind. But Handel's musical setting enables his audience to "see." The oratorios seem to have inspired the composer to extraordinary heights in the musical representation of action and setting. Handel's music mimes the two most notorious actions in the story of Joshua, the battle of Jericho and the sun standing still, and in *Alexander Balus*, it represents the precipitating event of the plot, Cleopatra's kidnapping. Contrasting settings are depicted in both works by means of orchestration, meter, melodic-rhythmic style, and form. The oratorio may have been considered a moral alternative to the lush decadence of opera, but the very deprivation of stage spectacle had the paradoxical effect of inspiring some of Handel's most spectacular music.

DONALD BURROWS, "Handel's Women in the mid-1740s"

Handel's career in the 1730s was dominated by the competition between London's opera companies and by the uneasy relationship between the composer and the new generation of opera managers led by Lord Middlesex. It is arguable that Handel's continuing refusal to work with the opera company was also a key factor affecting his professional activities in the 1740s. Society ladies in London who supported the opera company in the mid-1740s held alternative entertainments on his oratorio nights to draw the audience away, and Handel was denied the services of the operatic soloists who had hitherto served his casts for both operas and oratorios. The women soloists were more affected by this than the men: Beard, Lowe and Reinhold were theatre singers who continued their previous association with Handel, but the women in his successful oratorio season of 1743 were 'goddesses from the farces' who had never sung for him in London before. Subsequent years saw considerable instability in the situation: many of the women soloists sang for Handel in only one season. A radical change occurred in 1748, the season of *Alexander Balus* and *Joshua*, when Handel was once again able to employ opera soloists, probably because of a change in the opera company's management. The leading ladies, Casarini and Galli, undertook an unusually heavy schedule by singing for Handel's oratorios on Wednesdays and Fridays, while still appearing at the opera house on other nights of the week. It happens, furthermore, that the opera programme at the time included pasticcio revivals of music from Handel's older operas.

STAN PELKEY, "Political Discourse and the Representation of Authority in the Music of Handel"

Throughout the eighteenth century, the British debated the legitimacy of the Hanoverian dynasty and the nature of monarchy. A central feature of these debates was the use of classical and Biblical characters, themes, and allusions. These tropes permeate the librettos of Handel's oratorios and operas, and their implications for the political meaning of the librettos has recently received new scholarly attention. Because the same classical

and Biblical figures were used as object lessons by both sides in political debates, the political implications of Handel's librettos alone can be ambiguous. However, Handel's use of associative tonality can be shown to indicate to the listener which characters in his dramas are legitimate rulers or figures of moral authority. In this way, Handel's music clarifies potential ambiguities in the librettos. His numerous representations of divine, ancient, and British kingship reveal striking similarities in musical content (keys, surface figurations, general affective quality). The aural associations among these representations thus produce a conflation of divine, ancient, and traditionally British symbols of monarchy closely analogous to that found decades earlier in Augustus Anglicus, the famous celebration of the life of Charles II. Taken as a whole, Handel's compositions suggest that he was a loyal supporter of the Hanoverian dynasty. This paper seeks to demonstrate a connection between political discourse and musical content; in doing so, it draws music into the general historical discussion of politics and the arts in the Augustan Age. (In keeping with the theme of the Conference, special attention was given to Agrippina, Deborah, Theodora, and Susanna.)

RICHARD G. KING, "The Flower of Princesses': Anne of Hanover"

Among the women who played a significant role in Handel's life, Anne, daughter of George II and Caroline of Ansbach, stands out as among his best pupils, as a loyal patron, and as a friend of long-standing. She learned well enough from Handel that a knowledgeable contemporary, J. W. Lustig, could observe that she and Frederick the Great were the most accomplished amateur musicians of the century. The details of her patronage of Handel are sketchy, but it is clear that she played an important role during the years of the so-called "Second Academy," and it is possible that her patronage continued after she left England in 1734 as wife of Willem, Prince of Orange. Her friendship with Handel was such that in 1750 he spent a good part of his final trip to the continent in her company.

Anne (1709-1759) was a remarkable woman of wide-ranging intellectual interests. The political aspects of her life have been outlined in a recent biography; however, the many facets of her cultural interests and patronage have yet to receive serious attention. This paper addresses that gap.

Among the musical topics discussed are Anne's documented performances on the harpsichord (she was apparently in demand as a performer), her musical relationship with Frederick the Great, her creation of a Dutch court orchestra, and the lively musical culture at her court. Concerning art, a pastime to which Anne devoted considerable energy and resources, house inventories show that several of her homes were decorated with numerous paintings by the Princess, some of which may survive today. Further, references in letters and diaries show that her tal-

The Handel Institute Awards

Performance

Applications are invited for the *Byrne Award* (up to £1,000) to support performance of Handel's music and assist young professional musicians at the start of their careers. Deadline April 1.

Research

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

Further details from:

Professor Colin Timms
Department of Music
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom
Tel/fax: 0121-414 5781
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ents were rather well known and that her work was highly valued. Other topics addressed include Anne's musical library and the many portraits of the Princess, another important aspect of her patronage.

Based primarily upon manuscript sources in the Royal Archives at the Hague and the City and State Archives at Leeuwarden, this paper attempts to give a fuller picture of the woman that Handel is said to have called "the flower of princesses."

THOMAS MCGEARY, "Handel as Art Collector"

The full extent of Handel's interest in collecting art only became apparent in 1985, when transcripts of the posthumous sale catalogue of his collection were published. This paper reconstructs Handel's art collection, illustrated with more than 70 slides of paintings and prints that match descriptions in the sale catalogue. Contemporary art theorists describe how in Handel's day painting was valued not for its aesthetic or formal qualities, but for its ability to delight and instruct. Painting was understood and judged according to the hierarchy of genres, with genres ranked on their instructive ability. Handel's collection well represented the major genres and styles. Handel had several still lifes, heads, drolleries, battle scenes, and hunting scenes. Part of his collection must have served as souvenirs of his travels on the continent. Handel had a view of the Doge's Palace in Venice, and several views of Roman ruins. His print collection included engravings of Raphael's mosaics in the cupola of the Chigi Chapel, and of the frescoes of the cupola of Sant' Agnese, both churches in Rome that he no doubt visited. Handel had landscapes from the Flemish "Mannerist" School and from the Dutch "Tonal" School. Of the three major Italian landscape styles, he had prints or paintings of Rosa and Poussin, and paintings in the style of Claude. Handel had subjects from mythology, the bible, and Roman history. His set of the Loves of Jupiter might be considered erotica. At the summit of the hierarchy was history painting. The moral lessons of Handel's paintings from Roman history (Belisarius and Mucius Scaevola) are similar to those of his Italian opera librettos. The paper closed with suggestions for using his art collection for further understanding Handel and his artistic personality.

DAVID HUNTER, "Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown: 'Persevering Enemy to Handel' but 'Otherwise Unknown to History'"

Handel scholarship has been misogynist since Mainwaring, insofar as Handel's female opponents have continued to be insulted and demeaned. By synthesizing information from recent work on eighteenth-century women and archival sources (newly uncovered), and through highlighting the contrast between what is actually a fascinating and complex record of one woman—Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown—and the dismal way her story has been purveyed heretofore, I offer a corrective to 250 years of derogation. Though some writers consider Lady Brown to be unknown other than in the context of Burney's remark that she was "a persevering enemy to Handel," we can glean a fair amount of information about her life from her correspondence and that of others. Those writers—such as John Mainwaring—who had first- or second-hand knowledge of Handel and the people who supported and opposed him have the advantage of chronological propinquity but they do not always exhibit greater accuracy than their successors. While we are perhaps more conscious of the ideological biases of subsequent writers, the facts and opinions of the early ones also warrant close scrutiny. Historians now have a much clearer understanding of acceptable roles for elite women (as well as for working, plebeian ones) in eighteenth-century England. Women were legally their husband's property; nonetheless they did have opportunities for involvement beyond domestic activity. Relations between the sexes provide the most significant key to evaluating Lady Brown's actions and the responses that they produced, such as denigration in verse, a form of sophisticated gossip. The male guards policing the boundary of acceptable behavior clearly felt Lady Brown had gone too far and therefore punished her. It is time to call the guards' bluff.

A Curious Handel Performance

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deputy to William Croft at Westminster Abbey. His name is among those who were members in 1739 of what was later to become the Royal Society of Musicians; Handel also was a member.⁸ Robinson subscribed to seven of the ten Handel works issued by subscription from 1726 to 1739 for which lists survive.⁹

Hughes had collaborated with Handel (and Alexander Pope and John Gay) on *Acis and Galatea* in 1718, which, as Brian Trowell has remarked, "was Handel's first extended setting of English verse, and his first encounter with an English libretto in dramatic form," and he may also have been involved with *Esther*.¹⁰ Dean states that "Handel had known Hughes as early as 1711, when the latter had sent him some poems to set, among them perhaps the short cantata *Venus and Adonis*."¹¹ A violinist himself, it is possible that he attended and participated in the entertainment described above.

David Hunter

- ¹ Hertfordshire Record Office D/EP F61. First published by P. E. Roberts, "John Hughes and His Patron, Lord Cowper: Some Unpublished Correspondence," *Notes and Queries* 222 (1975): 353-57. Cowper had appointed Hughes to the secretaryship in 1717. The eight other letters published by Roberts indicate the obligation that Hughes and his family felt for the patronage of the Cowpers.
- ² Mary, Countess Cowper, *Diary of Mary Countess Cowper, Lady of the Bedchamber to The Princess of Wales: 1714-20*, ed. Spencer Cowper (London: John Murray, 1864), 154. Quoted in Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (New York: Norton, 1955), 104.
- ³ *Diary of Mary, Countess Cowper*, 37.
- ⁴ Olive Baldwin and Thelma Wilson, "Barbier, Jane," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1:308.
- ⁵ Philip H. Highfill Jr., Kalman A. Burnim and Edward A. Langhans, eds., *A Biographical Dictionary of Actors, Actresses, Musicians, Dancers, Managers, and Other Stage Personnel in London, 1660-1800*, 16 vols. (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1973-1993), 1:281-84.
- ⁶ Winton Dean, "Robinson, Ann Turner," *New Grove Opera*, 3:1361.
- ⁷ *A Biographical Dictionary*, 13:26-27.
- ⁸ Betty Matthews, *The Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain: List of Members 1738-1984* (London: Royal Society of Musicians, 1985), 124.
- ⁹ Rose Mason, "Subscribers to Handel's *Rodelinda* and *Faramondo*: A Preliminary Study of the Ten Works Published by Subscription During His Lifetime," (M.M. report, The University of Texas at Austin, 1998).
- ¹⁰ See Brian Trowell, "Acis, Galatea and Polyphemus: a 'serenata a tre voci'?" in *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean*, ed. Nigel Fortune (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 31-93.
- ¹¹ Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 158.

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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