



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE  
NEWSLETTER

There are four items in this issue of the *Newsletter*. We begin by printing the abstracts of the papers to be read at our conference next month on 'Performing Handel – Then and Now'; this promises to be a thoroughly stimulating and enjoyable event, and we are hoping our readers will attend in very large numbers! Current research is represented by Donald Burrows

in an article that explores the Aylesford partbooks of *Samson* and a recently rediscovered manuscript of the Chandos anthems. Between these contributions there are reports on this summer's Handel festivals at Göttingen and Halle; David Vickers, Terence Best and Donald Burrows are the reviewers.

Colin Timms

## 'PERFORMING HANDEL – THEN AND NOW'

**Handel Institute Conference at The Foundling Museum,  
Brunswick Square, London W. 1,  
on 26-27 November 2005**

The performance of Handel's music, in his day and ours, is the theme of the sixth Handel Institute conference, which will take place this year on the last weekend in November. This is the first such conference to be held at The Foundling Museum, home of the Gerald Coke Handel Collection, and the first to host a number of speakers from the world of performance as well as from the groves of academe. The range of topics to be discussed is broad and the demand for places expected to be high; so if you are thinking of attending, please complete and return the enclosed booking form as soon as possible!

You may also be interested to know that on the day before the Handel conference, Friday 25 November, The Foundling Museum will be hosting the 21st Annual Conference on Music in 18th-Century Britain. For further details please contact Claire Sharpe (c.sharpe@ram.ac.uk or telephone +44 (0)20 7701 8038).

### Graydon Beeks

#### *Performance Practice at Cannons*

Taking into consideration new evidence uncovered since the publication of my 1985 article on 'Handel and Music for the Earl of Carnarvon', this paper will reconsider some questions concerning the performance of music at Cannons, the stately home of James Brydges, Earl of Carnarvon and later first Duke of Chandos. The questions concern the musical repertoire that was performed, when and where it was performed, and the instrumental and vocal forces employed.

On the question of repertoire the paper will discuss what music is known to have been performed at Cannons and what sorts of additional music may have been performed there; it will ask how far these questions can be answered by the catalogue of the Cannons music library and by the surviving exemplars from that library. On venues, the paper will discuss the configuration of the recently restored St Lawrence,



Little Stanmore, where Handel's Cannons anthems were first performed, propose a configuration for the chapel at Cannons House, which was torn down in 1747 (the contents being dispersed) and consider what is known of the music room there and the possibility of outdoor performance. As for performing forces, the paper will discuss what is known of the layout and pitch of the organs in St Lawrence and the Cannons chapel, as well as the voice types and ranges of the singers and the skill and versatility of the instrumentalists employed at Cannons. It will also consider the likelihood of additional performers having been imported from London for special events.

Finally, the paper will conclude with a list of Cannons music that one might wish to hear. Among these would be performances of the Cannons anthems, with appropriately small forces and at an appropriately high pitch; *Acis and Galatea*, with the correct distribution of solos and the added bassoon as indicated in the lost conducting score; and the anthems of Nicola Haym and cantatas of Thomas Roseingrave.

### **Donald Burrows**

#### ***Musical Notation and its Role in Handel Performances***

This paper will firstly review the surviving performing material that may have been used in, or prepared for, Handel's own performances. From it we can make some generalisations about the type of material that Handel's performers had in front of them and the amount of information that it carried on matters of performance. Second, the role of notation in modern performances will be considered, and in particular the diversity of expectations about the degree of prescriptiveness in performance

material. This diversity implies different levels of editorial intervention in the presentation of the notation, different expectations about the role of the performers and thus the continuing possibility of different interpretations of the same notation.

### **Timothy Day**

#### ***What do the recordings tell us?***

In 1907, just as recordings of Handel were beginning to be made, a distinguished historian considered that, while 'a very considerable cleansing process' had begun, English worshippers still heaped indignities on the head of their idol, that the score of *Messiah* 'is full of careful directions that at least ninety-nine per cent of our performances complacently and totally ignore'. Critics pleaded for a reincarnation of Handel's music 'in the terms in which Handel conceived it', and in 1980 the editor of *The New Grove* was delighted at a 'revelatory' reading of *Messiah* which achieved just that, in his estimation, and allowed him to reconsider 'what kind of a work *Messiah* is and what Handel was saying in it'. Music not being sounds but that which is not heard, as Mahler reminded us, mere recordings can never tell us the whole story. But recordings of Handel together with words about the recorded performances do perhaps allow important insights into the minds of the men and women who loved this music in the twentieth century.

### **Anthony Hicks**

#### ***The Ethics of Period Performance: Some Aspects of the Performer/Audience Relationship***

The distinctive characteristic of period or 'historically informed' performance, at least by implication, is that it offers to an audience the

chance to hear music performed with the instrumental and (less certainly) vocal sonorities anticipated by its composer. There is usually a further implication that the performance will conform to the stylistic conventions of the period, as far as they are understood, and that the underlying music text will have been soundly prepared. While some early music performers adhere to these principles, an increasing number do not, and their work may contradict the 'historical information' by which they are supposedly guided. Audiences led to expect 'period' fidelity may thus be denied that experience, and are not made aware (*e.g.*, in programme notes) of how historically deviant a performance may be; indeed, the impression may be given that there is no such deviance. Ostensibly, this is a breach of professional ethics, yet it is a topic that remains largely undiscussed by commentators in both popular and academic outlets. Some areas for discussion will be outlined.

### **Peter Holman**

#### ***Handel, the Viola da Gamba and its Players in London***

A number of scholars have tried to understand why Handel specified the viola da gamba in two works written around 1724, his opera *Giulio Cesare* and a variant of the violin sonata in G minor, HWV 364b, and have attempted to identify the musician or musicians who might have played them. This paper revisits the topic in the light of new research into the lives of the circle of gamba-playing Italian cellists around Handel, and places the two works in the context of other gamba music written or arranged in London at the time. Some newly identified gamba arrangements of Handel will also be discussed.



**David Hunter**

*The Audience Speaks:  
Comments on Performances  
of Handel's Music, 1711–1759*

Three questions frame the discussion initiated by this paper. 1: What do we know least about, concerning the performance of Handel's music? Not the music itself, nor how it was performed, nor when or where it was performed: great strides have been made in developing our understanding of those areas. The vital missing element is the audience, for without one a piece of music can have meaning only to musicians. 2: What do archives reveal concerning performances? Only by thorough investigation of the archives of persons who did or did not attend performances can we hope to establish what the performances meant to individuals. I will explore some of the material uncovered at the nearly fifty repositories that I have visited so far. 3: What do the comments tell us about the audience? The audience, so far as can be determined from the sample studied to date, provides a different and, from a musicologist's viewpoint, quite unsatisfactory account of performances. That the minutiae of performance practice, such as ornamentation or alterations to librettos, receive no mention should not cause us to dismiss the materials as irrelevant. The aesthetic concerns of the audience operate at a quite different level, for example in determining whether or not one goes to opera or oratorio, both or neither. Once at the performance, the memorability of the occasion may not reside in the work. Though this may be a major source of concern to musicologists (and Handel apologists), it is part of the reality with which Handel dealt and we should accord it close consideration.

**David Ross Hurley**

*Handel's Compositional  
Choices in Theodora*

*Theodora*, Handel's penultimate oratorio, contains a fair number of revisions that the composer made before first performance. The *raison d'être* of this paper is, above all, to explore the aesthetic issues raised by fascinating revisions in three arias. Along the way I address certain caveats or criticisms of studies of compositional process that have arisen over the past few years. One view, raised in a recent review of my book *Handel's Muse*, questions whether revisions can reflect typical compositional practices; according to this view, because Handel composed fluently and without difficulty, revising his music only during 'unusual' moments when problems appeared, compositional changes are by their nature abnormal and tell us little about the composer's typical concerns. In opposition to this criticism, I will demonstrate how the revisions in *Theodora* may in fact disclose specific compositional concerns, for they reveal aspects of the music that we might not have noticed otherwise. They are a guide to musical analysis, in other words. A second critic has attacked studies of compositional changes in general for maintaining that the final version always constitutes an 'improvement' of the original. After discussing the relevance of this view to Handel, I will examine a revision in *Theodora* that actually weakens the effectiveness of an aria. I conclude, however, that in the revisions made prior to first performance (and unrelated to such issues as cast changes) Handel generally sought to improve his scores and only occasionally fell short of doing so.

**Neil Jenkins**

*John Beard: the Tenor Voice  
that inspired Handel, Arne  
and Boyce*

This paper presents some results from the author's research into the remarkable career of the tenor John Beard (c. 1716–91). Newly discovered facts include details of his first marriage to Henrietta, daughter of Earl Waldegrave, which took place in the Fleet Prison on the same day (8 January 1739) that he sang the role of Jonathan in the dress rehearsal of Handel's *Saul* at the Haymarket Theatre, and the reasons for his trip to France in 1740, immediately following the wedding of Princess Mary (in which he had repeated his solo from the 1736 Wedding Anthem), which resulted in Handel rewriting *Imeneo* without him in it.

Beard's commitments for the oratorio seasons of 1748, 1749 and 1750 reveal that he could have been in Handel's company of soloists if he had been invited, as he had no clashes with theatrical performances on the relevant dates. The Foundling Hospital *Messiah* parts have often been interpreted as implying that soloists sang with the choruses; Beard's commitments elsewhere show this to have been unlikely, and a reason is given for his refusal of a fee for his annual Foundling Hospital *Messiah* performance. Information is provided on his performances in Handel's operas and oratorios, before and after the composer's death, and his appointment as 'Vocal Performer in Extraordinary' to George II is outlined. The Handel quotation on his memorial stone in Hampton parish church is described, and a possible explanation given as to why this musical theme was chosen, rather than any other of the famous airs that he premièred (e.g., 'Every valley', 'Where'er you walk', 'Total eclipse', 'Sound an alarm').



**Richard G. King**  
*Acting Alexander*

Concerning the performance of Handel's operas, Reinhard Strohm once observed that 'if we had a Senesino, who had a deep understanding not only of singing but also of reciting Italian verse and not least of how to be an Emperor, it might not matter so much that some of his arias were by Harnoncourt and not Handel. In fact they could even be by Penderecki'. The remark was no doubt meant to be provocative, but it seems to me that Professor Strohm has a point here, and it is one that I should like to explore in this paper using the example of one emperor, Alexander the Great. The paper will examine how Alexander might have been acted in Handel's time and in his operas *Alessandro* and *Poro* by examining images of Alexander in painting and statuary. One of my goals is to extend our current understanding of Baroque gesture by taking seriously what the acting tutors and treatises have to say: that a complete performance is possible only after careful study of gesture in art. Another goal is to establish how far our understanding of Handel's Alexander and, by extension, other operatic heroes can be shaped by comprehension of what it means 'to be an Emperor'.

**Annette Landgraf**  
*A Quest for the Ideal Performance*

Handel's oratorios have long held a special fascination for musicians and audiences, from their first performance to the present day. This paper presents a survey of the reception history and performance practice history of these works, with special emphasis on the various

performances and debates that took place during the 19th century.

Ever since his death, performances have kept Handel's music alive, offered unforgettable experiences and conveyed real enthusiasm for his oratorios. His successor, John Christopher Smith (junior), made the first important contribution by continuing the Lenten oratorio seasons in London, although he did not necessarily perform the works as Handel had written them. There followed Samuel Arnold, Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, and Friedrich Chrysander. Others, like Ignaz von Mosel and Robert Franz, sought to adapt the works in a contentious way. In addition, English conductors such as George Smart and Michael Costa need to be considered.

Today we can look back on many experiments, including arrangements and attempts at instrumentation, leading to the monumental 19th-century performances at the Crystal Palace. The experiments sought to explore the possibilities and the limits, often amid fierce controversy. Arguments raged between 'philologists' and promoters of arrangements. Philologists advocated performances according to the so-called 'original' score, while promoters pursued the aesthetics of 19th-century sound. Opinions ranged between the extremes, between purism and extravagance, probably best illustrated by Eduard Hanslick's public abuse of Chrysander as a 'Kunstzealot' (art-zealot). Agreement between the parties was never achieved. Each experiment and debate adds to our knowledge, whichever argument is advanced. The discoveries and mistakes made by musicians and musicologists in the 19th and in the first half of the 20th century paved the way to the modern performance practice of historic music.

**Konstanze Musketa**  
*Handel Performances in Halle in the Late 20th Century*

Performing Handel in Halle has a tradition that lasts about 200 years. Enthusiasm for Handel's music increased in the middle of the 20th century. The Händel-Haus Museum was opened to the public, an annual Handel festival was established and the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft was founded. To make Handel's music popular to the general public in Halle in the 'Golden Fifties', many works by him, especially operas, were arranged more or less heavily. Playing on period instruments, for example, was practised in the Händel-Haus, but this was rather an exception at that time. In the meantime performing styles have changed remarkably, giving rise to much more 'authentic' performances. This paper will focus on the performances of the 1980s and 1990s and compare them with those of the 1950s and 1960s.

**Michael Pacholke**  
*Customs and Abuses in recent Handel Performances*

The paper will contain: a comparison of the number of instruments in the different groups of instruments in the orchestra used in Handel performances in the late 20th and early 21st century with the number used in Handel's own performances, and conclusions drawn from this comparison; a discussion of the purpose of continuo realisation in modern Handel performing material; and a discussion of the purpose of singable translations in modern Handel performing material.



**Andrew Parrott**  
*Handel's Italian Choirs*

At different stages in his international career Handel composed church music variously for Lutheran, Anglican and Roman Catholic worship. The cathedral choirs that he encountered in England and Ireland have perhaps come to be regarded as historical models for today's performances of most if not all of this music. Against the background of the composer's early Lutheran experience, this paper looks at contemporary Italian practices that will have informed the first performance of his Roman works, not least the virtuoso *Dixit Dominus*.

**Graham Pont**  
*French Overtures at the Keyboard: the Handel Tradition*

In a number of articles I have criticised the modern use of consistent over-dotting in the introductory movements of Handel's French overtures. This manner goes back to William Crotch (1775–1847), whose numerous arrangements of these movements are very fully double-dotted. Crotch's uniform rhythms, in my view, represent a possible but by no means obligatory interpretation of the French entrée, but his consistent over-dotting is certainly not authentic. It is at best a crude and simplified representation of an older and more varied manner that presumably was employed by Handel himself and certainly was so by a small but significant number of his British successors.

The evidence for what I consider the genuine Handel tradition of arbitrary and irregular rhythmic alteration is drawn mainly from editions and performances of

overtures that survived in the continuous repertoire from Handel's time until the 20th century.

**John H. Roberts**  
*Performing Recitative Cadences: Notation, Convention, and Recent Practice*

Three interrelated issues arise in performing the standard types of perfect cadence found in the *secco* recitative of Handel's day: application of vocal appoggiaturas, placement of the final chords in relation to the voice, and use of 4-3 suspensions in the dominant chord. Scholars such as Winton Dean and Dale Monson have made us more aware of the changing conventions of the period, but confusion remains about how performers interpreted the notation, and recent practitioners of historically informed performance, while adopting authentic ways of executing such cadences, have also developed variants that have no foundation in 18th-century practice. We must recognize too that Handel's usage may have differed to some extent from that of his Italian contemporaries.

**David Vickers**  
*An Opera Aria Cadenza written by Handel?*

The renaissance of Handel's operas has been a particularly significant and rewarding aspect of the early music revival during the last forty years. However, one of the most elusive and controversial aspects of Baroque opera performance is how a modern singer might deliver an appropriate cadenza in conclusion to an aria. It is an understandable compromise to suggest that such matters were a matter of taste during Handel's career, and must

remain so now. With the international performance of Handel operas now firmly established, there is an uncomfortable discrepancy between plain performances that ignore such stylistic conventions as the cadenza, and elaborate interpretations that positively encourage extreme solutions. The most considerable obstacle to a historically plausible option in modern performances of Handel's opera arias is our inability to discern what the composer wanted his singers to sing at the moment when his score indicates the potential for a cadenza. New evidence found at Hamburg in performance manuscripts of *Arianna in Creta* (HWV 32) sheds light on Handel's direction of one particular aria that potentially provides an authentic model for modern cadenza performance.

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**GERMAN HANDEL  
FESTIVALS  
SUMMER 2005**

**Göttingen**

Given the city's political and geographical affinity with Hanover, it was appropriate that Göttingen's 80th anniversary festival had the theme 'Handel and the House of Hanover'. This afforded music director Nicholas McGegan ample opportunity to direct such overtly ceremonial choral works as the 'Dettingen' *Te Deum* and its accompanying anthem. Despite the bass soloist Andrew Foster-Williams struggling on crutches and having flu, his contribution to the solo interjections was the brightest element in a programme exploring Handel's musical connections with George II. Alas, I felt a little guilty that it was difficult to enjoy every



moment of Handel's 'Dettingen' music, despite it being given exemplary performances by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and the Choir of Winchester Cathedral.

The concert also included a breathless performance of *Zadok the priest*, with its stately introduction shorn of suspense in favour of a fervent sense of physical excitement (McGegan took it at double the usual speed). The finest contribution was the American tenor Thomas Cooley's delightful performance of *Look down, harmonious saint*, which has no connection with George II but which, according to McGegan, provided 'an opportunity to perform something that wasn't in D major'.

McGegan also directed a gala concert that was supposed to feature Emma Kirkby giving modern premières of arias from Vivaldi's rediscovered opera *Montezuma*. Owing to her illness, however, the programme had to be changed at the last minute, with the cast of *Atalanta* bravely stepping in to perform various Handel favourites: 'Dove sei' was sung a little blandly by Emma Curtis and 'As steals the morn' was made rather superficial by Michael Slattery's goofing about, but 'Lascia la spina' was beautifully performed by soprano Dominique Labelle. The resulting event inevitably lacked coherence, but nobody could be blamed; McGegan's enthusiastic and spirited performance of the *Water Music* was ample compensation.

Both the excellent Stuttgart Kammerchor and its director Frieder Bernius were impressive in a concert of music associated with Queen Caroline. Although some of Bernius's tempos in *The ways of Zion do mourn* were unconvincing, the quality of the choral singing and the rich depth of the Stuttgart

Barockorchester were enjoyable. But his interpretation seemed coldly perfunctory in movements with potential for greater lyricism, and it was a pity that he did not quite avoid using soloists in the anthem, despite Annette Landgraf's recent *HHA* edition making it clear that Handel intended the entire work to be performed by the choir. The weak musical textures resulting from the occasional use of solo voices were strong artistic evidence that conductors would do well to follow Handel's intentions.

A performance of *My heart is inditing* was marred a little by the peculiar idea of singing the first line staccato and placing a trill on the middle syllable of 'inditing': surely no native English choral singer would find either device natural. The most memorable element of the concert was a charming performance of the 'Caroline' *Te Deum*. This compact Purcellian setting impressed me more than the two bigger, more familiar 'Te Deum' settings that were performed during the festival, although the 'Utrecht' version (Handel and the House of Stuart?) was not well served by a sluggish and joyless performance from the local Göttingen Baroque Orchestra and University Choir. It was so nearly admirable, but so few members of the huge chorus looked up from their score with enthusiasm.

As usual, some of the finest attractions were provided by smaller-scale concerts. Ralf Popken, formerly a countertenor soloist in McGegan's Göttingen opera performances, directed a superb concert of cantatas by the little-known composer Georg Böhm (Popken's recording of this repertoire has just been released on the CPO label) and Handel's *Nisi Dominus*. In the elegant yet compact University Hall, Popken's

direct and energetic performances made an enormous impact. The University Hall was also the perfect venue for Michael Schneider and La Stagione Frankfurt's powerful *Apollo e Dafne*, featuring Claron McFadden and William Berger.

A recital by the Choir of Winchester Cathedral, under its director Andrew Lumsden, was an oasis of reflective beauty. It was a peculiar experience to sit in the Jacobi-Kirche and hear an English choir produce some refined and heart-piercing performances of standard English repertory, such as Purcell's 'Hear my prayer' and Byrd's 'Ave verum corpus'. The gentlemen of the choir took centre stage for a sublime performance of Tallis's *Lamentations of Jeremiah*. In many ways, this was the most moving and special musical event of the festival, and the choir received a thoroughly deserved standing ovation.

The most delightful surprise of the festival was the serenata *Parnasso in festa*, which Handel produced in 1734 to celebrate the wedding of Princess Anne to Prince William of Orange. The libretto describes the celebrations of Apollo, Orfeo and the Muses at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. Some of the score is adapted from Handel's Oxford oratorio *Athalia*, which had not yet been heard in London, but ten numbers were new and they show the composer on top form; the adapted music fits the Italian text so sweetly that the uninitiated could be confused about which version came first.

Hans Christoph Rademann directed the Dresdner Kammerchor and Dresdner Barockorchester as if this were the world première of a long-forgotten masterpiece. His direction was expertly paced and spontaneous. Simone Kermes was excellent as Orfeo, but David



Cordier was not sensibly cast as Apollo: his hooty and harsh timbre did not persuade me that it is anything other than a foolish mistake to cast a countertenor in a Carestini role (although I look forward to being proved wrong about this). However, the performance overall proved beyond doubt that *Parnasso in festa* is not a mere pasticcio but a first-rate work that deserves some long-overdue attention.

Since McGegan took over the helm of the festival from John Eliot Gardiner in the early 1990s, Göttingen has become famous for its opera productions. This year he and his San Francisco-based orchestra, and director Catherine Turocy, combined for a new production of *Atalanta*, which Handel composed for the wedding of the Prince of Wales to Princess Augusta of Saxe-Coburg in 1736. McGegan described this elegant and delicate entertainment as 'a delicious pastoral in which almost nothing happens very delightfully, while nobody has mundane occupations such as looking after sheep'.

But nobody is better than Handel at lulling his audience into a false sense of security before landing a killer blow: the finest moment was Dominique Labelle's anguished rendition of *Atalanta's* 'Lassa! ch'io t'ho perduta', a minor-key lament worthy of Alcina in her darkest hour. Amid so much charming and inventive pastoral music, the few moments of convincing human passion become surprisingly powerful. Susanne Rydén's Meleagro was a wise hero whose nobility could not be obscured by his disguise, but her singing was a little uneven. Michael Slattery was an entertaining Aminta, the shepherd whose unhappiness in love

prevents *Atalanta* from being a very short opera; the role was possibly too hammed-up and comic for some, but it made undeniably wonderful theatre.

Turocy produced a master-class in how to stage a Handel opera: there was never a dull moment, yet neither was there any subversive conceptual patronising of the audience. The opera concludes with Mercury descending from heaven to bless the royal couple *Atalanta* and *Meleagro* (or *Augusta* and *Frederick*), followed by an indoor fireworks display accompanied by some short martial pieces. Turocy and McGegan rose to this challenge, inside the small Deutsches-Theater, with a stunning 'cold' firework display (apparently modern pyrotechnics ensure that a theatre will not burn down). It was wonderful to experience a production that was firmly sympathetic to Handel's music, faithful to the libretto, and spectacularly concluded. Although the musical performance was not perfect, this *Atalanta* was one of the most integrated and aesthetically complete operas that I have experienced in the theatre.

David Vickers

### Halle

The theme of this year's festival was 'Biblische Gestalten bei Händel', which is difficult to translate convincingly: the best we could manage was 'Handel's Biblical Characters'. This naturally implied a good dose of oratorios, and on offer were *Esther*, *Athalia*, *Jephtha*, *Messiah* and his early *La resurrezione*, as well as the non-biblical *Hercules*; Carissimi's exquisite *Jephtha* was given as an introduction to Handel's setting of the story. I was not able to stay

for *Athalia*, *Jephtha* or *La resurrezione*, which came in the last three days, nor was Donald Burrows, but Graydon Beeks found *Jephtha* less good than the other two.

The Festakt, which is the opening ceremony, began in robust fashion with the overture to the Fireworks Music, vigorously performed by the Händelfestspielorchester conducted by Michael Hofstetter. Then we had the usual greetings from political dignitaries, including the Polish Minister of Culture, followed by an improvisation on themes from the Fireworks Music on the large organ, played by Hansjörg Albrecht. Often I find the organ solos at this ceremony rather tedious, but this one was quite spectacular and earned an ovation from the audience.

The presentation of the Handel Prize for 2005 was of special and poignant interest, since the recipient was the late Stanley Sadie. His son Graham accepted the award on behalf of the family, and made a charming and gracious speech of thanks in excellent German. It was a moving and dignified occasion.

The Festakt ended with a neat performance of the organ concerto Op. 4, No. 1, played by Albrecht on a chamber organ rather than on the monster at the rear of the stage. The second half of the evening, the Festkonzert, consisted of excerpts from *Saul*, with three soloists and the Chamber Choir of Europe; this wonderful work came across very well, and the English diction was excellent.

The big event of the second day was the première of *Rodelinda* (using Andrew Jones's HHA edition). The opera was given in its second season version (December 1725), the chief difference between

this and the first version being the substitution of Rodelinda's 'Se il mio duol' by 'Ahi, perchè'. The singing was good, and the orchestra played well under Hofstetter, although for my taste there was too much plucking continuo in the tiresome modern fashion (two lutes and a harp!).

Having seen the unbelievably awful *Deidamia* in Göttingen two years ago, directed by Peer Boysen (see this *Newsletter*, vol. 14, no. 2), one was apprehensive on finding that he was the creator of this show. 'How to murder a masterpiece' might have been its subtitle. Rodelinda, you may recall, has a young son, Flavio, a non-singing part ('che non parla', librettos usually say of such characters). Flavio is used by the cruel Grimoaldo as a pawn in his efforts to win Rodelinda as his bride, and is usually played by a small boy of about 8 or 9 years.

Did we see such a small boy? Not on your life, according to Boysen: it was an adult woman, dressed as a baby, who was wheeled around the stage in a pram. And there was not just one baby: in some scenes there were lots of babies, in nappies, being wheeled around in lots of prams by lots of nannies, who performed pretty ballet movements. Each of the acts was introduced by the said baby, now revealed as an adult, who made a pretentious speech in German to the audience, explaining the philosophy of what was about to happen. So just as the Göttingen *Deidamia* was performed as seen through the eyes of the 'non parla' character Nestor (who spoke a lot), so the Halle *Rodelinda* was seen through the eyes of the be-napped Flavio.

There was a surtitle system in operation. "Just the job", you might think, for a German audience watching an Italian opera; but a

translation of the text being sung? Not a bit of it: just a one-word indication of the emotion expressed in an aria or the action in recitative (e.g., 'Joy', 'Revenge'). And of course, we had the usual supply of distractions to amuse the audience while long arias were sung – although there was at least a concession to good sense in that, during the *da capo* repeats, the antics disappeared and there was a concentration on the singer, which gave some relief and made you wonder why they did not do that all the time. Most of the characters remained on stage when they should not, and some of the most dramatic moments (especially the Act I scene in which Bertarido sees Rodelinda and Flavio in the wood) were hopelessly bungled.

After a depressing Act I, things got better, and the characterisation, especially of Grimoaldo and Garibaldo, was generally good. The ingredients of a fine performance were discernible, but the production was ruined yet again by a director's idiotic conceit (or should we say 'concept'?). What did triumph, of course, was Handel's glorious score.

As always in Halle, there was so much going on that it was impossible for one reviewer to hear more than a few of the performances on offer, and I tended to go for the unfamiliar rather than yet another *Messiah*. *Amadigi* at Bad Lauchstädt was pleasingly staged and well sung; a lot of noise, some of it quite violent, was made by the lute-pluckers in the Lautten Compagny of Berlin, but otherwise this was an agreeable afternoon's entertainment. Another interesting concert was 'Perlen der Spanischen Barock', which actually turned out to be South American. There were cantatas by José de Torres and José de Nebra, with some harpsichord

pieces and Handel's fine trio sonata Op. 5, No. 4. The cantatas were superbly sung and played – quite a revelation – but the keyboard pieces were undistinguished.

Then we had a concert in the Marktkirche, where Zachow taught the boy Handel. The centre-piece was Carissimi's *Jephte*, between two works by Telemann – a Concerto in D with trumpets and his 'Donner-Ode'. The music was splendid, the soloists outstanding, and the Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Halle played well. Finally, I attended an all-Carissimi concert in the Dom, of music I had never heard before. And most satisfying it was: a *Dixit Dominus*, a *Judicium extremum* (Last Judgement), a *Magnificat*, and the story of Jonah, written very much in the style of the composer's *Jephte*. A first-rate small choir – the Capella Angelica – was accompanied by a more restrained Lautten Compagny, and they did justice to the beauty and power of Carissimi's music.

The musicological Conference, on the theme of the Festival, was the best I have attended for some years. The topic is, of course, a rich and fruitful one, and it drew some fine papers from an international group of speakers (including Donald Burrows, Ruth Smith, John Roberts, Graydon Beeks and Kenneth Nott, from the Anglo-American team) on aspects of *Israel in Egypt*, *Samson*, *Saul*, *Esther*, *Jephta*, *Joseph*, *Solomon* and *La resurrezione*. By way of a postscript I added my pennyworth about the newly discovered Water Music manuscript (see this *Newsletter*, vol. 16, no. 1).

**Terence Best**

Although I did not manage to stay to the end of the festival, I did attend one major concert after Terence had left – a re-creation of a



programme from the Crystal Palace Handel Festival of June 1883. The Dom in Halle had neither the ambience nor the space of the vast performing area at the Crystal Palace, so a choir of about 80 and an orchestra of about half that number had to do duty for the serried ranks seen in the famous engravings of the festival performances. Mr Distin's monster drum was not in evidence, but there was an ophicleide-type bass instrument, whose contribution seems to have been mainly visual.

Along with a limited repertory from Handel's oratorios, the Crystal Palace Handel festivals usually included a 'selection' concert of movements and short sequences of movements, and this is the sort of programme that was re-created in Halle, with 'Sacred Music' in the first half and 'Secular Music' in the second. (There must have been some reason, I am sure, for placing 'What though I trace' and 'May no rash intruder', both from *Solomon*, either side of the divide.) The programme proved to be an amiable evening's entertainment, with a mixture of arias and choruses (including, it must be said, some of Handel's best), and the soloists, with the MDR choir and orchestra, did well in entertaining the Town.

I was reminded that it was through programmes such as this that Handel's operatic arias remained before the public, in an age when the contexts, in terms of performances of the complete operas, were not available. It will be interesting to see how the Crystal Palace anniversaries are celebrated in Britain in 2007 and 2009.

**Donald Burrows**

## TWO CONNECTIONS COMPLETED

In 'Something Necessary to the Connection', an article in the Spring 2004 issue of this *Newsletter* (vol. 15, no. 1), I outlined the link between the 'Aylesford' partbooks of Handel's *Samson* and a manuscript score of the oratorio, dated 1743, that was copied by James Hunter. Central to the 'connection' was the circumstance that the partbooks contained a version of *Samson* that incorporated significant alterations that were not reflected in any of the sources (musical or literary) associated with Handel's own performing versions of the work. I speculated in the article that the alterations were made by, or at the behest of, Charles Jennens, and that they may have been made in a lost manuscript score, formerly known to have been in the Aylesford Collection, from which the copyist derived the parts. Subsequent events have led me to evidence that confirms the first speculation and involves some modification to the second.

In the course of a final round of checking of *Samson* sources, prior to the publication of my new edition, I visited the Henry Watson Music Library in Manchester, with the principal purpose of seeing printed wordbooks. While there, I also looked at copies of the early printed editions of *Samson* in the library's collection. Although the Handelian material at Manchester originated principally from the Aylesford Collection (and from Jennens), some items come from other independent sources, probably purchases by Newman Flower and Henry Watson. There is no doubt about the provenance of one copy of an early Walsh edition of *Samson* arias, however, for it not only has

the characteristic 'Aylesford' library markings but also includes many amendments in Jennens's hand, beginning with an annotation on the title-page in which he added, following *The Words taken from Milton*, 'mix'd with Nonsense by Hamilton'.<sup>1</sup>

On the music pages of this volume Jennens made four types of amendment. As in many of the manuscript scores in his collection, he added many supplementary figurings to the basso continuo, and (probably in tandem with this) he corrected or queried various individual notes in Walsh's music text. In the verbal text he made some detailed amendments, some of them no doubt constituting what he regarded as corrections to Hamilton's usage – for example, 'seraphim' for 'seraphims' and 'be they told' for 'be it told'. Beyond these, however, there was some thorough-going recasting of sections of the text, particularly in the arias 'Thus when the sun' and 'Ye men of Gaza'; in the latter case the rewriting was related to a radical change in the function of the aria from that of a Philistine anticipating the Feast of Dagon to that of an Israelite celebrating Samson's final victory, as 'Ye men of Israel'. The textual and musical changes no doubt reflected Jennens's views on how Hamilton and Handel should have composed the oratorio.

Although there are no cue-markings on the printed score as an explicit guide to a music copyist, it seems virtually certain that it was on this music that Jennens worked out his amendments to *Samson*, and that he gave detailed instructions to incorporate them (including a shift in the position of 'Ye men of Gaza/Israel' within the work) when making out the partbooks: it is, of

<sup>1</sup> Manchester, Central Public Library, Henry Watson Music Library, B.R. f530 Hd665.



course, possible that Jennens's version was first rendered as a manuscript score, from which the parts were copied.<sup>2</sup> Since the printed volume is a first edition, there is no incompatibility with the '1743' date on Hunter's subsequent copy of the score: the first edition was issued in three parts during March–April 1743, overlapping with the later performances of Handel's first run, and it seems very likely that Jennens created his version very soon afterwards, while the project was still topical for him.

The story of Jennens's version of *Samson* introduces a note of general caution into the status of the 'Aylesford' partbooks as sources for editors of Handel's works. Jennens is known to have had, at least during certain periods, quite close contact with Handel and access to the composer's own music; furthermore, the music copyists who were responsible for his collection were from Handel's own circle. For these reasons, materials from Jennens's library are sometimes regarded as having an authority deriving directly from Handel himself. Some critical caution needs to be exercised, however. Jennens's partbooks seem to have been derived mostly from scores rather than from Handel's own performing materials, and it is not known whether the principal copyist (S2) was closely involved with the preparation of Handel's partbooks, or whether he was put on to the Aylesford task because he had a fluent hand and was not needed (or was thought untrustworthy) elsewhere. In the case of *Samson* his performing parts convey the composer's work only through the

intermediate distortion of Jennens's activity, though one would not guess this from the authoritative appearance of the music as copied.

\* \* \*

In November 1985 I gave a paper entitled 'Sources, Resources and Handel Studies' at a meeting of the Royal Musical Association, in the course of which I noted the recent reappearance of three scores and two partbooks of Handel's Cannons ('Chandos') anthems and *Te Deum* at a sale in 1981 of music from the collection of the 4th Lord Leigh which had probably in former years been in the library at Stoneleigh Abbey.<sup>3</sup> This was at a period of considerable scholarly activity on the Cannons music: Graydon Beeks completed his dissertation on the subject in 1981, and the anthem volumes for the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* under the editorship of Gerald Hendrie were coming to publication. The music in the 1981 sale had almost certainly derived from the library of the original patron for the composition and performance of the anthems – James Brydges, who became the first Duke of Chandos soon after the period of Handel's association with his musical establishment. The family connection had arisen because in 1755 James Leigh of Adlestrop, whose son later inherited Stoneleigh, married Brydges's grand-daughter Caroline; she seems to have been the recipient of music and other books from the Chandos estate originally at Cannons Park.

As I outlined in 1985, the musical contents of the newly-recovered sources seemed to

complicate rather than resolve various questions about the texts of the pieces concerned. My paper continued as follows:

"One manuscript whose rediscovery would be particularly useful is a score of the Chandos anthems that has not been seen since the sale of the music collection of W. H. Cummings in 1917. Cummings described this [in a booklet *Handel, the Duke of Chandos and the 'Harmonious Blacksmith'* (London, 1915)] as 'a collection of Handel's church music, probably written in the order of composition (from 1718 to 1720), by John Christopher Smith and his son'."

Fortunately, this manuscript score was located by Dorothea Schröder in 1990 at the Gemeentemuseum in The Hague, having formerly been in the collection of the banker D. F. Scheurleer, and a report on her discovery appeared in the following year.<sup>4</sup> (Less fortunately, the score turned out to provide little additional enlightenment concerning the textual details of the musical repertory.)

The manuscript score carries no direct evidence in support of Cummings's claim that it presents the works in the order of composition, though this order coincides with a scheme that I had previously evolved on the basis of a hypothetical chronological flow of paper-types in the autographs. The good-quality eighteenth-century binding of the score, with elaborate decoration to the covers, renders a connection with James Brydges plausible, though the volume is not identifiable in the list of Brydges's library prepared by J. C. Pepusch in August 1720. It does, however,

2 The paper characteristics of the partbooks are compatible with origination in the period 1743-6.

3 The text of the paper was subsequently published in Stanley Sadie and Anthony Hicks (eds), *Handel Tercentenary Collection* (London, 1987), 19-42.

4 Dorothea Schröder, 'Wiederentdeckt: die Kopie der Chandos-Anthems aus der ehemaligen Sammlung Cummings', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 4 (1991), 94-107. The manuscript had been in Scheurleer's collection since at least 1924, and it seems probable that he bought it in 1919 when it was sold by Bernard Quaritch Ltd, who had purchased it at Cummings's sale two years previously.



have material on the introductory leaves that confirms at least some stages in its provenance: a small plate with the arms of 'Chandos Leigh Esq.' and an inscription 'From James Henry Leigh's Library At Adlestrop', thus establishing a clear connection with the Chandos family.<sup>5</sup>

Even so, some questions about the manuscript's provenance have remained, because the path of its ownership is less clear than that of two of the volumes of scores (in which anthems are presented in the same order as in the 'Cummings' manuscript) that were sold in 1981 and may be traced back to items 7-12 in Pepusch's catalogue of Brydges's library.<sup>6</sup> By a happy accident, I came across the missing link when looking for something else in a volume of nineteenth-century sale catalogues. The *Catalogue of a Portion of the Valuable Library of the Rt Hon.*

*Lord Leigh, removed from Stoneleigh Abbey* (Puttick and Simpson, London, 14 December 1886 and the following day) includes, for lot 202, a description of the score that was subsequently owned by Cummings:

Handel's Anthems, a Collection in Manuscript, Music and Words, in a fine volume, beautifully bound in OLD ENGLISH CRIMSON MOROCCO, SIDES COMPLETELY COVERED WITH ELABORATE GOLD TOOLING imp. fol. [*i.e.*, 'imperial folio' format].<sup>7</sup>

This was the only music manuscript included in the sale – which is omitted, perhaps for this reason, from the list of such events in Appendix B of A. Hyatt King, *Some British Collectors of Music c. 1600-1960* (Cambridge, 1963). The sale did, however, include copies of volume-sets of the music histories

by Burney and Hawkins, and 'Cantatas and Songs with Music' (apparently printed editions), as well as a number of other items of general interest, such as the literary works of James Harris and a collection of play-texts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Obviously many of the items in the sale derived from the post-Handel period, but one would dearly like to know who in the family had collected (and probably attended) the earlier plays.

In the longer term, there is still much work to be done in tracing the ownership of music and Handelian through items in sale catalogues. All too often, promising-looking lists degenerate after a time into 'Music, 45 items, miscellaneous', or some such formula. Occasional moments of coherence, and specific descriptions, as in the present case, are thus all the more gratifying.

**Donald Burrows**

5 Chandos Leigh (1791-1850), of Stoneleigh and Adlestrop, was the son of James Henry Leigh (1765-1823) and thus the grandson of the James Leigh who married Caroline Brydges.

6 These volumes are now British Library, Add. MSS 62099-62100; the complementary volume, now Add. MS 62101, is less easy to account for.

7 The copy of the sale catalogue in the British Library records the purchaser and the price paid: 'Quaritch [£]20.0.0'.

