

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XII, Number 3

December 1997

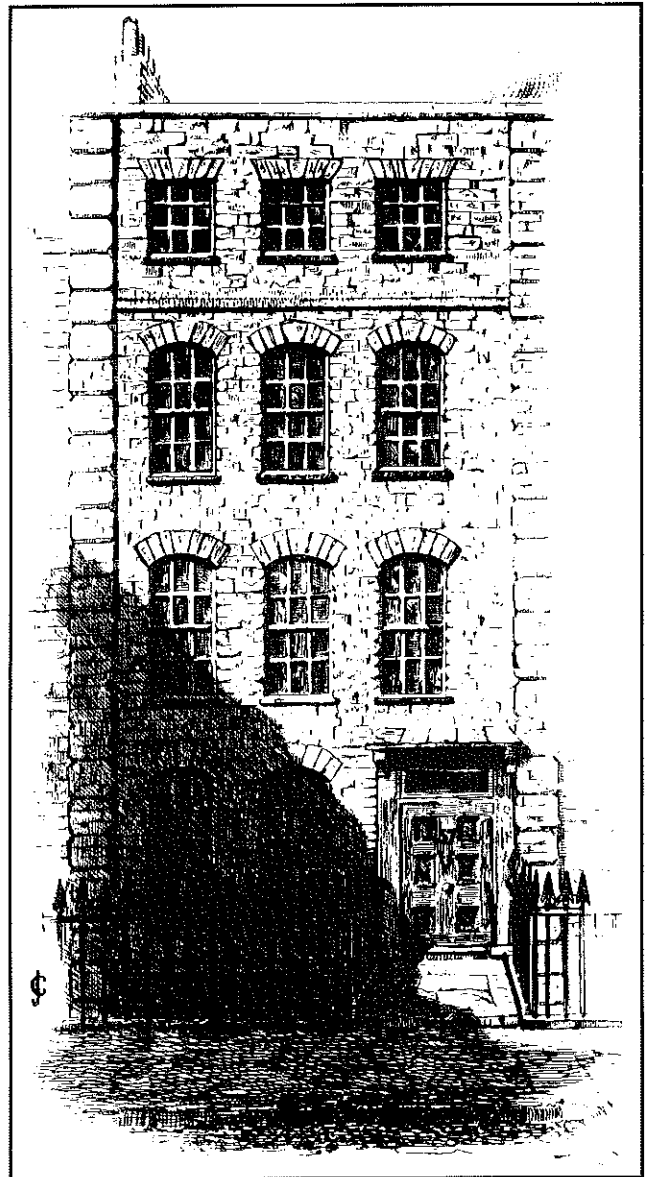
The Handel House Museum and the Byrne Collection

Miraculously, the house where Handel lived for 36 years—where he composed *Messiah*, and where he died—survived the bombing raids during World War II and still stands, derelict, in the retail center of London. Close to Oxford Street and just by New Bond Street, No. 25 Brook Street sits on the edge of fashionable Mayfair. For several years it has been under threat of redevelopment as a frock shop. The Handel House Trust (a limited company with charitable status in England), together with its sister organization the Handel House Foundation of America (tax-exempt under IRS 501(c)3), is striving to save it from that fate and to create there a fitting and dynamic memorial to the composer in the form of a museum and recital room.

The Trust has already succeeded in raising the funds to purchase a 999-year lease on 25 Brook Street, together with a 99-year lease on the neighboring house, No. 23, which is also planned to form part of the Handel House Museum (and where, as it happens, the American rock guitarist Jimi Hendrix lived for a few months in 1969). However, the contract remains in draft until the owners, the Co-operative Insurance Society of Manchester (UK), are assured that funds are in hand to enable all the building works to be undertaken.

The owners have given the Handel House Trust until March 1998 to raise the \$3,460,000 (£2,160,000) required to restore Handel's principal rooms and fit out the display rooms, recital room, educational facilities, library, offices and shop. If we fail to meet their deadline, they will implement their own scheme immediately.

We are fortunate in Great Britain that one branch of our National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund, currently distributes grants to projects such as the Handel House Museum. Already they have provided



Handel's house as it appeared in 1859.

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Handel Calendar

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelians. If possible, please include the 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.

Ariodante. January 26, 28, 1998. Merkin Hall, New York. A Manhattan School of Music production.

Giulio Cesare. February 1, 5, 9, 13. Bayerische Staatsoper, Munich.

Belshazzar. February 2. Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. Belshazzar: Jamie MacDougall; Nitocris: Lynne Dawson; Cyrus: Catherine Denley; Daniel: James Bowman; Gobrias: Neal Davies; The King's Consort and New College, Oxford, Choir, Robert King, conductor.

Hercules. February 8. University Christian Church, Seattle. Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers, George Shangrow, conductor.

Semele. February 8, 11, 15, 17, 19. Ghent. Semele: Rosemary Joshua; Ino: Sara Fulgoni; Cadmus: Gidon Saks; Athamas: Charles Brett; Jupiter: Charles Workman; Les Musiciens Du Louvre; Marc Minkowski, conductor; Robert Carsen, producer. Also February 26, 28, March 3, 6, and 8 at Antwerp.

Tolomeo. February 13, 14. Stadsschouwburg, Bruges. Tolomeo: Jonathan Peter Kenny/ Pascale Bertin; Seleuce: Anne Cambier; Elisa: Marie-Noëlle de Callataÿ; Alessandro: Steve Dugardin; Araspe: Werner van Mechelen. Also April 13 at the Stadsschouwburg, Amsterdam; April 17 at the Kunstmin Theatre, Dordrecht.

Athalia. February 15. St Maria im Kapitol, Köln. Collegium Cartusianum and Kartaeuserkantorei, Peter Neumann, conductor.

Giulio Cesare. February 19, 21, 24, 26, 28. The Royal Opera, London, at the Shaftsbury Theatre. Giulio Cesare: Ann Murray; Curio: Roderick Earle; Cornelia: Yvonne Howard; Sesto: David Taylor; Cleopatra: Amanda Roocroft; Tolomeo: Brian Asawa; Achilla: Neal Davies; Royal Opera House Orchestra and Chorus, Ivor Bolton, conductor; Lindsay Posner, producer.

Rodelinda. February 19. Karlsruhe. Freiburg Baroque Orchestra, Trevor Pinnock, conductor, Ulrich Peters, producer.

Agrippina. February 20. Karlsruhe. Deutsche Händel-Solisten Orchestra.

Giulio Cesare. February 22. Palais des Beaux-Arts, Brussels. Giulio Cesare: Jennifer Larmore; Cornelia: Bernarda Fink; Sesto: Iris Vermillion; Cleopatra: Maria Bayo; Tolomeo: Graham Pushee; Achilla: Olivier Lallouette; Concerto Köln, René Jacobs, conductor.

Concerti Grossi op. 3, no. 2; op. 6, nos. 11 and 12. February 26. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. Orchestra of The Age of Enlightenment, Nicholas McGegan, conductor.

Dolce mio ben, Nice che fai. March 8. Hertz Hall, Berkeley, CA. Emma Kirkby, Lars Ulrik Mortenson. Also Babell's "Lascia ch'io pianga" among other works.

Giustino. March 19; April 15, 27; May 9, 18. Komische Oper, Berlin.

Radamisto. March 24-27. Britten Theatre, Royal College of Music. London Handel Festival. Telephone: 0181-336-0990.

Saul. March 25. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Jennifer Smith, Dominique Labelle, David Daniels, Steven Stolen, David Thomas, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Chorale, Nicholas McGegan, conductor. Telephone: 212-307-4100, or Ticketmaster at 800-755-4000.

Hercules. March 27. Brooklyn Academy of Music, New York. Julia Gooding, Catherine Robbin, Daniel Taylor, Robert Breault, Kevin MacMillan, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, Philharmonia Chorale, Nicholas McGegan, conductor. Telephone: 212-307-4100, or Ticketmaster at 800-755-4000.

Brockes Passion. April 10. University Christian Church, Seattle. Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers, George Shangrow, conductor.

Susanna. April 16. St. George's, Hanover Square. London Handel Festival. Telephone: 0181-336-0990.

Dixit Dominus, Donna che in ciel, Silete venti. April 22. St. Andrews, Holborn. London Handel Festival. Telephone: 0181-336-0990.

Il trionfo del Tempo. April 30. St. George's, Hanover Square. London Handel Festival. Telephone: 0181-336-0990.

Serse. April 22, 24; May 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12. Salle Theodore Turrettini, Geneva. Paula Rasmussen, Graciela Araya, Elizabeth Futral, Judith Howarth, Brian Asawa, Graham Pushee, Thierry Felix, Marcello Lippi; Roderick Bryden, conductor, Guy Joosten, producer.

Theodora. June 7. University Christian Church, Seattle. Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers, George Shangrow, conductor.

Advice to Mr. Handel

A single copy of a broadsheet poem in praise of George Frideric Handel and his *Israel in Egypt* has survived in the collection of the Child Memorial Library, now part of the Houghton Library at Harvard University. The broadsheet, apparently unknown to Otto Erich Deutsch and to the compilers of the *Händel-Handbuch*,¹ is listed in David Foxon's *English Verse 1701-1750*² and in the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (N1604). I transcribe it here without distinguishing the long "s" and the size of capitals.

ADVICE

TO

Mr. Handel:

Which may serve as an EPILOGUE to
ISRAEL in EGYPT.

Griev'st thou, my Friend, that HARMONY has Foes?
That Spite and Ignorance Desert oppose?
Reflect; true Merit always Envy rais'd,
Who felt herself condemn'd, when That was prais'd.
In vain thou hop'st to charm with Sounds divine
The Fiend, who stops her Ears to Sounds like Thine;
Deaf to the Charmer's Voice, tho' 'ere so wise: ⌈
The more thy Art to sooth her Malice tries, >
The more her Javelin of Detraction flies, ⌋
But flies in vain; her Javelin let her throw,
Superior Merit still eludes the Blow.

IF *Vandal* Ears with native Dulness curst,
Damn the best Musick, and applaud the worst;
If thou to dull P——ti quit the Field,
And * Bards inspir'd, to duller C——i yeild;
Repine not but attend the sure Event,
And with the pleasing Prospect rest content.

THOU know'st the Rigour of *Egyptian* Law,
Exacting Brick, yet not allowing Straw.
Think on this Lot severe, and pity those ⌈
Who justly claim thy Pity, tho' thy Foes, >
By Hunger, without Genius, fated to Compose. ⌋
Pity th' *Egyptian* Darkness of His Mind,
Who gropes for HARMONY, but cannot find.
Nay, pity us, once doom'd Two Hours to bear
Such Sounds, as Thou hast made us loath to hear.

FROM Day to Day thou shift'st thy flying Muse,
From Day to Day the *Vandal* Host pursues:
They cannot long; like *Egypt*, quickly drown'd,
Their own dull Weight shall sink 'em in the vast Profound.
Thou safe, like *Israel*, on the promis'd Shore,
Exult, enjoy the Wreck, nor fear their Insults more.

* Moses and David.

A few points may be made without exhausting the poem's stock of interpretive possibilities. *Israel in Egypt* was first performed on April 4, 1739 and was not warmly received. The second performance (April 11) did little better despite the work's being shortened through the removal of some choruses and being made more conventional by the insertion of some arias. Winton Dean attributes the oratorio's unpopularity not only to the preponderance of choruses but also to the shock "at hearing Holy Writ sung by the Babylonian whores of the opera in the theatre."³ The third (and last) performance for that season was on April 17, with the Prince and Princess of Wales in attendance. *Israel* was revived for one performance in the following season (April 1, 1740).

The names hinted at by the dashes are the composer Giovanni Battista Pescetti and the librettist Angelo Maria Cori.⁴ Pescetti came to London in April 1736 and replaced Nicola Porpora as resident composer and director of the Nobility Opera for the next season. He left London around 1745. Cori was known as a teacher of Italian and published by subscription *A New Method for the Italian Tongue* in 1723. The two collaborated on three works from 1737-39 the last of which, an adaptation of Metastasio's serenata *Angelica e Medoro*, was first performed at Covent Garden under the sponsorship of Charles Sackville, Lord Middlesex on March 10, 1739, and repeated on March 17 and 24, and April 11.⁵

Less certain, if only because of the lack of direct evidence, is the allusion in the poem's first stanza to a female opponent of Handel. This may be Lady Margaret Cecil Brown, who had subscribed to

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Special Offers from the American Handel Society

The American Handel Society is offering sets of back issues of the *Newsletter* for the price of \$10 per year (three issues each), going back to the first year, 1986. All volumes are available, but some numbers are in short supply. We reserve the right to supply photocopies of individual numbers where necessary. In addition, the AHS has a limited number of copies of *Handel and the Harris Circle* at the price of \$7. This attractive and important booklet, written by Rosemary Dunhill, provides a useful introduction to the rich Harris family archive, recently deposited at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester and discussed by Donald Burrows in the December 1996 issue of the *Newsletter*. For further details, see the subscription notice inserted in this month's *Newsletter*.

\$800,000 (£500,000) towards the purchase of the house (matched by the Handel House Trust with gifts from trusts, foundations, corporations and individuals) and a further \$600,000 (£375,000) towards the acquisition of a major Handel collection (see below).

In September, the Trust applied again to the Heritage Lottery Fund for three-quarters of the eligible restoration costs; it expects to learn the decision of the Fund's trustees in March. In the meantime, the Handel House Trust is continuing to seek the matching one-quarter, \$720,000 (£450,000), through donations and pledges from trusts and foundations, corporations and individuals, in the UK and abroad. Donors will take heart that for every dollar we raise at this stage, we are eligible to apply for a further three.

Plans for the Handel House Museum are well advanced. The museum experience has been designed by the distinguished museum designer John Ronayne, who has worked on the Tower of London and the Victoria and Albert Museum; the architect in charge of the restoration is Julian Harrap, an acknowledged authority on Georgian architecture. The planned acquisition of both 23 and 25 Brook Street will give the Trust scope for restoring four of Handel's principal rooms and for displaying the collection in secure and environmentally controlled conditions in the adjoining house. Although an inventory of Handel's lower-ground floor kitchen survives, the Trustees have decided that that space, adjacent to the Recital Room, would better serve visitors as an educational center.

The Handel House was extended at the rear towards the end of the eighteenth century and upwards in the nineteenth. The extensions make possible a performance space on the lower ground floor seating sixty, where a chamber organ built to Handelian specifications by Martin Goetze and Dominic Gwynn (Worksop, Nottinghamshire) and a harpsichord, a copy of the Colmar Ruckers, by Bruce Kennedy (Amsterdam) will be available for performances; these instruments, together with a copy of the William Smith harpsichord in the Bate Collection, Oxford, being built for Handel's own first-floor rehearsal room by Michael Cole (Cheltenham, Gloucestershire), were commissioned with a generous grant from the Wolfson Foundation (UK).

The extensions also make possible the installation of an elevator at the rear and a library and administrative suite at the top of No. 25. The upper floors of No. 23, once Jimi Hendrix's flat, offer space for a suite of rooms for volunteer staff, and also provide the Trust with the opportunity to commemorate Hendrix in the principal room of his flat. On 14 September 1997, No. 23 acquired an English Heritage blue plaque proclaiming Hendrix's brief stay, matching that for

Handel which, in one form or another, has been in place on No. 25 since 1870. The person with whom Jimi shared the flat, Kathy Etchingham, has generously offered to loan the Museum some of the flat's original furniture and furnishings.

One of the ways in which we have successfully publicized the plight of the Handel House and the Museum project in Britain has been through concerts of Handel's music. These have been organized under the banner of "Sing for Handel," the implications of which will be clear. Choirs and instrumental ensembles the length and breadth of the nation have dedicated performances of Messiah and other major works to the Trust. Sometimes their help has taken the form of a collection at the end of the concert, often preceded by a brief speech by the conductor or someone associated with the Trust. On other occasions our fundraising leaflets have been placed on seats or a note about the project has been included in the programme. In any case, for every person performing there are a dozen people in the audience, any one of whom might be able to help us substantially, individually or through an organization, to reach our goal in time.

Like the British and Germans, Americans are great lovers of Handel's music. Americans seem likely to make up as many as 75% of foreign visitors to the Handel House Museum when it opens, so it would not be surprising if musicians throughout the United States were eager to help at this critical phase of the project. If you, as Handelians, can help, either by acting as a local coordinator during the next few months—getting the message to choir administrators, schools, churches, etc. and providing help with distributing the programme note and leaflets to interested organizations—or by organizing a "Sing for Handel" event yourselves, please contact now the Handel House Trust by e-mail: handel.house@virgin.net. We would enormously welcome your involvement.

At least in Britain, an historic house without a collection is not considered to be a museum. With the acquisition of the substantial Byrne Handel Collection in September 1997, the Trust has ensured that there can be a Handel House Museum. The collection's star items include an autograph letter and address leaf of 19 July 1744 from Handel to Charles Jennens; an autograph leaf of Mordecai's aria "Virtue, Truth and Innocence" from the 1751 version of *Esther*; an uncatalogued Mozart autograph in which he transcribed for string quartet the opening 20 measures of the F major fugue from Handel's Harpsichord Suite No. 2; Jennens's own annotated copy of the Mainwaring biography; and thirty-six volumes of printed music which once formed part of the Shaftesbury Collection.

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The Byrne Handel Collection also contains numerous scribal manuscripts of Handel's music as well as one by Sandoni, libretti for operas and oratorios, and first and early editions of operas, oratorios, the keyboard suites, concerti grossi and anthems. There are nearly forty framed items, including portraits of Handel and his contemporaries, programmes and playbills, an aquatint of Vauxhall Gardens by Rowlandson, the famous Vanderbank print and several Hogarths. There are busts of every size, statuettes, an array of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century commemorative medallions, and eighteenth-century theater and pleasure garden tokens. There is also a library of books on Handel.

The Handel House Museum's founding collection was the property of Gerard W. Byrne, a devoted collector of all things Handelian and a loyal friend of the Handel House Trust. Matching funds of \$256,000 (£160,000) for the \$600,000 (£375,000) Heritage Lottery grant came mainly from British sources: the Foundation for Sport and the Arts, the Kohn Foundation, the Pilgrim Trust, the Idlewild Trust and nearly two dozen individuals. It is an honour and privilege now to plan the Museum with Gerry's superb collection in mind. The Byrne Handel Collection will be on deposit in Cambridge and available for study at the Fitzwilliam Museum until the Handel House Museum opens in 2000.

The Handel House Trustees are deeply grateful for the gesture embodied in the American Handel Society's recent donation.* We need your help now to ensure that all we have achieved thus far will not have been in vain. If you know of people and organizations

1998 American Handel Society Conference Call for Papers

The 1998 Meeting and Conference of The American Handel Society will take place November 6-8 at the University of Maryland, College Park, in conjunction with the Maryland Handel Festival. The theme of the conference is "Handel's Women" and the featured works of the festival will be Handel's *Alexander Balus* and *Joshua*. The Society invites proposals for papers pertaining to but not restricted to the featured topic and works. Abstracts of no more than 300 words should be sent by April 1, 1998 to Professor Ellen Rosand, Chair, AHS Program Committee, Department of Music, 143 Elm Street, Yale University, New Haven, CT 06520.

who might be in a position to help, please be in touch with Ellen Harris (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 14N-112, 77 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, MA 02139; telephone 617-253-5882), who has graciously agreed to lead the U.S. campaign. Please join in further helping this most important Handelian enterprise to succeed.

—Julie Anne Sadie
Director, Handel House Museum

Editor's Note: Following a resolution by the Board of Directors, the American Handel Society donated \$500 to the Handel House Trust on November 2, 1996.

The J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship

The Board of Directors of the American Handel Society invite applications for the 1998 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 1998 Fellowship must be postmarked no later than March 15, 1998 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.

Heidegger's aborted 1738 season,⁶ and who worked in 1739 with Lord Middlesex to re-establish opera in London. In a letter to her half-brother James Harris, dated November 22, 1739, Katherine Knatchbull refers, perhaps ironically, to Lady Brown as "our friend."⁷ The number of female subscribers to the 1741 and 1743 seasons of Lord Middlesex's opera comprised almost a quarter of the total, attributable perhaps to Lady Brown's efforts deriving from her personal animus against Handel, though we should note that several of Handel's female supporters were among the subscribers. If this hypothesis is correct, it would indicate an earlier start for Lady Brown's role in organizing "opposition" to Handel.

The external evidence points to a date of publication for the poem of April 1739 at the earliest. Concerning the identity of the poem's author and the person who funded its printing and distribution, the poem offers no clues to this reader but perhaps others can discern some. That Handel enjoyed the support of a group of wealthy and literate friends is evident from the correspondence among the Harris family as well as that recorded by Deutsch. Letters from supporters occasionally appeared in the newspapers of the time, notably one signed R.W. on *Israel in Egypt* first published in the *London Daily Post* April 18, 1739, and reprinted April 1, 1740.⁸ In view of the regularity of unsuccessful Handel productions during the latter 1730s it seems less likely that *Israel* itself was the particular occasion for the poem, but that its production offered the author of the broadsheet an opportunity to decry the actions of "The Fiend."

—David Hunter

¹ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (New York: Norton, 1955); *Händel-Handbuch*, 4 (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1985).

² London: Cambridge University Press, 1975; item A82.

³ Winton Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), 134.

⁴ My thanks to Anthony Hicks and Richard King for helping to identify Cori from among the "C—i" possibilities.

⁵ Lowell Lindgren, "Cori, Angelo Maria," *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 1: 950.

⁶ Carole Taylor, "From Losses to Lawsuit: Patronage of the Italian Opera in London by Lord Middlesex, 1739-45," *Music & Letters* 68 (1987): 2.

⁷ See Rosemary Dunhill, *Handel and the Harris Circle*, Hampshire Papers 8 (Winchester: Hampshire County Council, 1995), 6.

⁸ Deutsch, 481.

HANDEL-L on LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU

HANDEL-L is a list sponsored by The American Handel Society at the University of Maryland, College Park. The list offers a forum for discussion of the life, times, and works of George Frideric Handel as well as related topics. HANDEL-L is open to all and welcomes comments, questions, and short reports from scholars, performers, and others interested in Handel.

To subscribe to HANDEL-L, send the following command to LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU:

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Howard Serwer serves as owner and moderator of HANDEL-L. In that capacity he reviews all postings for relevance and suitability and communicates with submitters if necessary. Serwer's electronic address is hs7@umail.umd.edu.

The Handel Institute Awards

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, 1998.

Further details from:

Professor Colin Timms
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NEWSLETTER

of

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