



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER

This issue draws special attention to Handel's *Agrippina*. Since many of the movements in the opera are based on musical 'borrowings', Andrew V. Jones shares his thoughts on an extremely interesting but under-considered aspect of this topic. While he also whets the appetite for his performances at Cambridge in early May, the undersigned presents new information on singers in the Venetian première (1709). The issue is completed by

Carole Taylor, who contributes a round-up of the recent Study Day on the 'Handel Documents' project.

Just as this *Newsletter* was going to press, we heard the sad news of the death on 27 March of Professor Paul Traver, co-founder of the Maryland Handel Festival and of the American Handel Society. A full appreciation will be published in a future issue.

Colin Timms

FURTHER THOUGHTS ON BORROWINGS IN HANDEL'S *AGRIPPINA*

Handel's opera *Agrippina* shares with *Rinaldo* what might once have been regarded as a somewhat dubious distinction: the majority of the music is borrowed, mostly from the composer himself.¹ We no longer regard such borrowing as morally culpable: it was a common practice of the time, though indulged in more frequently by Handel than by his contemporaries. The basic archaeological work continues,² while concurrently Handel's practice is being used to shed light not only on his compositional process but also on questions of attribution.³ Important contributions have been made to our understanding of the broader context by George Buelow, who set the subject in historical perspective,

and by John Roberts, who addressed (and convincingly answered) the question 'Why did Handel borrow?'⁴ and whose research has been opening up and clarifying the subject over several decades.⁵

While the identification and analysis of borrowings are of fundamental importance, an interesting question, raised from time to time, is: why did Handel borrow this particular music on this particular occasion? There are many possible answers, of which one of the more intriguing is that he wished to create an ironical effect.

The possibility of ironical intention was touched on by Winton Dean in his examination of Ottone's arias in *Agrippina*, though not with specific reference to borrow-

¹ Bernd Baselt, *Händel-Handbuch*, i (Leipzig, 1978), 89-92; George J. Buelow, 'Handel's Borrowing Techniques: Some Fundamental Questions derived from a Study of "Agrippina"', *Göttinger Händel-Beiträge [GHB]*, 2 (1986), 105-28; Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas 1704-1726* (rev. Oxford, 1995), Appendix D. It has often been observed, but needs to be repeated, that 'borrowing' covers a wide range of techniques, ranging from a fleeting reference to wholesale appropriation. Buelow addresses this matter and situates Handel's practice of borrowing within 'the temperament of the German Baroque composer', whose aim was 'to show what could be achieved with one or more musical ideas', employing 'a method of composing that often emphasized the craft of reworking, revising, adapting, and transcribing musical ideas of his own and others'.

² For example, the discovery by the present writer (announced in the programme note for a concert in Cambridge on 6 May 2006) that Handel borrowed the opening of the third movement of his Trio Sonata in F major (HWV 389) for the aria 'Ho perduto il

caro sposo' in *Rodelinda*, Act I, scene 1.

³ An important recent fruit of the latter is John Roberts's demonstration (in private correspondence, but to be published in the *Händel-Jahrbuch*) that the long cantata *Amore uccellatore* (sole source: GB-Cfm, MS 858), of which the cantatas HWV 176 and 175 form part, must be accepted as an authentic composition by Handel, albeit one that he certainly modified and possibly disowned.

⁴ George J. Buelow, 'The Case for Handel's Borrowings: The Judgment of Three Centuries', in *Handel Tercentenary Collection*, ed. Stanley Sadie and Anthony Hicks (London, 1987), 61-82; John H. Roberts, 'Why did Handel Borrow?', *loc. cit.*, pp. 83-92.

⁵ Significant landmarks are 'Handel's Borrowings from Telemann: An Inventory', *GHB*, 1 (1984), 147-71; 'Handel's Borrowings from Keiser', *GHB*, 2 (1986), 51-76, and *Handel Sources: Materials for the Study of Handel's Borrowing*, 9 vols (New York, 1986).



ings. Concerning Ottone's first aria, 'Lusinghiera mia speranza', he writes: 'Although he [Ottone] is ostensibly rejoicing at the success of his hopes, the music with its D minor tonality, frequent chromaticism, and interrupted cadences seems to anticipate the woes to come.' Of 'Coronato il crin' in Act II he notes that Handel 'makes a similarly unexpected point [...] by giving Ottone's anticipation of the throne [...] a reflective rather than a jubilant tone, thus inviting the ironical participation of the audience'. Dean adds the observation that 'this type of emotional cross-current, words pulling against music, was to become one of the most distinctive features of Handel's dramatic style in opera and oratorio.'⁶

With reference specifically to the borrowings in *Agrippina*, George Buelow, in similar vein, noted the surprisingly frequent cases in which the words (and hence the *Affekt*) of the music from which Handel was borrowing conflict with Grimani's libretto.⁷ John Sawyer responds to Buelow by analysing the disparities, which, he suggests, are to be interpreted as demonstrating ironical intention on the part of the composer.⁸ The present essay constitutes a short footnote: it concerns an aria that Sawyer did not refer to, but which strengthens his argument considerably.

It is certainly legitimate to argue (as Sawyer does) that one of the possible motivations behind Handel's choice of borrowed material was his desire to create irony in *Agrippina*. Indeed, he was assisted in this by Grimani's libretto, which effectively sets up many of the composer's ironical musical borrowings. Irony is conveyed principally by means of a mismatch in the opera between words and music: the music to which Handel set Grimani's text might originally have been associated with words of a different – even radically different – nature. Such 'emotional cross-currents' could certainly have appealed to Handel (who knew the source of his borrowing); and possibly an audience (in the eighteenth century or today) might sometimes have the sense that the music was conveying a different message from the one embedded in the words. A disparity of this kind is a powerful tool for the composer, especially if it serves to express in music the emotional truth behind dissembling words.

It must be admitted, however, that the effect of music is to some extent contingent on its context. This point is accepted by Sawyer, for example in his comments on Narciso's aria 'Spererò, poiché mel dice'. This aria is borrowed from Fileno's aria 'Sai perché' in the cantata *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* (HWV 96), of 1707, in which the

text of the A section reads: 'Sai perché l'onde del fiume / nega ad altri le sue spume? / Perché al mar le destinò.' ('You know why the waves of the river deny their spray to others? Because they are bound for the sea.'). Sawyer interprets the dotted figures in the bass and their repeated melodic descent as a portrayal of the river as it descends to the sea. In the operatic text Narciso addresses Agrippina, who he thinks has just given him reason to hope that she will reward his love. There is no reference in Grimani's text to a river or to water of any kind: 'Spererò, poiché mel dice / quel bel labro, o donna augusta.' ('I shall hope, since those beautiful lips tell me to, oh august lady.'). In this context Sawyer has to reinterpret the descending dotted figures in the bass as suggesting Narciso's 'agitated frustration over the political duplicity and amatory futility'.

What should be considered is not only the contingency of musical meaning but also an audience's perception of the significance of Handel's borrowings: if no one is aware of the irony that is created by the new verbal and/or dramatic context, and if in any case 'meaning' is a slippery concept, then analysis is in danger of remaining at the level of speculation. Clearly it is important to make a distinction between Handel's intentions and an audience's perceptions. (The latter could be those of an eighteenth-century or of a present-day audience; it must be accepted that perceptions change over time – and, for that matter, that they vary between different members of an audience.)

Sawyer acknowledges this point in his comments on Pallante's aria 'Col raggio placido'. In August 1705 Handel would have got to know Keiser's opera *Octavia*, first performed at the Hamburg opera house during his residence in the city. One of the arias that he borrowed from *Octavia* is Livia's 'Costante ognor': he used it first in his oratorio *La Resurrezione* and then in *Agrippina*. In the former it provides material for Lucifero's aria 'O voi dell'Erebo'. In the Keiser aria Livia emphatically rejects the amorous advances of Tiridate. Lucifer's aria in *La Resurrezione* is again defiant, though in a more terrifying way: Lucifer summons up the powers of hell, and calls on the 'terrible snakes of the Furies to threaten heaven with their thunderbolts'. Keiser gives the orchestra parallel octaves and the voice independent melodic lines. Handel modifies this texture so that the voice now doubles the *bassi* in unison, thus emphasising the terrible power of Lucifer. (He also adds demisemiquaver scales for violins and *bassi*, doubtless depicting the thunderbolts.)

⁶ Dean and Knapp, *Handel's Operas*, 123.

⁷ Buelow, 'Handel's Borrowing Techniques', 116-18.

⁸ John Sawyer, 'Irony and Borrowing in Handel's 'Agrippina'', *Music and Letters*, 80 (1999), 531-59.



In Pallante's aria in *Agrippina*, however, the words are radically different: 'With the serene ray of hope my constancy leads me on. Thus my soul seeks nothing more than her fidelity and reward.' Since Keiser's opera was first performed in Hamburg and Handel's oratorio in Rome, there is little chance that any member of the audience in Venice in December 1709 would have known either the ultimate source of Pallante's 'Col raggio placido' or its intermediate borrowing in *La Resurrezione*. (In Sawyer's words: 'The Venetian audience – like, indeed most modern listeners – would not have known the aria's prior musical connections to assist their interpretation.'⁹) On the other hand, they surely would have observed a mismatch between the rather gentle words and the powerful, defiant mood of the music. As Sawyer notes, Grimani set up the potential for irony in the aria by giving Pallante a revealing aside at the end of the recitative that precedes it: 'Ha nel seno costei cor di Megera.' ('She has in her breast the heart of a Fury'.).

There is, however, another aria in *Agrippina*, not mentioned by Sawyer, that provides even firmer evidence on which to base assumptions about the perceptions of the audience at the opera's first performance. Again it is highly unlikely that the original audience would have known the source of Handel's borrowing, but in this case the musical figure is a familiar cliché of musical rhetoric, the connotations of which could not possibly have been unfamiliar to an eighteenth-century listener. The aria is Nerone's 'Qual piacer' in Act I, scene 7, set in the square in front of the Capitol.

At the very beginning of Act I, his mother, Agrippina, ambitious to see her son crowned emperor in succession to (the supposedly dead) Claudio, advises Nerone to court popularity with the Roman people: she instructs him to mix with the crowds, distribute money generously to the poor and show sympathy for their suffering. Such gestures are, of course, anathema to Nerone, but he agrees to follow his mother's wise counsel. We see the result of her advice in scene 7 – in his feigned generosity and sympathy towards the crowd and in the text of his aria:

Qual piacer' a un cor pietoso
l'apportar sollievo a' miseri!
Prendi tu ancora, prendi.
Ma rassembra tormentoso
il veder fra turbe tante
che vi manchi un zelo amante
che il lor stato almen commiseri.

*What pleasure [it is] to a merciful heart
to bring relief to the poor!*

Take [my money], take [it] again.

*But it torments me
to see among such a large crowd
that there is no loving fervour
that would at least have compassion on their plight.*

Although not apparent in the layout of the original Venetian libretto, Grimani's text consists of two stanzas of unequal length (two and four lines), separated by one line of recitative.

Handel borrowed the aria's music from the opening movement of his cantata 'Un sospir a chi si muore' (HWV 174), the text of which reads:

Un sospir a chi si muore,
per pietà, labbra vezzose.
Renderà di questo core
l'agonie meno penose.

*Pretty lips, [heave] a sigh,
in pity, for one who dies.
It will make the agonies
of this heart less painful.*

The music of the cantata's first eleven bars is borrowed almost verbatim in the opera (see Exx. 1 and 2 overleaf).

There are small differences: those in bars 2 and 4 are necessary because the melodic line of the basso continuo, now doubled at the upper octave, goes too low for the violins; the extra note for the voice in bar 9 is necessitated by the extra syllable in Grimani's second line, which ends with a *parola sdrucchiola* ('miseri'); small rhythmic differences elsewhere might have been prompted by the words. Handel rewrote the melisma beginning in bar 11, and thereafter Nerone's aria diverges from the cantata: it is shorter; the first section cadences in A flat major; the second section (after the single bar of recitative) begins in C minor and ends in F minor (it is not a da capo aria). The character of the aria, however, does not differ. Although the words of the cantata's second stanza suggest that the heart's agonies might become less painful, the music continues to emphasise its present misery; this mood is maintained in the second half of Nerone's aria.

We do not need to go further than the first vocal phrase to become aware of Handel's ironical intention. To set

⁹ Sawyer, 'Irony and Borrowing', 543.



the words 'Un sospir' ('A sigh') to a falling diminished 7th is entirely appropriate: the *saltus duriusculus* ('hard' or 'harsh leap'), referred to by Christoph Bernhard,¹⁰ was associated with emotions of grief and pain. To set 'Qual piacer' ('What pleasure') to the same interval is baffling, until we realise that Handel is employing heavy irony to tell us what is actually in Nerone's mind: he may be feigning pleasure at giving alms to the poor, but in fact it pains him to do so. (Translating the aria for a singer makes the irony glaringly apparent: an obvious English rendering of the words 'Qual piacer' is 'Oh what joy'.) As it happens, the one musical illustration of a falling diminished 7th that is cited by Bernhard is a setting of the words 'Und dein Hertz falsch gewesen ist',¹¹ where the word 'falsch' is set to the lower note of the falling diminished 7th.

Interestingly, Handel added a further layer of irony to Nerone's aria, which manifests itself in two places in the opera. In the middle of the fast section of the introductory *sinfonia* the listener might notice a foreshadowing of the *saltus duriusculus*: the same notes are played in repeated semiquavers an octave lower in the bass (c' d' b e^b). Since the *sinfonia* is in G minor, the F minor tonality of these bars is quite prominent.

Far more striking is the reappearance of the *saltus duriusculus* in Ottone's aria 'Voi che udite il mio lamento' in Act II, which borrows ideas from the aria 'Io so ben ch'il vostro orrore' in the cantata *Alpestre monte* (HWV 81). When Ottone sings this anguished F-minor aria, his fortunes are at their lowest ebb: having been accused of treachery by Claudio, he has been rejected in turn by Agrippina, Poppea, Nerone, Narciso, Pallante, and even the servant Lesbo. The melody in both voice and instruments repeatedly rises by a semitone from C to D^b, only to sink back to C. Just once, in the *bassi* at the end of the A section, the semitone ascent is followed by a descent of a diminished 7th to E^a: Nerone's selfish grief in 'Qual piacer' at having to give away his money is now echoed – by the same notes in the same key – by Ottone's profound grief as he is plunged into utter despair. On this occasion we can be less certain of Handel's intention (was the reference conscious?), but it hardly matters, since the effect on the listener is the same. A hint of intentionality can be found, however, in the fact that the bars containing the *saltus duriusculus* in Ottone's aria are completely new: they are not found in the source aria.

The distinction that was made earlier – between the composer's intention and the audience's perception – can now be considered with regard to Nerone's aria. It is highly unlikely that any member of the audience in the Teatro San Giovanni Grisostomo in December 1709 would have known Handel's continuo cantata 'Un sospir a chi si muore', or for that matter the accompanied cantata 'Ah! crudel, nel pianto mio' (HWV 78), which also borrows from HWV 174: both were composed for Roman patrons, and neither of them survives in a manuscript of Venetian provenance. But no one would have needed to know the source from which Nerone's aria was borrowed in order to appreciate Handel's ironical intention. There is no question here of the contingency of musical meaning: the diminished 7th was such a powerful rhetorical device that its significance would have been grasped immediately. Indeed, any member of the audience in 1709 who had heard Alessandro Scarlatti's *Mitridate Eupatore* in the same theatre just under three years earlier – the opera was first performed on 5 January 1707 – would have had recent experience of it: in the aria 'Cara tomba del mio diletto' Laodice mourns the (supposed) death of Mitridate: her anguished melodic lines are suffused by the *saltus duriusculus* in various forms – diminished 4th, diminished 5th, and diminished 7th.

The possible existence of irony, whether of intention or perception or both, gives rise to a related question: how is such irony to be conveyed in performance? If words and music are in conflict with each other, does a singer express the *Affekt* of the words or of the music or, indeed, (somehow) of both? The question is perhaps best confronted and answered by the actual experience of performance – not a recording (a two-dimensional representation of an opera), but a live, staged performance, in which the audience both hears the words and music and also sees the body language of the singers. I therefore diffidently refer the reader to an announcement later in this *Newsletter*.

Andrew V. Jones



¹⁰ *Tractatus compositionis augmentatus* (Dresden, 1657), 78.

¹¹ Dietrich Bartel, *Musica poetica: Musical-Poetic Figures in German Baroque Music* (Lincoln, NE, 1997), 382.



ARCHIVE NOTES ON SINGERS IN *AGRIPPINA*

This article is a sequel to that on singers in Handel's *Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria* (Florence, 1707), also known as *Rodrigo*, published in the last issue of this *Newsletter* (vol. 21, no. 2). It presents new archival information on singers who took part in the first performance of *Agrippina* in Venice in 1709. The information is extracted from the papers of Violante Beatrice (1673–1731), the Bavarian wife of the music-loving Grand-Prince Ferdinando De' Medici, who became a prominent patron of music and musicians in her own right and whose papers are preserved in the Archivio di Stato in Florence.

Before looking at the cast of *Agrippina*, however, it is necessary to add a note about Handel's earlier opera for Italy. The date of the first performance of *Vincer se stesso* was for a long time a matter of conjecture. When I wrote the previous article, I did not know the date but suggested that it fell in October or November 1707. Soon after those 'archive notes' had appeared, my attention was drawn by Hans Joachim Marx to an article by Rashid-S. Pegah that presented new information on Handel's activities in Rome and Florence in 1707.¹ Pegah's article is based on the travel diary of the Saxon Prince Anton Ulrich of Meiningen (1687-1763), extracts from which are presented in an appendix. The prince's travels in Italy, which lasted from 1705 to 1709, overlapped with Handel's Italian period, and their paths crossed on many occasions.

On 23 October 1707 Anton Ulrich noted that he had not seen Handel at a Ruspoli concert in Rome, because he [Handel] had set off for Florence.² The prince followed him north and continued his diary in Florence ('*Continuation meines Journal*'). The first entry relating to Handel in this portion of the diary reads as follows:

d[en] 9 November [1707.] Mittwochens
[...] darnacher sind wir wied[er] nach hauß gang[en],
da mit der übrig[en] Compagnie und M[onsieu]r.
Kroll in die opera gange[n], da ZWar das Theatrum
klein, aber die opera hübsch, und war die Historia
Von der Roderich und Florinta mit dem Iuliano der
die Maur[en] in SPani[en] hin[n]ein gebracht, die

opera hieß vincer se stesso è la maggior Vittoria
darnach nach hauß gang[en] und mit der ander[n]
Compagnie Zu abends gesse[n]³

Wednesday, 9 November [1707]

[...] after that we went back home again, then we went with the remaining company and with Mr Kroll to the opera. Admittedly, the theatre was small, but the opera was very fine. The story concerned Rodrigo and Florinda, and the Giuliano who brought the Moors into Spain. The opera was called Vincer se stesso è la maggior vittoria. After that we went back home and ate with the other company in the evening.

Anton Ulrich does not say that this was the first performance of *Vincer se stesso*, but this is the first relevant entry from this portion of his diary: if there had been an earlier performance of the work he surely would have mentioned it, just as he mentioned another visit to the opera on 11 November.⁴ All things considered, it seems safe to assume that the performance of *Vincer se stesso* on 9 November was the première, and that it was repeated two days later.

And so to *Agrippina*. The original cast was listed in the libretto for the first performance and has since been reproduced many times:⁵

Agrippina:	Margherita Durastanti <i>soprano</i>
Poppea:	Diamante Maria Scarabelli <i>soprano</i>
Nerone:	Valeriano Pellegrini <i>soprano castrato</i>
Ottone:	Francesca Vanini-Boschi <i>contralto</i>
Claudio:	Antonio Francesco Carli <i>bass</i>
Narciso:	Giuliano Albertini <i>alto castrato</i>
Pallante:	Giuseppe Maria Boschi <i>bass</i>
Lesbo:	Nicola Pasini <i>bass</i>

Of these eight singers, three – Scarabelli, Albertini and Carli – make appearances in the papers of Violante Beatrice. They are better known to Handelians than those in *Vincer se stesso*, each having an entry by Winton Dean in *The New Grove*.

¹ Rashid-S. Pegah, "'anno 1707". Neue Forschungsergebnisse zur Tätigkeit von G. F. Händel in Rom und Florenz', *Musikforschung*, 62 (2009), 2-13. I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Marx for alerting me to this article.

² '...da den *Hendel* nicht mehr geseh[en], weil er nach *Florenz* gereiBt': Pegah, "'anno 1707'", 12.

³ Pegah, *loc. cit.*

⁴ '... und Zu abends mich wieder mit der vorig[en] *Compagnie* in die *opera* begeb[en], da uns wieder auf das *Parterr* gesetzt ...': Pegah, *loc. cit.* For discussion of the two performance dates, see Pegah, "'anno 1707'", 6-8.

⁵ For example, Winton and John Merrill Knapp, *Handel's Operas 1704-1726* (Oxford, 1987), 129.



Diamante Maria Scarabelli, who was well known in northern Italy from 1692 to 1718, is described as ‘one of the most celebrated sopranos of her age’. Violante regarded her very favourably (‘con molta benevolenza’) and recommended her in April 1709 to a nobleman in Bologna, her native city (Letter 1). Here Scarabelli appeared in two operas – *Engelberta, o sia La forza dell’innocenza* and Caldara’s *L’inimico generoso*⁶ – before going to Venice to sing in *Agrippina*.

Giuliano Albertini sang frequently in Florence from 1701 to 1738, sporadically in Venice between 1705 and 1719, and in Genoa, Naples (1707-9) Palermo (1726) and elsewhere. He was probably born in Florence and was a ‘virtuoso’ of Prince Ferdinando, of Cardinal Francesco Maria De’ Medici (1705 and 1707) and of Violante Beatrice (1716-29).⁷ When he went to Modena in 1717, presumably to sing the title-role in *Fernando* (Sartori, libretto 10034), the princess asked the duchess to take special care of ‘my chamber [music] singer’ (‘mio musico da camera’: Letters 5 and 6).

There may have been two singers by the name of **Antonio Francesco Carli**, and they may have been father and son. The Carli who appeared in a handful of operas between 1689 and 1699 is reported to have been a tenor; the other, active from 1703 to 1723, was a bass. The latter sang throughout northern Italy, but especially in Venice and, in 1719-20, Florence. He was a ‘virtuoso’ of the ‘Real Casa di Toscana’ and of several of its members, including Gian Gastone, Cosimo III, Ferdinando and Violante Beatrice.⁸ His relationship with Violante is clear from the librettos of Vivaldi’s *Orlando finto pazzo* and *Orlando furioso* (both Venice, 1714) and of Albinoni’s *L’amor di figlio non conosciuto* (1716), where he is described as a ‘virtuoso della Serenissima Gran Principessa, Violante di Toscana’.⁹

There are two groups of letters about Carli, of which the first (2-4) dates from April–May 1712. On 8 April Duke Rinaldo of Modena asked Violante Beatrice whether he could borrow the singer for an opera in Reggio in early May – presumably *La virtù trionfante dell’inganno* (Sartori, 25028), in which he sang the part of Artaserse. Given that Carli had created the bass role of Claudio in *Agrippina*, it is odd that the duke described him as a ‘baritono’. The request was granted (3) and Carli apparently performed well. When he returned to

Florence, he carried a letter of thanks from Rinaldo to Violante (4).

The second group of letters (7-12) provides new evidence that Carli appeared as an opera singer in Naples. He wrote from there on 25 November 1721, asking for a recommendation from Violante Beatrice to a noblewoman in Naples – either the vicereine (Livia Spinola Borghese) or the duchess of Laurenzano (Aurora Sanseverino), who had commissioned Handel’s serenata *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo*. He addressed his request to somebody in Florence who could persuade Violante Beatrice to write a strong reference; that he referred to the princess as ‘our’ most serene patron suggests that the addressee was the influential secretary, Francesco Gaetano Pucci. Carli had arrived in Naples ‘safe and sound’ (‘sano e salvo’), was due to make his début on the following day (‘dimani si va in scena per la prima volta’) and wanted to secure the protection of a powerful patron.

Violante did what she could. In December she recommended Carli to the vicereine (8), saying that he had sung for Grand-Prince Ferdinando and, ‘on various occasions’ (‘in varie congiunture’), for her, and the vicereine agreed to help (9). We do not know what he sang in Naples, however, for there is no mention of the city in the list of his roles in Sartori.¹⁰ The vicereine also asked Violante to take an interest in Carli’s daughter, who was going through a divorce (9-10), which had been granted by 23 January 1722. On 11 February Violante replied that the woman’s husband had demanded that she withdraw to a nunnery and that this had been approved by the grand-duke (Cosimo III) – the implication being that nothing more could be done.

The Letters

Abbreviations: ‘VB’ – Violante Beatrice; ‘V.A.’/‘A.V.’ – ‘Vostra Altezza’ (Your Highness: YH); ‘V.S.’ – ‘Vostra Signoria’ (Your Lordship or Ladyship: YL); other abbreviations are expanded. The number in brackets at the end of each extract is that of the file in which the document is preserved; in most files the leaves are not numbered.

1. VB to Marquis Francesco Maria Monti (Bologna)

Florence, 30 April 1709

Since the singer Diamante Maria Scarabelli, to whom

⁶ Claudio Sartori, *I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800*, 7 vols (Cuneo, 1990-94), librettos 8923 and 13230.

⁷ Robert Lamar Weaver and Norma Wright Weaver, *A Chronology of Music in the Florentine Theater, 1590-1750* (Detroit, 1978), 355 and 68; Warren Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians in Florence during the Principate of the Medici*

(Florence, 1993), 653-4.

⁸ Weaver and Weaver, *A Chronology of Music*, 359; Kirkendale, *The Court Musicians*, 651-3.

⁹ Taddeo Wiel, *I teatri musicali veneziani del Settecento* (Venice, 1897), 35, 36 and 39.

¹⁰ *I libretti italiani*, ‘Indici, II: Cantanti’, 149-50.



I am very favourably disposed, is coming there to perform in your opera, I should like to recommend her to the kindness of YL, so that you may have the interests of the said woman at heart and be pleased to assist her at every appropriate opportunity. ...

Venendo alla recita di codesta opera la cantatrice Diamante Maria Scarabelli, da me riguardata con molta benevolenza, ho voluto raccomandarla alla bontà di V. S., perch'Ella abbia a cuore gli interessi della medesima e si compiaccia d'assistarla in ogni conveniente occorrenza. ... [6282]

2. Rinaldo D'Este, duke of Modena, to VB

Modena, 8 April 1712

My interests in the opera that is to be performed at the theatre in my city of Reggio at the beginning of next month make me intercede with YH – that you may be so kind as to interpose all your good offices so that the singer Carli, a baritone and ‘virtuoso’ of Your Lord the Prince of Tuscany, may have permission from His Highness to come and sing in the said opera. ... [autograph:] Your most devoted servant and cousin, Rinaldo D'Este

Gl'interessi nell'opera che si deve fare nel teatro della mia città di Reggio al principio del mese venturo mi fanno intercessore con V. A., perch'Ella voglia avere la bontà d'interporre tutte le buone disposizioni affinché il musico Carli, baritono e virtuoso del Signore Principe Suo di Toscana, abbia da Sua Altezza la permissione di venire a recitare nella sudetta opera. ... Di V. A. [autograph:] Divotissimo servitore e cugino, Rinaldo D'Este [6283]

3. VB to Rinaldo D'Este

Florence, 12 April 1712

I had anticipated the most courteous request that YH is pleased to make (that I intercede with My Lord and Consort the Most Serene Prince to secure the singer Carli, currently his servant, for the impresarios of the theatre at Reggio), since the application has been made by my steward, Marquis Bagnesi. I am very glad to have been able to contribute, even in anticipation, to YH's most gracious offices ...

Le cortesissime richieste che si compiace V. A. di fare della mia interposizione col Serenissimo Principe, mio Signore e consorte, per ottenere il musico Carli, suo servitore attuale, agli impresari del teatro di Reggio trovano che io le avevo già prevenute finch'allora che l'istanza fu fatta dal Marchese Bagnesi mio scalco, con aver ben goduto d'aver potuto contribuire anche preventivamente agli uffici umanissimi dell'A. V. ... [6283]

4. Rinaldo D'Este to VB

Modena, 20 May 1712

The singer Carli is returning after having executed his

parts in the opera at Reggio perfectly well, and I am accompanying him with the present letter in order to express to YH and to Your Most Serene Lord the Prince the thanks that I owe. I remain ...

Ritorna il musico Carli dopo di aver compite perfettamente bene le sue parti nell'opera di Reggio, ed io l'accompagno col presente foglio per rendere a V. A. e al Serenissimo Signor Principe Suo le grazie che devo. Resto ... [6283]

[Violante Beatrice acknowledged this letter on 24 May. (6283)]

5. VB to Maria Benedetta, duchess of Modena

Lappoggi, 1 October 1717¹¹

When he arrives there to perform in the operas, Giuliano Albertini, my chamber [music] singer, will be most highly esteemed if he is given the eminent consideration of the powerful patronage with which YH may deign to honour him. And I, who desire such an estimable capital for one who enjoys my protection, cannot refrain from accompanying him with the present, most ardent offices, begging YH to regard him with your usual kindness towards my dependants and to grant him occasional favours at appropriate opportunities. ...

Nel portarsi alle recite di codeste opere Giuliano Albertini, mio musico di camera, avrà il maggior pregio per essere distintamente considerato dal valido patrocinio di cui V. A. si degni di onorarlo; et io, che desidero un capital sì stimabile ad uno che gode la mia protezione, non so lasciare d'accompagnarlo col presente vivissimo ufficio, pregando l'A. V. di riguardarlo con la Sua solita benignità verso i miei dipendenti, e di graziarlo d'opportuno favore nelle convenienti occorrenze. ... [2060]

6. Maria Benedetta, duchess of Modena, to VB

Modena, 13 October 1717

When your chamber [music] singer Giuliano Albertini, who has come here for the opera performances that are currently in progress, presented me with YH's most gracious letter, as he has done, I readily agreed to grant him my assistance in any way that might be helpful to him ... Your most humble servant and cousin, Benedetta, duchess of Brunswick and Lüneburg

Al presentarmi che ha fatto l'umanissimo foglio di V. A. Giuliano Albertini, di Lei musico da camera venuto qui in occasione delle recite, che attualmente si vanno facendo, sono concorsa ben volentieri ad accordargli tutta la mia assistenza in ciò che mai potesse occorrerle ... Di V. A. Umilissima serva e cugina Benedetta duchessa di Brunswick e Luneburg [6288]

7. Anton Francesco Carli

[to Francesco Gaetano Pucci, VB's secretary]

Naples, 25 November 1721

¹¹ Lappoggi is a Medicean villa that was given to Violante Beatrice after the death of her husband.



I apply to the protection of Your Most Illustrious Lordship, that you may do me the kindness of procuring from my Most Serene patron a letter of recommendation to the vicereine here, or to the duchess of Laurenzano or to whomever may be more pleasing to Her Royal Highness, so that I may enjoy some advantage in this city, where, by the grace of God, I have arrived safe and sound and take to the stage for the first time tomorrow. This letter would be extremely useful to me, for I understand how highly esteemed our Most Serene [patron] has become. I beg you, therefore, to do me this favour, which would serve me as a very great advantage. Honour me with some command of your own, and with all my heart I kiss your hands ...

Ricorro alla protezione di V. S. Illustrissima acciò voglia farmi la carità di procurarmi dalla Serenissima padrona una lettera di raccomandazione appresso questa viceregina, o appresso la duchessa di Laurenzano, o chi più piacerà a Sua Altezza Reale, acciò che io possa godere qualche vantaggio in questa città, dove per la Dio grazia son giunto sano e salvo e dimani si va in scena per la prima volta. Sarebbe questa lettera di un gran mio utile, mentre sento in quanto stima sia venuta la nostra Serenissima padrona; onde io Le supplico a farmi questa grazia, che mi servirebbe di un grandissimo vantaggio. Mi onori di qualche Suo commando, e di core Le bacio le mani ... [6291]

8. VB to [Livia Spinola] Borghese, vicereine of Naples

Florence, 10 December 1721

The same special consideration that the Most Serene Grand-Prince Ferdinando, my Lord and Consort of glorious memory, had for the singer Antonio Francesco Carli, for the most punctilious service that he gave him in 'virtuoso' entertainments and which he also has rendered to me on various occasions, moves me to desire for him there the most powerful and most estimable protection that may increase his dignity and advantage during his residence for the opera performances in that theatre. Wherefore I make so bold as to recommend him to the supreme kindness of Your Excellency, imploring you to enable him to enjoy the effects of your kindness when you have opportunity to favour him ...

L'istessa special considerazione che aveva il Serenissimo Gran Principe Ferdinando, mio Signore e consorte, di gloriosa ricordanza, al musico Antonio Francesco Carli per l'accertissimo servizio che gli rese in virtuosi trattenimenti, e per quello pure ch'egli ha prestato a me stessa in varie congiunture, mi muove a desiderargli costà la più valida e più stimabil protezione che portò a lui decoro e vantaggio nella sua permanenza alle recite di codesto teatro; ond'io m'avanzo a raccomandarlo alla somma gentilezza di Vostra Eccellenza, pregandoLa di fargli godere gl'effetti della Sua benignità alle occasioni di favorirlo ... [6291]

9. Princess Borghese, vicereine of Naples, to VB

Naples, 20 December 1721

The singer Anton Francesco Carli has passed into my hands the revered folio of Your Most Serene Highness, in which you command me to enable him to enjoy every manifestation of my respect, assisting him particularly during the time that he will remain here for the opera performances in the theatre, so that I cannot *not* go to all the lengths possible to second the desires of Your Most Serene Highness; nor will these be entirely unconnected from the partiality that I myself have for the same Carli. And it is this that encourages me to beseech Your Most Serene Highness to bear in mind all the appropriate needs of his daughter for the reasons that are well known ...

Il musico Anton Francesco Carli ha fatto passare alle mie mani il riverito foglio di Vostra Altezza Serenissima, con cui resta servita comandarmi a fargli godere le dimostrazioni tutte del mio riguardo, assistendolo particolarmente nel tempo ch'egli si fermerà qui per le recite di questo teatro. Sicché io non posso non mettere in opera tutta l'attenzione mia possibile a secondare le premure dell'A. V. S., ne saranno punto disgiunte dalla parzialità che ho pur'io pel Carli medesimo; ed è tale che mi anima a supplicar l'A. V. S. ad aver presenti le convenienze tutte della di lui figliuola per le cagioni ben consapute. ... [6291]

10. VB to Princess Borghese, vicereine of Naples

Florence, 7 January 1722

From the very ardent offices of recommendation that I have already passed to Your Excellency on behalf of the singer Anton Francesco Carli ... It is very true that the affair of his daughter, which consists of a divorce, is entirely unexceptional for the Ecclesiastical Court, and that secular parties cannot presume to arbitrate in it. Nevertheless, I shall do what I can, also to show you that my very partial will is ready ...

Dai vivissimi uffici di raccomandazione che già passai con Vostra Eccellenza a pro del musico Antonfrancesco Carli ... È ben vero che l'affaro della di lui figliuola, consistendo nel divorzio, è tutto di ineccezione del Foro Ecclesiastico; ne posson presumere d'arbitrare le parti secolari. Ma nulladimeno farò quanto potrò anche per manifestare a Lei tutta pronta la parzialissima volontà mia. ... [6292]

The vicereine informed VB on 23 January that the divorce had been granted; VB replied on 11 February that the grand-duke had approved the husband's demand that Carli's daughter withdraw to a nunnery. Both letters are in file 6292. File 6294 includes two further documents relating to Carli, dating from 1724; they have no bearing on his career as a musician.

Colin Timms



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STUDY SESSION ON *AGRIPPINA*

in association with The Handel Institute and the University of Cambridge Faculty of Music

Saturday 7 May at 2 pm

Faculty of Music, 11 West Road, Cambridge

- | | |
|---------|---|
| 2.00 pm | Professor Robin Osborne (King's College, Cambridge)
<i>Agrippina and Agrippina</i> |
| 2.30 pm | Professor Donald Burrows (Open University)
What do we know about the first performance of <i>Agrippina</i> ? |
| 3.00 pm | Tea |
| 3.30 pm | Emeritus Professor David Kimbell (University of Edinburgh)
Handel's 'Borrowings': Can common sense help? |
| 4.00 pm | Christine Botes (Stage director)
Staging <i>Agrippina</i> |

Admission is free and open to all. There is a charge of £1 for tea and biscuits.

For more information, or to book a place, please email info@chog.co.uk or write to:

Joanna Harries, Cambridge Handel Opera, c/o Dr A. V. Jones, Selwyn College, Cambridge, CB3 9DQ.

DOCUMENTS ABOUT HANDEL (AND OTHERS) STUDY DAY

Handelians gathered in London on 6 December 2010 for a Study Day devoted to 'G. F. Handel: The Collected Documents', the landmark research project that aims to include transcriptions of, and commentary on, all published (and some new) documents about Handel and his music from the composer's lifetime down to the present day – an astonishing total of some 4,000 documents to date. The project, based in the UK at the London Regional Centre of the Open University, will culminate in a major reference book – the plan is for three volumes – to be published by Cambridge University Press (CUP) in 2012.

The possibility of a revised edition of O. E. Deutsch's *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (1955) has been in the air since at least 1974, but it is only since 2007, with a major injection of funding support from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Winton Dean Fund of The Handel Institute, that the project has taken off. Just past the halfway mark, the time was right for a review of progress to date. The project team comprises Donald Burrows, Helen Green and John Greenacombe. They, and five other researchers who have been working in related areas, provided good coverage of the project and its place in the broader world of Handel scholarship.



Donald Burrows and Helen Green (Open University)
'The Handel Documents Project'

Professor Burrows surveyed the repertory of published documents to be included in the CUP volumes. It was astonishing to learn that nearly 97% of the documents contained in Deutsch will have been revisited, with the result that dating errors will have been resolved, not least through the project's aim to inspect all extant newspapers of the period (not simply those in the Burney collection, which formed the basis of Deutsch's work). Inevitably, with so many documents, the team have encountered inconsistencies and questions will remain. Donald pointed out with wry humour that a chronological account cannot list documents under 'no date', and in some instances choices had to be made. However, the commentary in this publication will ensure that readers can choose whether or not to be convinced. As in Deutsch, the presentation will be chronological, but this is not intended to represent a chronicle of Handel's life. Above all, the project sets out to produce a reference tool on an immense scale that will be treasured by Handelianists for years to come.

Dr Green reported on her recent researches in the Hamburg archives and the *Hamburger Relations Courier*. The latter includes reports of Handel's activities in London and frequent advertisements for performances of his operas in Hamburg, so new references have come to light. For example, an advert for a performance of *Tamerlano* (28 August 1725) refers to 'the famous Mr Hendel', and another (6 April 1734), for his setting of the *Brockes Passion*, refers to 'the widely renowned Kapellmeister Mr Handel'. Helen also cited references to Handel in Mattheson sources, including his own marginalia in a copy of *Der Musicalische Patriot* (1728).

Cliff Eisen (King's College, London) and **Elizabeth Norman McKay** spoke about Deutsch's work on Mozart and Schubert, respectively, highlighting methodological and historical links to the present Handel project. Professor Eisen shares with Deutsch a love of art and music that shapes his work on Mozart's life. His authentication in 2008 of the Hagenauer Mozart forced scholars to reassess the traditional view of the composer's decline into obscurity in his last years. He picked up on this aspect of his work at the Study Day, drawing on references in contemporary sources and images by (or attributed to) Zoffany from the 1760s, for which he is compiling evidence to suggest that the sitters are Mozart and Nannerl.

More broadly, Eisen asked why Deutsch is still taken by so many to be the 'last word' in Mozart scholarship. New material has been discovered, but integrating this work into the mainstream of Mozart scholarship has not been easy. The answer appears to lie in the centralization of Mozart scholarship in the 1950s, which resulted in what can be described only as a calcification of views about what was acceptable as biographical data and what was not. Eisen described how, for example, the work of authentic eighteenth-century copyists could be dismissed as secondary sources. This aspect of his talk highlighted how fortunate we are to work in an historical environment that welcomes new discoveries, where the only criterion of acceptance is the highest standard of scholarship.

Elizabeth Norman McKay reminisced about her acquaintance with Deutsch, who knew her family in Vienna and visited them there as well during his stay in England. She reviewed the stages of Deutsch's career, emphasizing how his early work on Schubert was interrupted and later revived. Her description of 'the whole of Europe moving around' in the post-war period evoked an intimate world of scholarship that is almost unrecognisable today.

David Hunter (University of Texas)

'Discovering the pro-, con- and non-Handel audience'
David Hunter is applying intense archival research to produce nothing less than a macro-analysis of those persons who heard and those who declined to hear Handel's music in London, Oxford and Dublin. Consulting on-line and printed catalogues, Hunter has ascertained that papers of potential relevance are held in over 310 archives and libraries in the UK, Ireland and the USA for some 7,000 persons and families alive during the period 1710–59. His goal is to visit 122 public and five private archives (84 visited so far) in order to examine accounts, correspondence, diaries and other material for evidence of expenditure on entertainment, attendance at the opera or oratorio, and musical interests more generally. He is gathering data on age, Grand Tour travel, marital status, politics, religion, amateur musical activity, frequency of attendance, and more.

Identifying connections across all these categories, Dr Hunter has found that attendance simply cannot be reduced to political faction, status as a musical amateur, and/or taking the Grand Tour. Perhaps more surprising is the regular attendance of teenagers at opera and oratorio. Hunter's work promises to produce a demographic profile which, like Deutsch's *Documentary Biography*



of Handel, goes beyond anything of the kind previously attempted. In the context of the encyclopaedic work to be published next year by CUP, Hunter's research felt very much at home.

Fiona Richards (Open University)

'Boyd Neel's Handel performances'

The Boyd Neel Orchestra was founded in 1932 and reached the height of its international reputation at the same time as Deutsch was in Cambridge (1939–51), where he began work on his Handel opus. Boyd Neel's papers, housed at McMaster University in Canada, include programmes and related documents dating from 1933 until his death in 1981. Dr Richards focused on Neel's association with the revival of Baroque music prior to leaving his native London (in 1953) for the University of Toronto.

Between 1933 and 1947, some 20% of performances by the Boyd Neel Orchestra included music by Handel. Notably, the orchestra toured the UK in 1946, and between February and November they played 25 concerts with works by Handel in eleven cities from London to Glasgow. Thirteen performances at the Chelsea Town Hall featured what was to prove a pioneering 'Series of Seven Concerts', each of which opened with one of Handel's *concerti grossi*, op. 6. This was no mean achievement less than a year after the Second World War had ended in Europe. Also extraordinary for the time, the orchestra embarked in 1947 on a six-month tour of Australia and New Zealand, a journey that took them on a ten-day flight via Dublin, New York, Fiji and Sydney.

The revival of Handel's operas later in the twentieth century resonates nicely with Boyd Neel's story. His small (eighteen-member) string orchestra was suited to Bach and Handel at a time when, as Richards reminded us, Furtwängler conducted Handel's op. 6 concertos with Brahmsian sumptuousness.

Cheryll Duncan and David Mateer (Open University)

'An Innocent Abroad? Caterina Galli's Finances in New Handel Documents'

New documents relating to Handel and one of his singers have come to light among the Exchequer documents at The National Archives. In a legal dispute between Caterina Galli and two of her servants, the former provides an outline of her earnings for the period 1744–48 that mentions the names not only of Handel but also of Geminiani, Niccolo Pasquali and Gluck (?). From the documents, Cheryll Duncan and David Mateer learn of

the singer's alleged extravagance in London and her peripatetic lifestyle on tour in Bath, Scarborough, Bristol, Lincoln, York and Wakefield. The documents add to our scant knowledge of singers' salaries, and record what Handel paid Galli for performing in his oratorios, as well as her fees for singing in various benefit concerts and in Geminiani's pasticcio *L'incostanza delusa*. The case includes the names of several significant patrons of London's opera scene, including: Baron Henrik Frederik Söhlenthal, the Danish ambassador; Francis Greville, long-associated with Lord Middlesex's opera company; and Sir Joseph Hankey, the eminent banker. The case is supported by a series of signed depositions, including one from John Christopher Smith the elder.

John Greenacombe (Open University)

'The Trail of Handel in London'

John Greenacombe's interest in Handel's house in Brook Street goes back a long way, and over the years the scope of his research has broadened to include all the London locations associated with the composer. The archival sources necessary to follow Handel's trail in this manner (deeds registers, rate books, poll books, churchwarden accounts, etc.) are not the standard fare of music historians, which is all the more reason for welcoming a scholarly canter through Handel's London.

On the residences, Greenacombe suggested some possible dates for Handel's stay at Barn Elms in the early London years but pointed out that the chronologies given by Mainwaring, Burney and Hawkins are not easily reconciled with the facts as we know them. It is also difficult to pin down dates for Handel's stay at Burlington House, though it was probably later than has been implied.

How Handel got about London remains a knotty question. We know that he did not lease a stable in the yard behind the house in Brook Street, and no contemporary references suggest that he hired a sedan chair (although it is difficult to imagine how else he might have got about in cold, wintry weather). During his healthier years, horses were available for hire from local livery companies, and, of course, he would have got around locally on foot. Did Handel vote? – Yes, in 1749! Where did he sit at church in St George's, Hanover Square? – Five rows back on the south side! So many of us have asked little questions like these. Mr Greenacombe's findings contribute to the heart and purpose of our studies of Handel: to know the man and his music.

Carole Taylor