



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER

We apologize for the lateness of this issue, which is due to a variety of factors. Patience is rewarded with two research articles and two festival reviews. Reviews of Handel's own performances are few and far between, but one appeared, in the form of a letter, in the *Daily Advertiser* of 5 March 1740, two days after the première of *L'allegro*; its implications are explored by Ruth Smith. Robert Smith was a

Georgian music collector whose identity has been obscured by mystery and error; intrigued by questions about him, Lucy Roe went digging in the archives and uncovered the new information presented here. The reviews, by David Vickers and Terence Best, convey a vivid impression of the annual Handel festivals in Göttingen and Halle.

Colin Timms

HANDEL, MILTON, AND A NEW DOCUMENT FROM THEIR ENGLISH AUDIENCE

In 1737 a monument to John Milton (1608-74) was unveiled in Westminster Abbey. Having been refused even a mention on a monument there in 1710 (because of his republicanism),¹ Milton was now regarded as a jewel of British heritage. He was the national, classic poet, repeatedly hailed as 'the favourite poet of this nation' and 'the ornament and glory of his country'.² When William Lauder alleged that he had been a plagiarist, a correspondent in the *Gentleman's Magazine* declared that 'the question concerns the whole nation' – with some justice, given that it prompted forty items in just one magazine.³ After the Bible, Milton's works were probably the most-read texts in England while Handel was writing oratorios.

Admiration was not parochial. Milton's birthplace had been on the international tourist trail until it was destroyed

in the fire of London.⁴ *Paradise Lost* was said to be 'justly esteemed and admired by every *Englishman*, and also by the *Learned Abroad*'.⁵ Handel could have read *Paradise Lost* in German, translated into verse by Ernst Gottlieb (1682), and into prose by Johann Jacob Bodmer (1732), or in Italian, in a translation (1735) that made the literary reputation of one of his own opera librettists, Paolo Rolli. British authors had given the national epic an even more epic, classical and indeed international guise by translating it into Latin: there had been eight partial Latin versions by the time the Oxford professor of poetry completed his full translation in 1744.⁶

To most readers Milton meant *Paradise Lost*, which was printed on average every year in the eighteenth century (as compared to an average of one printing every other year for Shakespeare). A variorum edition appeared

1 Dustin Griffin, *Regaining Paradise: Milton and the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), 15.

2 Ibid., 33.

3 Ibid., 35; John T. Shawcross, ed., *Milton: The Critical Heritage*, II (London, 1972), 27-9; John Lauder, *An Essay on Milton's Use and Imitation of the Moderns* (London, 1750).

4 Thomas Birch, 'An Historical and Critical Account of the Life and Works of Mr John Milton', in Birch ed., *A Complete Collection of the Historical, Political, and Miscellaneous Works of John Milton* (London, 1738), I, p. lxi.

5 James Paterson, *A Complete Commentary, with Etymological, Explanatory, Critical and Classical Notes on Milton's Paradise Lost* (1744), II, 130.

6 Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 64. Dustin Griffin, *Regaining Paradise: Milton and the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1986), 15.



in 1749, the first of any English work, and five concordances had been produced by 1762.⁷ Defoe, echoing Dryden, dubbed *Paradise Lost* 'the greatest, best, & most sublime work now in the *English Tongue*'.⁸ By 1725 it was 'the noblest Poem, next to those of *Homer* and *Virgil*, that ever the wit of man produc'd'.⁹ By 1744 it was simply 'the *prime Poem* in the World'.¹⁰ It was the paramount text for the prevailing cult of the sublime style, in its paramount form, the religious sublime.¹¹

It is unsurprising that Handel was offered at least two librettos of *Paradise Lost*, in the hope of a dream team uniting the greatest composer, famed for his capacity for the sublime, with the greatest achievements of the sublime in English verse. In 1740 John Lockman, in a discussion of the merits of oratorio as developed by Handel, wished for an oratorio of *Paradise Lost*, which would surely be the ideal text.¹² At least two composers had attempted an extract, setting Adam and Eve's morning hymn from Book V.¹³ In 1744 Mrs Delany adapted Book IX into 'a drama for an oratorio ... to give to Mr. Handel to compose to; it has cost me a good deal of thought and contrivance'. She began 'with Satan's threatenings to seduce the woman, her being seduced follows, and it ends with the man's yielding to temptation'.¹⁴ In 1746 John Upton reported to his friend James Harris that

'when last I came from Handel's oratorio I was so charmed, that to work I went, and from Milton's *Paradise Lost*, drew out a plan of a new oratorio'. He sent the first two acts to Handel, but did not get a positive response.¹⁵ These proto-librettists' texts may have remained unset because of their guiding principle. Upton told Harris that 'I have religiously observed Milton's words, tho' I have here and there varied the measure'. Mrs Delany was even more purist: 'I would not have a word or a thought of Milton's altered; and I hope to prevail with Handel to set it *without* having *any of the lines put into verse*, for that will take from its dignity.'

Among art-lovers in the 1740s, at the height of the Milton cult, *Paradise Lost* was, it seems, too sacred a text to bear major alteration.¹⁶ This may have been one reason why the librettos were still-born. The Morning Hymn composers had left their text unaltered, but their works were not of oratorio length. Newburgh Hamilton also showed considerable reverence when he compiled the libretto for Handel's *Samson* in 1742; he invented barely a line of recitative, and for the arias and choruses he used other, rhymed, poems by Milton.

Samson and the attempts to elicit a setting of *Paradise Lost* were preceded by Handel's great popular success with his first Milton setting: *L'allegro, il*

penseroso ed il moderato (1740). That success had itself been preceded by another great success for a musical version of a Milton work: Dalton's and Arne's *Comus* (1738), a musico-dramatic adaptation of Milton's *Mask* which was so successful that it renamed the original.¹⁷ If Handel had doubted the possibility of a match between Milton and the theatre box office, *Comus*'s popularity would have reassured him.¹⁸ And while Milton's paired poems of *L'allegro* and *Il penseroso* had – unlike *Comus* – no dramatis personae, beyond the two temperaments of the cheerful and the serious person, they had advantages over *Paradise Lost* for the composer: shorter sentences, simpler syntax, octosyllabic (rather than pentameter) metre with some variation, and rhyme.

The correspondence recording the work of the three librettists of *L'allegro* – James Harris, whose idea it was (he was a devoted Miltonist), his and Handel's friend Charles Jennens, and Handel himself – is now available in print.¹⁹ It is the fullest real-time record we have of the process of composition for and by Handel apart from the Handel's correspondence with Jennens about *Belshazzar*, and it gives a fascinating insight into Handel's requirements. In particular, the essence of Harris's plan, the alternation of sections of the two poems, played brilliantly to Handel's need for short blocks of contrasted or

7 J.W. Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition* (Urbana, IL, 1915), ch. 2.

8 Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 35.

9 Elijah Fenton, 'Life', in Fenton ed., Milton, *Paradise Lost*, 12th edn (1725), p. xxi, cited Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 33.

10 Paterson, *Complete Commentary*, cited Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 33.

11 Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 37.

12 *Rosalinda: A Musical Drama ... to which is Prefixed, An Enquiry into the Rise and Progress of Operas and Oratorios. With some Reflections on Lyric Poetry and Music* (London, 1740), pp. xx-xxi.

13 John Ernest Galliard, *The Hymn of Adam and Eve* (1728); Philip Hart, *The Morning Hymn, from the Fifth Book of Milton's Paradise Lost* (c. 1729).

14 *Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, ed. Lady Llanover (London, 1861-2), II, 278-80.

15 Clive Probyn, *The Sociable Humanist: The Life and Works of James Harris 1709-1780* (Oxford, 1991), 72-3.

16 A reticence not shown earlier, by Dryden (*The State of Innocence and Fall of Man. An Opera*, 1674), or subsequently, by Benjamin Stillingfleet and John Christopher Smith jnr (*Paradise Lost. An Oratorio*, 1760).

17 Ed. Julian Herbage, *Musica Britannica*, III (London, 1951); Shawcross, *Critical Heritage*, II, 9-10; Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 67-8.

18 It was preceded by Rolli's *Sabrina* (1737), an Italian opera (in Italian) with a story modelled on *Comus*, which had more mixed fortunes: it gave Farinelli the embarrassment of singing to a house worth barely £35 (according to Burney), but it survived for eleven performances (*The London Stage 1660-1800: Part 3, 1729-1747*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale, IL, 1961), II). Handel later (1745) wrote some music for *Comus* himself, but not for public performance: Betty Matthews, 'Unpublished Letters concerning Handel', *Music & Letters*, 40 (1959), 264-8, and letter from Winton Dean, *ibid.*, 406-7; Anthony Hicks, 'Handel's Music for "Comus"', *Musical Times*, 117 (1976), 28-9; music ed. Hicks and Colin Timms as *Music for Comus* (London, 1977).

19 *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: The Family Papers of James Harris 1732-1780*, ed. Donald Burrows and Rosemary Dunhill (Oxford, 2002), 82-5, 88-9.



complementary material, in this case both, and Handel himself intensified the plan by shortening the extent of individual sections. There is much still to be elicited from the record of *L'allegro's* genesis.

It was Handel who asked Jennens to adapt Milton's *At a Solemn Musick* ('Blest Pair of Sirens') to form a final part and finale to the contrasting episodes and, when he demurred ('As it stands, it has no sort of connection with the other'),²⁰ asked him to write a conclusion himself, the result being *Il moderato*. The modern listener usually finds the didacticism of *Il moderato* hard to swallow, and its existence justified only by the fact that it gave rise to one of Handel's most beautiful duets (interestingly, at the moment when Jennens borrows from another poet – Shakespeare – and employs concrete nature imagery of the kind that so evidently stimulated Handel in Milton's poems).²¹ But as the review below indicates in its generous comment on *Il moderato*, the eighteenth-century audience was differently attuned to moral comment in creative art. In 1735 John Hughes, whose verses were among the first English texts that Handel set, had offered a moralizing conclusion to Milton's paired poems in his own *Collected Poems*.²² In 1740 Francis Peck, in his commentary on Milton, reported that Dalton's and Arne's *Comus*:

... was at first thought an attempt which would never answer in the success, as it was imagined that the town would not taste MILTON's beauties, or at least would think it too heavy an entertainment for a whole evening, to hear only fine poetical sentiments & moral

instructions. But the event was the very reverse. Every night it was performed the audience received it with the utmost satisfaction & delight, & were no where more attentive than in those scenes where there are such excellent lessons of morality.²³

Comus showed that the reinforcement of moral teaching with newly written text was acceptable. Dalton's and Arne's vocal additions included an anti-masque to tempt the brothers, and a display by the brothers of a resolute temperance comparable to their sister's. Dalton also incidentally pointed to the Miltonic text that Handel might use, by introducing his Act II with the first 36 lines of *L'allegro*, even making a cut (lines 17-24) which is made in Handel's libretto. Moral didacticism was a pronounced feature of several of the poems, including some of the most popular of the period, which Milton's pair inspired, as was the apostrophizing of personified abstractions. *Il moderato* was in the mainstream of imitation.²⁴

The following letter from the *Daily Advertiser* of 5 March 1740 was recently noticed by Thomas McGeary and kindly made available by him for publication here. Dated two days after the first performance of *L'allegro*, and published in an issue that appeared the day before the second, it provides us with an addition to the slender file of reviews of Handel's performances. While avowedly partisan, it is more than a puff, its frame of reference encompassing the nature of good art and its reception, the nature of humanity, the state of the nation, Handel's oeuvre, and Milton's status as a poet.

The writer begins by welcoming the arrival and increase of musical entertainments which, unlike masquerades, set sound to sense. The dawning 'Light of rational Musick' is to the nation's credit, since public entertainment reflects, as well as shapes, 'the Manners of a People'. The statements and attitudes of these opening remarks place the author in the lobby for high-art English-language setting.²⁵ The desirability of linking sound and (good, English) sense, in order to raise the level of art and to raise and celebrate the character of the audience for art, is the writer's underlying agenda, and Handel's *L'allegro* is presented as a splendid union of the best of sound, sense and national well-being.

The writer identifies himself as a committed supporter of Handel's English word settings by asserting that Handel's oratorios have restored music 'to its original distinction' as the noblest, because the least sensual, of the pleasures. He instances all the oratorios heard in London to date, and (despite its lukewarm reception) *Israel in Egypt* 'above all'. To these he adds *L'allegro, il penseroso ed il moderato*.

Here the writer was consciously breaking new ground, discussing a piece that had so far been heard only once. He explains the meaning of the words '*L'allegro*' and '*Il penseroso*' to his readers, reassuring them that the works are in English, in fact no less than 'the most beautiful Compositions we have in our Language', by a 'Divine Author'; and that the 'as divine *Composer* of the Musick' has preserved the Italian titles only 'out of Respect to the Author', and not in compliance with 'the Barbarity of an expiring Taste' – by which he means

20 Ibid. The idea was not wasted: Hamilton used 'Blest pair of sirens' for the conclusion of *Samson*.

21 Friedrich Chrysander, *G. F. Händel* (Leipzig, 1859, 1860, 1867, repr. Hildesheim, 1966), III.1, p. 130 (I owe this reference to Anthony Hicks).

22 His appreciation dated from at least 1697, an avant-garde taste; see Raymond Dexter Havens, *The Influence of Milton on English Poetry* (Cambridge, MA, 1922), 442-3.

23 *New Memoirs of the Life and Poetical Works of Mr. John Milton* (London, 1740), 21, quoting *The Universal Spectator*, no. 454.

24 Parnell's *Hymn to Contentment*, Dyer's *Grongar Hill*, Collins's *Ode to Evening*, and Thomson's *Seasons*; George Sherburn, 'The Early Popularity of Milton's Minor Poems', *Modern Philology*, 17 (1919-20), 259-78, 515-40, at 518-28; Havens, *Influence of Milton*, 441, 444-7; Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 72-82, 184-6.

25 Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge, 1995), 70-80.



(as his conclusion shows) the British taste for Italian opera. The writer puts appreciation of the poems at the highest aesthetic and spiritual level. To enjoy this 'Collection of Images, most beautifully put together, relating to those two Frames of Mind' which are so true to the tendency of human nature, is a form of homage to the creator of human nature Himself.

Milton's peerless matching of images to states of mind is so little known, says the writer, because it is not published separately, but bound in with the relatively unpopular *Paradise Regained*. This was accurate. Unlike *Paradise Lost*, *L'allegro* and *Il penseroso* appeared only eleven times before 1740, and never in a separate edition.²⁶ The author wishes that the poems from which the libretto was extracted had been printed in their entirety, in a smaller font, as an appendix to the wordbook; the audience's enjoyment would have been greatly enhanced and the author of *Il moderato* could well bear the comparison. The writer hopes that they will soon be independently issued, 'since the Town has, by the successful Boldness of the Musical Poet, been so unexpectedly and so agreeably *let into* the Beauties of them'. Moreover, appreciation of the poems will feed appreciation of Handel's version of them. This was prophetic. According to Joseph Warton, writing in 1757, Milton's *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* 'lay in a sort of obscurity, the private enjoyment of a few curious readers, till they were set to admirable music by Mr Handel', and 'are now universally known'.²⁷ The author assures his

readers that the Miltonic vocabulary and classical allusions in the libretto need not frighten fops and ladies, for they are accessible to anyone with basic literacy (implying, again, that to enjoy Handel is an index of belonging in good society, and that that society is not narrow or exclusive).

In his penultimate paragraph the writer instances one of the moments in Handel's 'enactment' of Milton that is always popular with modern audiences ('Laughter ho- ho- ho- holding both his sides'), and it is pleasant to hear that it was equally popular at first hearing, even obliging the writer to rebuke the audience for applauding too soon. The instigator of *L'allegro*, James Harris, singled out Handel's mimetic power for particular praise in his work on words-and-music, while other critics despised its literalism, in a debate that drew examples from *L'allegro*.²⁸

The writer's final paragraph includes another stab at Italian opera and link of art with patriotism. Handel's cast included 'the Boy', and this gives the opportunity to make a contrast between 'a *foreign Eunuch*' (Italian opera castrato) and this youngster, who may have an 'imperfectly harmonious Voice' but, as a potential defender and peopler of the British nation, is vastly preferable. Here the writer implicitly engages with Milton's status as the poet of British national integrity, liberty and culture, which was at its apogee when Handel's *L'allegro* was first performed.²⁹

Ruth Smith

Appendix

Letter to the *Daily Advertiser*

Feb 29, 1740

To the Author

SIR,

In your Paper of the 19th instant [19 Feb, no 2830, 'Letter from a Batchelor', on masquerades] you give us the *Censures* of one, who subscribes himself a *Batchelor*, on the *Masquerades*: – I send you here the *Sentiments* of a *Widower* on another *Entertainment* that is lately, God be praised, risen up among us, which I would beg leave to term, our *sensible Musick*, or, (a Thing long unheard of among us) *Musick* set to *Sense*. The unmarried Ladies, whose Influence is justly so extensive, will, I hope, have Respect to our Opinions, in condemning the *one*, and recommending the *other*, for the Sake of our *Condition*, if not for the Justness of our Decision. I hope also, in Time, it will be seen, That we speak the Sense of *our* respective *Fraternities*; and if so, – let the *married Men* and their *Wives* stand out if they dare. They have been long, more is the Pity, in an *obsolete Way*, and to concur with us will be found in the End to be the best Means they can make use of to *get out* of it.

Publick Diversions have a very near Relation to the *Manners* of a People. They are the Effect of Manners, as well as the Occasion of them. And, I hope, the Light of *rational Musick*, that is seen, to our Honour, to be in its Dawn, will be as prevailing, as the Darkness of a *Midnight Masquerade* has been, to our great Disgrace: and which may truly be said, now, to be ashamed to see the Light, since, as your *Correspondent* well observed, it was obliged to have Recourse to a *Lye* for a *Repetition* of it.

Diversions, within the Limits of Vertue, are lawful, are honourable, they are our Duty to indulge. And the more Publick Concurrence there is in

26 Sherburn, 'Early Popularity', 260; Good, *Studies in the Milton Tradition*, 38-9.

27 *Essay on the Genius and Writings of Pope*, I, 38, cited Sherburn, 'Early Popularity', 259. Although they were printed separately only once during the eighteenth century, they also became known in and through their libretto form.

28 James Harris, 'A Discourse on Music, Painting and Poetry' in *Three Treatises* (London, 1744), 66-7, but see also 99-101; Charles Avison, *An Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1752), 57-60; William Hayes, *Remarks on Mr. Avison's Essay on Musical Expression* (London, 1753), 64-8.

29 Griffin, *Regaining Paradise*, 16-17, 20-21, 30-31, 36-37; Smith, *Handel's Oratorios*, 292-3. Anthony Hicks informs me that Handel surrendered this point of popular appeal in his revival of *L'allegro* in the following year, when the castrato Andreoni sang several numbers, and in Italian. I am grateful to Mr Hicks for reading and commenting on this paper, and to Thomas McGeary for making the *Daily Advertiser* letter available to me.



them, under that Restriction, the greater is the Happiness and Honour of our Nature.

Of all the *Entertainments* allowed us, *Musick* has ever been held, by the wisest of Men, to have the Pre-eminence. It has something in it, so nearly ally'd to the superior and more noble Part of us, that, tho' the Entertainment it yields passes through the Organs of Sense, it can hardly be deem'd of a *sensual* Nature. – I mean, Sounds set to *Sense*, or expressive of it. What Dignity has there not been given to it, to all reasonable Minds, since our *Deborahs*, our *Esthers*, our *Sauls*, and, above all, our *Israels in Egypt*, have restored its original Distinction; – may I be pardon'd, if I add, our *Allegros* and *Penserosos*? Foreign Words, *these*, which the Divine *Author* of the respective Poems (the most beautiful Compositions we have in our Language) chose to give to them, and which the as divine *Composer* of the Musick set to them, has out of Respect to the Author, and not (I dare say) out of Choice, to comply with the Barbarity of an expiring Taste, preserved: *Il Penseroso* and *L'Allegro* signifying no more than what may be sufficiently express'd in our own Language by the *Thoughtful* and the *Gay Person*. They being each a Collection of Images, most beautifully put together, relating to those two Frames of Mind, so alternately incident to Human Nature. The *respective* Delights of which we have Faculties given us to relish; and as we have the Faculties for both, it is a Homage paid to the Author of our Nature, rationally, to indulge the lighter Enjoyment of the *one*, as well as the severer, but to a Virtuous Mind and Ear, the much more transporting Entertainment of the *other*.

Never was there in any Language so beautiful a Collection of Images suited to each of those *Tempers*, as in the *two* original *Poems*; unfortunately shut up from the World in a Book of the Author's not much enquir'd after, – his

Paradise Regained. But had they been printed entire, and annex'd to the *Drama*, in a small Character, it would have been an agreeable Compliment paid to the Audience, had heighten'd the Relish of the Musick, and been no Injustice done to the *Fitter* of them for the Theatre; whose dramatic *Moderato* (or *Mean* between them) can very well bear being compared together. – This is as great a Compliment as it deserves, and nothing penn'd, on such an Occasion, needs a greater. I hope, however, we shall soon see them call'd for, and *separately* printed, since the Town has, by the successful Boldness of the Musical Poet, been so unexpectedly and so agreeably *let into* the Beauties of them. The more they are read and relish'd, the greater will the *Entertainment* be, – to all, I mean, who have Souls for Sense, as well as Ears for Sounds. – As to those who have not, the *Drama*, by itself, is by much too good for them. If the *pretty Fellows* cannot help the *Ladies* to the Meaning of some hard, but most beautiful Words, or explain the entertaining Allusions to antient Fable therein, they need not trouble the *Doctor* of the *Parish* to unfold it; an ordinary *Curate* or *Reader*, if requir'd, or *Bailey's Dictionary*, will serve the Turn.

I can't help observing the *Risk* the great *Composer* of the Musick has run for the Entertainment of his Audience, whilst, to show his Mastery in his Art, he has not only adapted his Sounds in the most exquisite Manner to the airy and solemn Parts in general, but has *hazarded* the *Expression* of a *Laugh* itself (the *Propriety*, if I may so call it, of human Nature) in his Musick. This he has executed in so masterly a Way, as must do the Greatness of his Skill as much Honour, as it will give Entertainment to the *Hearers*, if the *Eclat* it excites cou'd be at first restrain'd, and the *Laughs* repress the Loudness of their Sympathy till the *Chorus* was got into it.

I shall conclude by observing, that I

had rather lend my Ear to the imperfectly harmonious Voice of an *English Boy*, who may live to defend and *people* his native Country, than to the most perfect Expressions of his Art in a *foreign Eunuch*, who enervates the Place he appears in, and is in himself so great a Disgrace to *Man*, and ought, wherever he is seen, to be, in the most superlative Degree, the Detestation and the Horror of every *Woman*. I am,

Your humble Servant,
A Widower

ROBERT SMITH, MUSIC COLLECTOR

Robert Smith was one of the many eighteenth-century collectors of important Handel manuscripts. Among his numerous possessions was a volume containing the conducting score of the 1732 *Acis and Galatea* and the end of the autograph of the 1708 *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*; this manuscript was eventually acquired by the British Museum and discussed by Barclay Squire in 1921.¹ Among Smith's non-Handelian possessions were copies of Pevernage's *Harmonia celeste* (1583), Gouy's *Airs à quatre parties sur la Paraphrase des pseumes de [Antoine] Godeau* (1650) and Morley's *Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597).²

Despite the importance of his collection, little is known about Robert Smith. When his musical library was sold, by White on 18 May 1813, the sale catalogue described him as 'deceased' and 'of St. Paul's Churchyard'. According to contemporary Kelly directories of London and

1 William Barclay Squire, 'A Lost Handel Manuscript', *Musical Times*, 62 (1921), 690-92. The manuscript is now *Lbl*, Egerton MS 2953. There are at least fourteen volumes in *Lbl* containing Robert Smith's bookplate and coat of arms.

2 A. Hyatt King, *Some British Collectors of Music, c. 1600-1960* (Cambridge, 1963), 26, 94.



Westminster, there was a firm of wine merchants named Smith, Jennins & Smith at No. 3, St Paul's Churchyard, in 1811, and in 1785 the merchants at that address were known as Bates & Smith. The will of John Bates reveals that he was the senior partner and that the junior was his nephew, Robert Smith.³

Bates was born in Beaconsfield, Buckinghamshire, in 1722 and wished to be buried there. His father, Robert, came from yeoman stock, was a butcher by trade and frequently held office as a church warden or parish officer.⁴ John was sent to London at the age of fourteen and apprenticed to a 'vintner and citizen' for the usual term of seven years. He evidently worked hard and prospered, for he became a member of the Court of the Vintners' Company in 1750 and Master in 1776 (his son had become a freeman of the company in the previous year);⁵ he also bought property and was a Freeman of the City of London.

It was in the 1740s that Bates took over No. 3, St Paul's Churchyard. This property was none other than the Queen's Arms tavern, where, according to Hawkins, members of the Cathedral choir used to gather after Evensong for refreshment and music-making.⁶ Situated in the south-west corner of the churchyard, near the junction with Ludgate Hill, it had a pleasant view of the west front of the cathedral and the statue of Queen Anne. A contemporary print shows a house of five floors, separated from Dean's Court (an alley-way leading to the Wren Deanery) by a single house,⁷

which also Bates acquired. The Queen's Arms became a popular meeting place for clubs and societies. David Garrick frequented a club there in the 1750s, and John Wilkes dined there regularly in the 1770s.⁸ Boswell left this vivid account of 6 April 1773:⁹

This was the monthly meeting of the partners of the London Magazine, at the Queen's Arms in St Paul's Churchyard ... We have always a good supper, and besides Madeira, our landlord Bett's [Bates's] excellent old port at half a crown a bottle. He is a jolly fellow, and it is said worth £20,000. As he has been much obliged to the Stationers' Company, he always attends himself upon the partners of the London Magazine. He told me he had eight hundred dozen of that port.

Bates reached the summit of his career in 1784, when he became Alderman and Sheriff of the City, but died on 13 May 1785, at the age of 62, before completing his year of office.¹⁰ His will confirms that he was a wealthy man: in addition to Nos. 3 and 4, St Paul's Churchyard, he owned a distillery in Aldersgate Street of which he was eventually sole proprietor, property in Beaconsfield and elsewhere, and an undisclosed number of stocks and shares. He was survived by his wife Martha, a son and two daughters, and he named Robert Smith as one of his executors.

Smith's father Ralph, who, like Bates's father, was a butcher, married

Bates's sister Elizabeth in Beaconsfield on 11 September 1737. They moved shortly afterwards to Windsor, where Robert was born in 1741 and probably received his earliest education. When he was only seven years old, however, his father died, leaving a widow with three small children (Robert was the second) and a fourth born only a month later.¹¹ Elizabeth stayed on in Windsor, but it seems likely that, in view of her circumstances, her brother John offered to adopt her eldest son and bring him up in London: the next reliable information we have about Robert is as a chorister at St Paul's Cathedral,¹² probably at the age of eight or nine.

For most of the eighteenth century the choir of St Paul's had an excellent reputation.¹³ William Savage, who became almoner and master of the choristers in 1748, combined a strict regime with able teaching. There were eight choristers and usually two probationers, the former boarding with Savage, the latter living at home. Savage's house was situated in Paul's Bakehouse Court, Doctors' Commons, only a short distance from the Queen's Arms. The boys sang daily at Morning Prayer (9.45 am) and Evensong (3.15 pm); in between they had singing practice, usually accompanied on the spinet by one of the two Head Boys. Two or three times a week Savage monitored each boy's progress, and he also encouraged them to play the harpsichord and compose.

It must have been a welcome change when he took them to the Castle Concerts at Haberdashers' Hall,

3 Kew, Public Record Office, PROB 11/1129. Microfilm copies at Family Records Centre, London.

4 Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire County Record Office, Beaconsfield Parish Registers, Vestry Books and Land Tax Assessments.

5 London, Guildhall Library, Vintners' Company Apprenticeship Records, 1736, and List of Court Members, 1750.

6 John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 2nd edn (London, 1853; repr. 1875), II, 852n, 859.

7 Cf. Nikolaus Pevsner, *London*, vol. I (London, 1973), 285.

8 Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London, 1963), 462-3.

9 William K. Wimsatt and Frederick A. Pottle, ed., *Boswell for the Defence, 1769-1774* (London, 1960), 170.

10 A. B. Beavan, *The Aldermen of the City of London* (London, 1908), II, p. xxxix. Bates was given a generous paragraph in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, 55 (1785), 406.

11 Reading, Berkshire County Record Office, New Windsor Registers of Births and Deaths. Copies at Society of Genealogists, London.

12 Mark Argent, ed., *Recollections of R. J. S. Stevens, an Organist in Georgian London* (London, 1992), 107.

13 *Ibid.*, 4-15.



where they sang in the chorus. They also performed, as needed, in the choruses of theatrical works, and once a fortnight four of the choristers attended the Madrigal Society, where they often had to read at sight. On 2 July 1757 one of the outstanding pupils ('Mr. Savage's celebrated Boy') took Giulia Frasi's part in a performance of *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital.¹⁴ Savage's own experience of singing solo under Handel as a boy and young man must have given him an enthusiasm for the composer and his music that he communicated to his pupils. As a keen collector of manuscript and printed music, he may also have kindled a similar interest in his pupil Robert Smith.

Around 1755, when Smith was fourteen, his life underwent a radical change. When his voice broke, he left the choir and was apprenticed to his uncle in the wine trade. He was active both at the Queen's Arms and at the distillery in Aldersgate, and was admitted to the freedom of the Vintners' Company in 1765.¹⁵ Two years later his financial position was good enough for him to marry his cousin, Bates's daughter Martha. They evidently wished to maintain their connections with Beaconsfield, for six of their children were baptized there between 1768 and 1774, and two of them – Ann Bates Smith and Henry Bates Smith – bore names that stressed the link between their families. Smith's wife died in 1780, at the cruelly early age of 36.

Three years later, Smith invited some friends, including professional musicians, to dine at his home and sing glees, Masses, madrigals, motets, canons and catches. The idea took root,

the group flourished, was formalised in 1787 and became known as the Glee Club.¹⁶ Its founding members are named, in order of seniority, in the preface to Richard Clark's *The Words of the Most Favourite Pieces performed at the Glee Club* (1814), and the list is headed by Robert Smith. He is immediately followed by Samuel Arnold and Thomas Bever; since the latter officiated at Doctors' Commons, he was also one of Smith's neighbours.¹⁷

The Glee Club originally comprised 21 subscribing and eight honorary members, the latter being professional singers. Most of them were interested in Handel, and three – Arnold, and the organists Theodore Aylward and Thomas Sanders Dupuis – were assistant directors of the Handel Commemoration at Westminster Abbey in 1784. Seven of the members were also serious collectors of music: James Bartleman, whose collection rivalled Burney's; Bever, who left his collection to John Hindle (another member of the club); the tenor Samuel Harrison; the composers John Wall Callcott and Samuel Webbe sr; Aylward, and Smith himself.

In the late 1780s Smith was preoccupied with family and business affairs. He had much to do as an executor for his late uncle and for his aunt Martha, Bates's widow, who died in 1788. In 1787 he was Renter Warden of the Vintners' Company and responsible for their finances. Five years later he was elected Swan Warden, in charge of the annual Swan Upping at Windsor, and was asked to oversee alterations and refurbishment at Vintners' Hall. This he did with great enthusiasm, ordering furniture,

mirrors and curtains at a cost of £1400, far more than the Court had intended. One thousand pounds' worth of the Company's stock had to be sold to cover the expense, and Smith was debarred from holding office again. In spite of this he was elected Master in 1809.¹⁸ His wine business in St Paul's Churchyard continued, but it must have changed in 1796, when it merged with St Paul's Coffee House;¹⁹ it was listed in the directories for the last time in 1833.

By the turn of the century Smith had more time to enjoy music collecting, the Glee Club and other aspects of London's musical life. In 1795 he subscribed to a concert of Handel's music at St Margaret's, Westminster, in aid of the Royal Society of Musicians, and he went to St Paul's for the annual Festival for the Sons of the Clergy, which was conducted in 1796-8 by Samuel Arnold.

He combined his interest in collecting with his enthusiasm for Handel. The size of his collection can be gauged from the fact that, when it was sold, it consisted of 276 lots, including: 'the harpsichord copy [of *Messiah*] used by Mr. Handel, 3 vols. in rough calf'; a single-volume manuscript score of *Messiah* 'in the handwriting of Mr. Overend, in blue morocco' (now in the Gerald Coke Handel Collection); a manuscript score of *Esther*, with the Hebrew words, and a copy of five of Handel's 'Cannons' anthems (now RM 19. g. 1b). In the last of these Smith noted that the manuscript had once belonged to Frederick, Prince of Wales, that George III had given it to Aylward when the latter was organist of St

14 Jackson's *Oxford Journal*, cited in O. E. Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955), 787.

15 'John Bates in consideration of Service takes Robert Smith son of Ralph, late of Windsor in the county of Berks., Butcher, deceased for seven years': Guildhall Library, Vintners' Company Register of Apprentice Bindings, 1736-1809. See also the company's Register of Freedom Admissions, 1768-1888.

16 Cf. W. A. Barrett, *English Glees and Partsongs* (London, 1886); Robert Elkins, *The Old Concert Rooms of London* (London, 1955), 50-57.

17 On Bever, see Richard Charteris, 'Thomas Bever and Rediscovered Sources in the Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg', *Music & Letters*, 81 (2000), 177-209.

18 On Smith and the Vintners' Company, see Anne Crawford, *A History of the Vintners' Company* (London, 1977), 290-94. Smith's son and grandson served as Master in 1833 and 1877, respectively.

19 Lillywhite, *op. cit.*, 464.



George's Chapel, Windsor [1788-1801] and that he, Smith, had bought it from a Mr Hamilton, of 121 Piccadilly, on 8 July 1803.²⁰

It is partly because of this note that the name of Robert Smith has been linked with the so-called Smith Collection in the Royal Music Library. The title 'Smith Collection' was apparently coined by Barclay Squire, who believed that the collection had come with Handel's autographs from J. C. Smith junior; Donald Burrows found no evidence that it did.²¹ Hyatt King stated that the collection had been owned by Robert Smith and may have believed that Smith was the copyist 'R. S.' – Larsen's S10 – whose initials appear repeatedly in the collection; however, the hand of S10 does not match that of the note in RM 19. g. 1b.²² Furthermore, the Smith Collection is absent from the sale catalogue of Robert Smith's music library.

That aside, Smith also collected printed works, as we have seen. He subscribed to two sets of Arnold's edition of Handel, 'both handsomely bound, and selected for him by Dr Arnold'.²³ This edition was issued in instalments, the arrangement and binding of volumes being left to subscribers. Since Arnold supervised this work for his friend, the arrangement of Smith's copies may reflect the preference of the editor. In addition to music by Handel, Smith also collected such vocal polyphony as was sung at the Glee Club; his name is accompanied in subscription lists by those of his son Henry Bates Smith, his daughter-in-law Mrs M. Bates and his friend Stephen Groombridge (a fellow vintner, Handelian and music collector). He must have been

particularly pleased with Reginald Spofforth's *Six Glee's* (London, [c. 1810]), which the composer dedicated to the president and members of the club.

Smith was Treasurer of the Glee Club until his death in 1810, at the age of 69. He was buried in the vault at St Mary's Church, Beaconsfield, where 'his late dear wife' was interred, and was survived by two sons and three daughters. His executors were Stephen Groombridge, Richard Jennins (presumably his business partner 'Jennins'), and his sons Robert and Henry Bates Smith. His will included this instruction:²⁴

I give and bequeath to the Glee Club, of which I am the oldest member, ten guineas, to be by their President, Vice-President, and the rest of the Society, adjudged to and bestowed upon the composers of the two most cheerful glee's, upon any subject they may think proper to propose.

In fact this bequest brought forth three glee's – Spofforth's *Fill high the grape's exulting stream* (1810), and Charles Evans's *Beauties, have you seen a toy* (1811) and *Fill all the glasses* (1812).

We should be grateful to Robert Smith for his collection and for his part in establishing the Glee Club. It is not known whether he ever met Handel, but the composer and his music exerted a considerable influence on him, as on so many of his contemporaries. Let us raise a glass in tribute to this vintner and music-lover!

Lucy Roe

HANDEL FESTIVALS IN GERMANY

Göttingen

Aside from the dreadful production of *Deidamia*, reviewed below by Terence Best, the 2003 Göttingen Handel Festival was as delightful as usual. One of the regular highlights is the annual recital by Alan Curtis's Il Complesso Barocco and his accomplice, the crime writer Donna Leon. Ms Leon read several extracts from her work, but, as usual, one could not always see their relevance to Handel's music. The performance, given in the elegant surroundings of the Aula of the University, was particularly distinguished by the soprano Simone Kermes's breathtaking interpretation of 'Per pietà' from *Giulio Cesare*. The mezzo-soprano Sonia Prina was less assured and honey-toned than Kermes, but she rattled through 'Empio dirò tu sei' with sufficient gusto. The duet 'Per le porte del tormento' from *Sosarme* was charming, with the two singers blending surprisingly well. Alan Curtis's pacing was immaculate, and it is not surprising to learn that he and his team will be returning in 2004. My only complaint is that Il Complesso Barocco on tour are too small to bring sufficient richness and volume to this operatic repertory, despite the quality and taste of their performances.

The Aula was a less pleasant environment on the hot evening of the Gala Concert. Nicholas McGegan, introducing his programme with the Arcadian Academy, welcomed the audience to 'the most elegant sauna in Germany'! The concert was most memorable for its modern première of three recently discovered arias from *Almira* and *Rodrigo*. To be honest, about 70% of the arias had been stylishly completed by McGegan, who, admittedly, understands Handel's style better than most; it was good to hear unusual pieces that had presumably been rejected during the composition process. More masterly

20 Smith's inscription is cited in Donald Burrows, 'The "Granville" and "Smith" Collections of Handel Manuscripts', in *Sundry Sorts of Music Books: Essays on The British Library Collections presented to O. W. Neighbour on his 70th Birthday*, ed. Chris Banks, Arthur Searle and Malcolm Turner (London, 1993), 235.

21 William Barclay Squire, *Catalogue of the King's Music Library* (London, 1927-9), I, p. [ix]; Burrows, *op. cit.*, 238.

22 King, *op. cit.*, 26; Burrows, *op. cit.*, 239.

23 King, *op. cit.*, 95.

24 Public Record Office, PROB 11/150.



and mature Handel was represented by chamber duets composed shortly before *Messiah*, including 'No, di voi no vuò fidarmi'. The Arcadian Academy, featuring sopranos Dominique Labelle and Susanne Rydén, also relished performing Alessandro Scarlatti's serenata *Cupido e Onestà*, composed in Rome in 1706.

Artistic Director of the festival since 1991, McGegan this year conducted an oratorio instead of his usual opera. While one is relieved that he will be back at the helm of an opera (*Rinaldo*) next year, his performance of *Jephtha* with The English Concert and Winchester Cathedral Choir entirely eclipsed the woeful production that upset many used to Göttingen's usual standards. McGegan's interpretation of *Jephtha* was refreshing: his tempi were judicious, and his shaping of Handel's music was packed with enthusiasm and feeling. The recitatives were dramatic without becoming laboured, and the pacing of the drama from *Jephtha*'s vow to the arrival of the Angel was perfection itself.

John Mark Ainsley does not sound quite so sweet and youthful as he used to, but that suits the role of *Jephtha* well enough. As with most of the cast, his acting in a concert performance of a long and challenging oratorio was exemplary. The title character was drawn with sympathy, and the sparing of his daughter could only be perceived as a blessed relief. Although the pleasant countertenor Fritz Vitzhum ought to have made more of Hamor, he was perhaps intimidated by his intended mother-in-law: Wilke te Brummelstroete sang Storgé's arias with fire and fury. Dominique Labelle was a radiant Iphis who portrayed a young woman with steely determination, thus transcending the usual girlish interpretations. It was also lovely to hear a totally positive and literal presentation of the drama. McGegan confirmed that *Jephtha* can end happily: the final moments ('So are the blessed who fear the Lord') had a genuine sense

of jubilation. Leaving emotional ambiguity for others to debate, McGegan's *Jephtha* was typically charismatic, theatrical, and musical.

A separate concert by The English Concert and John Mark Ainsley featured finely played concertos by Handel and Boyce, Scottish folksong arrangements by J. C. Bach, and Arne's 'Rule Britannia!' In the absence of a choir, the patriotic anthem seemed rather surreal on foreign soil and a little detached from the vast Stadthalle auditorium. The few British visitors in the audience, invited by McGegan to join in, could not add much to the volume, despite the best efforts of the Winchester boys at the back.

David Vickers

The last performance in this year's Göttingen festival was of *Deidamia*, an opera that has grown in popularity since the publication of the new *HHA* score. I reported on last year's curious production in Halle (*Newsletter*, Autumn 2002), of which I found many aspects to be over the top or plain silly. Perhaps Göttingen, with its laudable tradition of sensible productions, would be better, particularly as the conductor was to be the experienced Michael Schneider.

Certainly the musical side was excellent, but alas! the direction by Peer Boysen was as silly as any I have seen. In this opera there is a silent role, that of the ancient Nestor, who accompanies Ulysses on his mission to retrieve the absent Achilles from Skyros; he is there, as they say in theatrical circles, to dress the stage. Not here! As the surtitles soon made clear, the action was to be seen through Nestor's eyes: what did he think was going on, and how should he react to it? This did not leave much space for the translation of the text.

Furthermore, as the move to war against Troy gathered momentum, toward the end of the opera, Nestor, who had been on stage throughout and was played by a woman dressed as an

old man in a 1920s outfit, with walking-stick, interrupted the action with a long spoken passage in barely comprehensible English (yes, English, in an opera otherwise sung in Italian!) which, to the accompaniment of a loud solo on the drums, appeared to be a quotation from Homer about the armadas and armies going to war and the devastation that they would cause. Shades of contemporary events in the troubled summer of 2003? Almost certainly.

Then there was the irritating mannerism of having almost all of the characters on stage in every scene and a ludicrous attempt to make the recitatives 'dramatic' by slowing them down so much that in some passages everything stopped for long pauses between chords. Thus when Nerea was courted by Fenice, first she turned her back on him, then he thought about it (long silence), turned to her with a pleading gesture while *she* thought about it, then after about fifteen seconds – I kid you not! – we had at last some music in the form of the next chord in the continuo.

Reading between the lines of some comments made to me afterwards by those with influence in Göttingen, I think the festival may revert to tradition, with *Rinaldo*, next year. 'Hoffentlich', as they say over there!

Halle

The theme of this year's festival in Handel's birthplace was 'Les goûts réunis', the famous title of François Couperin's publication of 1724, which was about the coming together of the Italian and French styles. In Halle this idea was developed into the influence of these styles on German music. The emphasis was strongly on the French tradition rather than the Italian, and a good deal of French music was played, generally very well.

The opening concert, conducted by Uwe Grodd, was reasonably successful (much better than last year's rather muddled affair). The programme



included the Dettingen Anthem, two of the 1727 Coronation Anthems, arias from the *Birthday Ode for Queen Anne* and *Samson*, with an organ solo by Tournemire. The French element was the choir, that of Les Musiciens du Louvre of Grenoble, who sang well enough, and it was announced that the annual Handel Prize had been awarded to Marc Minkowski.

The major stage event was the world première of *Imeneo* in the new *HHA* edition by Donald Burrows. It was delightfully done, with a sensibly minimalist staging in an elegant set – a convincing (and long-awaited) demonstration of how good things can be when the director studies the libretto and resists the urge to create a pretentious concept. The first-ever modern performance of the complete 1740 score of this delightful opera was a total success.

As always in Halle, it was impossible to attend every event, so I gave *Messiah* a miss and went to Bad Lauchstädt for a new production of *Teseo*, with the Lautten Compagny of Berlin conducted by Wolfgang Katschner. The production was by the retired countertenor Axel Köhler, whose *Rodrigo* two years ago was tiresomely vulgar. His *Teseo* was more modest in approach and worked reasonably well. Medea, the opera's most powerful role, was well sung and acted by Maria Riccarda Wesseling, whom I do not remember hearing before. The 'soprano countertenor' Jörg Waschinski – I never know what to call these rare birds – sang the title-role with considerable virtuosity, and we were reminded of how much fine music there is in this early opera. The Lautten Compagny were more restrained than usual with their lute accompaniments, and the whole performance was a most enjoyable experience.

One of the most interesting concerts, for me, was devoted to Handel's teacher in Halle, Friedrich Wilhelm

Zachow. We heard four of his cantatas, and very fine they were, composed in the noble late 17th-century Lutheran tradition that was consummated by Bach. The music was well-crafted and sure of itself, with skilful counterpoint and orchestration. The young Handel would certainly have received a sound musical education from the composer of such works. The concert also included two of Georg Friedrich's Op. 4 organ concertos (nos. 4 and 6), performed on the Marktkirche's Reichel organ on which the boy had learnt his notes from Friedrich Wilhelm.

There were several chamber and harpsichord recitals in which French music was prominent, and two other major concerts of note. One of these, under the clever title 'Musik der Macht [power] – Macht der Musik' gave us orchestral pieces by Lully (the 'Macht' here being the court of Louis XIV) and Handel's *Ode on St Cecilia's Day* (the 'power of music' as in *Alexander's Feast*). The performers were Musica Antiqua Köln, directed by Max Ciolek, a group always guaranteed to give a fine show. The other was a performance of the Vespers of the Assumption by Lassus, given by the Ensemble Weser-Renaissance Bremen. The programme provided an interesting contrast with all the other music on offer, and was beautifully performed.

The last concert I heard, given by the Ensemble Rebel, included concertos by Telemann and the so-called G-major suite from Handel's *Water Music*. The programme was performed with ear-boggling force, even violence, and with some remarkable histrionics by the players. This manner did not seem out of place in Telemann's two Polish-style concertos but was less convincing in the others, including the Handel!

The musicological conference accompanying the festival was devoted, of course, to 'Les goûts réunis', and there were several good papers on

French music and its influence in Germany; less attention was paid to the Italian style. For many of us, the most interesting was Donald Burrows's discussion of the performance of the opening Grave section of the *Messiah* overture, which, as we know, is called 'Sinfony', not 'Overture'. This being so, should the section really be over-dotted in the French overture manner, as is now customary? Donald is doubtful, threatening to overturn the practice of a whole generation or two: a most interesting cat among the musicological pigeons.

Terence Best

HONOUR FOR TERENCE BEST

It gives us great pleasure to announce that the degree of Doctor of Philosophy *honoris causa* has been conferred on Terence Best by the Martin-Luther-Universität of Halle-Wittenberg. This prestigious award is in recognition of his outstanding contributions to Handel scholarship – as a writer on the composer and as an editor of his music. Dr Best is currently co-general editor of the *HHA*, for which he has edited several volumes.

AWARDS FOR RESEARCH

Applications are invited for **Handel Institute Awards** to assist in the furtherance of research into the music or life of **George Frideric Handel** or his contemporaries or associates. One or more awards may be offered, up to a total of £1,000. Awards may not be used for tuition fees or for the photocopying or binding of theses. The **deadline** for the receipt of applications is **1 September 2004**. For further information, please contact the Honorary Secretary: Dr Elizabeth Gibson, The Red House, Aldeburgh, Suffolk, IP15 5PZ (email: Elizabeth@gibson.free-online.co.uk).