



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE  
NEWSLETTER

The last issue began with an appreciation of the life and work of the American Handel scholar Howard Serwer, who died on 3 May 2000. Howard had been due to deliver the key-note address at the Handel Institute conference in November 1999 but was prevented from doing so by illness; his paper was read by his colleague Paul Traver. As a tribute to Howard, the full text of his

paper is presented at the head of this issue. David Hunter discusses a poem that sheds new light on the early history of *Messiah* performances in Ireland and elsewhere, and Fiona Palmer contributes a review-article based on Alfred Planyavsky's *The Baroque Double Bass Violone*.

Colin Timms

## HANDEL AND THE COORDINATION OF NATIONAL STYLES: BUKOFZER REVISITED

Given the theme of this Handel Institute conference ['Great among the Nations'], it seems fitting to begin with a few observations on Manfred Bukofzer's chapter on Handel in his book *Music in the Baroque Era* (New York: Norton, 1947; London: Dent, 1948). A distinguished specialist in 15th-century English music, Bukofzer asserted in the preface (p. xiii) that the volume needed no justification because it was 'the first book in the English language on the history of baroque music'. At the same time he warned his readers that this history of baroque music adopted a stylistic approach, biographical material being reduced to a minimum, and warning to his subject he continued:

If the history of music is to have more than an antiquarian interest and significance, it must be seen as a history of musical styles, and the history of styles in turn as a history of ideas. The ideas that underlie musical styles can only be shown in a factual stylistic analysis that takes music apart as a mechanic does a motor and shows how musical elements are combined and how they achieve their specific effect.

Indeed, Bukofzer boasted that not once would the word 'beautiful' appear in his text. Today we may have reservations about such a doctrinaire logical positivist approach, but at the time it was refreshingly new. Furthermore, Bukofzer was not as cold-blooded as he pretended, writing, for example, of 'Handel's choral

technique which triumphs' or describing 'the impassioned quartet in *Jephtha*' (p. 338).

Some of the content of *Music in the Baroque Era*, parts of which were written as early as 1945, has been overtaken by subsequent research, yet the book has held up remarkably well, if only because Bukofzer seems to have looked at everything relevant that was in print and much that was not – as evidenced by his 'Checklist of Baroque Books on Music' (417-31), 'List of Editions' (461-9) and Bibliography (433-59). A bit more unsettling than the author's unavoidable errors of fact are a few of his judgements concerning a given composer's style. For example, he characterized the formal aspects and musical textures of Corelli's concertos as 'primitive and tentative' (223-4): today I think we would disagree.

Chapters 8 and 9 of the book are devoted to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach and George Frideric Handel, respectively, and focus nominally on Bukofzer's perception of the composers' responses to the national styles of the era. Chapter 8 is entitled 'Fusion of National Styles: Bach'; the title of chapter 9, the subject of this essay, is 'Coordination of National Styles: Handel'. Bukofzer used the term 'coordination' thrice – in connection with the operas of Agostino Steffani ('the smooth coordination of national styles that Steffani effected in his operas was to become a decisive factor in Handel's music': 307), in his description of Handel's

choral techniques ('Handel ... coordinates four distinct influences: the German cantata, the Italian opera, the English choral tradition, and the oratorio of Carissimi': 338), and in the chapter's perzoration, 'Bach and Handel, a Comparison' ('Handel assimilated the various national styles so that they became his second nature. He thus arrived at a complete coordination of national styles': 349). Chapter 9 describes Handel's musical antecedents in Germany and Italy as the background for a discussion of his music by genre and within the genres, in roughly chronological order. It is notable that only in his discussion of Handel's choral technique does the term 'coordination' appear (as noted above).

But what did Bukofzer mean by the coordination of styles in Handel's music? Commonly understood, the word 'coordination' implies both independence and interdependence. Yet in spite of his obvious enthusiasm for Handel's musico-dramatic miracles, Bukofzer never quite showed how Handel's 'coordination' of national styles served to create musical drama. Part of Bukofzer's failure to do so reflects the style and manner of scholarly writing of his day, but even had Bukofzer wished to expand on his observations – and he may have wanted to do so – the publisher might have balked at the length of such a text. Or perhaps Bukofzer was reluctant to assume that eighteenth-century audiences responded in the same way as we do. It is with all possible diffidence, therefore, that I revisit some of Bukofzer's examples and add a few of my own in an attempt to expand on Bukofzer's splendid work. I hope also to show that, over time, Handel's management – or coordination, if you will – of national styles evolved to the point that it may be said that from them he forged his own manner of composition.

The then conventional view of the nature of the principal national styles of late baroque music was presented

in Chapter 8, where Bukofzer wrote (260):

The harmonic resources of tonality, the concerto style in instrumental and vocal music, and the concerto and sonata forms of 'absolute' music passed as the characteristics of the Italian style; the coloristic and programmatic trends in instrumental music, the orchestral discipline, overture and dance suite, and the highly florid ornamentation of the melody passed as the characteristics of the French style. The German style, universally recognised as the third in the group of national styles, was characterized by its marked proclivity for a solid harmonic and contrapuntal texture. Serving as the mediator between the two poles it brought the reconciliation of the opposed Italian and French techniques in a higher unity.

In one form or another, Bukofzer's formulation has been a kind of 'given' for music historiography from his day to ours. His use of the phrase 'passed as the characteristics', when referring to Italian and French styles, suggests that he had reservations about so pat a formulation, yet when it came to his description of the German style, he used the phrases 'characterized by' and 'universally recognised'.

Underlying Bukofzer's descriptions is the unspoken assumption that these national distinctions (and others, such as the traditional distinction between the church, chamber, and theatre styles) governed the compositional process and audience response. While it is rare for a composer to report that he or she consciously elected to employ a particular manner in a given context, often a passage in a composition clearly reflects a musical commonplace.

For instance, we might well begin with a delightful example by Lully, a Frenchified Florentine, who deliberately imitated the Italian manner in a *tragédie lyrique* – in Act IV, scene 1, of *Alceste* (1674). The accompaniment to the air for Charon, the

infernal boatman, is Lully's rendition of what Bukofzer called the 'concerto' style with a running bass, no doubt a reference to the Italian tradition of Charon as *buffone*. At the end of the air Alcide (Hercules) appears and demands that Charon carry him across the Styx, in a recitative in the French manner. Here Lully coordinates, or rather juxtaposes, the Italian manner with the French. It seems reasonable to assume that Lully's audience was conditioned to recognizing Charon's music as Italianate, and indeed it is strikingly similar to the fourth movement (*Vivace*) of Corelli's concerto grosso, Op. 6, No. 3 (see facing page).

This *topos* finds a late echo in Amastre's 'Anima infida' in Handel's *Serse*, Act II. Betrothed to Serse, but thinking that she has been betrayed by him, Amastre tries to commit suicide, though Elviro, the opera's old-fashioned comic servant, restrains her. The text of Amastre's following aria touches on death and the 'anima infida'. The musical manner here is what Bukofzer called the concerto style, but by 1738 it was surely an old-fashioned concerto: even its scale, the outcome of a very short text, speaks to its archaic manner. It is not difficult to classify the piece as 'old-fashioned Italian' in manner, and with Lully's Charon in mind we can understand Handel's compositional choice, given the topic (death) and the extreme brevity of the aria's text. But what did the London audience of 1738 make of it? Not much, if the poor success of *Serse* is any measure.

Another example of this manner is the quartet celebrating (prematurely) Nero's rise to power in Act I, scene 9, of *Agrippina* (1710). The quartet comprises only eighteen bars, of which the last four consist of Nero singing of his own happiness, but it seems that Handel deliberately used this archaic *topos* to project the humour of the situation. The humour is reinforced in the tiny trio toward the end of Act I when the servant Lesbos interrupts an assignation between



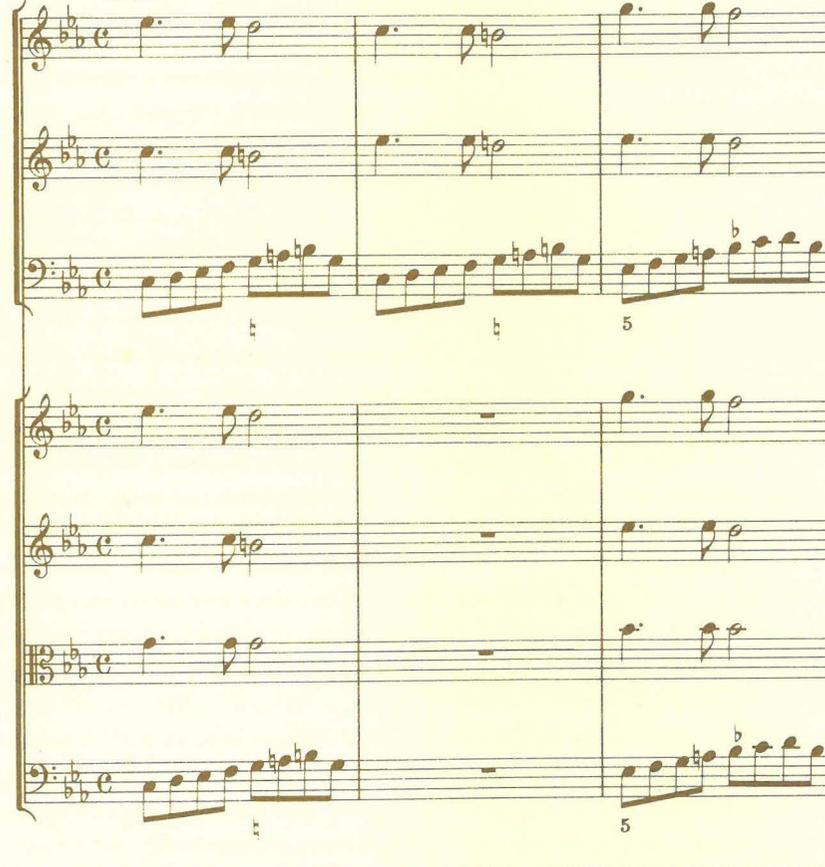
Lully, *Alceste*, IV/I

RITOURNELLE



Corelli, Concerto grosso, Op.6 No.3, mvt. 4

Vivace



Claudius and Poppea with a warning that Agrippina is about to appear.

A related example of this *topos* in *Agrippina* is Claudius's 'Io di Roma il Giove sono' (III/8). Claudius's part, which is for a bass, contains just enough passages in unison with the triple-meter rhythmic *ostinato* of the continuo line to remind the listener of the Italian operatic manner of fifty years earlier. That Claudius is the

bombastic, foolish, ineffectual emperor ('Io di Roma il Giove sono', indeed!) reinforces the association with the operatic Charons of the past, especially as Claudius himself had almost needed the services of the infernal boatman shortly before.

Handel's exploitation of this particular type of concerto manner is consistent with Bukofzer's characterization of Handel's music when

compared to that of J. S. Bach (346):

While Bach transformed these types in a personal way ... Handel used pre-existing types as springboards for his music. ... His aim was not so much the transformation of the type as its animation by means of a great variety of solutions.

By 'solutions' I assume that Bukofzer meant 'approaches', as in the present case, where Handel uses the style both in arias and in a solo ensemble.

My treatment of the preceding examples differs from, and goes beyond, Bukofzer's approach, because he restricted himself to the mere description of stylistic traits, except for his discussion of the so-called mad scene in *Orlando*. In the latter case he observed that, in the *scena* at the end of Act II, Orlando, 'imagining himself in Hades, is torn between visions of wildly contrasting affections' (327). Though Bukofzer mentioned the famous bars in 5/8 metre, he seems to have been unwilling to observe that such a metre could be emblematic of mental imbalance or insanity, though he surely must have known the identical usage in Act III of *Tristan und Isolde*. Indeed, Bukofzer relegated the subject of musical rhetoric to a short passage in a chapter on 'Musical Thought in the Baroque Era'.

In another passage (322) he referred to 'simple dance songs' as a feature of *Agrippina*. The 'simple dance songs' are, in most if not all cases, Italian versions of dances, even though they are not so named. The tunes may be simple, but the settings are not, most of them being *da capo* arias. Even the dances in the *scena* in which Ottone pleads for understanding successively from Agrippina, Poppea, and Nero are cast as three tiny arias.

Turning to others of Bukofzer's examples, we may keep in mind that today's received truth is that *opera seria* was essentially an Italian genre. In its insistence on solo song it is supposed to be the counterpoise to the *tragédie lyrique* of Lully and his



successors. Yet the standard Italian *opera seria* libretto from the 1690s onwards reflected the influence of tenets from French literature and theatre, and as we know from Handel's early oratorios and other works, French drama of the age also affected English theatre as well.

Among these English works is Handel's *Semele*, to which Bukofzer made only a passing reference (335). Yet, like so many commentators after him, Bukofzer called *Semele* 'a work of the highest order ... more worthy of revival than perhaps any other of Handel's neglected oratorios', mentioning it in the course of a discussion of oratorio in which he observed that the work was 'actually based on an opera libretto'. Indeed, the generic identity of *Semele* has been the subject of discussion from its first run to our own times. It is a work that, almost more than any other, demonstrates how Handel brought together two or even three national styles: the French and the Italian, filtered through an English adaptation and including at least two pieces of music in the English style. How did Handel coordinate national styles in *Semele* and how did his treatment serve the drama?

William Congreve, the author of the original libretto of *Semele*, visualized it as an opera, though the model, as Winton Dean pointed out, was not Italian opera but Shadwell's *Psyche*, which in turn had its origins in a *comédie-ballet* of the same name by Molière and Lully.<sup>1</sup> In fact, Handel's Act I and the end of his Act III are structured much in the manner of French opera. Act I contains just four large-scale *da capo* arias as part of an enormous *scena*. Though Bukofzer observed that 'Handel remained essentially faithful to the basic forms of the *opera seria*', he recognized Handel's penchant for creating a 'dramatic grand *scena*'. He

might have added that the natural home for the grand *scena* was the *tragédie lyrique*. As for *da capo* arias, the large-scale *da capo* form had long since found a place in the *tragédie lyrique* under the oxymoron 'ariette'.

In his autograph of *Semele* Handel entitled the curtain-raiser 'Overture', not 'Overtura' as printed by Chrysander: was he trying to tell us something by using the English form of the word? The 'Gavotte' that follows the overture's slow-fast-slow sequence seems conventional enough, and an overture followed by a dance piece was not at all unusual, especially when the opening stage action called for dancing or celebration. Gavottes were, in Mattheson's formulation, expressive of 'jauchzende Freude ... hüpfenden Wesen',<sup>2</sup> and a gavotte chorus often concluded an *opera seria* as part of the *lieto fine*. In *Semele* the opening action is a wedding celebration, but the gavotte's minor key signals that all is not well. In short order Jupiter, in the guise of an eagle, is reported to have abducted a more than willing Semele, rescuing the latter from an unwanted marriage, much to the chagrin of her father and her fiancé. Semele's sister Ino, in love with the groom, is not at all displeased with this turn of events.

The structure of the libretto is apparently traditionally operatic, with a pair of interlocking amatory triangles: Ino - Athamas - Semele; Semele - Jupiter - Juno. At the end of Act I, Semele reports 'alla gavotta' from on high of her 'endless pleasure' in her scandalous liaison with Jupiter. Is there a difference between 'gavotte' and 'alla gavotta'? May we wonder if Handel viewed 'alla gavotta' as something a bit *risqué* and the French gavotte as depicting innocent joy? It is to be noted that the wedding guests seem to approve of the abduction by reprising the 'alla gavotta' as a chorus to end Act I. The effect conveyed by

this *coro* (to use the term found in the autograph) makes the end of Act I feel almost like the end of the opera.

The section from the opening gavotte in *Semele* through to the chorus 'Cease thy vows' (*i.e.*, 'Scene I') is an example of Bukofzer's 'grand *scena*', here comprising recitatives, choruses in the modern sense, and two *da capo* arias as centrepiece. After the arias we have recitatives, a quartet of soloists, and choruses. This design is very much in the manner of French opera, even to Congreve's use of anapæsts in the opening chorus. Scenes 2 and 3 are structurally much like Italian opera, consisting of simple recitatives and *da capo* arias, a duet, and *accompagnato*, but Scene 4 reverts to the grand *scena* manner.

Act II, with its *da capo* arias, seems superficially like Italian opera, except that most of these arias do not lead to exits. Further, Congreve's texts are mostly not in a style typical of Italian opera, because they are tied to the story-line and do not contain the generalized sentiments that would make them suitable for *arie di baule*. The text of the one aria that does have a long history as an *aria di baule*, the famous 'Where'er you walk', is not by Congreve but comes from a poem by Pope in praise of nature. Here it is transformed by its context into an air in praise of Semele's charms, and becomes one of the very few exit arias in the work.

Most of the arias in Act III are not in full *da capo* form. Indeed, scenes 2, 3 and 4, which conclude with Semele's immolation, contain only one *da capo* aria, Semele's 'No, no, I'll take no less'. At the conclusion of this number Semele exits - temporarily. Jupiter soon expresses his regrets in an *accompagnato*, Juno expresses her glee in a brutally frank aria whose B section has been characterized as a 'great British march'; only then does Semele appear for her immolation.

<sup>1</sup> W. Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London, 1959), 368.

<sup>2</sup> J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739; facs. edn, Kassel, 1954), 225.



Surely the justification for the expansiveness of this *scena* was to give the theatre a chance to show off its lightning and thunder, descending god, bursting clouds, and disappearing palaces. This exhibition of stagecraft balances that of Act I with its dying fires and the singer suspended in the air. If we think of the *merveilleux* as typical of French theatre, we should remember that it was Italians like Giacomo Torelli who had devised spectacular stage machines more than a century before.

In his discussion of the oratorios Bukofzer noted that Handel referred at times to the chorus movements in his oratorios as anthems. Although Bukofzer acknowledged that this usage 'seems symbolic of the English share in the formation of the oratorio' (338), he followed this statement with an enthusiastic enumeration of various of Handel's choral practices, with almost no reference to the national styles reflected in the choruses. It is only at the end of this section that he observed that Handel began by composing Italian *oratorio volgare* whose *cori* were in fact solo ensembles: only after his arrival in England did the *cori* become choruses with more than one singer to a part. He also noted Handel's debt to Carissimi, whose *oratorio latino* choruses were performed with more than one singer to a part. Bukofzer could also have invoked the *grand motet* tradition of Lully and his successors, as well.

Bukofzer (339) cited 'Fall'n is the foe' in *Judas Maccabæus* as an example of:

the unique flexibility of [Handel's] choral style, achieved primarily by the interpenetration of polyphonic and chordal textures. ... The sovereign freedom with which he took up and abandoned the one or the other device for dramatic emphasis is strikingly illustrated by [this] chorus.

In revisiting Bukofzer's description, we may note that Handel's harmonic

language in this number is simplicity itself. Is this English? There are only passing excursions into secondary keys, and in places (especially in the opening bars) the harmonic tempo is extremely slow, as befits a trumpet-like ritornello. The setting of the first two lines of text is a madrigalism almost embarrassing in its simplicity. Handel's thumb-print appears in bars 26-9, where the music skids from the tonic D minor key directly to momentary C major, seeming to prepare for the relative major (F); but his setting of the next line, 'Where warlike Judas wields his righteous sword', uses the dominant minor (A). The setting of these words is fugal, surely a madrigalism for the chaos of the battlefield. This episode concludes on the dominant of D minor at bar 41, where the soprano part re-enters with 'Fall'n is the foe'. Alto, tenor and bass take up the first lines again, but the soprano returns to the fugue subject, and we realize that Handel has used a procedure familiar to us from Bach to Beethoven, making a musical idea thematic but later revealing its true role as an accompaniment. The accompaniment to the fugue is a dramatic consequence of the fugue's text: 'where Judas wields his righteous sword, fall'n is the foe'.

*Judas Maccabæus* is one of the small number of Handel's oratorios that kept his name before the public in the century and a half following his death. Note that in this instance neither Bukofzer nor I have said anything about national styles. And this is as it should be, for in many of his later works, we may argue, Handel had learned to transcend national styles and had forged a style of his own - not Italian, not French, not German, and not even English, but unmistakably Handelian. I would hold that his style was then coordinate with - on the same level as - the various national styles, and that Handel had become 'great among the nations'.

Howard Serwer

## MESSIAH IN CORK IN 1744

A poem published in Faulkner's *Dublin Journal* of 22-26 December 1744 and republished in the London *Daily Gazetteer* of 1 January 1745 provides evidence for three 'firsts' concerning Handel's *Messiah*: performance outside Dublin and London, performance during Advent, and performance in a sacred space.<sup>1</sup>

The author, the Rev. James Delacourt, was born at Killowen, not far from Blarney, in 1709. Educated at Trinity College, Dublin, from 1728 to 1732, he was ordained priest in July 1737 and held the curacy of Ballinaboy from 1744 to 1755.<sup>2</sup> His first published poetry was *Abelard to Eloisa in answer to Mr. Pope's fine piece of Eloisa to Abelard*, issued in 1730 while he was still an undergraduate. *The Progress of Beauty* (1732) and *A Prospect of Poetry, address'd to the Right Honourable John, Earl of Orrery* (1733; 5th edn, 1770) quickly followed, and Delacourt was enjoying the support of James Thomson, author of *The Seasons*. According to Alfred Webb's *Compendium of Irish Biography* (1878), 'he fell into intemperate habits and became deranged. The latter part of his life he pretended to have the gift of prophecy, and was regarded with

<sup>1</sup> The text that follows is as printed in the *Daily Gazetteer*. The poem is not in O. E. Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955) or the *Händel-Handbuch*, iv (Leipzig, 1985). It is mentioned by W. H. Grattan Flood, 'Handel's *Messiah* in Cork', *Journal of the Cork Historical and Archeological Society*, xxvi (1920), 40, but he does not transcribe it or say where it was published. The performance and poem are noted in Brian Boydell, *A Dublin Musical Calendar 1700-1760* (Black Rock, 1988), 101. The copy of the *Dublin Journal* microfilmed for the series 'Irish Newspapers in Dublin Libraries, 1685-1754' lacks the relevant issue.

<sup>2</sup> W. Maziere Brady, *Clerical Records of Cork, Cloyne, and Ross*, 3 vols. (London, 1864), i. 17.

To Mr. Handel, on hearing his grand Oratorio, called the MESSIAH, performed to Cathedral Service in the Church of St. Finbarry's, Cork, Thursday, Dec. 6, 1744.

By Mr. DELACOURT.

Great Son of Tubal! how thy Concords flow,  
Wing the soft Sight, and melt the Breast of Snow!  
More than Cæcilia did, you made appear,  
She drew one Angel, but you Thousands, here.  
Here, in brisk Strains, your Cherubims rejoice;  
Or God apparent, in the small still Voice!  
Hark! his Trump sounds, and calls each neighb'ring Tomb  
To the last Audit, or the Day of Doom:  
Ne'er were my Passions shook, so rous'd before,  
It thrill'd my Blood, my Pulses beat no more;  
Death seem'd attentive to th' harmonious Sphere,  
And Silence Self, sat listning in my Ear.  
Thus Eastern Swains, that kept their Flocks by Night,  
Heard Songs Seraphic hymn'd by Sons of Light;  
Their Awe-struck Senses seem'd absorb'd and lost,  
Drown'd in the Chorus of the Heav'nly Host.  
Well might Men say with Jacob, in that Case,  
Of Barry's Cell, how dreadful is this Place!  
Surely the Lord is here from Morn till Ev'n,  
This is the House of God, and this the Gate of Heav'n.

some awe after a successful guess as the day on which the garrison of Havannah, then besieged, would be compelled to surrender'. The Handel poem is not included in his *Poems* (Cork, 1778).<sup>3</sup>

Delacourt's passionate, even ecstatic outburst can be compared for tone and style with Laurence Whyte's poem, written after the first Dublin performance.<sup>4</sup> While Delacourt records an overwhelming personal experience, Whyte is formal, relatively impersonal, conventionally religious. Delacourt anticipates the vivid imagery of Christopher Smart and William Blake in his invocation of dread, doom and the contrast with the light of God and heaven.

Why should Cork have been the

third site for *Messiah's* performance? During the 18th century, Cork was the second-largest city in Ireland, with a population of about 60,000 at mid-century, equivalent to that of the second-largest city on the mainland – Edinburgh.<sup>5</sup> According to Charles Smith, whose *Ancient and Present State of ... Cork* was published by subscription:<sup>6</sup>

... every entertainment that has the authority of fashion in *Dublin* (which place also takes its example from *London*) prevails here; and some perhaps in a higher degree. ... Besides the public consorts, there are several private ones, where the performers are Gentlemen and Ladies of such good skill, that one would imagine the God of music

had taken a large stride from the continent over *England* to this island; for indeed the whole nation are of late become admirers of this entertainment, and those who have no ear for music are generally so polite as to pretend to like it. A stranger is agreeably surprised to find in many houses he enters, *Italic* airs saluting his ears: and it has been observed, that *Corelli* is a name in more mouths than many of our Lord Lieutenants. The humane and gentle disposition of the inhabitants, may in some measure be attributed to the refinements of this divine art: The harp, which is the armorial ensign of the kingdom, wrought great atcheivements [sic] in the hands of the *Israelite* king; and *Cambrensis* affirms, that the *Irish* some hundred years ago were incomparably well skilled in this instrument, beyond what he had observed in many other nations, which is also confirmed by *Polydore Virgil*.

Elsewhere in the book (ii. 405), Smith remarks that the Charitable and Music Society resolved in January 1744:

... that surplus money arising [sic] from their subscriptions and performances, should be applied to the support of this infirmary: ... On *Hamand's Marsh* is a large pleasant bowling-green ... on it a band of music has been supported by subscription, for the entertainment of the Gentlemen and Ladies who frequent it; adjacent to it is the assembly house, where assemblies are held two days in the week; as also a weekly consort, which is maintained by a subscription for the support of the infirmary: Here is an organ, the other performers play on violins, *German* flutes, &c. With

<sup>3</sup> Delacourt may have died in 1785. For samples of his verse, including one in which he welcomed back soldiers from the American war, see S. Deane (ed), *The Field*

*Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 3 vols. (Derry, 1991).

<sup>4</sup> See Deutsch, *Handel*, 546-7.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. P. O'Flanagan and C. G. Buttimer (ed), *Cork History & Society* (Dublin, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> C. Smith, *The Ancient and Present State of the County and City of Cork*, 2 vols. (Dublin, 1750), ii. 406-7. Delacourt and Rev. Patrick Delaney were subscribers.



vocal music, and are sometimes assisted by Gentlemen, who play to encourage this charity.

The gentlemen of the weekly consort had clear charitable goals and their own place for performance. If they were involved with *Messiah*, why would the Cathedral be used? The old St. Finbarr's Cathedral was taken down in 1734 and rebuilt.<sup>7</sup> Robert Clayton was appointed bishop in 1735. Clayton (1695-1752) was a regular correspondent with Charlotte, Lady Sundon (died 1 January 1742), who was Woman of the Bedchamber to Caroline of Ansbach as Princess of Wales and Queen Consort. Her husband, William Clayton (1672-1755), was created Baron Sundon of Ardagh in 1735, at which time he was M.P. (Whig) for Westminster.<sup>8</sup> The Claytons were distantly related through the male line, William's great-grandfather and Robert's great-great-grandfather being William Clayton (c.1550-1632) of Croke, Lancashire.<sup>9</sup> Bishop Clayton was a governor of Mercer's Hospital in Dublin and had been present on 21 November 1741 when the governors decided to ask Handel to play the organ during the musical performance at St Andrew's Church.<sup>10</sup> Bishop Clayton's wife was Katherine Donnellan, the sister of Mrs Anne Donnellan, a friend of Handel and beneficiary in his will.<sup>11</sup> If it was Clayton who was responsible for organizing the performance at his cathedral in Cork, it seems

improbable that he was unaware of the controversy concerning *Messiah*'s performance in a playhouse in London. The pioneering effort in bringing *Messiah* into a sacred space was not emulated until the Foundling Hospital Chapel performances that began in 1750.<sup>12</sup>

The Cork performance was the first during Advent, the season when so many performances of *Messiah* now take place. It was followed eight days later by the first Advent performance in Dublin, being the fifth performance there and the third under Matthew Dubourg's direction.<sup>13</sup> There is no indication of it in Boydell's *Calendar* of Dublin performances or rehearsals by Dubourg from 1 to 9 December, so it is possible that Dubourg travelled to Cork, perhaps with some of the members of the State Musick and soloists, to put on the performance there – though, given poor roads and the inclement season, this possibility is not as strong as it might seem. The permission of the Lords Justices would presumably have been required for such an absence from Dublin, as Dubourg and the other State Musicians served at their pleasure while the Lord Lieutenant was not in residence.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, given the strong musical life in Cork, it is conceivable that local musicians – including those few belonging to the Cathedral, of which the organist was William Smith – mounted the production themselves.<sup>15</sup> They would have

needed the score and parts from Dublin, or a set copied from those or sent from London.

What does the phrase in the poem's title 'performed to Cathedral Service' mean? Performed during a service at the Cathedral seems highly improbable, owing to the work's lack of liturgical warrant and its length. Could it mean performed at the Cathedral as a service, that is, as a fund-raiser? If so, how much money was raised and which charities benefited from the performance?

Much remains to be uncovered: who were the performers, which numbers did they perform (was it only the 'Christmas' portion?), where did the score and parts come from, did Handel himself authorize the performance, who was the driving force behind it, who funded it, who attended, and was the performance repeated in subsequent years? Whatever the answers, Ireland can lay claim to additional *Messiah* firsts.

David Hunter

## THE DOUBLE BASS VIOLONE

The name Alfred Planyavsky has long been associated with reputable double bass research. His monumental *Geschichte des Kontrabasses* (Tutzing, 1970; 2nd edn, 1984) marked a turning-point in our understanding of the development and application of the instrument, its makers and players. With the publication in 1989 of *Der Barockkontrabass Violine*, Planyavsky expanded one chapter of his *Geschichte* into a more detailed study of a previously murky area of research. Now translated by James Barket into a usefully illustrated volume, *The Baroque Double Bass Violine* (Maryland: Scarecrow Press, 1998) furnishes an accessible source for anyone interested in issues of terminology (the violone/violoncello

<sup>7</sup> R. Caulfield, *Annals of St. Fin Barre's Cathedral* (Cork, 1871), 64. The new building was in turn demolished in 1864.

<sup>8</sup> G. E. Cockayne, *The Complete Peerage*, ed. Vicary Gibbs, 13 vols. (London, 1910-59), xii/1, 490-91.

<sup>9</sup> R. Stewart-Brown, 'The Pedigree of the Claytons of Croke, Fulwood and Adlington, in the County of Lancaster', *The Genealogist*, xxvi (1909/10), 129-42.

<sup>10</sup> Deutsch, *Handel*, 526.

<sup>11</sup> E. Harris, 'Three Ladies of Handel's Will', *Newsletter of the American Handel Society*, xv/1-2 (2000), 1, 4-7.

<sup>12</sup> Donald Burrows asserts that cathedral performances did not begin until the late 1750s:

*Handel: Messiah* (Cambridge, 1991), 47.

<sup>13</sup> The London première on 23 March 1743 had been followed by two further performances: A. H. Scouten, *The London Stage ... Part 3, 1729-1749* (Carbondale, 1961), 1043.

<sup>14</sup> William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, left for the last time on 29 December 1743. His replacement, Philip Stanhope, 4th Earl of Chesterfield, arrived on 10 October 1745.

<sup>15</sup> The cathedral choir comprised perhaps as few as four vicars choral and two choristers in the late 17th century and four vicars choral, four choirmen, and four boys in the early 19th: W. H. Grindle, *Irish Cathedral Music* (Belfast, 1989) 34, 78.

debate), local tradition, design, or performing practice.

What exactly does the book offer to students of Handel? It unravels terminology and emphasizes local definitions and contradictions. The verdicts of Ganassi (Venice, 1542/3), Agazzari (Siena, 1607), Praetorius (Wolfenbüttel, 1619), and Banchieri (Bologna, 1609) are compared and contrasted. We discover that the terms 'violone' and 'contrabasso' were synonymous. Panyavsky reports (p. 2) that:

... in the two centuries that followed, a gradual change is observed from the six-string violone tuned in fourths (and usually with one third as well) with frets, to the four- or five-string double bass tuned in fourths without frets. But this metamorphosis did not proceed in a steady linear pattern. Instead it occurred by means of countless intermediate, overlapping forms and types and was not completed until the nineteenth century.

The trio sonata debate is assessed and the thorny issue of the use of violoncello rather than violone is tackled, with the result that Panyavsky clarifies the use of two differently-sized double basses in works by Biber and Telemann. Attention is drawn to the publication of Corelli's solo sonatas, Op. 5 (Venice, 1706), with bass parts for cello and double bass. By the end of Chapter 6 Panyavsky is able to conclude (p. 109) that 'with the definition of the *violin bass* as a *violoncello* tuned C-G-d-a and the violone as a *contra basso* tuned E<sub>1</sub>-A<sub>1</sub>-D-G (Bismantova) the two string basses developed their role as *Bassi* – often playing the same part together in

octaves. This phenomenon sanctioned the term *double basse* (Brossard)<sup>1</sup>.

Panyavsky reminds us that the violoncello was used as an instrument 'of the middle range' (113) whose playing position was closely related to the viola – a fact which provoked Leopold Mozart to observe that 'these days the violoncello is also held between the legs' (112).<sup>2</sup>

Panyavsky advocates a greater recognition of the value of the violone in operatic recitative and aria at the time of Handel and J. S. Bach. He uses Handel's *Pastor Fido* (1712) as an example of a work containing passages for *violono e violono grosso*, *violono grosso* and *violoncello* to demonstrate the composer's understanding of the distinction between violone and violoncello (118).

All in all, this is a thought-provoking and readable book that unfolds logically and is characterized by careful discussion and evaluation of primary and secondary sources. Scholars with primarily baroque interests may find the title misleading since the scope of the ten chapters is broader than implied. Chapter 1 concerns the development of the string bass in the 16th and 17th centuries, and by Chapter 9 the violone/double bass in the 19th century and beyond is under scrutiny. The translation is careful, perhaps occasionally a little cumbersome, and there are some typographical errors. Nevertheless, the availability in English of Panyavsky's rigorous attempt to put the record straight, and foster awareness of the considerable importance of the double bass violone, is both welcome and useful.

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<sup>1</sup> Sources: B. Bismantova, *Compendio musicale* (Ferrara, 1677, suppl. 1694; facs. edn, Florence, 1978); S. de Brossard, *Dictionnaire de musique*, 2nd edn (Paris, 1703).

<sup>2</sup> L. Mozart, *Violinschule* (Augsburg, 1756), 3.

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