



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER

This issue includes a substantial article by Michael Talbot about a hitherto unknown version of a poem on Handel's blindness, a study that leads to new information on Handel's librettist Newburgh Hamilton. Donald Burrows reports on the recent Handel festival in Göttingen, Terence Best on the festival and conference in Halle. The new Handel Institute website (<http://handelinstitute.org>), awards for work on Handel, and this

year's study day on 'Music in 18th-Century Britain' are the subject of various announcements, but pride of place goes to the next Handel Institute conference (23–25 November), when participants will be offered two professional concerts as well as two days of papers by speakers from America, Europe, Japan and the UK.

Colin Timms

HANDEL INSTITUTE CONFERENCE

HANDEL AND HIS MUSIC FOR PATRONS

The eleventh triennial Handel Institute conference will take place in London on 23–25 November. An outline of the programme – some timings are provisional – and the abstracts of the papers are given below. To book a place, please go to the new Handel Institute website (<http://handelinstitute.org>). Booking closes on 12 November, but early booking is advised.

FRIDAY 23 NOVEMBER

7.00 **Concert: 'Celebrating Handel'**
British Library Knowledge Centre Theatre
Programme includes the chamber trio
'Se tu non lasci amore'
Soloists and instrumentalists, dir. Julian Perkins

SATURDAY 24 NOVEMBER, THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

9.30 Registration
10.00 **Opening remarks: Donald Burrows**
(chairman, Handel Institute)
10.15 **Session 1: Handel in Italy**

Nastasja Gandolfo and Valeria Matacchini

The sacred cantata Il pianto di Maria: Handel or Ferrandini?

The sacred cantata *Il pianto di Maria* was long attributed to Handel before a group of musicologists (Riepe–Vitali–

Furnari–Poensgen) attributed it in 1994 to Ferrandini. The situation of the sources is controversial. The cantata survives in eight manuscripts, in two of which it is ascribed to Ferrandini and in five to Handel (the other copy is anonymous). The recent work of the two speakers on the cantata has brought new elements to light that lead us to query the attribution to Ferrandini and reopen the issue of attribution to Handel. Firstly, a stylistic comparison with other sacred cantatas by Ferrandini (*Ecco quel tronco* and *O spettacolo pur troppo funesto*) does not support the idea that he composed *Il pianto di Maria*; secondly, the dating provided by Riepe and colleagues for the sources attributed to Ferrandini cannot be proved with certainty. Although the cantata cannot be attributed securely to Handel, either, the purpose of the paper is to highlight those stylistic and formal elements that suggest that it was written either by him or by a contemporary composer active in Rome or Naples before 1710.

The paper is therefore divided into two parts. In the first part Valeria Matacchini describes the source situation and the philological reasons for questioning the attribution of *Il pianto di Maria* to Ferrandini; in the second part Nastasja Gandolfo illustrates the stylistic factors that reinforce the hypothesis of attribution to Handel or one of his contemporaries through an analytical comparison of the cantata with Handel's sacred cantatas and motets of the Roman period and with Ferrandini's sacred vocal works.



Tadashi Mikajiri

The French Connection: Cardinal Carlo Colonna and the Austrian siege of Naples

On 15 and 16 July 1707 Handel participated in the first and second Vesper services of the Carmelite order at the church of Santa Maria di Monte Santo in Rome. He probably provided five new works – the psalm settings *Laudate pueri Dominum* (HWV237) and *Nisi Dominus* (HWV238), the antiphons *Haec est regina virginum* (HWV233) and *Te decus virgineum* (HWV243), and the motet *Saeviat tellus inter rigores* (HWV240). He may also have performed such earlier works as his *Dixit Dominus* (HWV232) and *Salve regina* (HWV241), both composed in the same year for unknown occasions.

Curiously enough, *Laudate pueri Dominum* was completed as late as 8 July 1707 and *Nisi Dominus* even later, on the 13th. The Colonna family had been in charge of this Carmelite feast since at least 1699: if Carlo had planned to use festive music by Handel, he would surely have asked him to write it in advance, and Handel should have been able to complete his settings earlier. Why, then, did he end up finishing them so hastily?

The key to this question is the date. On 7 July, only eight days before the first Vesper service, Austrian troops captured Naples. During the War of the Spanish Succession, Italians were divided between the Austrian and French sides. In this paper I discuss how the Austrian siege of Naples could have prompted Italian noblemen who supported the French to hold the service in a rush.

Later in Italy Handel not only wrote works on the French side (e.g., *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*) but also left *La Resurrezione* and *Agrippina* for supporters of the Austrians. His ability to write operas, oratorios and cantatas flexibly for either political inclination must have appealed to kings, lords and their delegations in Italy, especially in Rome and Venice, and could have been the decisive factor why the Hanoverian court employed him as Kapellmeister.

11.50 **Session 2: Opera Traditions in Italy and Germany**

Adriana De Feo

Handel and Vincenzo Grimani's Agrippina (1709): Encountering the tradition of the Incogniti

In the *dramma per musica Agrippina* (1709), the zenith of his period in Italy, composed for Venice's prestigious Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo, Handel tackled the long literary tradition linked to the *Accademici Incogniti*. The libretto, attributed to Cardinal Vincenzo Grimani, focuses on the unscrupulous Agrippina and shows a dramaturgical model that dates back to *L'incoronazione di Poppea* by Giovanni Francesco Busenello (1643) and continues with *Le fortune di Rodope e Damira* by Aurelio Aureli (1656), *La Messalina* by Francesco Maria Piccioli (1680) and *Nerone fatto Cesare* by Matteo Noris (1693). Deception is at the core of *Agrippina's* libretto, in blunt contrast to the

'moral dramas' of Apostolo Zeno, which prevailed at the time on the Venetian stage.

In addition to a specific local literary tradition, the taste of the theatre's owners, the Grimani brothers, played a decisive role in the choice of the dramatic features of the *dramma*: while Giovanni Carlo was a learned antiquarian, Vincenzo was one of the most talented diplomats for the Habsburg family and their ambassador to the Papal State. Satirical content, polemical allusions and an almost comedy tone make *Agrippina* an 'anachronistic' text, in which Roman history is depicted as full of ambitions, imposture and a dense network of intrigues, in contrast to the contemporary dramas by Zeno, where ancient history is a display of moral and sentimental lessons.

In this paper I analyse the anachronism of *Agrippina*, contextualizing it in the literary climate of the time, and show how the vivacity and narrative fluency of the text are reflected in the general structure of Handel's score. This is achieved by manifold, sometimes unpredictable, means that always adhere to the text, even though – and this is remarkable – the bulk of the music comes from earlier works.

Reinhard Strohm

Rodelinda and Cleopatra at the Royal Opera, Berlin, 1741–1742

When Frederick II (1712–86) became King of Prussia in 1740, two of his most significant actions were (a) to start an unprovoked war against the Habsburgs, and (b) to create an Italian opera company. He engaged Carl Heinrich Graun as *Hofkapellmeister* and Giovanni Gualberto Bottarelli as court poet, recruited Italian singers and dancers, had the opera house built and appointed various theatre officials. The first two opera performances of his reign were *Rodelinda* (Bottarelli–Graun), 12 December 1741, Palace theatre, and *Cleopatra e Cesare* (Bottarelli–Graun), 7 December 1742, which inaugurated the new opera house (Unter den Linden).

Considering that Frederick II did very little without previous deliberation, especially at the beginning of his rule, the choice of two subjects familiar from the then most famous Handel operas can hardly be coincidental. But what was meant by this choice? And why do the actual librettos and their musical settings differ from Handel's? Bottarelli's *Rodelinda* libretto is a reworking of Haym, preserving several aria texts; his *Cleopatra e Cesare* is a new libretto over the Bussani–Haym plot, with largely similar situations and characters. Graun surely knew these Handel operas: both had been performed in Hamburg in the 1730s, and *Giulio Cesare* had been staged in Brunswick in 1733 during Graun's own presence there. King Frederick II and his entire family were Handel admirers, as their personal music collections confirm.

The paper will present the results of a new comparative analysis of the London and Berlin operas mentioned, in both text and music, and will attempt to explain why this apparent patronal homage to Handel took aesthetically different forms in Prussian Berlin.



2.10 Session 3: Royal Academy Operas

Ivan Ćurković

Attilio Ariosti as a composer of vocal duets

In the first seasons of the Royal Academy of Music its directors saw Handel as one among many composers whose style reflected their expectations of what Italian opera in London should be like. At one point Handel's slightly older Italian contemporaries Giovanni Bononcini and Attilio Ariosti were in equal positions to compete for success in this – for London – novel form of operatic production and patronage. This paper will focus on Ariosti as the seemingly most moderate party in the rivalry between the three composers to see if the particular working conditions in London affected his output in the realm of the vocal duet. Duets were a less common and somewhat less important part of dramatic vocal genres than arias and could therefore be less dependent on stylistic trends and more suitable for comparison.

Another link between the three composers is the court of Sophie Charlotte of Hanover in Berlin, where both Ariosti and Bononcini were active and where Handel allegedly made a visit in his youth, possibly meeting his older colleagues and receiving musical stimuli from them. Not only did the patronage of the Prussian queen leave a strong mark on the two Italian composers (comparable to her impact on Agostino Steffani, Handel's predecessor in the service of her Hanoverian father and brother): Ariosti and Bononcini also shared illustrious patrons in Vienna.

This paper will examine the duets in some of Ariosti's works written for Berlin, Vienna and London, making comparisons with the duets by both Bononcini and Handel in order to outline how they changed and to determine whether this is related to their different contexts of rivalry and patronage.

John H. Roberts

From exiled queen to favored princess: Domenico Scarlatti's Narciso and the Royal Academy of Music

The third and final opera of the Royal Academy of Music's first season in the spring of 1720, following Porta's *Numitore* and Handel's *Radamisto*, was Domenico Scarlatti's *Narciso*. Originally composed in Rome for Maria Casimira, widowed Queen of Poland, as *Amor d'un'ombra e gelosia d'un'aura* (1714), in London the opera was dedicated to Caroline, Princess of Wales. No score of the first version has been found, and the music survives mainly in two English manuscript copies and a set of Walsh *Songs*. It has been suggested that Scarlatti revised the Roman score for London himself, though the final version was certainly prepared by Paolo Rolli and Thomas Roseingrave, who composed some additional numbers. Through a detailed analysis of the sources, this paper attempts to disentangle the various strands in the complex evolution of the opera, dealing among other things with questions of chronology and authorial responsibility.

3.50 Session 4: Opera Patronage in the 1730s

Graham Cumming

Ambivalent patrons and patronage in the 1736/37 London opera season

This paper examines several aspects of patronage and the ambivalent audience support for London's two Italian opera companies during the 1736/37 season. More specifically, it investigates the programme of works composed and performed by each company to entice prospective patrons in this, the last of four seasons in which Handel's company and the rival 'Opera of the Nobility' were locked in aggressive competition for the same relatively small audience. It had been the intention of the directors of the Nobility opera to put Handel to rout, but in this aim they had failed. At the end of three seasons both companies were still exhibiting stubborn resistance in the face of fluctuating audience support and financial deficits.

For this season Handel presented his most ambitious programme of works to date. With the exception of the pasticcio *Didone* (mostly from Vinci), it consisted entirely of his own music, including seven operas, three of them new (*Arminio*, *Giustino* and *Berenice*), revivals of the ode *Alexander's Feast*, the wedding serenata *Il Parnasso in festa* and a bilingual version of the oratorio *Esther*. The programme was completed with a much revised and expanded version of his first Italian oratorio, now retitled as *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità*.

By contrast to such a varied schedule, the Nobility Opera's programme consisted of one genre, six *opere serie*, of which *Siroe* (a pasticcio), *Merope* (Riccardo Broschi?) and *Demetrio* (Pescetti) were imports. Only two of the operas were newly composed for London, Veracini's *La clemenza di Tito* and Egidio Duni's *Demofonte*. The sixth work, *Sabrina*, was a further pasticcio, arranged by Pescetti. The company's new 'weapons', intended to boost falling audience numbers, were five comic intermezzos, mostly by Orlandini. These were either inserted between the acts of the *opere serie* or performed as 'afterpieces'.

Carole Taylor

Aristocratic direction and Professional management of Italian opera in Handel's London: Hints from eighteenth-century bank accounts

My work in eighteenth-century bank archives to date (Drummond's, Child's, Hoare's, Bank of England, Coutt's, Goslings) confirms a rich source of primary source data for scholars interested in the financial world in which Handel was writing and producing his music for London audiences in the 1720s, 1730s and 1740s. Isolated payments made to Handel and others from the accounts of the opera patrons (and others) add factual evidence to this complicated (dare I say, complex) world. Such transactions are not available to scholars online (account holders, yes; transactions within accounts, no). By way of



recent example, I have come across another isolated payment to Handel – this from the Duke of Newcastle – further suggestive of my tentative conclusion (*Handel Institute Newsletter*, 27/2 (2016)) that Italian opera finances were nothing if not unsystematically financed in this period.

Bank transactions are typically skeletal and compel us to consult the family papers of account holders to make better sense of payments to and from these individuals. I cannot promise extraordinary new findings but will report on private archives that I have examined in order to make better sense of bank transactions. In one case, for example, I was able to compare the accounts of the 4th Duke of Bedford in the family's private archives (Woburn Abbey) with those at Child's (held by the Royal Bank of Scotland). The focus of this research is to identify what historians can learn from the banks – not just names that turn up (fascinating enough) but how this evidence leads us down new and rewarding research paths.

7.30 **Concert: 'Handel at Cannons'**
St Lawrence, Whitchurch, Little Stanmore
'Cannons' Te Deum; 'The Lord is my Light';
organ music
Soloists and London Handel Orchestra,
cond. Adrian Butterfield

SUNDAY 25 NOVEMBER, THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM

9.30 Registration

10.00 **Session 5: Cannons and Copyists**

Graydon Beeks

'Some Overtures to be played before the first lesson'

In his letter of 25 September 1717 to Dr John Arbuthnot describing Handel's composition of the first four Cannons anthems, James Brydges also reports: 'He is at work for 2 more & some Overtures to be played before the first lesson'. What were these 'overtures' and did Handel ever complete them? This paper will consider four possibilities.

First, that they might be the one- or two-movement instrumental sonatas that precede all but one of the Cannons anthems, although there is no evidence that these sonatas were ever detached from their respective anthems until much later.

Second, that a trace of these missing overtures is represented by the movement designated by Handel 'to be play'd before the Symphony of the Anthem let God arise' and bound with the autograph of the anthem as British Library, R.M. 20.d.6, ff. 43 and 50. This movement is written on paper that was in use during the Cannons period, and the closing cadence on the dominant indicates that it must always have been followed by another movement in B-flat major.

Third, that the four trio sonatas later published as Op. 2, nos. 1, 3, 4 and 5, and the single quadro sonata listed in the Catalogue of the Cannons Music Library, all of which seem to have been composed during the Cannons period

or shortly thereafter, might have been played in the manner that *sonate da chiesa* were performed in Italy.

Fourth, that Brydges or his secretary may have used the word 'overture' by mistake and actually meant to use the term 'voluntary'. This could help explain Handel's composition during the Cannons period of keyboard fugues, most of which were later published in his first collection of harpsichord suites (1720) and in his *Six Fugues or Voluntaries for the Organ or Harpsichord* (c. 1735).

Andrew V. Jones

A Handel copyist identified

One of the frustrating aspects of Handel scholarship is our (relative) ignorance about the copyists, most of whom languish in the anonymity of *sigla*. Enormous progress has been made over the years, and continues to be made, as (for example) in Michael Talbot's identification of Francesco Barsanti as the copyist of (*inter alia*) Handel cantatas in the Hamburg Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek and duets by Handel, Steffani, and various Italian composers in the British Library (*Handel Institute Newsletter*, 24/2 (2013)). In the course of studying a group of manuscripts (A, B, and C, for present purposes) that contain the same four Handel cantatas grouped together, I discovered that their connection was more than mere chance: variants demonstrated a line of filiation between them. Group B was transposed from the versions in group A, and group C was copied from group B. The key to the identification of the copyist lay in the transcriptions in group B, in which the writing of the words proved to be identical to known specimens of the handwriting elsewhere. Having established this connection, it was possible to identify also the characteristics of the music handwriting, and from there to track down examples of the copyist's activity in a partly-autograph manuscript in Cambridge (Fitzwilliam Museum, MU MS 252).

11.35 **Session 6: Queen Caroline and Princess Anne**

Matthew Gardner

Supporting Handel in London: The musical interests of Queen Caroline and her children

Queen Caroline (1683–1737) was a long-term supporter of Handel and his music. Her connection with the composer began in 1710, when he was appointed Kapellmeister to the Hanover court – some of the chamber duets he wrote at Hanover were probably composed for Caroline, although there is no record of her singing them herself. In London from 1714 Caroline continued to show interest in music, and Handel in particular, helping him to further develop his career. She regularly attended the opera; he was music master to her daughters and was commissioned to write new music for a number of royal occasions – the 1727 coronation, the 1734 and 1736 royal weddings, and Caroline's own funeral in 1737. Although royal support of music continued after her death, it is evident that the driving force behind royal patronage stemmed from her



influence rather than the personal interests of her husband, George II. Several of the royal children, however, developed their own interests in music, especially Handel's pupil Princess Anne and Frederick Prince of Wales, who before his arrival in London in 1728 had received most of his education in Hanover.

Handel's funeral anthem for Queen Caroline, *The ways of Zion do mourn*, and her interest in the arts have received some scholarly attention, but her broader support of music in connection with Handel's London career has yet to be addressed. This paper therefore explores her wider role in shaping royal patronage of music and musicians in London by considering her interests and those of her children (particularly Princess Anne and Frederick, Prince of Wales) and investigating how the situation changed after her death in 1737. It thus sheds new light on the direct and indirect ways in which Handel in London benefited from royal patronage.

Judit Zsovár

A 'centaur' in music and genre: Parnasso in festa for Princess Anne's wedding

Handel's *Parnasso in festa*, composed for the wedding festivities of his royal pupil Princess Anne (13 March 1734), is a neglected piece within his oeuvre, mostly because of its hybrid nature. The fact that a considerable portion of the work was adapted from the Oxford oratorio *Athalia* ought not to cloud our appreciation of the newly composed parts, since this appropriation is best understood not as a sign of Handel's laziness but as an act of *Athalia*'s 'repatriation' to his patrons.

As a musical 'centaur', *Parnasso* shows intriguing multi-layered ambiguities. Was the Janus-faced Handel (Apollo/Orpheus) lamenting the permanent departure of his favourite, as stated by Harris, or was this, as suggested by Hortschansky, a bitter-sweet celebration of an unwanted marriage, *i.e.*, of the not-even-appearing Thetis (Anne) and Peleus (the ill-looking Prince Willem)? Dramatically, the focus falls on Apollo's and Orpheus's loss of their loved ones, but how does this fit together with the massive vocal domain of the new *primo uomo* Carestini (Apollo) and Strada (Clio) – apart from the chorus? The genre itself fuses pastoral, operatic and festive kinds of music structurally framed in an oratorio-like form.

On the vocal side, larger concessions were made on Carestini's behalf, resulting in the musical polarisation of the main roles. Carestini was given the most virtuoso numbers with long coloraturas and other vocal fireworks, while Strada, as a Muse, represented the pastoral side and Scalzi (Orfeo) added plaintive pathetic arias to the palette. Nevertheless, there are harmonising common points in Carestini's and Strada's musical formulations, both in style and vocal tone. These, paired with the reasonable assumption that Strada (a 'soprano entirely *di petto*') and Carestini (who also sang 'brilliant passages [...] in chest voice') both possessed a clarion sound-quality, form a 'silver thread' that helps sew the diverse parts of the *Parnasso* 'centaur' together.

2.00 **Session 7: Handel and English Patrons**

Annette Landgraf

Esther – The metamorphosis of a private composition

Esther was originally composed for one of Handel's patrons, 'the most noble Duke of Chandos', initially drafted and probably performed at Cannons in 1718. In April 1732 the *Daily Journal* announced 'The Sacred Story of ESTHER: an Oratorio in English. Formerly composed by Mr. Handel, and now revised by him, with several Additions'. Handel had then decided to present it to the public. He took a different approach and turned it from an oratorio in six scenes into an unstaged oratorio in three acts, establishing the tradition of the English oratorio. After that it went through a 'bewildering variety of versions' (John Roberts). Handel was keeping a certain core of movements from the Cannons version, adding new material and finally, in 1757, going back to some of the original movements from 1718 which he had previously altered. This paper focuses on the versions of 1751 and 1757.

Colin Timms

Handel, Comus and the 4th Earl of Gainsborough

In June 1745 a version of Milton's *Comus* including music by Handel was compiled and performed at Exton Hall (Rutland), seat of the 4th Earl of Gainsborough; there were further performances in July 1748. That these events took place, and that in 1745 Handel was present and composed the entertainment's finale, was made known in 1959 by the publication, in an article by Betty Matthews, of two contemporary letters. Handel's finale was discovered ten years later by Anthony Hicks, but the literary and musical text of the masque as a whole has not been found in any libretto or score from the period. The nature of the work, however, is described in the letters, and its Handelian content is outlined in a contemporary cue sheet, also discovered by Hicks. Anthony discussed this last document in a paper to the Maryland Handel Festival in 2001 and used it in an attempt to reconstruct the entertainment, a task he never completed. Having worked with him in the 1970s on the first edition and performance of the finale, I was interested, in the period after his death, to see whether a text for the entire masque could be established. The result of this inquiry, which was published by Novello in late 2016, includes music by both Handel and Arne. The process that led to this text is explained in the preface to the edition and in a forthcoming essay; the purpose of this paper is to say more about the decision to include music by Arne, about Handel's role in the creation of the Exton *Comus*, and about the background and patronage of Baptist Noel, 4th Earl of Gainsborough.



Natassa Varka

***‘This new favour will greatly increase my Obligations’:
New light on the relationship between Handel and Jennens***

Evidence of the complex relationship between Handel and Jennens has survived in many forms. The letters from Handel to Jennens regarding *Belshazzar* and those between Jennens and his friend Edward Holdsworth are well known, and other correspondence has provided information of various kinds, including the fact that Jennens borrowed manuscripts from Handel. The autograph scores reveal that Handel allowed Jennens to write in some of them, and Anthony Hicks, in his article ‘Handel, Jennens and *Saul*: Aspects of a Collaboration’, demonstrated that careful study of Jennens’s copies can yield valuable information regarding the relationship between composer and librettist.

My PhD research began with a thorough examination of the autograph scores, the performing scores and Jennens’s copies of a number of Handel’s oratorios. The aim of this research was to gain a deeper understanding of Jennens’s collection. In addition to achieving this, my examination of these manuscripts – in particular, those of *Saul*, *L’Allegro*, *Samson*, and *Belshazzar* – sheds further light on the relationship between Handel and Jennens. The paper will present new information in the context of our current knowledge and suggest ways in which our understanding of their relationship can be further refined and deepened.

4.05 **Session 8: Patrons and their Finances**

David Hunter

Inter- and Intra-generational patronage of Handel and his musical contemporaries

As the foremost musical client of the Hanoverian royal family in Britain, Handel is the most obvious instance of both inter- and intra-generational patronage. Having explored on previous occasions the details of his pensions, teaching and other interactions with that family, I now look at the engagement of more than fifty other families with him and his musical contemporaries. Drawing upon the evidence of opera company and publication subscriptions, ticket purchasing, family correspondence, and the employment of musicians in households, I show how prevalent patronage was between and among family generations, particularly within aristocratic families.

The implications of the findings are that support for musicians was forthcoming from a limited number of families; support of musicians and opera companies was frequently familial; publication subscribers were more varied and less wealthy than opera subscribers and less likely to show familial relations; Handel’s level of support was unique and unprecedented in terms of prestige, responsibility, income, and longevity; the royal family’s support of Handel could not be emulated in scope and largesse, but its inter- and intra-generational aspect was modelled by other elite families.

Ellen T. Harris

‘Master of the Orchester with a Sallary’: Handel at the Bank of England

The discovery of an account held by Handel at the Bank of England in 1721 offers new documentary information about his financial transactions. It also offers two new signatures and evidence on his residence before the move to Brook Street. Careful consideration of the circumstances surrounding this account has led as well to a reinterpretation of Handel’s short-lived accounts with the Royal African Company in 1720, transferring the responsibility for this investment instrument from Handel to his patrons. Further, the revised understanding of the purpose of the accounts from 1720 and 1721 at the Bank of England and the Royal African Company sheds light on Handel’s South Sea Annuities account (1723–32). My analysis provides a new explanation for the origin of this account and an explanation for its pattern of credits and withdrawals, offers a hypothesis on the salary Handel received from the Royal Academy of Music, and indicates that the ‘Second Academy’ at least attempted to continue the financial arrangements that had been in place from the inception of the Academy.

5.15 **Closing remarks: Donald Burrows**

7.00 **Conference dinner: Ristorante Olivelli,
35 Store Street, WC1E 7BS**

MUSIC IN 18TH-CENTURY BRITAIN

The 34th annual conference on Music in 18th-Century Britain will take place on Friday 30 November 2018 at the Foundling Museum, 40 Brunswick Square, London, WC1N 1AZ (see <https://sites.google.com/site/mecbconf/>).

Offers of contributions are now invited on any aspect of music in eighteenth-century Britain. Formal papers, round tables, lecture-recitals, performances and reports on work-in-progress normally last up to thirty minutes, but longer or shorter sessions will be considered, as will collaborative or related-topic papers. This year, to coincide with the Foundling Museum’s exhibition *Ladies of Quality and Distinction*, we particularly would welcome proposals on aspects of music and women.

Please submit your abstract (about 250 words) by email to handel@foundlingmuseum.org.uk, giving your name, address or institution, telephone number and email address in the body of the message. Please alert interested parties and those not on email. The closing date for proposals is **Thursday 27 September**, but if you wish to offer a paper and see this too late, please contact the organisers. Conference details will follow shortly afterwards.



THOMAS NEWBURGH AND HIS POEM ON HANDEL'S BLINDNESS

Users of Deutsch's documentary biography of Handel will be aware that the entries for the year 1755 open with a sixteen-line anonymous poem on the subject of Handel's blindness.¹ This progressively worsening condition, the earliest reports of which appear in 1751, was by 1755 no longer front-page news, and the motivation for the poem seems to have been a more general wish to immortalise the composer's reputation by associating him with the venerated cultural figures of Homer and Milton, both famously blind. Cleverly and poignantly, the poem confers on Handel a comparable quasi-mythic status by lending him the name and attributes of the blind musician Timotheus, whose persona the composer himself had portrayed in 1736 (as if foreshadowing his own fate) in *Alexander's Feast*. The version of the poem presented in transcription by Deutsch is the one in which it first achieved print. This was in the opening section ('Miscellaneous Correspondence, in Prose and Verse', p. 5) of the very first issue, for January 1755, of Benjamin Martin's journal *The General Magazine of Arts and Sciences*.²

That the poem's author, clearly a practised and accomplished versifier, chose to remain anonymous should not surprise. Publication of a poem in a journal was a conventional means for amateur and professional authors alike of giving it a first outing and testing the reaction of the general public. Should the poem not win favour,

1755 version

To Mr. Handel. On the Loss of Sight.

HOMER and MILTON might complain
They roll'd their sightless orbs in vain;
Yet both have wing'd a daring flight,
Illumin'd by celestial light.
Then let not old * *Timotheus* yield,
Or, drooping, quit th'advent'rous field;
But let his art and vet'ran fire
Call forth the magic of his lyre:
Or make the pealing organ speak
In sounds that might the dead awake:

Or gently touch the springs of woe,
Teach sighs to heave, or tears to flow:
Then with a more exalted rage
Give raptures to the sacred page,
Our glowing hearts to heaven raise
In choral songs and hymns of praise.

* A musician, in the time of *Philip of Macedon*, banish'd by the *Spartans* for adding a tenth string to the lyre.

anonymity offered the author a way to keep his reputation intact. But if it passed muster, the opportunity remained open to include it later in a collection and perhaps finally reveal its authorship. This is exactly what happened to the poem in question, which re-emerged in 1769 in a large, extremely multifarious collection of essays and poems attributable beyond doubt to a prominent Irish landowner, Thomas Newburgh. The volume offers so many clues to the author's identity in its pages that the absence of his name from the title-page becomes a playful device rather than an expression of prudent reticence.³ Of course, the ostensible anonymity also serves as a conventional marker of the author's gentlemanly status: a reminder to readers that writing prose and poetry is for him a simple recreation, not a mercenary occupation.

It is interesting that in this second version, which to my knowledge has never before been mentioned in Handelian literature, the poem receives multiple revisions to the last six lines as well as four newly inserted lines immediately preceding them, an extra footnote and finally a highly interesting postscript in prose – a miniature essay, in essence. We need not dwell here on the differences between the two versions of the poem, which are of literary rather than musicological interest, but it will be useful for the record to transcribe them side by side for ease of comparison:

1769 version

To the late Mr. HANDEL on the Loss of his Sight.

HOMER and MILTON might complain,
They roll'd their sightless Orbs in vain;
Yet both have wing'd a daring Flight,
Illumin'd by celestial Light.
Then let not old * TIMOTHEUS yield,
Or, drooping, quit th'advent'rous Field,
But let his Art and vet'ran Fire
Call forth the Magic of his Lyre;
Or make the pealing Organ speak
In Sounds that might the Dead awake:
While Fancy takes its airy Round,
Through all the Labyrinths of Sound,
Or modulates the vocal Strain,
And gently soothes [*sic*] the Lover's Pain;
Awakes each tender, latent Woe,
Makes Sighs to heave, or Tears to flow;
Or with a more exalted Rage
† Gives Raptures to the sacred Page,
While to the Fields of sacred Light,
The Soul enraptur'd wings its Flight.

* TIMOTHEUS – a celebrated Musician of ancient *Greece*, by which Name Mr. *Handel*, is here intended.

† *Gives Raptures to the sacred Page* – Refers to Mr. *Handel's* celebrated *Oratorio* call'd the MESSIAH, justly esteem'd one of the noblest Compositions of its Kind, that modern Times have produc'd.

¹ Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955), 758.

² In 1759 the poem reappeared unaltered on the first page of a book-form edition from the same London publisher, William Owen, which

came out under the title *Miscellaneous Correspondence Containing a Variety of Subjects, Vol. I. For the Year [sic] 1755 and 1756*.

³ [Thomas Newburgh], *Essays Poetical, Moral and Critical* (Dublin, 1769), 280–81.



Thomas Newburgh is a figure well known to students of eighteenth-century Irish literature in English, some of whose poems – in particular *The Beau Walk in Stephen's Green*, the description of a picturesque locality in Dublin – are frequently included in anthologies. There are to date no dedicated studies of his life or works, but his biography is easy to reconstruct in outline. His father was Brockhill (or Broghil, in its Irish form) Newburgh (c.1659–1741), a militantly Protestant landowner in Co. Cavan whose ancestors had come to Ireland from England as settlers and plantation owners during the reign of James I. Brockhill served as a member of parliament for Co. Cavan in 1715–27 and was the county's high sheriff in 1704. He held the important position of chairman of the Linen Board, an office that later passed to his third son, Arthur, followed by the latter's own son, also named Brockhill. Brockhill senior, who had served with distinction in William of Orange's army at the time of the Siege of Derry, was a colonel in the Co. Cavan militia, a post that Thomas was to inherit after him, albeit only in an honorary capacity. The wealthiest and most powerful landowner in the county, and especially in and around the small town of Ballyhaise, Brockhill set the seal on his local prominence by having an imposing family residence in Palladian style, Ballyhaise House, constructed on his estate early in the 1730s.⁴

Thomas was the eldest of four sons and two daughters born to Brockhill and his first wife Mary, née Moore.⁵ If we can trust the description of his age as 'about 15' in the admission records of Trinity College Dublin, which he entered as a pensioner (commoner) on 7 May 1710, he will probably have been born in 1694 or 1695.⁶ He graduated with a BA in the spring of 1714, and in the same year was indentured as an articulated clerk to the attorney-at-law Charles Sanderson of the Inner Temple, London.⁷ Sanderson is a famous and colourful figure in English legal history of the eighteenth century, known for being exceptionally well connected and for taking an enormous number of pupils from all over the realm.⁸ The standard period of pupillage was two years. While in London, Thomas probably took the opportunity to continue his education privately in fields other than law. Sanderson, when estimating for a parent, in 1720, the annual cost of

maintaining a student at the Middle Temple (the Inn of Court to which he had in the meantime migrated), allowed for the fees payable to a music master, a dancing master and a French master.⁹ On 1 December 1716, his apprenticeship presumably complete, Thomas was admitted to the Middle Temple.¹⁰ He was called to the English bar on 11 June 1725,¹¹ and to the Irish bar in 1727.¹²

Yet he seems never to have practised law professionally in any systematic way. In a pamphlet-length memoir of his father published anonymously in 1761 (but of which Thomas is the sole plausible author) he attempts to explain and exculpate himself through the words: 'His [Brockhill's] eldest son, for many reasons, could not so far reconcile himself to the study and practice of the law as to chuse to make it his profession, and thereby divert his thought from other pursuits, and studies more agreeable to his genius'.¹³

What were these 'other pursuits, and studies'? Certainly, they included the classics, which had doubtless occupied much of Thomas's time at Trinity College. He may also have had antiquarian interests. According to the edited memoirs and annotations of the Irish poet Henry Brooke (c.1703–83), a close friend of Thomas:

[...] his father was determined that he should see the world; and, as he was a man of plentiful fortune, and of a liberal mind, he [Brockhill] was resolved that his darling boy should at least visit the remains of that city, whose proud gates were once thronged with tributary kings and chiefs. Our young traveller's rank, education, and native suavity of manners, opened his way to the first circles in Rome, where he remained upwards of two years.¹⁴

Concerning Thomas, Brooke is an unreliable witness in many particulars: he substitutes Oxford University for Trinity College Dublin as his friend's place of education, mistakes the surname of his second wife (writing 'Blacker' instead of 'Cary'), gives his year of death as 1779 instead of 1776 and computes his age at death as ninety instead of eighty-three (or thereabouts).¹⁵ Nevertheless, Brooke's claim that Thomas undertook a Grand Tour, presumably soon after completing his legal studies, rings true in the light of the content of his later poetry.¹⁶

⁴ Since 1905 Ballyhaise House has served as an agricultural college.

⁵ The most useful concise account of Brockhill and his immediate family is H. B. Swanzy, 'Militia Commissions, Co. Cavan', *Notes and Queries*, 146 (1924), 464–67 (464).

⁶ George Dames Burtchaell and Thomas Ulick Sadleir (ed.), *Alumni Dublinenses: A Register of the Students, Graduates, Professors and Provosts of Trinity College in the University of Dublin (1593–1860)* (Dublin, 1935), 616.

⁷ British Country Apprentices 1710–1808 (database hosted by the genealogical website findmypast.co.uk and accessed on 1 May 2018).

⁸ Edward Hughes, *North Country Life in the Eighteenth Century*, 2 vols (Oxford, 1952) is a prime source of information on Sanderson's activity and reputation.

⁹ *Ibid.*, i, 82.

¹⁰ Sir Henry F. MacGeagh and H. A. C. Sturgess (ed.), *Register of Admissions to the Honourable Society of the Middle Temple: From the Fifteenth Century to the Year 1944* (London, 1949), 278.

¹¹ *Loc. cit.*

¹² Burtchaell and Sadleir (ed.), *Alumni Dublinenses*, 616.

¹³ [Thomas Newburgh], *Particulars Relating to the Life and Character of the Late Brockhill Newburgh, Esq., Wrote at the Instance of Several of his Surviving Friends* (n. p., 1761), 22.

¹⁴ C[harles] H[enry] W[ilson], *Brookiana*, 2 vols (London, 1804), i, 2–3. Wilson (1757–1808) was a specialist in the preparation of edited memoirs (he was also responsible for a collection of *Swiftiana* and a volume entitled *Anecdotes of Eminent Persons*), and one should allow for the possibility that he embroidered and even garbled what he found in the sources on which he worked.

¹⁵ These errors by Brooke (or by Wilson?) persist in many modern accounts.

¹⁶ Thomas does not have an entry in John Ingamells, *A Dictionary of British and Irish Travellers in Italy, 1701–1800* (New Haven and London, 1997), a prime source of reference on Grand Tourists. Since, however, this dictionary does not index the names of travelling companions or other persons mentioned in entries, the possibility remains that his name will turn up in its pages.



Lastly, there is music. The earliest traced reference to this interest is the listing of a ‘Mr. Newburg’ among the payers of the seventh (8 May 1729) and eighth (9 April 1730) subscriptions to the Academy of Ancient Music.¹⁷ That this person is our Thomas emerges clearly from assorted pieces of evidence (we have already had the poem on Handel) that will be touched on at appropriate points in this article. For a start, Thomas Newburgh was a subscriber to Michael Festing’s *Twelve Sonatas in Three Parts*, Op. 2 (1731). This is concrete proof of his interest in music and also an action that increases the likelihood of his presence in London during the two previous years. It is true that no other subscriptions by him to musical works have come to light (whereas there are at least six subscriptions to publications of other kinds, most of them published from 1740 onwards in Dublin), but this can be explained either by the termination of his residence in London, which appears to have occurred at some point during the 1730s, or, perhaps more pertinently, by a lack of interest in collecting, as opposed to listening to, music. At the time when Festing first advertised for subscribers (in the *Country Journal* of 20 March 1731), he was still a member of the Academy of Ancient Music (from which he was very soon afterwards to resign in the wake of the Bononcini plagiarism scandal), and it could well be that Newburgh’s purchase stemmed more from friendship than from personal interest.

Back in Ballyhaise, Thomas took over the reins of the family estate on his father’s death in 1741. He shared and continued Brockhill’s interest in agricultural improvement, as evidenced both by Brooke’s account¹⁸ and by his subscription, in 1766, to Charles Varley’s treatise *The Yorkshire Farmer*.¹⁹ Belatedly, in 1743, he married a young bride, Charity Julia Blake. Her premature death in 1745 affected him greatly, as we learn from his poems. In 1747 he entered into a second marriage, to Martha Cary. This woman, who lived on until 1804 and remarried successfully after Thomas’s death in 1776, was a keen musician. We learn this from a rather fine poem in the 1769 collection.²⁰ It should be explained that although a great many of those poems in Thomas’s volume that are not translations or paraphrases of Latin originals refer to persons in his family or circle of friends, most of these names are lightly coded – that is, not sufficiently disguised to resist decipherment, but sufficiently so to lessen the risk of giving unpardonable offence. Thus ‘Thomas’ (Newburgh) becomes ‘Tom’ or, in its Latin incarnation, ‘Verus’; his deceased wife ‘Charity Julia’ becomes plain ‘Julia’; ‘Martha’ becomes ‘Matilda’; Richard Pockrich (Thomas’s cousin, the celebrated inventor, musician and entrepreneur) becomes ‘Pock’.

The poem in praise of Martha/Matilda is worth quoting in full because it testifies to the centrality of music in Thomas’s daily life. It is also rather beautiful and touching.

To MATILDA

MATILDA, think what Joys inspire
Thy tuneful Voice and sprightly Lyre.
Then think how Time becomes a Load
The live long Day on Cards bestow’d:
When the neglected Muses weep,
And Converse, Sense and Reason sleep.
Not that Custom’s Laws I spurn,
Or disallow *Quadrille* its Turn:
Or quitting social Joys, would chuse
In silent Shades to court the Muse.
I only mean with Friends to live
In those Compliances I give:
And if to such, I *Cards* allow,
Let Musick’s Charms unbend my Brow.
One Hour *Matilda* in the Day
With me thy tuneful Pow’rs display.
For Arts that give the Pow’r to please
Tho’ gain’d with Pain, are lost with Ease.
This single Hour, shou’d some refuse,
Deaf to the Call of ev’ry Muse,
Nor from their Cards and Counters budge
’Till at the Supper Bell they trudge;
Then strike the Lyre, thy own *Apollo*,
Shall make th’uprooted Oaks to follow.

To sum up in a few words the content of the *Essays Poetical, Moral and Critical*, which run to over three hundred pages, is an impossibility. The scale of the poems runs from the epigrammatic to the epic; their tone from the scatological (as in the aptly named *Cloacina’s Cabinet*) to the Elysian; their style of treatment from the realistic and closely observed to the whimsical and satirical; their inspiration from the classical (where Horace occupies an even larger place in Thomas’s affections than Virgil)²¹ to the quotidian. If there is a dominant mood, it is gentle humour: Henry Brooke’s recollection that ‘in conversation he [Thomas] was extremely gay, and even witty, but his wit was never mingled with gall’ corresponds exactly to the impression gained from his writings.²²

A similar diversity informs the prose portions. These range from footnotes to the poems, often very erudite and extended in the case of the translated pieces, to thoughtful prologues and epilogues to them, not excluding a few free-standing essays. As it happens, *To the late Mr. Handel* possesses an epilogue of this kind that repays close reading:

¹⁷ London, British Library, Add. MS 11732. I owe this information to Harry (H. Diack) Johnstone, whom I thank in addition for bringing the initially mysterious ‘Mr. Newburg’ to my attention.

¹⁸ W[ilson], *Brookiana*, i, 3.

¹⁹ Thomas’s interest in agriculture explains his particular affection for Virgil’s *Georgics*, so evident in his poetry.

²⁰ [Newburgh], *Essays*, 265.

²¹ In 1750 a slim octavo volume entitled *A Translation of Some of the Odes of Horace*, whose author is named as Thomas Newburgh, was published, probably privately, at an undisclosed location that one would guess to be Dublin. A copy of this rare publication (not inspected) is held by the library of the University of Illinois. In all likelihood, this is the source of all or most of the Horace translations in the 1769 volume.

²² W[ilson], *Brookiana*, i, 4.



It has been said that Mr. *Handel* has compos'd more *Church* and *Theatrical* Music, than all the Masters of his Time joined together. Of these numerous Compositions, it has been generally allow'd by the best Judges, that there is scarce a single Piece that does not discover a masterly Genius – not to observe that many, or the greater part of them, have scarce been equall'd. In Exclusion of these masterly Compositions, little else, have of late Years prevail'd but paltry *Ballad-Airs*, and flimsy *Instrumental Pieces*, which might be equall'd, if not exceeded by many masterly Hands in their common, extemporary, unstudied Flights. In this low Kind of Composition, some Masters of Genius have been forc'd to comply with the false Taste of the Times. The Contagion has spread far and near – and even in *Italy*, formerly the great School of Music, Painting, and Architecture, these noble Arts have been preserv'd only in the Works of their great Masters, long since deceas'd.

It were to be wish'd that some Standard cou'd be settl'd for adjusting the Taste of true Compositions in music as well as for other Arts. And if *HOMER* and *MILTON*, *Vetruvius* and *Palladio*, *Raphael* and *Michael Angelo*, have by their masterly Performances, settl'd the generally allow'd Plans for Poetry, Painting, Statuary, and Architecture; why may not the Compositions of *Pallestrini*, *Correlli*, *Pergolesi*, *Handel* and *Geminiani*, with equal Justice and Propriety be allow'd to settle those of Music[?] I am not here writing to the illiberal and tasteless, but to those who have Ears to hear, and have Hearts and Minds capable of being touch'd or entertain'd. If therefore, Compositions of Harmony (whose Powers are much better felt than describ'd) have always found a Place in the Services of the *Jewish* as well as *Christian Church* (both of Divine Appointment) I see no Reason why, with its Sister Arts, *Music* should not meet with an equal Degree of Patronage and Encouragement. But this is not likely to be speedily, if ever effected, while the Compositions of the above-mentioned Great Masters are, as at present, totally neglected and forgotten.

If one were not already convinced that the 'Mr. Newburgh' who joined the Academy of Ancient Music in 1729 was Thomas Newburgh of Ballyhaise, this forthright exposition of the central creed of the counter-culture in eighteenth-century English musical life that we could describe for brevity as 'the cult of ancient music' would settle the question. Indeed, Newburgh verges on the extreme in his insistence that perfect models for musical composition have been laid down for all time by a handful of masters (significantly, all ones prominent in the repertory of the Academy, as may be discerned from the contents of its library and the surviving programmes).²³

Yet what is remarkable in this context is the evidence of Handel's success in bridging the great divide between the partisans of ancient music and the devotees of 'paltry *Ballad-Airs*, and flimsy *Instrumental Pieces*', as Newburgh so disparagingly terms them. Handel is seemingly acceptable to everyone, succeeding improbably in being classic and fashionable at the same time. This universal acceptability bridged, of course, many other divides: between Hanoverian and Jacobite; Protestant and Catholic; nativist and cosmopolitan; metropolitan and provincial; courtly and bourgeois.

About Thomas's last years there is nothing of note to say. His death was reported in the *Hibernian Journal* of 6 December 1776, which gave his age at death as 83, thus placing his birth in 1692 or 1693, a couple of years earlier than the date inferred from his approximate age when matriculating. His will, dated 28 January 1773 and proved on 19 October 1776, remains to be studied.²⁴

And if one should ask, finally, whether Handel's friend and collaborator, the dramatist Newburgh Hamilton (arranger of the libretto of *Alexander's Feast* and author of those for *Samson* and the *Occasional Oratorio*), was perchance a relative of Thomas Newburgh, the answer must be an emphatic 'yes'. Colonel Thomas Newburgh, the first of that surname to settle in Ireland, had three sons, of whom another Thomas was our Thomas's paternal grandfather. This second Thomas had a younger brother, Arthur, who inherited an estate in Lifford, Co. Donegal. Arthur's daughter Jane married a certain Patrick Hamilton, and the two had a son, Newburgh, born in Co. Tyrone in about 1691, who became the dramatist. (The conversion of a surname into a given name in order to preserve the memory of a maternal line is recognisable, of course, as an established custom in British and Irish families of the upper strata.) The relationship of the Lifford and Ballyhaise branches of the Newburgh family is in fact sketched in a footnote in our Thomas's *Particulars* of 1761 (coincidentally, the year of Newburgh Hamilton's death), which reads: 'Col. *Thomas Newburgh* had three sons; – to his two younger sons, *Arthur* and *Charles*, he left those estates purchased by him in the counties of *Donegal*, *Wexford*, and *Kilkenny*, which are still possessed by his descendants. *Arthur* left a daughter, not many years deceased, from whom our relations, the *Hamiltons* in the *North* are descended'.²⁵ The two cousins, Thomas and Newburgh, may have moved in the same circles, since Newburgh Hamilton was likewise a subscriber, in 1731, to Festing's Op. 2. But this is a matter to be explored on another occasion.

Michael Talbot

²³ On this question, see H. Diack Johnstone, 'Westminster Abbey and the Academy of Ancient Music: A Library once Lost and now Partially Recovered', *Music & Letters*, 95 (2014), 329–73.

²⁴ Ireland Diocesan and Prerogative Wills and Administrations Indexes,

1595–1858 (database hosted by findmypast.co.uk and accessed on 1 May 2018).

²⁵ [Newburgh], *Particulars*, 5.



GERMAN HANDEL FESTIVALS

GÖTTINGEN

The tendency of Handel festivals to sprawl over ever-longer periods inevitably results in selective coverage for the un leisured visitor. I attended the closing performances of the Göttingen 'Festspiele' but was not able to hear the full range of what was clearly a large and varied programme. I heard good reports of one of the major performances, *Judas Maccabæus*, which had been given in the original 1747 version but fulfilled other public expectations by including 'See, the conqu'ring hero comes' as an encore. I went to the Gala Concert (*Dettingen Te Deum* and *The Choice of Hercules*) and the opera *Arminio*, a combination which incidentally provided a curious opportunity to hear Handel's reworking of the same music in 'Lead, Goddess, lead the way' and 'Il fuggir, cara mia vita', composed about fifteen years apart. Christ Church Cathedral Choir from Oxford acquitted themselves well in the Gala Concert (and provided some of the 'verse' soloists for the *Te Deum*), as did the soloists in *The Choice of Hercules*, in particular Diana Moore as a convincing Hercules/ Guadagni.

The opera production was an improvement on last year's *Lotario* in two important areas: there was less stage movement and there were fewer irrelevant persons on stage in the scenes. A few solecisms remained, when characters were not left 'solo' to communicate the content of their arias without distraction. In this opera there is a particular temptation over the character of Segeste, whom Winton Dean correctly described as 'the villain of the piece' but who has only one aria. In spite of this limitation Cody Quattlebaum vividly conveyed Segeste's angry determination, but he should not have been around, doing so, during some of the other characters' arias.

Arminio presents a practical challenge because there are seven principal singers; this production abundantly met the challenge, particularly in the performances of Christopher Lowrey and Sophie Junker in the contrasted castrato roles of Arminio (originally Caffarelli) and Sigismondo (Conti). The Festspiel orchestra's contribution to both the concert and the opera was magnificent, in particular by revealing (under Laurence Cummings's direction) the range of music and moods in the arias of this rather underrated opera. There seems to be a conspiracy among theatre directors to prevent the audience from giving full attention to overtures. The overture provides the transition from the world outside the theatre to the characters and action of the opera. (It would be good to return to the practice of applauding the band at the end of the overture, 'before the raising of the curtain' as specified by Locke.) The Earl of Shaftesbury's letter written after the second performance in 1737 shows that he was attentive to the music, noting especially the fugue subject. The world of the opera was credibly represented at Göttingen for two Acts but fell apart in the third, when the anachronistic introduction of pistols (in place of the choice between dagger and poison) and face-painting of incomprehensible significance drew jarring attention to the inescapable historical location of the opera in 9 A.D. (as represented in 1737). The situation was saved by some glorious singing and playing.

Donald Burrows

HALLE

This year's festival on the theme 'Foreign worlds' focused on composers and performers who travelled in Europe in Handel's lifetime. It began in glorious weather with the traditional open-

air concert in the Marktplatz, around the famous statue of Handel that was erected by subscriptions from German and British admirers in 1859. A large number of mostly young singers, accompanied by the chamber orchestra of Halle University, belted out some great choruses, ending inevitably with 'Hallelujah'. Their English diction was immaculate.

The big occasion, of course, was the première of this year's opera, the rarely heard *Berenice*, which is known to many only by the famous minuet in the overture. The performance was based on the new HHA edition by Wolfgang Hirschmann. As always in Handel's least performed works, the opera has many beauties and a reasonable plot. The production, however, was a disaster and was universally judged to be so. We have become used to pretentious nonsense on stage (not only in Halle), created by directors who entertain (or infuriate) by nonsense, vulgarity and plain stupidity. This production, which used flickering photographs of meaningless persons to create a background to crude action on stage, was one of the worst in a lamentable tradition. As we sat wearily attempting to understand the supposed significance of these goings-on, at least Handel's score came across superbly, revealing the many beauties in this neglected work.

Relief from nonsense came in a staged production of *Parnasso in festa* in the lovely Goethe Theater in Bad Lauchstädt, which made use of the new edition by Teresa Ramer-Wünsche, a member of the HHA Editorial Office. The libretto is based on the activities of the gods on Parnassus in Greek mythology, and the opera is a lovely work, little known outside the realm of Handel specialists. The performance was musically superb, and the costumes and action were most entertaining.

Joyce DiDonato, one of the finest operatic sopranos around, gave a stunning recital in the G.-F.-Händel-Halle which at first seemed a rather pretentious evocation of war and peace (presumably inspired by the centenary of the Great War). It was sung in concert fashion but semi-staged, the house lights being switched off as it began. As a result, the audience was left in total darkness (although a dead soldier could be seen near the rostrum) and unable to read the copious programme notes until the interval. This was a pity, and I felt uncomfortable with the whole thing, but DiDonato sang like an angel and at the end was presented with this year's Handel Prize.

Samson has always presented problems for Handelians: Act I is very long and repetitive, as the hero laments his predicament, and is often drastically cut in performance, while the remainder of the work has some of Handel's greatest music. This difficulty was confirmed in a splendid sell-out performance in the Konzerthalle by John Butt and his Dunedin Consort. No ensemble could have performed the piece more powerfully, but the first interval was a long time in coming and the audience seemed somewhat overwhelmed. By the end, however, *Samson*'s splendours were revealed and the magnificent performance was soundly cheered.

A quintet of British vocal soloists and the London Handel Orchestra, directed by Adrian Butterfield, gave a most delightful concert in the Dom. The programme included the first performance of the 'Chandos' *Te Deum* in Graydon Beeks's new edition for the HHA. All of Handel's music for Cannons is delightful, especially when, as here, a small group of performers is used (as at Cannons). The *Te Deum* is a



marvellous work – for some reason I had not heard it before – and the experience was overwhelming.

One of the finest mezzo-sopranos of our time, Magdalena Kožená, gave a recital of arias from Handel operas in which she was accompanied by La Cetra Barockorchester Basel, directed by Andrea Marcon. This was for me one of the most enthralling of the concerts on offer: she is indeed at the height of her powers. Marcon and the orchestra also gave a very fine performance of *Messiah* in the Dom – though a spasm of over-enthusiasm by the timpanist, who in this piece, admittedly, has only two movements to play (and he needed to make his mark), turned the final chorus into something approaching a timpani concerto.

The scholarly conference was related to the theme of the festival and entitled ‘Music and musicians from abroad, 1650–1750’. As a famous foreigner, in spite of his naturalization in 1727, Handel was inevitably the centre of attention. Of the Anglo-American team, papers were read by Donald Burrows, David Vickers, Matthew Gardner, Graydon Beeks (on the way-out topic of Sir George Smart’s adaptation of Mozart’s orchestration of *Messiah*) and John Roberts. As always, there was a good deal of feasting and drinking with our German colleagues, all of whom are great friends.

An innovation was that we were lodged in a new ‘B&B Hotel’ (sic!), conveniently situated five minutes from the Händel-Haus. An odd feature of this establishment is that in every room and in the foyer there is a reproduction of a composer’s autograph. One would expect this to be something by Handel, but the music in question is actually part of the Fugue in G minor from the first book of *Das wohltemperierte Klavier* by the man from down the road in Leipzig. As Tennyson put it in another context, ‘someone has blundered’.

Terence Best

THE HANDEL INSTITUTE

WEBSITE

In September the Handel Institute launches its own website (<http://handelinstitute.org>). This will be the principal source of information on the Institute and its activities and will provide an online facility for bookings and payments. Bookings for the November conference must be made online, but, for the moment, subscriptions to the *Newsletter* must be made or renewed on the enclosed form. There will be a fuller account of the website in the next issue.

CONFERENCE AWARDS

Handel Institute Conference Awards help individuals attend an overseas conference to read a paper on a Handel-related subject that has already been accepted by the organisers. The awards, which relate to travel and/or accommodation, are open to UK residents who wish to attend a conference elsewhere and to overseas residents who wish to attend one in the UK. For full details see <http://handelinstitute.org> Applications, before expenditure is incurred, to Dr Helen Coffey (helen.coffey@open.ac.uk). Deadlines: **30 November 2018**, **30 April** and **31 August 2019**.

HANDEL OPERA PRODUCTION GRANTS

The Handel Institute offers grants of up to £5,000 towards a production of an opera by Handel that is planned to take place by the end of 2020. The production company may be professional or amateur or a combination. For full details see <http://handelinstitute.org>

Applications (and enquiries) to Dr Ruth Smith (res1000@cam.ac.uk). Deadline: **31 October 2018**.

RESEARCH AWARDS

Handel Institute Research Awards help individual scholars pursue a research project relating to Handel or his associates or contemporaries. No single award exceeds £1,000, but more than one award may be made. For full details see <http://handelinstitute.org>

Applications, before expenditure is incurred, to Dr Helen Coffey (helen.coffey@open.ac.uk). Deadline: **30 April 2018**.

Handel News

The September 2018 issue (No.73) of *Handel News*, previously published by the Friends of the London Handel Festival but now by the Handel Friends, includes articles by John Andrews (on the libretto for *Semele*), Sandra Bowdler (on staging Handel) and Sarah McCleave (on Handel in Armagh), plus reviews of the Göttingen and Halle festivals, a Review of Reviews of recent Handel performances, and a global listing of forthcoming performances. Enquiries to: The Handel Friends, PO Box 83, Ilminster, Somerset, TA19 9XU.

International Handel Research Prize 2019

In 2019 the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft will award the 4th International Handel Research Prize to a young scholar who has completed a research project on the life or work of Handel and has presented the results in a formal research document. Research teams also may apply. Historical-critical editions are eligible, and studies may be submitted in English or German.

Applicants must have completed their Master’s or Doctoral (or equivalent) studies in musicology or a related discipline between 2016 and 2018. Applications must include the scholarly work in printed and in electronic form, a brief curriculum vitae, and an account of the applicant’s career; they may also include reports on the submitted work. Applications should be sent by **30 November 2018** (postmark) to the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft e.V., Internationale Vereinigung, Geschäftsstelle, Grosse Nikolaistraße 5, D-06108 Halle (Saale), Germany.

The prize is sponsored by the Foundation of the Saalesparkasse and is valued at €2,000. Entries will be judged by a panel from the Foundation and the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft. The prize will be presented at the scholarly conference (3–5 June 2019) during the annual Handel Festival in Halle an der Saale, where the winner will read a paper.

The Handel Institute is a registered charity, no. 296615. All correspondence should be sent to the Newsletter editor, Professor Colin Timms, Department of Music, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, England (C.R.Timms@bham.ac.uk).
