

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume VI, Number 2

August, 1991

Messiah Anniversary

Two hundred and fifty years ago, on August 22, 1741, Handel began the composition of his oratorio *Messiah*. He completed the initial stage on September 6 and the final "filling up" process on September 14. It was acclaimed at its premiere performances in Dublin in April 1742 and despite the initial cool reception when it was first presented in London in 1743, went on to become the best known, most often performed, and most intensively studied Handel oratorio. The story of *Messiah's* reception is best told by Robert Manson Myers in his 1948 book *Handel's Messiah: A Touchstone of Taste*, augmented by Winton Dean's discussion of the general reception of Handel's oratorios in his classic 1959 treatment of *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*. The history of the work itself is best covered in Jens Peter Larsen's pioneering study *Handel's Messiah: Origins. Composition. Sources* published in 1957 and augmented in 1972, and in Watkins Shaw's *A Textual and Historical Companion to Handel's Messiah* published in 1965 as a pendant to his great 1959 edition of the work.

Since the bicentennial of Handel's death in 1959 a vast amount of scholarship has been devoted to all aspects of his life and works, and not surprisingly, a great deal of it has focused on *Messiah*. Probably the most important manifestation has been a pair of articles by Donald Burrows for *Music & Letters*, in which he examined "Handel's Performances of 'Messiah': The evidence of the conducting score" (July–October 1975) and "The Autographs and Early Copies of 'Messiah': Some Further Thoughts" (July 1985). In these he expanded upon some of Shaw's conclusions concerning versions performed and soloists employed in specific years, argued that the relative stability of versions performed by the composer in the 1750s was probably a direct result of a relatively stable cast of soloists rather than a preference on Handel's part for those particular versions, and argued that the terms "con Rip:" and "senza Rip:" were added by Handel to the scores of works performed in the 1749 season when he employed an exceptionally large body of strings, and applied only to that season. (This latter argument had been suggested earlier by several scholars). Several of these arguments had immediate impact on the users of Shaw's edition.

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George I by van Nost at Stowe, Bucks.

The American Handel Society 1991 Annual Meeting

The American Handel Society, in collaboration with the American Bach Society, will hold its 1991 Annual Meeting and Conference on Friday, November 1 and Saturday, November 2 in Washington D.C. The Program Committee, consisting of Lowell Lindgren, MIT (chairman), George Buelow, University of Indiana, and Mary Ann Parker, University of Toronto, has assembled a program centered on the twin themes of "Handel and Bach and the Classical Style" and "Handel and Bach and the Eighteenth-century Audience." The American Handel Society Lecture will be given by Professor Paul

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The American Handel Society: Election of Officers

In the April 1991 issue of this Newsletter, the Board of Directors of The American Handel Society presented the following slate of nominees to the membership of the society for consideration:

President: Graydon Beeks, Pomona College

Vice-President: John Roberts, University of California, Berkeley

Secretary/Treasurer: Howard Serwer, University of Maryland, College Park

Additional nominations were solicited from the membership at large, to be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer in writing by July 1, 1991.

Ballots are included in this mailing, together with instructions for their completion and return. The officers elected will serve two-year terms of office beginning January 1, 1992, as provided for in the By-Laws of the Society.

The Handel Institute

The Spring 1991 issue of The Handel Institute Newsletter contains a number of items of interest to American Handelians. The editor reports on the establishment of the Handel House Association Limited which has been formed to carry out the project of transforming the upper floors of the composer's Brook Street house into a museum, and invites applications for the second round of Handel Institute Awards. Donald Burrows reports on the ongoing project of microfilming the Malmesbury Collection of Handel manuscripts and reviews the events of the 1990 Maryland Handel Festival and American Handel Society Conference. Terence Best announces the discovery of two letters by James Harris of Salisbury containing references to Handel, and Lowell Lindgren presents a preview of his upcoming *RMA Research Chronicle* article on references to musicians in the letters of the Florentine banker and diplomat Giovanni Giacomo Zamboni (1683–1753).

Members of the AHS are invited to become Friends of the Handel Institute for a minimum annual contribution of 10 (5 students). Friends of the Handel Institute receive two issues of the Newsletter per year, and support the work of a registered educational charity. Please address all contributions and related enquiries to Malcolm London, Cork Gully, Shelley House, 3 Noble Street, London, EC2V 7DQ, England.

From the Treasurer

The American Handel Society has entered into an arrangement with Olsson's Books and Records of Washington, D. C. to supply the Society's members with books and sound recordings at a minimum discount of 10% under regular retail price. As of this writing, all details have not been finalized, but the discount on recordings is now available. See the order form on page 8 of the Newsletter for details.

Halle Festival: June 6–11, 1991

"It is an extraordinary pleasure for me to be able to participate in my hometown, Halle in the opening of the 40th Handel Festival, the first in a united Germany." With these words Hans-Dietrich Genscher, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, greeted the readers of the program book for the 1991 Händel-Festspiele in Halle (Saale). There were greetings too from the President of Sachsen-Anhalt, the newly reconstituted Land (or state) of which Halle is a part, from officials of the Göttinger and Karlsruhe festivals, and from Bernd Baselt, Vice President and Academic secretary of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft. The number and tone of these messages were a kind of final seal to the events of the previous twenty-four months.

On the Sunday morning of the Festival, the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft held, as usual, its annual membership meeting. Walther Siegmund-Schultze, President of the Society, opened the meeting with a short and poignant farewell address, having decided not to stand for reelection to the Board. In recognition of his forty years of devoted service to the Society and the Festival, the members present responded with a five-minute standing ovation. The main business of this year's meeting was the consideration of a new set of statutes for the Society proposed by the outgoing Board and the election of a new Board of Directors as called for both in the old and new statutes. The latter were adopted with some modifications, and the election of new directors followed. In the past, the Board had been in effect a self-perpetuating body that named its own successors. In accordance with the requirements of the new statutes, the new board was elected in a contest among twenty-nine candidates for twenty seats.

The new board consists of eleven members from Germany, three each from the United States and the United Kingdom, and one each from the Soviet Union, Austria, and Czechoslovakia. The American members are Ellen T. Harris, J. Merrill Knapp, and Howard Serwer. As in the past, the Board elected a presidium or main working group from among its number. These are Bernd Baselt, President; Winton Dean, Hans Joachim Marx, and Hanna John, Vice-Presidents; Karin Zauft, Academic Secretary; Siegfried Flesch, Treasurer; and Helmut Gleim as the presidium's seventh required member. All except Dean and Marx are from Halle.

Section 9 of the Society's new statutes sets out the constitution of the Editorial Board of the *Hallische-Händel Ausgabe*, the new edition of Handel's works. In recognition of the need for international cooperation in the production of the new edition, the new statutes grant to The American Handel Society and the Handel Institute in London the right, subject to the approval of the presidium, to name two members each to the Editorial Board. The American members named by the Board of Directors of The American Handel Society at its April 19, 1991 meeting are J. Merrill Knapp and John Roberts.

The recital of these details serves to underscore the

immense changes that have taken place in all areas of life in the eastern *Länder* of Germany. In the past, a program such as the Handel Festival could not have taken place unless the government decided it was appropriate and politically useful to the regime. Yet even the 1991 Festival seems to have had its political uses—apart from Foreign Minister Genscher's *Grusswort* in the program book. On Monday evening, June 23, those attending the Festival were bemused to see a gaggle of security heavies and limousines carrying German, British, and American flags waiting at the Hotel Stadt Halle. With no advance announcement (as usual), the Foreign Minister of Germany, Great Britain's Foreign Secretary, and the American Secretary of State attended a choral concert offered by the Choir of Westminster Abbey in the Marktkirche where Handel was baptized and where it is said he learned to play the organ. Foreign Minister Genscher makes much of his origins as a Hallenser; Messrs Hurd and Baker certainly did themselves and their governments no harm by associating with this "down home" event in the new Germany. Just as under the old regime, a cultural event became the occasion for a little harmless politicking. Plus ça change. . . .

With twenty-three musical events, there was the usual embarrassment of riches at the Halle Festival, though there were, in fact, many fewer performances than in previous years. The decrease arose largely from abandoning the practice of giving repeat performances in the surrounding industrial communities. Gone too were performances by choruses recruited from the local chemical plants and community organizations.

The 1991 Festival planned to present five Handel operas, *Admeto*, *Amadigi*, *Agrippina*, *Tamerlano*, and *Rodelinda*. Only one, *Tamerlano*, was a local production, and it was a revival. In the event it had to be canceled because of the illness of one of the principals. This was no great loss from the theatrical point of view inasmuch as it was a revival of Peter Konwitschny's staging that features a thicket of wires through which the singers have to pick their way and searchlights for them to use as weapons. Alas, it deprived us of hearing a performance that promised to be wonderful musically. Three of the others were revivals of productions from Karlsruhe, Munich, and Göttingen, and the last, *Agrippina* was the musical component of a new production intended to be produced in Göttingen about a week later. The program also included three oratorios, *Theodora*, *Saul*, and *Messiah*, and the usual complement of chamber performances.

Even though the management of the Festival reduced the number of performances for 1991, the choices forced on the hapless Handel-fan were as onerous as always. And as always, your travelling correspondent displayed a knack for making some very bad selections. For example, on the evening of Friday June 7, I had to choose from among *Admeto* in the big theatre, a choral concert presented by the Halle Stadtsingerchor and the Capella Savaria, and a production of what was supposed to be *Amadigi* in the Goethe Theatre at Bad Lauchstädt.

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Handel Calendar

The AHS welcomes news or leads about events of interest to Handeliens. If possible, please include an address where readers may obtain details.

Theodora. L. Hunt, J. Lane, D. Minter, J. Thomas, D. Thomas; U.C. Berkeley Chamber Chorus, dir. J. Butt; Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, cond. N. McGegan. **Sept. 19:** Regional Center for the Arts, Civic & Locust, Walnut Creek, CA; **Sept. 20:** Herbst Theatre, Van Ness & McAllister, San Francisco, CA; **Sept. 21–22:** 1st Cong. Church, Dana & Durant, Berkeley, CA; **Sept 28:** 1st Meth. Church, Hamilton & Webster, Palo Alto, CA. PBO, 57 Post St., Suite 705, S.F., CA 94104. (415) 391-5252.

Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra. Incl. arias (w/L. Hunt), Corelli: Concerti grossi; cond. N. McGegan. **Oct. 17:** Regional Center for the Arts, Civic & Locust, Walnut Creek, CA; **Oct. 18:** 1st Meth. Church, Hamilton & Webster, Palo Alto, CA; **19–20:** 1st Cong. Church, Dana & Durant, Berkeley, CA; **Oct. 25:** Herbst Theatre, Van Ness & McAllister, San Francisco, CA. PBO, 57 Post St., Suite 705, S.F., CA 94104. (415) 391-5252.

American Handel Society Annual Meeting and Conference, with members of the American Bach Society. Incl. Bach: *Mass in B Minor*, Bach Consort, Washington, D.C., and conference "Handel and Bach and the Classical Style" and "Handel and Bach and the Eighteenth-century Audience." Details in this issue of Newsletter. **Nov. 1–2.** AHS, Dept. of Music, Univ. of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742. (301) 454-5758.

Messiah. D. Hanchard, L. Crawford, S. Stolen, L. Kromm; U.C. Berkeley Chamber Chorus, dir. J. Butt; Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, cond. N. McGegan. **Dec. 14–15:** 1st Cong. Church, Dana & Durant, Berkeley, CA; **Dec. 18:** Angelico Hall, Dominican College, San Rafael, CA; **Dec. 19:** Regional Center for the Arts, Civic & Locust, Walnut Creek, CA; **Dec. 20:** Herbst Theatre, Van Ness & McAllister, San Francisco, CA; **Dec. 21:** 1st Meth. Church, Hamilton & Webster, Palo Alto, CA. PBO, 57 Post St., Suite 705, S.F., CA 94104. (415) 391-5252.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele. "Handel and Germany." **June 5–9, 1992.** Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft e.V., Hainholzweg 3-5, W-3400 Göttingen, Federal Republic of Germany, att'n: Frau E.M. Starke. 05 51 / 5 67 00.

Händel-Festspiele. **June 12–16, 1992.** Händel-Festspiele, Händel-Centrum, Kl. Brauhausstrasse 26, O-4020 Halle/Saale, Federal Republic of Germany, att'n: Dr. H. John.

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Brainard of Yale University, and the featured concert will be Bach's *Mass in B Minor*, presented by the Bach Consort of Washington, D.C.

The Registration Form enclosed with this issue of the Newsletter contains detailed information concerning venues, and concert tickets, as well as a list of suggested accommodations.

American Handel Society
Conference Program
(Schedule and locations subject to change.)

Friday, November 1, 1991

1:00 p.m. Conference Room, Folger Shakespeare Library, 201 E. Capitol St., S.E., Washington, D.C.: Meeting of the Board of Directors of The American Handel Society

4:00 p.m. Folger Theatre, Folger Shakespeare Library: Fifth Annual American Handel Society Lecture
Paul Brainard, Professor of Music, Yale University: "A New Look at Handel and Bach"

8:00 p.m.—St. Paul Lutheran Church, 4900 36th Street N.W.

Concert: MASS IN B MINOR; Bach Consort of Washington, D.C., J. Reilly Lewis, *conductor*

Saturday, November 2, 1991

9:00 a.m. Room 202, Gelman Library, George Washington University:

Conference Session I, , chair: "Audiences and Formal Developments"

Richard King: "On the Education of Handel's Audience"

Stephen Crist: "The Allegorical Use of Remote Tonalties in Bach's Arias and Its Impact on His Audiences"

C. Steven LaRue: "Handel, Haydn, and the Expansion of the Binary Dance Form"; Response: Chanan Willner

Miriam Whaples: "Bach, Handel, and the Recapitulation Aria"; Response: David Hurley

1:00 p.m. Room 202, Gelman Library, George Washington University

Conference Session II, Marita McClymonds, chair: "Classical Consequences"

Kenneth Nott: "Affective Uses of the 'stil galant' in the Late Works of J.S. Bach and Handel"

David Schulenberg: "Handel, Bach and One Eighteenth-Century Listener: C.P.E. Bach"

David Schildkret: "Handel Redux: Mozart's Arrangement of *Messiah*"

Steven Norquist: "The Reception of the Handel-Mozart *Messiah* in Pre-Victorian England: An Early Manifestation of the 'Authentic Performance Practice' Controversy"

4:00 p.m. Room 202, Gelman Library, George Washington University

Business Meeting of The American Handel Society

6:30 p.m. Cocktails and Supper for AHS members (no-host)

Freundes- und Förderkreis des Händel-
Hauses zu Halle Established

The Freundes- und Förderkreis des Händel-Hauses zu Halle (Friends and Supporters of the Handel House, Halle) was established on 12 December 1990. The purpose of the society in the words of its statutes is to "financially and morally support the work of the Handel House in its role as a museum . . . including preservation and operation of Handel's birthplace." Gert Richter, Associate Director of the Handel House, has been named Chairman of the Society.

The Handel House, described by Edwin Werner in the December 1989 issue of the Newsletter, serves not only as a center for Handel research (it houses, for example, the editorial staff of the *Hallische-Händel-Ausgabe*), but also owns a large collection of musical instruments dating from as early as the sixteenth century. Its research interests are two-fold: (1) Handel (of course) and (2) the musical history of the city of Halle and its environs. Composers associated with Halle include Samuel Scheidt, Wilhelm Friedemann Bach, Daniel Gottlob Türk, Johann Friedrich Reichardt, Karl Loewe, and Robert Franz. Indeed, a school of music founded by Franz, the Robert Franz Singakademie, still exists in Halle. The interests of the Handel House also extend to historic buildings associated with Handel and other Halle composers, one of the most important of which is the so-called Calvinist Cathedral very close to the Handel House. The Handel House is the site of the scholarly conference held each year in association with the Halle Festival. It is also the locus of certain of the Festival's concerts. In addition, it offers during the rest of the year concerts, lectures, symposia and even a Weinprobe in Händel's Keller. The Friends publish a newsletter, "Haus-Mitteilungen," three times a year. One of the articles in the first issue sketches the history of the Halle Stadtsingerchor (Municipal chorus), an 875-year-old musical organization that has been compared favorably with the Leipzig's Thomanerchor.

In Western Europe, shrines (not too strong a word) such as the Handel House are customarily supported by local and national governments to an extent not usual in the United States. The European model of support is a kind of middle ground between the absolute support given under state socialism (communism) and the American "sink or swim" model. In the present circumstances, the City of Halle and the state of Sachsen-Anhalt are at or beyond the limit of their means to provide minimal governmental services, let alone provide a level of funding for cultural activities customary in the western parts of Germany. Moreover the Federal Government in Bonn has discovered that the rehabilitation of the eastern parts of the new Germany will be so expensive, that little is available for small cultural institutions like the Handel House. Though the people of Halle might have expected that funding under the new regime would follow the pattern of the western part of Germany, they have in fact been forced more in the

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During the same period a number of primary sources materialized, became accessible, or changed hands. A copy of the otherwise unknown wordbook for the first London performances in 1743 surfaced in time to be reproduced as an illustration in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music & Musicians* published in 1980. The "Goldschmidt" copy of *Messiah*, unavailable to Shaw, was acquired by the Pierpont Morgan Library as part of the Mary Flagler Cary collection and became generally accessible in 1968. An incomplete copy formerly in the possession of Sir Newman Flower and subsequently deposited on loan in the Senate House Library of The University of London by his heirs, was acquired by the Library of Congress. And in the December 1989 issue of this Newsletter Donald Burrows described the recovery of two more fragmentary copies, one of them formerly in the collection of Sir Watkin Williams Wynn and the other "almost certainly the earliest known *Messiah* copy after Handel's own conducting score."

In addition to these musical sources, documentary evidence has also appeared. The purchase of the correspondence between Charles Jennens and Edward Holdsworth by the late Gerald Coke and its subsequent publication in the fourth volume of the *Händel-Handbuch* allows us to trace Jennens's attitude toward his work on the libretto to *Messiah* and his attempts to convince Handel to make changes in his setting of it. In addition, the work on the subject of Handel's borrowings from other composers by John Roberts, Elwood Derr, William Gudger and others has not bypassed *Messiah*, and borrowings from composers as diverse as Porta, Ariosti and Anonymous have been unearthed.

With all these discoveries a surprising number of questions still remain unanswered, among which are the following. Were oboes (and perhaps bassoons) used by Handel in Dublin, and in what way? When were oboes, bassoons and horns first used in London performances of *Messiah*, and were they used in the manner indicated in the Foundling Hospital parts? Did John Beard actually perform *Messiah* in 1743 and, if not, was his part taken by another tenor or given to the soprano Avoglio? How were the performers arranged on the stage in the theater or, for that matter, at the Foundling Hospital? What happened to the missing partial or complete manuscript copies cited by Shaw and Burrows?

Finally, an almost overwhelming number of recordings have been issued over the past thirty years or so which allow us to hear *Messiah* performed as we could only have imagined before. There are versions with period instruments and modern ones, with mixed choruses and with men and boys, and with all manner of soloists. There are recreations of specific performances, including Dublin of 1742, the Foundling Hospital of 1754 and 1758, and the Handel Commemoration of 1784, and recordings of versions assembled from a variety of performances. A forthcoming issue from *Harmonia Mundi* promises to include all the variant movements, permitting the listener with a programmable compact disc player to assemble any version at will. Finally, in this Mozart Year there are at least two record-

ings available of the Austrian composer's version sung in German.

Three recent publications are essential purchases for anyone with a serious interest in *Messiah*. The first is Burrows's 1987 edition for Peters (Edition No.7317), which contains all known authentic versions and a table which allows the performer to reconstruct any performance given under the composer's direction. A full score and performance material are also available. This edition contains all the variant versions printed by Shaw, plus several not previously published, and all the versions are present in the scores and parts without having to turn to the companion volume for some of the earlier ones. (It is only fair to mention that Shaw is presently at work on a revision of his edition for Novello.)

The second is Brian Boydell's *A Dublin Musical Calendar, 1700-1760*, published in 1988 by the Irish Academic Press, which places Handel's visit to Ireland in the context of the burgeoning musical life of its capital city. This book provides a treasure trove of material about musicians who spent their careers in Dublin and the ever changing number who visited there from England, Scotland and the Continent. It also tells a good deal about performances of Handel's music in Dublin both before and after his visit there. Most of the specifically Handelian references are printed elsewhere, but seeing them in context brings them to life.

The final new publication is the indefatigable Donald Burrows's contribution to a new series of Cambridge Music Handbooks published by Cambridge University Press and designed to provide "concise, comprehensive guides to major works of the musical repertory." Burrows's guide to *Messiah* analyzes the music as well as discussing the historical and social context, performance and reception history, and specific problems of the work. So far as I can determine, the publisher has only just shipped copies to American customers with standing orders, so the book should be generally available soon, and certainly in time for Christmas "wish lists".

Graydon Beeks

Händel Haus from page 4

direction of the American "sink or swim"—hence the establishment of the Friends.

Minimum dues for the Friends and Supporters of the Handel House are DM40 (about \$23) per year. Members of the AHS who want more information about the organization should write to Gert Richter, at the Handel House, Gr. Nikolaistrasse 5, O-4020 Halle, Federal Republic of Germany. The AHS Secretary/Treasurer will be glad to make available for as long as they last a very small supply of materials about the Friends of the Handel House.

Howard Serwer

Halle from page 2

Because I love the little theatre in Bad Lauchstädt, I chose the last in the hope that the production might use its old stage machinery in the traditional manner. The Vorprogram sent out in advance gave no hint of what was afoot; the full program book owned up to what it really was: "A Magic Opera after *Amadigi di Gaula* by George Frideric Handel". It was "after" alright. This was a production of the BIG BANG Theatre of Munich, an organization that "plays in Kindergartens and schools, theatres and multi-purpose auditoriums." Kindergarten, indeed. The best characterization of the production would have been "*Amadigi* dismantled, abbreviated, and adulterated for junior-high sensibilities (if any)." *Amadigi* himself was fitted out as a white-suited, lipsticked hipster; Melissa was equipped with a red broom (what else?); Oriana was portrayed as a cheap vamp; Dardanus' right eye was made up green and his left red (at least the director observed the navigational conventions). The audience was, from time to time, treated to dumb shows that were comprehensible to the director (we assume), but to no one else.

The production included only four of the original characters, but added a pair of speakers who addressed the audience in German. What shreds of recitative remained were in German, and what arias remained were in Italian. A most distinguished Handelian sat next to us snorting as he furiously leafed through his copy of the Chrysander edition searching for the aria then being presented. Early on, he realized that he was hearing one from another Handel opera—but which one? And why? We also realized that the orchestra (playing on old instruments, if you please) was not the orchestra that Handel called for in *Amadigi*, but of course by the time we realized it, we also realized that what we were seeing and hearing had very little to do with Handel's opera, but everything to do with an exhibitionist stage director smitten with his own cleverness. The singing was mediocre, and the orchestra playing a bit worse.

The following evening, the Festival presented *Agrippina* conducted by Nicholas McGegan in an unstaged performance. The program book referred to the "Premiere of the staged production on 14 June 1991 in the German Theatre in Göttingen", an oblique admission that the performance offered in Halle was simply a run-through. Would that all of the performances in Halle this year were such run-throughs! The eight singers (Juno was omitted, as well she might be) were placed behind the orchestra; some sang from memory, others (ones who had not quite got all the recitative down) did not. Though the artists did not enter and exit, they sang their recitative to one another, and to the extent possible engaged in bits of acting. McGegan presented the work almost uncut (Winton Dean and J. Merrill Knapp in *Handel's Operas 1704–1726* make it abundantly clear that we shall never know the precise content of *Agrippina* as Handel presented it in 1710), the whole running some three and one-half hours. The performance was so well paced, sung (in Italian), and played, that it was the perfect argument for presenting Handel's operas

uncut. The singers moved through the recitatives very rapidly without any loss of expression or drama; indeed, the drama benefitted from it because when they did slow down, it was to make a dramatic point. McGegan's sense of tempo for the arias was everywhere flawless, and the Capella Savaria played as though they were enjoying themselves greatly. A better balanced group of principals for this work is hard to imagine. Sally Bradshaw was outstanding as a scheming, unprincipled, and yet sympathetic Agrippina. Lisa Saffer was a Poppea who evolved (as Grimani, the librettist, would have her do) from a naive young woman to a schemer on a par with Agrippina herself. Wendy Hill and Drew Minter were also excellent as Nero and Ottone. From all reports, the staged performance in Göttingen was an even greater success.

If everything was right with *Agrippina*, everything was wrong with *Saul*, one of the greatest of all of Handel's works. The English of the bi-lingual libretto included in the back of the program book was crawling with errors. The typesetter apparently mistook many lower case h's for b's and committed so many other errors that we wondered if he had worked from a facsimile of an original libretto that he could not read. The Ernst-Senff-Chor was well drilled and its English diction was acceptable for the most part. Not so the soloists. Tomas Tomaschke's call for "ZAMUEL" was the least of his sins against English as he bellowed his way through the title role. The other soloists were little better. Even though the Heribert Beissel, the conductor, had a large harpsichord in front of him (an ancient Ammer; will they never get rid of them?), he resolutely beat his way through continuo arias, and did everything but conduct simple recitative. The tempi in recitative seem to have been slowed deliberately so that the soloists could belt out every note as though it was a passage from *Tristan und Isolde*. Indeed Beissel intervened in the pacing of the recitatives in an effort to lace them with what he took to be drama and pathos. The effect was largely comic with Wagnerian *rallentandi* in the great elegy. In places where a chorus was to follow an aria or recitative, Beissel stopped, the chorus rose, and when everyone was good and ready, the music continued. In short, it was a performance calculated to give Handel oratorios a bad name.

The production of *Rodelinda* was a revival of the 70th-anniversary production done in Göttingen in 1990, the work having been the first opera presented by Göttingen at the founding of the festival in 1920. Unfortunately it was not staged, but the quality of the performance almost made up for it. David Cordier as Bertarido was outstanding, and the other principals were not far behind. The orchestra, La Stagione of Frankfurt-am-Main, was ably directed by Michael Schneider.

The subject of the conference held in conjunction with the Festival was "The Reception of the Music of George Frideric Handel in the second half of the eighteenth century and in particular by W. A. Mozart and the Viennese Classic." Publication of the papers is

