



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

This issue may be a little late in appearing, but we hope it is well worth the wait – and even its weight (in gold: please deal with the enclosed subscription forms). Reinhard Strohm and Thomas McGeary contribute substantial articles on, respectively, Handel's so-called 'arioso' movements and his relations with George II and Frederick, Prince of Wales. There are also two shorter but no less

fascinating pieces by William A. Frosch (about a contract for curing Elizabeth Legh) and Graham Pont (on Handel's view of national musical taste). David Vickers and Terence Best report on the Handel festivals in Göttingen and Halle, and there is advance notice of three forthcoming events – a study day and two conferences. Enjoy!

Colin Timms

HANDEL'S OPERAS AND THE 'HANSEATIC' ARIOSO

'Arioso', 'cavata', 'cavatina', 'arietta' and 'mezz'aria' are terms that occupy a twilight zone in the technical vocabulary of Italian opera. Their meanings float somewhere between 'aria' and 'recitative' – almost like the 'chiaroscuro' of the operatic aesthetic that implied a nuancing between light and dark. The idea of a transitional zone mediating between utter contrasts was also the basis of Johann Joachim Quantz's tempo classifications: he bridged the framing concepts of 'allegro' and 'adagio' by the intermediate tempo zone of 'andante', a term that may be considered ambiguous or at least very elastic. My research in progress on the historical nomenclature of aria, recitative, arioso and related terms in opera seria, on which I hope to report in more detail elsewhere, suggests that the terminology was not vague but that it varied between individuals, regions, genres and social groups, and sometimes between different musicians in the same city.

Today, a number of vocal pieces in Handel's operas are commonly referred to as 'ariosi'. They are believed to demonstrate Handel's preference for formal or dramaturgical freedom over the alleged constraint of the da capo aria. Not everyone has the same pieces in mind when using the term, but the most current notion is expressed as follows in *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*:¹

Handel used 'arioso' to mean a short aria, for example Melissa's 'Io già sento l'alma in sen' (*Amadigi*, 1715) ... Dorinda's 'Quando spieghi i [tuoi] tormenti' (*Orlando*, 1733) or Rosmene's 'Al voler di tua fortuna' (*Imeneo*, 1740).

Nevertheless, the same entry defines 'arioso', at least in its older usage, as 'a recitative in the standard Italian poetic metres of seven- or eleven-syllable lines ... set in a contrasting song style'. In other words, it is claimed that Handel used a term, which traditionally denoted a type of recitative, for a type of aria.

In fact, however, he did not. According to my findings, the term 'arioso' does not occur in Handel's autograph opera manuscripts now extant in the Royal Music collection. I can find one, telling, exception: the first, deleted version of the short aria 'Folle sei, se lo consenti' in *Tamerlano*, Act III, scene 8 (R.M. 20. c. 11, f. 103v) is headed 'arios:'. The second version (f. 104r) bears the heading 'concitato', which is however wiped out. Handel composed a kind of excited song here but could not decide upon a suitable term for it, although 'arioso' was available in his vocabulary. In any case, the examples mentioned in *Opera Grove*, and dozens of other famous 'ariosi' (including 'Ombra mai fu' in *Serse* and 'Figlia mia, non pianger, no' in *Tamerlano*) were

not given this designation by Handel. It is not only that he avoided the term: I suggest he never meant to *compose* an operatic arioso.

The ariosi in his Italian cantatas (e.g., those in the *Lucrezia* cantata) corroborate this hypothesis, because they are textually and musically so different. They adhere to the *Seicento* tradition, being passages of recitative text set in an aria-like or solemn style to achieve a particular expression. The adjective 'arioso' (meaning 'aria-like' or 'melodious') implies the masculine noun 'recitativo';² the combination 'recitativo arioso' indicates a hybrid or 'cross-over', but in terms of their textual foundation (*versi sciolti*) the pieces so named before Handel's operas are unambiguous recitatives.

This curious finding poses new questions. What exactly *are* the pieces in the operas which not Handel, but posterity, has called 'ariosi'? Why do we favour the genre name today, and even single out Handel as an opera composer who was particularly successful at 'ariosi'? Did his contemporaries compose or describe equivalent pieces, and what did they call them? And, what if we persist in a terminology that we now know was not Handel's?

Act III of *Amadigi* furnishes two contrasting examples. Melissa's dying song 'Io già sento l'anima in sen / che da me partendo va' (III, 5) is not an arioso but, as noted in *Opera Grove*, 'a short aria', of only two *ottonario* lines. The truncated musical form is dramaturgically motivated: Melissa dies before she can finish an entire aria. The song is

also perceived as incomplete because it lacks rhymes. It corresponds to a form that Pier Jacopo Martello described (1715) as typical for scene-opening arias (*arie d'uscita*); he says of them: 'per lo più la figura apocope è l'anima loro' (their essence is mostly the [rhetorical] figure of *apocope* [truncation]).³ This description fits many scene-opening songs in contemporary operas, which usually consist of a few lines of *ottonario*, *senario* or *quinario* verse – poetic metres incompatible with recitative.⁴ 'Io già sento l'anima in sen' is not sung at the beginning of a scene, but is the tragic climax of a succession comprising *recitativo semplice*, *recitativo accompagnato* and (truncated) *aria*.

By contrast, 'Han penetrato i detti tuoi l'inferno', sung by the ghost of Dardano in *Amadigi* (III, 4) is an accompanied recitative. The *Händel-Handbuch* (vol. 1, p. 153) and J. Merrill Knapp's edition for the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* (series II, vol. 8) call it 'Accompagnato'. In Dean and Knapp's book, however, it is an 'arioso'.⁵ Klaus Hortschansky noted that 'in modern terminology we might call this piece an "arioso", as the text is significantly presented without repetitions in a solemn, slow singing style'.⁶ Scholarly terminology is indeed far from uniform. The *HHA* and the *Händel-Handbuch* tend to apply 'arioso' to truncated arias but not to accompanied recitatives, whereas other scholars prefer 'arioso' for solemn, aria-like recitatives, adopting the traditional cantata terminology. The autograph of *Amadigi* is not extant. The contemporary copies R.M. 19. c. 5

(scribe S13) and Egerton 2917 (scribe S5) do not use the term; I have not yet seen the others. Nevertheless, leaving aside for the moment the practice of Handel's copyists, I can propose an explanation for the modern use of the term.

The term 'arioso' in Handel's operas has become ingrained through Friedrich Chrysander and his editions for the *Händel-Gesellschaft*. This terminological influence is most obvious in the *HHA* and the *Händel-Handbuch*, but present also in most other scholarship. Chrysander introduced the term for short arias, although being more cautious than some of his successors, he did not actually place it over the respective pieces in his scores, but only mentioned it in the tables of contents – as a commentary rather than as a transcription of the source. Thus the eighteenth-century sources and Chrysander's terminology conflict in many works, for example *Almira*: 'Der kann im Blitz und Donner lachen' (III, 14) has no title in the score, is called 'Aria' in the libretto but becomes 'arioso' in Chrysander's table of contents; scene III, 15 begins in the score (a Hamburg copy) with an 'Accompagnement' leading to an 'Aria' but becomes 'Recit. e Arioso' in Chrysander's table.⁷ The missing autograph of *Almira* will hardly have contained the term. To conclude, it is from Chrysander's tables of contents, not from the sources, that the term 'arioso' found its way into Handelian lore, helped to define him as a non-conformist opera seria composer and influenced countless performances.⁸

The story, however, does not end

¹ M. Murata, M. McClymonds and J. Budden, 'Arioso', *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, ed. S. Sadie and C. Bashford (London, 1992), i, 189.

² Independent uses of the adjective occurred in other contexts at the time.

³ See P. J. Martello, *Della tragedia antica e moderna* (Rome, 1715), in *Scritti critici e satirici*, ed. H. S. Noce (Bari, 1963), 286.

⁴ This description is also applicable to the 'cavatina', a somewhat later term.

⁵ W. Dean and J. M. Knapp, *Handel's Operas, 1704-1726* (Oxford, 1987), 282.

⁶ K. Hortschansky, 'Die aria parlante bei G. F. Händel', in *Musik als Klangrede: Festschrift zum 70. Geburtstag von Günther Fleischhauer*, ed. W. Ruf (Vienna, 2001), 70-93, at 77.

⁷ D. Schröder's edition of the work in *HHA*, II/1 (1994) reproduces the source titles.

⁸ The practice of the *HHA* has now changed. M. Pacholke's edition of *Tolomeo* (2000) called three songs 'ariosi', although they are arias (see my review in *Notes*, 59 (2003), 980-83), but his *Lotario* (2003) correctly has 'aria' in the two cases where the Chrysander tradition had 'arioso'.



here. The term 'arioso' had conflicting applications in Handel's own time. Johann Gottfried Walther states in his *Musicalisches Lexicon* (1732) that 'arioso' or 'arioso' meant 'im stylo recitativo einen solchen Satz, welcher nach dem Tact exprimirt werden soll als wäre es eine Aria' (in the recitative style, a piece that is performed in strict time, as if it were an aria); he also describes a 'cavata' as the concluding summary of a long recitative, when its last two lines are set 'arioso'.⁹ Walther does not mention the meaning of a short aria. Johann Mattheson, however, seems to admit this. In *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (1739) he twice refers to the term: first, he defines it as a recitative that is 'tactmässig gesungen' and analogous to an 'obligato'; later, under the heading 'Aria, arioso und arietta', he describes it almost as a variant form of an aria, characterized by its aria-like, measured performance but distinguished from a full aria by its free, undivided form and its mostly narrative or edifying content, lacking an 'explicit affect' ('sonderbare ausdrückliche Gemüths-Bewegung').¹⁰ The latter description probably encouraged Chrysander's usage.

In not calling his short, solemn or formally undivided opera arias 'ariosi', Handel differed from Mattheson. Did he have any allies? Yes. Not only had his Italian colleagues virtually banished the term 'arioso' from their opera scores by c. 1700 (as my research suggests); also his Hamburg colleague Reinhard Keiser was wary of the concept, while 'accompagnement', 'arietta' and 'cavata' are frequent in his scores. Nevertheless, the editor of

Keiser's *Nebucadnezar* follows Chrysander's practice of introducing the term 'arioso' in the table of contents, even where the manuscript source itself says 'aria'.¹¹

Keiser's Hamburg contemporary, the poet Barthold Feind, supports Chrysander's side practically and theoretically. In Feind's libretti *Lucretia*, *Masagniello*, *Sueno* and *Antiochus* (and in contrast to Feustking's *Almira*), we find many 'ariosi', along with 'obbligati' and other hybrid forms, for solemn, narrative, expressive or meditative texts. Keiser tolerated the ones in *Masagniello furioso*, but apparently the librettists Hinsch, Hunold and Feustking shared his abstention from the term. Feind explains in his treatise *Gedancken von der Opera* (1708) that to set a recitative 'arioso' is appropriate when either the poet has composed the words 'al Arioso' or a special affect is expressed.¹² Feind's statement and the examples in his librettos circumscribe 'arioso' as an independent, aria-like, poetic and musical type.

The reason why some Germans accepted this concept of arioso in opera is simple. They relied more on poetic content and musical form than on text-metrical structures for the definition of operatic genres, because German operatic recitative had more varied metrical forms than the narrowly-defined Italian *versi sciolti*. Thus a soliloquy in free poetic metres could be understood and set either like an aria or as a recitative. Correspondingly, German librettos and scores indicate genre names such as 'aria', 'obbligato', 'arioso', etc. much more regularly than do the Italian sources, because the distinction was less self-evident.

Mattheson mentions the outstanding German cavatas and ariosi in the poetry collection *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott* by Handel's Hamburg friend Barthold Heinrich Brockes.¹³ Brockes's lyrical 'ariosi' are hardly comparable to those of the Italian tradition: they are mostly long, self-contained texts in free poetic forms. Their contents are more often meditative, narrative or edifying (as stated by Mattheson) than expressive (as mentioned by Feind). Handel selected the texts of his nine German arias from several larger cantata-like poems in Brockes's collection – for example, 'Singe, Seele, Gott zum Preise' and 'Süsser Blumen Ambra-Flocken' come from 'Der Garten', pp. 88-99 – but he omitted the recitatives and 'arioso' units. 'Flammende Rose, Zierde der Erden' comes from the poem 'Die Rose', but its dryly reasoning arioso 'Der Inhalt dieser Schrift ist deutlich zwar' (p. 68) was not composed by Handel. We can hardly blame him.

If we insist on defending the term 'arioso' in Handel's operas, although the composer himself spurned it, a particular German, even 'Hanseatic' usage comprising Chrysander, Mattheson, Brockes and Feind might be constructed. Other Hamburg practitioners disagreed, however, and so did Handel. It seems that Handel, like Keiser, had an Italianised concept of operatic forms from very early on, perhaps reflecting their common central German background. Maybe this is why Handel did not adopt the Hamburg fashion of operatic arioso.

Reinhard Strohm

⁹ J. G. Walther, *Musicalisches Lexicon* (Leipzig, 1732; repr. Kassel, 1953), cols 48a and 150a. See Colin Timms, 'The Cavata at the Time of Vivaldi', *Nuovi studi vivaldiani: Edizione e cronologia critica delle opere*, ed. A. Fanna and G. Morelli (Florence, 1988), 451-77.

¹⁰ J. Mattheson, *Der vollkommene Capellmeister* (Hamburg, 1739; repr. Kassel, 1954), 78 (para. 53) and 212-13 (paras. 9-20), respectively.

¹¹ See J. H. Roberts (ed.), *Handel Sources: Materials for the Study of Handel's Borrowings*, 3: Reinhard Keiser, *Claudius and Nebucadnezar* (New York, 1986), 204-6 and table.

¹² B. Feind, 'Gedancken von der Opera', in his *Deutsche Gedichte*, facs. ed. W. G. Marigold (Berne, 1989), 79.

¹³ Mattheson, *op. cit.*, 213. See B. H. Brockes, *Irdisches Vergnügen in Gott*, 2nd edn (Hamburg, 1724).

A BONESETTER'S CONTRACT

Elizabeth Legh was the daughter of an ancient and distinguished family of English gentry. She was born in 1694, never married, and died before she was forty. She and her family were on friendly terms with Handel, and she was a 'fanatical admirer' of his music.¹ She also amassed an important collection of manuscript copies of his scores.² In the early 1990s Howard Serwer discovered a contract between Elizabeth's father and a 'bonesetter' to straighten her scoliatic back.³ Although we reported this in the *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*,⁴ the contract was not printed as the appendix we had hoped. We believed then, and I still do, that it is of sufficient interest to be part of the printed heritage of Handelian.

The Contract

Whereas it is agreed between John Legh of Arlington in the County of Cheshire Esq/ [sic], and Rachel Ormston, the wife of Joseph Ormston of London, Marchant [sic], that in consideration of one hundred and fifty guineas to be paid by the said [ink blot covering word(s): John Legh?], Rachel Ormston has undertaken to cure Elizabeth Legh, (the daughter of John Legh) who at present is awry, and to prevent all cavils or mistakes hereafter, it is resolved to mention the particulars of the said cure.

The backbone begins at the third joint to slant a little towards the left side; to about halfway downe [sic] the shoulder blade; from whence it turns more upon a crook as low down as the middle of the loyns [loins], and one inch half quarter from the center, to the left side, and thence turns back with a sloap [slope] to the right side; as low as the Os Sacrum, which lays sideways downe [sic] to the left side, and up at the right, but the rump has a small winding towards [the] left side, and lays half an inch that way from the middle. The left shoulder is higher and fuller than the right, and all the left ribs bear out sideways to the arm. The right hip rests much higher than the left, and lays much more backward. Beyond, the right collar bone turns more in then [sic] the left.

All these particulars being thus found, the said Rachel Ormston has engaged herself, by Gods assistance, to reduce the said Elizabeth Legh her backbone, shoulders, hipps [sic] and ribbs [sic] to an even height and breadth, and the whole body to its naturall [sic] figure, strait and upright, unless, since Elizabeth Legh is pretty much grown for her

age; she should stop growing in height in months after the date hereof, and by that means Rachel Ormston should be prevented from producing so compleat [sic] a cure; in which case the said Rachel Ormston has however by these presents oblidgd herself to bring the shoulders and hips to an even height, and so far to reduce the rest of the body, as that in an own even dress without padding or other means to hide it, Elizabeth Legh shall in her cloaths [sic] appear strait and even, but then for want of affecting so compleat [sic] a cure as above, tho onely [sic] to be hinderd [sic] by means of Elizabeth Legh's not continuing to grow, yet [sic, ?] Rachel Ormston shall then however, onely [sic] be able to demand by virtue hereof fifty guineas more, but if an absolute cure is performed, as Rachel Ormston has promised to attempt, and hopes to affect, then the said John Legh has obliged himself, his heirs, his executors and administrators to pay, or cause to be paid unto the said Rachel Ormston seventy five guineas in hand, the receipt whereof she has hereby acknowledged, and seventy five guineas more when compleat [sic] cure is performed as above, or only fifty guineas more when Elizabeth Legh is made to appear even in her cloaths [sic], and that it evidently appears she stops growing. Besides twenty five pounds a year for the said Elizabeth Legh her board during the time of the cure to be paid quarterly, that is to five pounds and five shillings every three months. To the performance of all which both parties have set their hands and seals, this present twentieth day of October one thousand seven hundred and nine.

Signed and sealed

in the presence of

Elizabeth Freman

Mary Walton

Discussion

The contract was signed and witnessed, but apparently cancelled. Despite, and perhaps because of, her 'wry' back, she had a straight and strong personality. As we said in our paper: 'Perhaps both her physical stigmata and her strong sense of self contributed to the fact that she never married, and in turn, encouraged her intellectual and aesthetic interests and led to her collection of Handel's manuscripts'.

William A. Frosch, MD

¹ W. Dean, 'The Malmesbury Collection', in *Handel Collections and their History*, ed. T. Best (Oxford, 1993), 36.

² Dean, *op. cit.*, 29-38.

³ London, British Library, Sloane MS 4034, f. 71.

⁴ H. Serwer and W. A. Frosch, 'The Trouble with Elizabeth Legh', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 7 (1998), 258-66.



HANDEL AND THE FEUDING ROYALS

In the summer of 1737 the simmering antagonism between Frederick, Prince of Wales, and his parents burst into open acrimony, resulting in Frederick and his household being expelled from St James's Palace and the king forbidding Frederick's supporters to attend his court. How Handel got tangled up in this royal feud and barely escaped the king's displeasure for disobeying orders has hitherto escaped notice.

The only known accounts of this episode are found in letters from the Countess of Strafford and Newburgh Hamilton (her steward, and one of Handel's future librettists) to the Earl of Strafford. Hamilton wrote to Strafford on 3 January 1737 [1738]:¹

The P— [Prince] design'd to have a concert every friday night & desir'd M.^r Handel to make one, which he readily agreed to; but it came to the K—^s ears, & he sent M.^r Handel an order, not to go near the P: I did not beleive it, till I had it this morning from his own mouth.

The king's order to Handel was part of the continuing fall-out of the royal scandal of the previous summer.²

The growing tension between the king and queen and their eldest son – at first personal, but later involved with the political opposition to Sir Robert Walpole's ministry – had reached a crisis after Frederick spirited the pregnant Princess Augusta from Hampton Court without royal permission to St James's, where she could be closer to medical attention. The king took this action (affecting the safety of a potential heir to the throne) as insolent and disrespectful. Despite penitential letters by Frederick, on 10 September the king expelled the prince and princess from St James's (as George's father had done to him during their own feud almost two decades earlier).³

At first, wishing to inflict further penalty on his son and his supporters, as part of the expulsion order the king informed the prince that he would not have his palace made 'the Resort of them, who under the Appearance of an Attachment to you [the prince], foment the Divisions which you have made in my

Family'. This would seem only to forbid the prince and his supporters from attending court. So strong was the king's displeasure and his desire to humiliate his son, that he commanded his order and all the letters that passed between him and Frederick to be published and distributed to members of parliament and foreign ministers, and sent through diplomatic channels to courts throughout Europe.

The following day (11 September) the king sent to his own household servants a message broader in scope:⁴

Notice is hereby given to all Peers, Peeresses, Privy Councillors and their Ladies, and other persons in any station under the King and Queen, that whoever goes to pay their Court to their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales will not be admitted into His Majesty's presence.

Since Handel was drawing two pensions and held an office worth £600 per annum from the king, the order (if he received it) would seem to apply to him. Several days later, as reported by *The Craftsman* on 17 September, the king further extended the scope of his orders:⁵

We hear by the late Order sent to several of the Peers, Peeresses, &c. those Persons who have Places under his Majesty and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales will be obliged to quit one of them.

This order commanded those having places with both king and prince to choose to serve one or the other.

The king seems to have had difficulty in making his royal will known or obeyed, for these direct orders did not have the desired effect, as the Duke of Newcastle was informed on 22 September: 'Our changes at Court do not happen so quick as was expected, for I don't hear of any body laying down except L[ad]y Torrington'.⁶ Charlotte Viscountess Torrington had resigned her position as Lady of the Bedchamber to the Princess of Wales, probably because her husband was Privy

¹ London, British Library [BL], Add. MS 31,142, f. 202r. The episode is mentioned by R. Loewenthal [Smith], 'Handel and Newburgh Hamilton: New References in the Strafford Papers', *Musical Times*, 112 (1971), 1063-6.

² On the feud and expulsion, see John, Lord Hervey, *Some Materials Towards Memoirs of the Reign of King George II*, ed. R. Sedwick, 3 vols (London, 1931), iii, 756-93, 807-27, 838-9; P. C. Yorke, *The Life and Correspondence of Philip Yorke, Lord High Chancellor of Great Britain*, 3 vols (Cambridge, 1913), i, 169-82; W. Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford*, 2 vols (London, 1798), i, 533-46. For references in private correspondence and diaries, see Historical Manuscripts Commission, *Report on the Manuscripts of the Earl of Denbigh* (London, 1911), 127, 223, 223-4, 225, 226, 228, *Manuscripts of the Earl of Egmont: Diary of the First Earl of Egmont (Viscount Percival)*, 3 vols (London, 1923), ii, 425ff.

³ See *Letters, in the Original, with Translations, and Messages, that passed between the King, Queen, Prince, and Princess of Wales; on Occasion of the Birth of the Young Princess* (1737), 21.

⁴ As transcribed by the Earl of Egmont, who was a Privy Councillor: Egmont, *Diary* (12 Sept), ii, 432.

⁵ *The Craftsman*, no. 584 (17 Sept 1737).

⁶ Letter of 22 Sept 1737 from 'Mr. Guides' to the Duke of Newcastle: BL, Add. MS 32,690, f. 370r. Guides's letter apparently accompanied a manuscript copy of the King's order (f. 371r-v).

Councillor and officer of the Royal Hospital at Greenwich. Two other resignations from the prince and princess's household were Anne, Countess of Effingham, Lady of the Bedchamber to the princess, and William, Earl of Jersey, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the prince.⁷

Given the laxity in obeying the king's somewhat conflicting orders, and perhaps because he held no appointment in the prince's household, Handel may have felt that the royal edicts did not apply to his visiting the prince and agreeing to direct his concerts – until the king directly ordered him 'not to go near the Prince'. The king's order to Handel, though, was no empty threat: in August 1737 he eliminated the Duchess of Ancaster's pension because her husband, Mr Douglas, had a post under the prince;⁸ on 1 March 1738 the king turned out Lord Archibald Hamilton as a Lord of the Admiralty because Lady Jane Hamilton was Groom of the Stole and Mistress of the Robes to the Princess of Wales.⁹

Lady Strafford repeated the incident of the king's order to Handel as a piece of court news several days later (7 January) and also revealed that the prince had his own means of getting revenge for his father's order:¹⁰

... the Prince as soon as Mr Hendle told him the King had forbid him to attend at his Royall Highness's Concerts told Denoyer he shou'd no more teach the Duke & the Princess's to Dance.

The prince's dancing master since at least 1731 was Philip Denoyer (d. 1788), who had taught Frederick in Hanover in summer 1722. News of the prince's command spread quickly, for Lord Egmont had already entered in his diary on 3 January:¹¹

This day a courtier acquainted me that Dunoyer the dancing master (whom the Prince entertains) had received his orders not to proceed in teaching the Duke and the Princesses.

General confusion, insubordination, or indifference to the seriousness of the king's wishes still prevailed among courtiers, for the Lord Chamberlain had to issue a decree on 27 February 1738, reaffirming the king's order:¹²

His Majesty having been informed, that due Regard has not been paid to His Order of the 11th [recte, 10th] of September 1737, has thought fit to declare, That no Persons whatsoever, who shall go to pay their Court to their Royal Highnesses the Prince or Princess of Wales, shall be admitted into His Majesty's Presence, at any of His Royal Palaces.

* * *

The notion spread by early twentieth-century writers that Prince Frederick was openly hostile to Handel and tried to subvert his opera company is now recognized as a great exaggeration, if not a fiction.¹³ As Carole Taylor has shown, Frederick had been paying season bounties of £250 to Handel's opera company since 1733/34.¹⁴ The letters to Lord Strafford reveal their personal association in 1737 and early 1738. As well, some time before 1742, Frederick had acquired a portrait of Handel painted by Joseph Goupy.¹⁵

Frederick subsequently bore no ill-will toward Handel for obeying the king's order. The prince and princess recognized the necessity of their servants' giving up their appointments in obedience to the king's

⁷ *The Craftsman*, no. 584 (17 Sept 1737), and letter to the Countess of Denbigh (*Denbigh Manuscripts*, 223). Lady Effingham resigned probably because her husband was Deputy Earl Marshal and held several army colonelcies. The places as Lady of the Bedchamber were quickly filled by the Marchioness of Carnarvon and Lady Baltimore: *The Daily Advertiser*, no. 2073 (16 Sept 1737).

⁸ Egmont, *Diary* (10 Aug 1737), ii, 429, and letter to the Countess of Denbigh (*Denbigh Manuscripts*, 127).

⁹ Egmont, *Diary* (2 March 1738), ii, 468-9. The prince compensated Hamilton by appointing him his cofferer and surveyor-general: London, Duchy of Cornwall Office, Accounts, vii (Ladyday 1737-Ladyday 1738), f. 6v.

¹⁰ BL, Add. MS 31,145, f. 210r.

¹¹ Egmont, *Diary* (3 Jan. 1738), ii, 459. The royal court moved quickly to fill the gap, for *The London Evening-Post*, no. 1582 (3-5 Jan 1738) reported: 'On Monday last [2 Jan], Mr. Glover was appointed Dancing-Master to the Royal Family'.

¹² Printed in *The London Gazette*, no. 7679 (25-28 Feb 1738); reprinted in *The London Evening-Post*, no. 1606 (28 Feb-2 March 1738); *The Daily Advertiser*, no. 2215 (1 March 1738); *The Political State of Great-Britain*, 55 (Jan-June 1738), 293-4. Egmont mentions the renewal several days earlier, noting that 'the same was signified to several private gentlemen, a thing never done before': *Diary* (2 March 1738), ii, 469.

¹³ See A. Yorke-Long, 'The Opera of the Nobility' (diss. presented for the Osgood Memorial Prize, University of Oxford, 1951), and T. McGeary, 'Handel, Prince Frederick, and the Opera of the Nobility Reconsidered', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge*, 7 (1998), 156-78.

¹⁴ C. Taylor, 'Handel and Frederick, Prince of Wales', *Musical Times*, 125 (1984), 89-92.

¹⁵ Listed in K. Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-51) as Collector and Patron', *Walpole Society*, 55 (1989-90), 73, no. 152; also in 'Frederick, Prince of Wales (1707-1751), as a Patron of the Visual Arts: Princely Patriotism and Political Propaganda', 2 vols (Ph.D. diss., Yale University, 1985), i, 370, no. 122.



wishes, and did not hold it against them for doing so.¹⁶

Despite the king's interference, it was well known in advance that Frederick would be attending Handel's benefit concert on 28 March 1738.¹⁷ Also that March, Frederick's name headed the list of the royal children who subscribed to the publication of Handel's *Alexander's Feast*.¹⁸ The 1737/38 opera season run by lords Cowper and Delawarr resumed on 3 January 1738 (after the theatres had reopened following the death of Queen Caroline) and included three operas by Handel (*Faramondo*, *Seerse* and *Alessandro Severo*), which were probably attended by Frederick, since he paid the managers £250 for that season.¹⁹

After the prince and his father had been formally reconciled, following the fall of Sir Robert Walpole in February 1742, Handel apparently began attending the prince's concerts and resumed socializing with him. Although the reports may vary in reliability, they are in agreement in documenting familiarity between them.

A hitherto unnoticed anecdote that circulated in the 1790s describes Handel 'conducting a morning concert at Leicester-House, when his present Majesty [King George III] was about four years of age' [in about 1742]; 'he was so struck with the attention which the Royal boy paid to the music, that he exclaimed to the performers about him — If that young Prince should live to ascend the throne, then will be the æra of Handel's glory'.²⁰ In February 1743 Newburgh Hamilton dedicated the libretto of *Samson* to Frederick,²¹ while in July, John Christopher Smith, Sr., reported that the prince had repeatedly urged Handel to compose operas for Lord Middlesex's opera company.²² Charles Burney reports

that in the 1740s Handel held oratorio rehearsals at Carlton House.²³ Such a rehearsal was the occasion of another anecdote from Burney:²⁴

He [Handel] was one day at Carlton House, where there was a rehearsal of one of his Oratorios. The Princess of Wales talk'd to her ladies & did not seem to mind it [the music] much, upon which Handel cried, "Stop, stop, you Bitch", loud enough for her R Highness to hear.

Mary Delany's correspondence suggests that Handel and the prince were on terms of personal familiarity, such that she could write on 11 February 1744: 'Mr. Handel and the Prince had quarrelled, which I am sorry for. Handel says the Prince is quite out of his good graces!'²⁵ This comment — especially Handel's inversion of the patron-musician relationship — could be a piece of raillery, for the quarrel does not seem to have been serious: shortly thereafter, in 1746, Thomas Morell reported that Handel approached him for a libretto (*Judas Maccabaeus*), adding to his request 'the Honour of a Recommendation from Prince Frederic'.²⁶ And in May 1749, Frederick requested the Foundling Hospital to postpone Handel's first concert in its chapel so that he could attend.²⁷

A degree of familiarity between Handel and Frederick is conveyed also in another (undated) anecdote conveyed by Burney:²⁸

He [Handel] was always very free with the Royal family particularly with the P and P's of Wales & one day the prince told him he had compos'd some

¹⁶ Egmont recorded (12 Sept 1737) that after the king's order had been sent, 'the Prince immediately sent to such officers of the Army as are in his service, to desire they would forbear his Court in obedience to His Majesty's order, assuring them that he should not be forgetful of their past services to him': *Diary*, ii, 432. Lady Torrington resumed her appointment by 30 April 1742 (date of her warrant), after the king and prince had become reconciled.

¹⁷ 'Tis apprehended generally the Prince will come [to the benefit]', wrote the 4th Earl of Shaftesbury on 14 March 1738 to James Harris: *Music and Theatre in Handel's World: The Family Papers of James Harris 1732-1780*, ed. D. Burrows and R. Dunhill (Oxford, 2002), 44. After the benefit, *The London Evening Post*, no. 1618 (28-30 March 1738), duly reported that 'Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales were present'.

¹⁸ O. E. Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955), 453.

¹⁹ Taylor, 'Handel and Frederick', 91.

²⁰ See *Attic Wit; or, a Medley of Humour* (1791), 15, and J. Addison, *Interesting Anecdotes, Memoirs, Allegories, Essays, and Poetical Fragments* (1797), viii, 168-9.

²¹ Deutsch, *Handel*, 559.

²² Letter of 28 July 1743 from J. C. Smith, Sr., to the 4th Earl of Shaftesbury: see B. Matthews, 'Unpublished Letters Concerning Handel', *Music & Letters*, 40 (1959), 263. The requests were futile.

²³ 'Sketch of the Life of Handel', in *Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey* (1795), 34, 36.

²⁴ It was recorded by Margaret Owen (1742-1816) in a notebook now in Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales, Brogyntyn MS 8499, p. 25: see G. Thomas, 'Burney on Handel: A New Source', *Handel Institute Newsletter*, vi/2 (autumn 1995), [2]. A politer version appears on p. 36 of the 'Sketch' in Burney's *Account*.

²⁵ As quoted in Deutsch, *Handel*, 582.

²⁶ Undated letter (c. 1779-80) from Thomas Morell to John Nichols: see R. Smith, 'Thomas Morell and his Letter about Handel', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association*, 127 (2002), 191-225 at 216-19.

²⁷ D. Burrows, 'Handel and the Foundling Hospital', *Music & Letters*, 58 (1977), 270.

²⁸ Recorded by Margaret Owen (cf. note 24 above). Named are Charles Wiedeman, and Thomas Vincent, music and instrument keeper (both members of Frederick's household).



music & desir'd him to hear it. Handel made a pish at it, but the Prince said he should hear it & had Weideman [flautist], Vincent [oboist] & the band call'd. They began to play it. Handel seem'd much dissatisfied & said it was very bad, upon w'ch the Prince order'd them to try another piece of his composition & ask'd Handel how he lik'd that, "Worse & Worse", replied the musician.

Despite Handel's severe judgment of his compositions, Frederick later paid tribute to Handel in the context of a temple of Mount Parnassus that he planned for Kew in about 1751.²⁹ The temple would have been adorned with the paired busts of ancient and modern worthies. For example, Lycurgus, Socrates, Archimedes, Homer, Aeschylus and Horace were to be paired with Alfred, Locke, Newton, Milton, Shakespeare and Pope, respectively. Among artists, Frederick paired Handel with the ancient Greek musician Timotheus, whose musical

powers Handel had celebrated in his ode *Alexander's Feast* (1736).

Toward the end of 1746 Frederick openly led a party in opposition to the Pelham ministry, thus ensuring that when he suddenly died, on 20 March 1751, he was completely estranged from his father. The king, unrelenting in expressing his contempt for his son, ensured that the heir to the throne received the barest minimum of ceremony for his funeral. George Dodington noted that among the 'many slights the poor remains' of the prince received, except for persons having a place in the ceremony and members of his household, of all the bishops, lords, their sons, and Privy Councillors of the realm only six marched in procession.³⁰ The hour-long service in Henry VII's chapel was performed without organ or an anthem, which Handel, as composer to the Chapel Royal, would otherwise likely have written for his erstwhile friend and patron.

Thomas McGeary

²⁹ The project is described in Rorschach, 'Frederick, Prince of Wales', i, 164-74.

³⁰ *The Political Diary of George Bubb Dodington*, ed. J. Carswell and L. A. Dralle (Oxford, 1965), 112-13. The ceremonial was reprinted in *The London Advertiser, and Literary Gazette*, no. 37 (15 April 1751).

ANOTHER HANDEL ANECDOTE

'Upon my asking the late Mr. Handel, what he took to be the genuine and peculiar taste in music of the several nations in Europe; to the French, he gave the Minuet; to the Spaniard, the Saraband; to the Italian, the Arietta; and to the English, the Hornpipe, or Morris-dance.'

The source of this anecdote is an article in the first volume of *Archaeologia; or, Miscellaneous Tracts relating to Antiquity* (London: Society of Antiquaries, 1770). The article, which begins on page 11, is entitled: 'Extracts from the Church-wardens Accompts of the Parish of St. Helen's, in Abington, Berkshire; from the first Year of the Reign of Philip and Mary, to the thirty-fourth of Q. Elizabeth; now in the Possession of the Reverend Mr. G. Benson; with some Observations upon them. By J. Ward.' The title is followed by the words 'Read November 24, 1743' – presumably the date on which Ward saw the 'accompts'. The ninth of his 'observations' (p. 20) reads as follows:

The morrice bells, mentioned under the year 1560, as purchased by the parish, were used in their morrice dances, a diversion then practised at their festivals; in which the populace might be indulged, from a political view, to keep them in good humour.

The anecdote is appended as footnote 'k' to this observation.

There were at least two contemporaries of Handel named J. Ward. One was the countertenor Joseph Ward, who sang in the Dublin performances of *Messiah*.¹ Another was the musical writer John Ward, who reviewed the first edition of Robert Smith's *Harmonics* (1749) and of Charles Avison's *Essay on Musical Expression* (1752).² The latter is more likely to have been the author of the memoir.

Handel's summary of the national styles is neat and straightforward, except for his reported account of the 'genuine and peculiar' music of England, which could be interpreted as identifying the hornpipe with the morris dance. Yet Handel, a professional composer of dances, would have been unlikely to confuse two different dance forms. More plausibly, he could be read as nominating both dances as representative of the distinctively English taste. Furthermore, 'hornpipe' and 'morris dance' refer to heterogeneous classes of dances that could conceivably overlap. So it is possible that Handel, who was familiar with hornpipes of his day and composed some beautiful movements inspired by them,³ had also seen or heard similar movements in triple time performed by morris dancers.

Graham Pont

¹ O. E. Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955), 531 and 545.

² J. Kessler, *The Science of Music in Britain, 1714-1830* (New York, 1979), i, 32, and ii, 951.

³ Most notably HWV 325:5 and 331:2; see also HWV 355 and 356.



GERMAN HANDEL FESTIVALS 2006

GÖTTINGEN

It was inevitable that Göttingen would join in the celebrations of Mozart's 250th anniversary. Whether this was appropriate for a famous Handel festival is a moot point: perhaps it does no harm occasionally to look for common ground between the two most popular musical dramatists of the eighteenth century.

Mozart's Viennese arrangements of Handel's odes and *Messiah* were naturally major attractions of the long weekend. The *Ode auf St. Caecilia* was performed at the St Johannis-Kirche with admirable integrity by local amateur forces (the Göttinger Stadtkantorei and Göttinger Symphonie Orchester), but Christoph Mueller's pedestrian approach, combined with a boomy acoustic, failed to match Peter Kopp's magnificent performance of Handel's original two years ago (in the same venue). Simone Kermes provided some extrovert solos, but Christoph Genz's flaccid singing paved the way for an interminable second half. Mozart's splendid incidental music for *Thamos, König in Ägypten* was made unpalatable by a monotone narrator who 'summarised' the play at considerable length.

Despite giving the pre-performance lecture, I donated my tickets for Nicholas McGegan's performance of Mozart's *Der Messias* to my long-suffering wife and children. My six-year old son reliably informs me that the loud bits with trumpets and drums were very exciting, and he liked the bit where they sang 'Hallelujah' lots of times. The general consensus was that McGegan was having the time of his life with his newly formed FestspielOrchester Göttingen (comprising some of the best period-instrument players in the world). This was especially evident in the performance I attended of Robert Levin's new reconstruction and completion of Mozart's Mass in C minor, K. 427: the soprano soloists may have had a bad day, but the NDR Choir was good while McGegan and the orchestra were thrilling and consummately musical.

Being rather fond of Mozart's affectionate handling of *Alexander's Feast*, I was profoundly disappointed by René Jacobs's performance. Although advertised as Mozart's arrangement, this was really three arrangements battling for supremacy – Mozart, Handel and Jacobs, in ascending order of priority. Most surprisingly, the work was performed in English. Having spoken enthusiastically about the German version that we would be hearing, and expressed admiration for details of Mozart's inventive re-orchestration of Handel's scoring (most of them

botched by Jacobs), I was utterly mystified and increasingly irritated by this concert. Things might have been better if the performance had been communicative and delightful in its own way, but Jacobs made a mess of things. The crowd in the Stadthalle seemed deliriously impressed by Maestro Jacobs's cleverness: a lovely little harp solo at the beginning of Part 2 (one of his prettier – unaccredited – compositions) elicited gasps of delight; but for me, at least, Alexander the Great's feast of victory was turned into something closer to a dog's dinner.

The best feature of the festival was the reassuring number of fine performances of unadulterated Handel. The outstanding highlight was a late-night concert at the St Marien-Kirche by Carolyn Sampson and Robin Blaze, accompanied by a small continuo group including James Johnstone and Elizabeth Kenny. Some gorgeously sung duets from *Jephtha*, *Saul*, *Tamerlano* and *Esther* were notable for the ravishing blend and sheer tonal beauty of the singers, but Sampson's passionate account of 'Piangerò la sorte mia' rightly stole the show.

Robin Blaze got to spread his wings in a solo recital of Purcell, Lanier and Lawes lute songs (with Handel's 'Vedendo amor' thrown in for good measure) that took place out of town, in the tiny village church at Adelebsen. Not only were foreign visitors given a tour of the local castle and historic curiosities, but at a post-concert party the children and I were profusely thanked by local people for visiting their village. We felt very humble about our own kind of hospitality in Huddersfield. 'Vedendo amor' made another appearance – in Andreas Scholl's recital at the Aula der Universität. Keyboard player Markus Märkl switched to fortepiano in the second half, when Scholl gave some delightful performances of songs by Haydn and Mozart.

Konrad Junghänel directed the Akademie für Alte Musik Berlin in Igor Folwill's understated and patient staging of *Poro*. The musical performance had conviction and dramatic colour, and was mostly appropriate in style – although there was no need for a chamber organ in the Deutsches Theater pit, or for the continuo group's twiddly-fiddly introductions to some of the Act III recitative. The singing was not particularly memorable, but this was a good team performance by an efficient cast who seemed to know and respect Metastasio's characters. It was consequently more satisfying than the more common star-studded fiesta garbed in misconceived action. Folwill has not always hit the bull's-eye in recent Göttingen productions, but this time his simple,

natural, and trusting approach to Metastasio and Handel paid handsome dividends. Manfred Kaderk's elegant stage design convincingly integrated baroque and modern ideas and gave the production a visual clarity that should come across well on the projected commercial DVD.

Next year the focus will be back on Handel with a vengeance: McGegan will conduct *Solomon* and *Giulio Cesare* (in a baroque-style staging); Alan Curtis is hoping to perform *Giove in Argo*, and Peter Kopp and his excellent Dresden group are booked to play *Belshazzar*.

David Vickers

HALLE

The theme of this year's festival was 'Händels Klassizität', the meaning of which was not immediately clear to some of us and led to interesting discussion: did it mean Handel's evocation of the ancient world (*Giulio Cesare*, *Admeto*, *Semele*) or his position as a forerunner of the Viennese classical period (a favourite theme of Walther Siegmund-Schultze in former times)? The answer was neither: it meant Handel's status as a classic, an idea that led neatly to the way in which the next two generations attempted to enhance this status by modernising some aspects of his work – and we have had a bit of that in this Mozart year.

After meetings of the Editorial Board of the *HHA* and the committee of the Handel Society, the festival began with the usual Festkonzert, including speeches of welcome and the award of the Handel prizes: this year the main prize went to the Intendant of the opera house, Klaus Froboese. The period-instrument Händelfestspielorchester, conducted by Michael Schneider, gave movements from the *Water Music* – well played, except for that curse of modern baroque performance, a battery of lutes and guitars (known to us in Anthony Hicks's now immortal phrase, 'silly pluckers'), a feature totally inappropriate to this particular work, whose sources give no hint of any continuo instruments. Thomas Trotter (organ) played a charming canon by Schumann, and Guilmant's March upon Handel's 'Lift up your heads', which was quite entertaining. After the speeches and presentations we had a selection of movements from *Alexander's Feast*; it was well done, but the quality of the English diction reminded one of that famous remark about an *Esther* performance in 1732, that 'you had sworn it had been Welsh'.

The new opera production was *Admeto*, directed by the retired countertenor Axel Köhler. One went into this with apprehension, because some of his recent

directorial efforts have been tiresomely vulgar (after the modern fashion); but given the approach that it seems we have to endure these days, this production was not too bad. There was some sex and violence, but it was kept within bounds. There were also some predictable clichés: Admeto's deathbed was in a hospital ward, with drips and all the associated paraphernalia, and the Hell scene at the beginning of Act II was in the dissecting room of the same hospital, with some gruesome post-mortem surgical details that raised titters in the audience and caused two ladies in the row behind me to leave the theatre in a hurry. Nevertheless, Köhler ensured continuity of action by the simple but effective device of playing one scene on the left side of the spacious stage and the next on the right, without a break but with suitable adjustments to the lighting. The singing and playing were excellent, and the young countertenor Matthias Rexroth was magnificent in the title-role – and he was well supported by the rest of the cast, especially the admirable Romelia Lichtenstein as Alceste. The performance was briskly conducted by Howard Arman.

As ever in this crowded festival, it was impossible to attend everything; but I was glad that I made it to the University Hall, now renovated and back in business as a concert venue, to hear Trevor Pinnock and Friends in a mainly Purcell concert. After the St Cecilia Ode of 1683 and *My beloved spake* there was a wonderful, semi-staged performance of *Dido and Aeneas*, with Susan Bickley in ravishing form as the injured queen. Handel's concerto grosso, Op. 6 No. 9, was despatched very powerfully in the first half.

An unusual and rewarding concert was given in the Dom – a 'Vespers at the Court of Duke August' as it might have been performed in Halle in the mid-seventeenth century, when the duke had his residence there. Works by Schütz, Krieger and David Pohle (1624-95) were beautifully performed by the Collegio Halense on period instruments, with soloists and the Coro di Capella Collegio Halense, conducted by Christoph Schlütter. A thrilling experience.

Another unusual performance was a 'Marienmesse in Salzburg', with music by Michael Haydn and Mozart (the 'Coronation' Mass and some smaller liturgical pieces that I had not heard before – the *Litaniae Lauretanae*, K. 195, and the *Regina coeli*, K. 276). It was given by an excellent French group, la Maîtrise de Bretagne, and Le Parlement de Musique (aren't the names of period groups often delightfully quaint?), conducted by Martin Gester. Really very good.

Which could hardly be said of the next offering that I attended in the same hall on the following evening – a rendering of *Alexander's Feast* in what must be



among the earliest of the post-Handel arrangements, made by Christian Gottfried Krause in 1766. It was well played and sung by Dresden forces, but what a waste of time! – a weird gallimaufry comprising selected parts of Handel's masterpiece on to which were grafted gratuitous, newly composed pieces of music that were not only second-rate but often just absurd. If we had to have such an arrangement, why not Mozart's?

The last concert that I could attend was 'Mozart and Bach's Sons', robustly performed by the Capella Angelica accompanied by our old friends, the Lautten Compagny of Berlin, conducted by Wolfgang Katschner. There was a cantata by Wilhem Friedemann Bach (who worked for some years in Halle), a *Laudate pueri* by his young brother Johann Christian, a symphony by Carl Philip Emmanuel, and three of the less familiar liturgical pieces by Mozart (K. 222, 273 and 127). The latter were sublime, and the J. C. and C. P. E. very good; but the W. F. (*Dies ist der Tag*) was to my taste rather uninspired: his dad did these things so much better! The orchestra was too large for this music,

with a heavy bass line, but it was an interesting programme.

For the scholarly conference, which occupied two days, the theme of 'Händels Klassizität' elicited seventeen interesting papers on a wide range of topics concerning Handel reception, from his influence on Mozart and Beethoven to Mendelssohn and Elgar (the last by the Elgar scholar Christopher Kent). Other British participants were Donald Burrows, on Vincent Novello's scores of the oratorios, and Katherine Hogg (Foundling Museum), who gave an account of Handel's significance for the Hospital. The overall standard was high, and some interesting ideas were aired.

As usual at Halle, the range of concerts and other events was extremely wide. There was a revival of last year's peculiar *Rodelinda*, which I was glad to miss, but I was sorry to leave before the St Cecilia Ode (in Mozart's arrangement) and the revival of the charming production of *Amadigi* at Bad Lauchstädt. This most important of annual Handel festivals is still flourishing and shows every sign of continuing to do so.

Terence Best

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

May 2007

IMENEO IN CAMBRIDGE

As the twelfth in its series of biennial productions of Handel's operas, the Cambridge Handel Opera Group will present four fully-staged performances of *Imeneo* in the West Road Concert Hall on 2, 3, 5, and 6 May 2007. The Handel Institute, in association with CHOG and the Faculty of Music, will present a Study Day on the afternoon of the Saturday performance (5 May). Friends and Benefactors of CHOG may buy tickets for a performance of the opera in advance (details to follow); for others, booking opens on 1 March. Admission to the Study Day is free and open to all; there will be a small charge to cover the cost of tea and biscuits.

If you would like to receive further information about the

performances and the Study Day, please send your name, postal address, and e-mail address to the Company Manager, Elisabeth Fleming, either at ekf20@cam.ac.uk or c/o Dr A. V. Jones (Cambridge Handel Opera Group), Selwyn College, Cambridge, CB3 9DQ. There is no charge to have your name on the mailing list, but if you would like to make a small donation to CHOG, it would be greatly appreciated.

November 2007

'COMMEMORATING HANDEL'

The next Handel Institute conference will take place on Saturday and Sunday 24-25 November 2007, at The Foundling Museum, London, WC1. The theme is prompted by two anniversaries.

The 150th anniversary of the first of the great Handel festivals at the Crystal Palace occurs in 2007, and the 250th anniversary of Handel's death will be remembered in 2009. (The Handel Institute itself will be 20 years old in 2007.) The conference will give an opportunity to reflect on previous commemorations, their concerns, their meanings and their effects, and to look forward to 2009 and beyond, defining the projects now most needful in the realm of Handel scholarship. The programme could be divided into two main areas – 'The Past' and 'The Future' – but the final plan will be determined by the papers offered, and allowance for 'free' papers will be made. Proposals for papers lasting 20-25 minutes are now invited: abstracts (not more than 300 words) should be sent to Helen Smithson (address below) by 31 March 2007.



November 2009

**PURCELL, HANDEL AND
ENGLISH LITERATURE**

A CONFERENCE organized by: the School of Advanced Study, Institutes of Musical Research and English Studies, University of London; the Departments of Music and Literature, The Open University; The Handel Institute; The Purcell Society

To be held at Senate House, University of London, on Friday and Saturday, 20-21 November 2009

This conference will be one of the concluding events in the year marking the anniversaries of Henry Purcell's birth (1658 or 1659) and Handel's death (1759).

Taken together, the careers of these two composers constitute one of the most remarkable periods in London's music-making. Although Handel's career in London commenced only fifteen years after Purcell's death, their styles in setting English texts were very

different, partly because of their individual approaches to word-setting and partly because of the different musical styles in which they worked. Yet for both of them English literary texts were fundamental to aspects of their activity. Both wrote for major productions (of plays or unstaged oratorios) in the London theatres, and contributed to some common genres – Cecilian and court odes, and liturgical church music on texts from the Book of Common Prayer. Handel set odes by John Dryden that had originally been written during Purcell's lifetime, and also texts by John Milton; texts by Congreve (though not the same ones) form a common thread in works by both composers. Nahum Tate was the librettist of Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*; Handel's anthems include settings of texts from the metrical versions of the Psalms by Tate and Brady. Both composers, however, were also reliant on other librettists of their own generations: D'Urfey for Purcell's stage works, for example, Miller, Jennens and Morell for Handel's oratorios.

The intention of the conference is

to bring together participants with interests in music and literature, and to cover a range of relevant topics, such as: the literary and musical genres, the nature of the libretti and the composers' treatment of them; the various forms of musical dramas (as genres, and in relation to the stage conventions of the 17th and 18th centuries); the status of Milton and Dryden as 'musical' poets; the influence of the text settings by Purcell and Handel on subsequent composers, and in subsequent literature; the genres of the court and Cecilian odes; the setting of English liturgical texts.

Although it is anticipated that the principal focus will be on English texts (and London performance conditions), the theme may also encompass the influence of Italian and Classical literature, Handel's settings of Italian texts in his operas and cantatas, and relevant topics relating to German literature. Proposals for papers that consider the importance of either or both of these composers within literature of later periods will also be welcomed.

It is anticipated that a Call for Papers will be issued in 2008.

The Handel Institute is a registered charity, no. 296615. Correspondence relating to the Newsletter should be sent to the editor, Professor Colin Timms, Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TS (C.R.Timms@bham.ac.uk). All other correspondence should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Ms Helen Smithson (handelsecretary@hotmail.co.uk).
