

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume II, Number 3

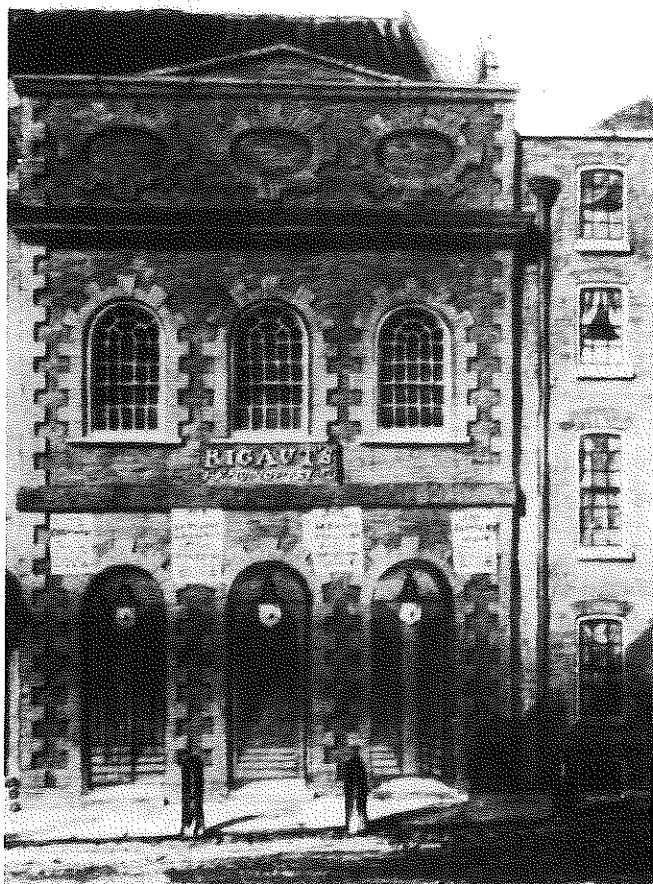
December, 1987

Report from Britain

If Handelian enterprise in Britain is now less intense than in past years, the reason is not simply the loss of the Handel Opera Society and its guarantee of a couple of staged operas or oratorios each year; nor is the harsher economic climate for all the arts entirely to blame. The problem is that the pioneering days are almost over. All but three of the operas have been given staged performances in Britain in the last thirty years (*Almira*, *Silla* and *Siroe* are yet to come) and among the oratorios only the two Italian versions of *Il Trionfo di Tempo* await modern revival. Thus those rough-and-ready productions made excusable by being "firsts" of some sort have become harder to justify. Handel operas or oratorios outside the mainstream now have to be done well or not at all—and when the estimates are drawn up to allow for reasonably complete and thoroughly rehearsed performance, "not at all" is often the decision. Established groups with a commitment to early opera turn to those masterpieces of the repertory which conveniently play for less than two hours—*Dido and Aeneas*, or one of the *Orfeos*—while the fringe pioneers investigate Lully or Alessandro Scarlatti. Wider exploration of the baroque opera and oratorio repertory is of course highly desirable, but the rarity of really good performances (and recordings) of the major Handel works remains something to be remedied.

For concert performances the situation is not too gloomy. The London Handel Festival, directed by Denys Darlow each April at St. George's, Hanover Square, and the "Handel in Oxford" week in July, centered on the Sheldonian Theatre at Oxford, are now well-established events in the musical calendar. The 1987 London Festival (April 25–May 2) paid respects to the bicentenary of Gluck's death as well as doing justice to Handel with the original "Cannons" versions of *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther* (the latter a particularly vivid performance) and the music for *Alceste*. Gluck's *Don Juan* ballet score was played, but the most interesting event was the attempt to reconstruct the Gluck-Handel concert given for the benefit of the Society of Musicians on March 25, 1746. All the identifiable music listed in the original program was performed, including several

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Guildhall Library, London

The King's Theatre, Haymarket, by William Capon (1783)—see the review of Handel's Operas, 1704–1726, page 2.

Göttingen Handel Society

In November 1986 the Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft (Göttingen Handel Society) proudly became the first European Handel organization to join the newly founded American Handel Society.

The positive and constructive relationship between the Göttingen Handel Society and its American counterpart is due largely to the efforts of Howard Serwer and Paul Traver, both well known as driving forces behind the Maryland Handel Festival. An important result of this collaboration has been the regular appear-

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Book Review

Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp. *Handel's Operas, 1704-1726*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987. Pp. xx + 751.

Most members of this Society probably already endorse the view of Dean and Knapp that "Handel ranks with Monteverdi, Mozart, and Verdi among the supreme masters of opera" (p. 1). But until the appearance of this book, even specialists have had difficulty marshalling the evidence to back such a claim in relation to some of the operas, let alone seventeen of them.

Incisively written background chapters place Handel in context, treating such topics as "Performance Practice," "Opera in Hamburg," "The Royal Academy... 1719-1726," and so on. But these are not the heart of the enterprise. The great achievement of the book is the close investigation of each of Handel's operas between 1704 and 1726. What Dean and Knapp have done is return to primary sources and rebuild each opera from the autograph or earliest surviving copies. Rehearsal and performance revisions have been sorted out from the changes, whether sweeping or minor, made for revivals. Each chapter on an opera begins with a detailed plot summary of the earliest version. The "History and Text" are discussed and evaluated. More technical treatments of the "Autograph" (where extant), "Librettos," and "Copies and Editions" follow. The result is like an elaborate lighting effect: as the sun emerges from darkness, we see the crossfade through all the gradations from dawn to half-light to full sunrise.

Let us imagine that we want to produce *Rinaldo*. Would we prefer to produce the opera as London first saw it in 1711 (an extremely elaborate undertaking)? Or in the slightly abridged version of 1717? Or in "the most radical of all Handel's operatic revisions" (p. 186), that of 1731? What Chrysander printed as the earliest version was never performed in Handel's lifetime; it is a composite made by the editor. Dean and Knapp not only locate Handel's changes, they can explain many of them either on musicological or economic grounds. The eighteenth-century attitude toward operas would delight the post-modernist critic: composers seem never to have regarded a composition as finished. Each *Rinaldo* was the *Rinaldo* for which Handel had singers and theatrical resources available at the time. Each has advantages and disadvantages. When deciding on a production, we can now make informed choices about this or any of the works through 1726.

Like Dean's equally monumental *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (1959), this book will remain a basic reference for many decades. Whatever details specialists may choose to quibble over, *Handel's Operas* changes the field of *opera seria* in basic ways. That the book gets Handel only part way through his career is lamentable: we must hope for a second installment.

The wealth of fact and interpretation now laid before us will of course stimulate further research. Equally important, it should inspire what the authors call "enlightened performances" of works only now starting to reach the audience they deserve.

Judith Milhous

AHS News

The AHS has submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities to fund a discography of recordings of Handel's music issued commercially on 78-rpm disks, cylinders, and other pre-LP media. The project, if funded, will be carried out between July 1987 and June 1988. It will produce an electronic database from which can be extracted both a publishable discography and the results of customized searches. The project has been developed in conjunction with David Edelberg's LP-era discography, discussed in Volume I, no. 2 of this Newsletter.

The AHS Board of Directors met on October 31, 1987 at College Park, Maryland. Chief among the topics of discussion was the future of the Society after startup funding from the University of Maryland at College Park ends in June 1988. While various possibilities are being pursued, support from the membership will continue to be vital. As of October 31, membership stood at 148 active members and nineteen subscribers, up by two from a year ago; another forty-eight members are on the delinquent list. To raise the active roster to two hundred, the Board encourages all members to introduce their friends and colleagues (and librarians) to the AHS, especially those in areas other than music.

The Board also considered new ways in which the Society might benefit Handeliens. Among the plans to be developed by the executive committee are an AHS membership meeting, possibly in conjunction with an AHS-sponsored session at the November national conference of the American Musicological Society in Baltimore, and a cumulative bibliography of writings on Handel in American scholarly journals, a project that would aid the future cooperation between the AHS and the editors of the *Händel-Handbuch* bibliography volume. A register of performing materials is announced in this Newsletter. Progress on these and other fronts will be reported from time to time.

Members may obtain copies of the minutes through the AHS office. A financial statement for the past year will appear in the next Newsletter.

Coke Acquires Shaftesbury MSS

Last summer Handel collector Gerald Coke acquired the manuscript collection of the Earl of Shaftesbury, which includes sixty-nine manuscript volumes containing Handel's music. The entire Coke collection, numbering over 150 music manuscripts as well as prints, librettos and other materials, is now being microfilmed (see "New Publications", page 4).

ance since 1980 of American guests at the Göttinger Händel-Festspiele, who undoubtedly are also drawn by the opportunity of enjoying John Eliot Gardiner, the artistic director of the festival.

American Handel enthusiasts expressed particular interest in the 1985 festival program, which included the operas *Tamerlano*, *Alessandro*, and *Deidamia*. They were impressed and fascinated by Gardiner's performances and expressed a strong desire to see him invited to the Maryland Handel Festival, hopefully by the end of the decade.

Whereas in previous years careful coordination of the Handel festivals in Göttingen and in Halle, East Germany, has made it possible to visit both, in 1987 an exceptional situation occurred. Due to unforeseen circumstances, the festivals in Göttingen and Halle, as well as the newly founded Handel Festival in Karlsruhe, all took place at the same time. However, the 1987 "Handel Summit" allowed the mobile concertgoer to create his own personal festival, picking and choosing the events that interested him most.

The theme of the 1987 Göttingen Handel Festival, which took place June 12-17, was "Handel and the Pastoral Tradition." Gardiner led the Monteverdi Choir and the English Baroque Soloists in performances of *Alexander's Feast*, which alternated with performances of the early Handel opera *Il Pastor fido* under Nicholas McGegan. Other performances included a chamber concert by the Chandos Baroque Players with soprano Nancy Argenta; harpsichord music by Handel, Couperin, and Domenico Scarlatti played by Virginia Black; a concert by countertenor Michael Chance and the viol consort Fretwork; and a performance of Dietrich Buxtehude's *Membra Jesu nostri* by the Monteverdi Choir conducted by Gardiner.

Plans for coming festivals are already well under way. Lufthansa has made special arrangements with the Göttingen Handel Society to provide special service for the 1988 Festival, whose theme will be "Handel and the Israelites." Included on the program are *Saul*, led by Gardiner, and *Samson*, sung by the Choir of the North German Radio conducted by Wolf-Dieter Hauschild. In 1989 the Festival will focus on "Handel and Rome;" of main interest will be Handel's opera on the Roman subject of *Giulio Cesare*, again conducted by Gardiner. The seventieth Göttingen Handel Festival will take place in June 1990 and will feature performances of the oratorio *Jephtha* in versions by Handel, Carissimi, and Graun. Dates for the Göttingen Handel Festivals of 1988-1990 are shown below along with those of the Halle festivals for the same years. It is to be hoped that these dates will also be coordinated with those of the Karlsruhe Handel Academy and Festival. This will benefit Handel lovers all over the world, who will be able to experience three different and unique festivals.

Friedrich Riethmüller
Chairman, Göttingen Handel Society

Handel Calendar

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

Il Pastor fido (broadcast of perf. at 1987 Göttinger Händel-Festspiele). P. Esswood, K. Farkas, G. Kallay, J. Nemeth, J. Gregor; Chamber Choir of Göttinger Stadtkantorei, cond. N. McGegan. Distr. by Deutsche Welle. After Jan 28: call local public radio for date and time (WNYC: Feb. 26, KKHI: Feb 22).

Athalia (broadcast of April 1987 perf.). J. Nelson, G. Reinhart, D. L. Ragin, J. Felty, S. Cornett, M. Sullivan, chorus and orch. of Handel & Haydn Society of Boston, cond. C. Hogwood. Distr. by NPR ("Musical Offering" series). After Jan. 7: call local public radio for date and time.

Water Music (complete). Handel & Haydn Society orch. (period insts.); cond. T. Dunn. Feb. 12, 14: Symphony Hall, Boston. Handel and Haydn Society, P.O. Box 4755, Boston MA 02116.

Theodora. L. Hunt, J. Gall, J. Felty, W. Hite, J. Maddalena; Chorus Pro Musica, Emanuel Chamber Orch., cond. C. Smith. March 5: Emanuel Church, 15 Newbury Street, Boston MA 02116.

Rinaldo. S. Nadler, B. Valente, A. Putnam, J. Gall, D. Walker, J. Atherton, L. Guinn; Concert perf. cond. S. Simon. March 9: J.F. Kennedy Center for the Perf. Arts, Washington, DC 20566.

Hercules. D. Arnold, D'A. Fortunato, N. Armstrong, J. Gall, W. Hite; Boston Cecilia, cond. D. Teeters. March 20: Jordan Hall, Huntington Ave., Boston MA 02116.

La Resurrezione. E. Kirkby, C. Robbin, J. Thomas, D. Thomas; Handel & Haydn Society chorus and orch. (period insts.); cond. C. Hogwood. March 25, 27: Symphony Hall, Boston. H&H Soc. of Boston, P.O. Box 4755, Boston MA 02116.

Giulio Cesare. J. Gall, S. Larson, D. Minter et al.; cond. C. Smith, dir. P. Sellars. Revival of Purchase, NY prod. of 1985. April 19-19: Theatre de la Monnaie, Brussels.

London Handel Festival. Plans include: concert for 250th anniv. of Royal Society of Musicians, *Joseph and His Brethren*, *Theodora* (Queen Elizabeth Hall) *Lucio Cornelio Silla* (concert perf.: Royal College of Music). April 21-30: London. LHF, Francis House, Francis St., London SW10 IDE.

Händel-Festspiele des Badisches Staatstheaters. Begins with *Belshazzar*, May 28. Internationale Händel-Akademie Karlsruhe, D-7500 Karlsruhe, BRD.

Händel-Festspiele der DDR. Incl. *Oreste* at Goethe Theater, Bad Lauchstädt. June 3-7. G.-F.-Händel-Gesellschaft, Grosse Nicolaistr. 5, 4020 Halle/Saale, DDR.

Göttinger Händel-Festspiele: "Handel and the Israelites." *Saul*, cond. J. E. Gardiner. *Samson*, Choir of the Norddeutschen Rundfunk, cond. W.-D. Hauschild. June 10-14. Göttinger Händel-Gesellschaft e.V., Hainholzweg 3/5, D-3400 Göttingen, BRD.

Göttingen and Halle Festivals, 1988-1990

1988	Halle: June 3-7 Göttingen: June 10-14
1989	Halle: June 2-6 Göttingen: June 9-13
1990	Halle: June 8-12 Göttingen: June 22-26

excerpts from a Galuppi pasticcio as well as arias from Handel's *Alessandro*, but unfortunately only one of the items from Gluck's *La caduta de' Giganti* survives in its original form and none of the five concertos originally included can be precisely identified. Thus there was more Galuppi than Gluck, even allowing for the arguable inclusion of an overture and aria from the latter's *Ipermestra* of 1744. A plausibly-chosen concerto for two flutes and strings by Charles Weideman considerably outstayed (for me) its slender welcome, and some of the arias could have been characterized more sharply; but nevertheless it was fascinating to hear the extraordinarily various mix of musical styles current in London in 1746. "Handel in Oxford" (July 3–12—regrettably I could not attend) included a repeat of the London Festival's *Esther* and covered the Coronation Anthems, the St. Cecilia Ode, *Messiah* and *Belshazzar* as well as the Bach B minor Mass.

In many ways the most satisfying Handel performance of 1987 was a fully-staged production of *Flavio* in the Concert Hall of the University Music Faculty at Cambridge, jointly promoted by the Cambridge University Opera Society and Selwyn College Music Society (April 30–May 2). Producer Jean Chothia and designer Tom Piper took due note of eighteenth-century acting and staging conventions without attempting stiff imitation and made the most of such simple points as the sudden illumination of the stage after the first scene as Handel's bright little Sinfonia strikes up. The singers were a good mix of students and young professionals, with countertenors in the original castrato roles of Guido and Flavio and a very promising mezzo (Verona James) as Vitige, the role created by Margherita Durastanti. The opera has been justly described as Handel's "tragi-comedy" and needs a unifying hand to blend its elements of farce and pathos. Andrew Jones provided it: he had prepared his own edition (based on the first performing version of 1723) and the English translation, and he conducted the performance (no cuts) with soundly judged tempos and a fine appreciation of Handelian phrasing. Ultimately it is the quality of the music that justifies the revival of Handel's operas, and the best productions are invariably those wholly supervised by a musical hand.

Plans for the next London Handel Festival (April 21–30, 1988) include—sponsorship permitting—a concert for the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society of Musicians, *Joseph and His Brethren, Theodora* at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (contributing to a series of "late works" by several composers), and a concert version of *Silla* at the Royal College of Music—the first performance in modern times (perhaps the first ever). Enterprise is still possible.

Anthony Hicks

New Register of Performing Materials

In keeping with its goal to foster the performance of Handel's music, the AHS plans to establish a central

register of orchestral parts and other performing materials for the less-performed works. The register will list the locations of such materials, their condition, and the terms under which they may be obtained. To use the register, a prospective performer would ask the AHS for information about the desired work. Upon receiving a list of relevant materials, he or she would apply directly to the owner(s).

Those who possess usable materials for Handel's major and lesser-known works are invited to send the AHS a note indicating their interest in the project. Respondents will receive a letter explaining it in more detail and a registration form for examination or response. Writing a letter of interest does not commit an owner to participate in the project but is vital in helping the AHS determine the scope of the project. Although AHS members will be exempt from the fee for obtaining lists of locations, the register will be open to all owners and prospective users alike.

Research Query

For a doctoral thesis on the opera *Il Giustino*, Andreas Hoffmann requests specific information on locations of Beregani's libretti for Genoa 1689 and Udine 1699 (in Sartori, *Catalogo . . . dei libretti italiani . . .* without shelf numbers). He also seeks arias from Albinoni, *Il Giustino*, Bologna 1711; Schieferdecker, *Justinus*, Leipzig 1700, 1703 and Hamburg 1706; Schürmann, *Justinus*, Braunschweig 1725, 1726; Schürmann/Handel, *Justinus*, Braunschweig 1741. Reply to:

Andreas Hoffmann
Senefelderstrasse 3
D-5000 Köln 30
Federal Republic of Germany

New Publications and Research

Fortune, Nigel, ed. *Music and Theatre: Essays in Honour of Winton Dean*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1987.

Hill, Cecil. "Handel's *Imeneo*: A Pre-Edition Study," Department of Music Occasional Paper No. 4. Armidale, NSW 2351, Australia: University of New England, 1987 (AHS discount: see page 6).

Hoffmann, Andreas. "Die Geschichte der Oper *Il Giustino*—von Legrenzi bis Händel." Ph.D. diss. (Cologne, in prep.).

Larsen, Jens Peter. *Essays on Handel, Haydn, and the Viennese Classical Style*. Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, spring 1988.

The Gerald Coke Handel Collection, Series One of *Music Manuscripts in Major Private Collections* (35mm positive film). Brighton, Sussex BN1 1AD: Harvester Microform. Part 1: Individual Works, 1987; Part 2: Composite Volumes and Miscellanies, and Additional Printed and Manuscript Items, 1988; Guide.

The American Handel Society

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In the last few years, scholars have come to recognize that traditional musicological studies alone cannot provide a clear picture of Handel and his world. The American Handel Society seeks the participation of all scholars—theatre historians, social historians, literary historians and all others whose subject matter is Handel's England. And of course, The American Handel Society welcomes the support and participation of all persons interested in Handel and his world. Activities of The American Handel Society will include

- publication of the *Newsletter of The American Handel Society*,
- sponsorship of meetings of the Society,
- cumulation of a computerized bibliographic data base of writings about Handel and his music and about related subjects,
- maintenance of a register of performing materials for Handel's major works,
- cumulation of a Handel discography,
- publication of an annual containing articles and reviews,
- establishment of an electronic bulletin board/conferencing network to facilitate communication among members and subscribers.

The Founding Members and the Board of Directors of The American Handel Society invite you to become a member. Wide support from scholars and those interested in Handel will help the Society make a strong start in achieving its goals. In 1987 members will receive

- the *Newsletter of the American Handel Society*,
- a 10% discount on scores and books (not restricted to Handel) through Dale Music Company of Silver Spring, Maryland, one of America's leading dealers. In addition, Dale has agreed to make available to our members four recent titles from Cambridge University Press at a 20% discount. See the order form on the last page of this newsletter.
- the AHS Membership Directory, showing members' Handel-related activities such as research, performance, and collecting.

APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP IN THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Class of Membership (for current calendar year, retroactive to January 1; else specify future starting year on dotted lines below)

- | | | | |
|-------------------|-------|---|----|
| ___ REGULAR | \$ 15 | ___ JOINT | 20 |
| | | (married couples; two memberships—one set of publications) | |
| ___ DONOR | 30 | ___ SPONSOR | 50 |
| ___ PATRON | 100 | ___ SUBSCRIBER | 30 |
| ___ LIFE | 300 | (institutions only; does not include discounts for books or performances) | |

Please attach your check payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY for the amount of your dues and mail to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, Department of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.