



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE  
NEWSLETTER

The previous issue of this *Newsletter* included an account of the *Ariodante* conference at King's College London which preceded performances of the work by English National Opera (ENO). We now give, as promised, a review of that production by

Winton Dean, who also contributes to our regular survey of the summer Handel festivals in Germany. The remainder of this issue is devoted to the forthcoming Handel conference at King's in November.

Terence Best (editor)

### ARIODANTE AT THE LONDON COLISEUM

*Ariodante* was an excellent choice for the ENO's latest Handel production. Apart from the superb quality of the music, Salvi's fine libretto makes fewer demands on the credulity of a modern audience than that of any other Handel opera. Here are no magicians, no abrupt tergiversations, no devious intrigues that strain at probability, not even a subplot, but a straightforward and very human story of love, jealousy, deception and retribution in which every character and every scene contributes to a tight dramatic unity. Based on an episode in Ariosto's *Orlando furioso*, it has been popular at many periods. Shakespeare used it in *Much Ado About Nothing*; it was the subject of several major operas in the early Romantic period; Weber's *Euryanthe* is a variant of it. Provided the musical demands are met and the production respects the opera's integrity, it should be fool-proof.

It was not proof against David Alden. To impose an alien or anachronistic interpretation on an old opera likely to be unfamiliar to the audience is a risky procedure; to impose one blatantly at variance with it, and change the plot to fit, is indefensible. The result was less Handel's opera than a perversion of it viewed through the spectrum of a blinkered personality. To introduce the idea of sexual abuse by her father into Ginevra's Act II Dream scene was gratuitous and offensive. (Handel did not perform this scene, but there was every justification for restoring it.) No less so was Polinesso's frenzied physical attack on Dalinda during his aria 'Se l'inganno', an Iago-like *credo* which he is directed to sing alone on stage. The final scene of exuberant rejoicing and brilliant spectacle was so undercut by silly stage business that it emerged as a hollow anticlimax.

A great deal else was wrong. The repeated intrusion of irrelevant supers and extraneous activities of all kinds served merely to present puzzles calculated to distract

attention from the music. There was an unmotivated game of blind man's buff during the first finale, and several threats of musical chairs later; the countless entries and exits of persons carrying chairs, and sometimes knocking them over, became a tired mannerism. The performance of arias prone on the floor or mounted on furniture, apart from stylistic incompatibility, is no help to the story or the singer. The very dramatic opening scenes of the second and third acts were so clumsily managed as to be scarcely comprehensible without a previous knowledge of the story: why not follow the stage directions? The great betrayal scene, in which Ariodante is forced to witness Dalinda dressed in Ginevra's clothes being admitted to Polinesso's bedroom, was played on what looked like an upturned boat (a sly allusion to *Peter Grimes* perhaps?). Ian MacNeil's basic set had an apt touch of the Baroque, and the inner stage used for the dream and other scenes worked quite well; but the costumes, ranging in period from medieval armour through doublet-and-hose and full-bottomed wigs to top hats, looked like the scrapings from an ill-stocked wardrobe. If this was intended to tell us that the story has a timeless application, it missed the target by a mile.

The musical performance (5 May) was very much stronger. The score was safe in the experienced hands of Nicholas McGegan. It was given complete (indeed more than complete); several recent productions, beginning with *Julius Caesar* at Birmingham in 1977, have demonstrated conclusively that cutting Handel's operas is not only unnecessary but does serious damage to their structure. Much of the singing, especially on the distaff side, reached a high standard. Amanda Roocroft was a touching Ginevra, the purity of her tone nicely reflecting that of the character. Lesley Garrett's Dalinda was pleasantly sung if slightly undercharacterised. Ann Murray had the measure of the taxing part of the hero;



she seemed to hold back a little in the first of her brilliant arias, and the wonderful 'Scherza infida' was taken so slowly that she was forced to break some of the phrases, but she gave a thrilling account of 'Dopo notte'. Michael Druiett's gravelly bass missed much of the pathos and dignity in the King's music. Paul Nilon was an accurate but scarcely mellifluous Lurcanio. Christopher Robson (Polinesso), as on other recent occasions, suffered from the whims of the producer, which indeed took some of the bloom off the entire cast.

By a singular stroke of irony the same week saw a production at Cambridge of *Berenice*, a far weaker opera than *Ariodante*. Capably sung, and intelligently produced in a style that respected the integrity of the original without falling into pseudo-historical pastiche, it got right all the things that *Ariodante* got wrong and so provided a much more satisfying experience. When will established opera-houses learn the obvious lesson, that the composer must take precedence over the producer?

Winton Dean

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### Halle and Göttingen Festivals June 1993

This year the Händelfestspiele in Halle were followed immediately by those in Göttingen, so it was possible to attend both and move comfortably from one to the other. This review covers all the performances except the oratorios, which are discussed separately by Winton Dean,

The evening before the main Halle Festival began, there was a revival of an earlier production of *Rinaldo*, now in the Opera-House repertory, and virtually identical in all respects to what we saw a few years ago. It was very well played and sung; the production was in general a less tiresome example of the 'modern' approach to Handel opera than many we have witnessed in recent years, but there were, nevertheless, some

irritating things, the silliest being the absurd costumes worn by the Christians, with a pole projecting sideways from one shoulder to carry an enormous cloak. Little attempt was made, perhaps inevitably, to reproduce the spectacular stage effects required in the original score, and there was a reasonable shot at the nigh-impossible parades and battle-scenes in the third act, using symbolic balletic gestures for the battles and asking the audience to imagine the passing by of the parading armies as first Argante and Armida, then Rinaldo and Goffredo, gestured to the empty stage as the marches were played. What did come across most powerfully was the marvellous beauty of the music, reminding us that in spite of its creaking dramatic structure *Rinaldo* is still one of the most enjoyable of Handel's operas.

The next day, after a brief opening ceremony during which the Handel prize was awarded to Nicholas McGegan, the Festival proper kicked off with the Halle première of *Orlando*, conducted by Howard Arman. As the overture was being played, our collective heart sank at the sight of large dolls on the stage, and coloured ropes obviously intended to represent a puppeteer's strings. "Oh no, not another of those," we groaned. Sure enough, Zoroastro appeared in a top hat as a master of ceremonies, controlling the destiny of the principals with his strings; the singers gave a dumb-show of stiff puppet-like gestures as they danced to the magician's commands. The symbolism of all this was so crassly obvious that one wondered why they bothered.

However, once the opera was under way things improved considerably: the producer, Roland Velte, did at times actually allow the singers just to stand (or sit) and sing, with natural gestures and postures; this was especially the case with the scenes involving Dorinda. Gregory Reinhart as Zoroastro had a magnificent power and vocal range, which impressed in spite of his sillier posturings. The counter-

tenor Axel Köhler as Orlando looked superb - not for him the mannered wimpishness which, alas, we sometimes see applied to castrato roles. He acted magnificently, and sang wonderfully; he is at his best at the moment, and must be one of the finest in the world. Derek Lee Ragin gave his usual highly professional and polished performance as Medoro, while the find of the evening was a radiant Dorinda sung by Martina Rüping: her performance was masterly in all departments, histrionic, visual, and vocal. It was a pity that she was made to leave the stage in one of her arias and cavort along the first row of the stalls, nearly tripping over the feet of the distinguished members of the audience sitting there; but it was a remarkable performance. Only the Angelica of Anke Berndt was not quite of the best: her voice sometimes lacked power and timbre, but the poor girl did have to put up with being dressed like Marlene Dietrich in a late-Twenties film. At the end the puppet antics returned, but they could not spoil what had been a musically satisfying performance of a great work.

This year there was no Wissenschaftliche Konferenz in Halle, instead a colloquium on 'Handel's illnesses and death', in which expert medical opinion was expressed on the nature of the composer's health problems, as far as can be determined from the available evidence. I did not attend this session, but it was reported that some interesting ideas were put forward, including confirmation of the now widely-held belief that Handel's troubles in 1737 were not the result of a stroke.

One of the delights of the Halle Festival is always the trip to the Goethe-Theater in Bad Lauchstädt, usually on the hottest day of the year: in this last respect the tradition was well maintained. The music was a staged performance of Hasse's intermezzo *Piramo e Tisbe* of 1768, elegantly played, sung and acted by La Stagione Frankfurt, and admirably suited to the intimate atmosphere of



that delightful theatre. Most of us found the music too bland and utterly devoid of character and individuality, and this impression was confirmed by the 'Intermezzo in an Intermezzo', which was Handel's cantata *Ero e Leandro*, sung against a stage set (for the second act of the Hasse) by Silke Stapf. Early Handel it may be (1706-7), but only a few bars were needed to point the contrast between genius and a fluent but uninspired talent.

Other items in Halle included: a concert performance of *Radamisto* (which also received three staged performances in Göttingen, discussed below); the traditional ceremony at the Handel statue in the Marktplatz, which included this year the official inauguration of the Glockenspiel in the Roter Turm (and very pleasing it was); some chamber concerts of vocal and instrumental music, all of the highest standard (one given by the Purcell Quartet of London); the now traditional Festgottesdienst in the Marktkirche on the Sunday morning, which included the Chandos Anthem 'O be joyful in the Lord'; and the membership meeting of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft.

Perhaps the most significant event in the latter was a protest by a local member who objected to the direction the Festival was taking: he looked back nostalgically to the great days when the operas and oratorios were performed in German, and the castrato parts were sung by 'normal voices' (i.e. tenors and basses). This complaint underlined what has been for many of us the greatest achievement of the Halle Festival in recent years (and commented on more than once in this *Newsletter*), namely its development into a truly international festival, in tune with present-day performance practice in the rest of the world, and now second to none in its quality, organisation, and status. The President, our good friend Professor Bernd Baselt, to whose efforts over the years so much of this is due, responded with admirable restraint and courtesy to this lone voice from the past.

The musical introduction to the meeting was quite original. It was given by two talented local pianists: Christian Meinel played Handel's F minor suite, and his brother Alexander gave a magnificent rendering of Brahms's 1861 variations on the B flat Air, HWV 434<sup>3</sup> (including, of course, the slight textual error that Brahms took over from Chrysander's edition of 1859: the present writer will give a small prize to the first reader to identify it correctly).

The Marktkirche, where the young Handel learned his craft from the organist Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, was the setting for an interesting concert of cantatas by that master, given by the Capella Cantorum of Berlin. The music was fascinating, showing a remarkable stylistic range from a mid-to-late 17th-century idiom in the earliest works, to the mature Baroque style of the later ones. The performance was patchy, and involved several changes of location and pitch, according to whether the Reichel organ (which the young Handel knew) was being used or not; but a treble from the Tölzer Knabenchor, who had a lot of solo work to do, coped well with these problems and made a delightful sound. The biggest disappointment was, perhaps, that because of the uncertain chronology of Zachow's compositions, we could not tell which of the works we heard would have been known to Handel.

The Cathedral was the unlikely setting for a superb rendering of Haydn's opera *La fedeltà delusa* in concert form, given by some excellent soloists and the prestigious Concentus Musicus of Vienna, conducted by Nikolaus Harnoncourt, who gave a witty résumé of the plot at critical moments. This was a magnificent climax to the festival; and for once it was a fine warm night for the closing open-air concert in the Galgenbergschlucht, in which the Fireworks Music was accompanied by a dazzling display of pyrotechnics.

Thence to Göttingen, and to staged performances of *Radamisto*, in a new

edition of the December 1720 score prepared by your reviewer. A good deal of reconstruction was necessary, since important parts of Handel's performing score are missing, having been removed when he rewrote the work in 1728 for Faustina and Cuzzoni; these were the first performances of the complete version of December 1720 since the original run. The cast was excellent - Ralf Popken as Radamisto, Lisa Saffer as Polissena, Dana Hanchard as Tigrane, Juliana Gondek as Zenobia, Michael Dean as Tiridate, Nicolas Cavallier as Farasmane, and Monika Frimmer as Fraarte. The Freiburger Barock-orchester demonstrated, as they rehearsed and played the music, how thoroughly they know 'the way it goes'; Nicholas McGegan directed from one of the harpsichords with that total joy or near-delirium which is as much a delight to watch as it is to listen to. Drew Ninter, taking a rest from his singing, was the stage director: we had, praise be, sumptuous costumes of a vaguely 17th-century nature, pleasing naturalistic back-drops which rose and fell instantaneously, allowing the scenes to flow without interruption, and some approximation to the acting style and gestures of Handel's time, though with some concessions to a more relaxed and naturalistic movement on the stage: in this regard the second performance was an improvement on the first, when some of the singers seemed a little uncomfortable with the gestures.

Altogether it was a triumph, and played three times to packed houses. The running time was just about three hours, demonstrating that you can do a Handel opera virtually uncut (two arias in Act III were reduced to A section only) in a reasonable time if you pace it properly.

The Freiburg team were in action again in the Stadthalle, where they gave an instrumental concert (a repeat from Halle) consisting of some Purcell theatre music, the Arrival of the Queen of Sheba, and Concerti Grossi op. 6 nos. 6 and 7. Purcell and his English



contemporaries (or near contemporaries) played an important part in this Festival, whose theme was 'Händel und das Haus Hannover' - although it was never clearly explained why English music of the Restoration period was relevant to Hanover. Among many interesting concerts was a fine organ recital in the St. Jacobi-Kirche by John Butt, consisting of voluntaries by Purcell, Blow and Locke, three fugues by Handel, and some Bach, ending with a spectacular performance of the great C minor Passacaglia BWV 582.

The St. Johannis-Kirche was the setting for a choral concert by the Chamber Chorus of the University of California at Berkeley, accompanied by another original-instrument group, the Orchester Fiori Musicali of Bremen, and conducted by John Butt. A lovely performance of the Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline was followed by slightly less successful renderings of Purcell's 'Rejoice in the Lord alway', Humfrey's 'Lift up your heads', and Handel's Coronation Anthem 'Let thy hand be strengthened'. There was a late-night chamber concert, and, to emphasise the Hanover connection, the Ensemble Le Nuove Musiche from that city gave an interesting and beautifully-performed recital, in the University Hall, of music supposedly composed for the electoral court. There were cantatas and duets by Steffani and Handel whose Hanover provenance is unquestioned, but also the Trio Sonata in F, HWV 405, which almost certainly dates from the Italian period, and the Oboe Sonata in C minor, HWV 366, which belongs to the early London years. Steffani's music came over as elegant, original and well-crafted, but the power and mastery of Handel's duets seemed to belong to a different world.

We left before the final sessions, but there was a concluding concert in which the Hanover connection was again to the fore, with pieces by Steffani and Venturini and ending with Handel's *Apollo e Dafne*, which was certainly completed there soon after his arrival from Italy. One came away

gloriously surfeited with Handel's music and happy that he is alive and well, and much honoured, in the land of his birth.

Terence Best

### Oratorios at Halle and Göttingen

The two oratorios at Halle presented a startling contrast. *Belshazzar* in the Cathedral was of much the same standard as last year's *Samson*, but lacked the (unintended) comic relief of that memorable occasion. The conductor, Heribert Beissel, is said to be a Bruckner-Mahler specialist, and one could well believe it; he should never be let loose on Handel. For no obvious reason he began with the chorus 'Behold, by Persia's hero made' (no. 6 in the Novello vocal score) followed by the overture and the first scene. Almost every number in Act I suffered brutal amputation, great swathes of music being chopped out, leaving a string of miserable torsos that gave no idea of the quality or strength of this magnificent oratorio. I am told that it ended with a spectacular trumpet cadenza in a movement for which Handel prescribed no trumpets; but by that time I had fled, depressed by the injustice to Handel, much plummy and off-pitch singing, and the penitential hardness of the Cathedral benches.

*Judas Maccabaeus* in the Opera-House was a very different matter. This oratorio, weak in human interest and with little contrast of mood beyond generalised expressions of national lamentation and patriotic fervour, can easily sound pompous, empty or plain dull. There was no danger of that in the performance by the RIAS Kammerchor and Akademie für alte Musik Berlin, with British soloists. Marcus Creed secured a splendid attack that gripped attention throughout. Handel's broad effects - the delayed entry of the trumpets and drums, followed by the chorus, in 'Sound an alarm', the varied scoring of the victory procession in Act III - made a thrilling impact. Julia Gooding warbled delightfully in the Israelite

Woman's airs; Catherine Denley was as reliable as ever as her mezzo colleague. William Kendall was a rousing Judas. The singing of the chorus (33 strong, nicely balanced with the orchestra) was superb, with a rhythmic bite that carried all before it. The one blemish was the excessive use of the organ, which muddied the texture of the lyrical airs and duets ('Father of Heaven' and 'O lovely peace' suffered badly) and even some secco recitatives, yet perversely yielded to the harpsichord in several choruses. It is strange how few conductors get this right. Nevertheless, this was as fine an oratorio performance as I have heard in Halle, and quite transcended Morell's wretchedly pedestrian libretto.

Göttingen offered a single oratorio, but it was a rarity. The Occasional Oratorio lives up to its name in every sense, including that of the authors of *1066 and All That*. Hastily composed to rouse the nation's warlike spirit in the face of the Stuart rebellion and first performed in February 1746, it has no pretensions to dramatic form, no particular shape and little contrast. It contains a certain amount of striking and beautiful music, mostly in the first of the three parts, but for much of the time Handel seems content to cruise along, lifting substantial sections from *Athalia*, *Comus*, *Israel in Egypt* and other works, which invariably sound better in their original contexts. No doubt it served its purpose adequately, but only an exceptional performance could bring it to life today. Unfortunately that given in the Stadthalle by Das neue Orchester and Chorus Musicus Cologne fell a good deal short, despite excellent singing by the soprano Patrizia Kwella and a tenor whose identity was not revealed. The conductor, Christoph Spering, set some eccentric tempos, dragging many of the airs but hustling the choruses. The organ took the lead in almost every movement and reduced the texture to the consistency of treacle.

Winton Dean



## HANDEL INSTITUTE CONFERENCE: HANDEL IN THE 1730s

King's College London, 27-28 November 1993

*Details of the programme and booking arrangements are given on a separate sheet (enclosed). Here we present brief abstracts of the papers to be delivered.*

### **Jeremy Black**

*Political Threat and Cultural Challenge: Britain and the Continent in the 1730s*

The 1730s was both a decade in which foreign policy remained controversial and one in which the associated domestic political debates were less fraught than in the 1720s and 1740s. Nevertheless, the use of the notion of cultural betrayal by opponents of the government remained strong and it continued to be focused on the issue of alleged subservience to foreign political and cultural forces. This paper will focus on the general background of this discourse and investigate the notion of cultural nationalism and xenophobia. Particular attention will be directed to the Haymarket riot of 1738, as a clear example of the political sensitivity of 'foreign' performances.

### **Reinhard Strohm**

*Ethos and Pathos, Image and Message in Handel's Later Operas*

The paper attempts to interpret the fluctuations of style, dramaturgy and 'relevance' in Handel's later operas in terms of a coherent model. How could the standard rhetorical-gestural language of the *dramma per musica* survive the demands of subject-matter and social expectations placed upon it by Handel's career, while fulfilling its traditional tasks to demonstrate moral principles and to imitate nature? Probably, Handel needed opera as long as he did because it helped to clarify his own position towards inherited principles such as Pathos and Ethos. But in so doing, he transformed them into something like 'image' and 'message'.

### **Sarah McCleave**

*Handel and Sallé: an unusual Duo?*

Handel's operas of the 1734-5 season, in which he collaborated with the innovative French dancer, Marie Sallé, have never been placed into the context of London theatrical dance activity. Dance was an important component of most theatrical entertainments produced in London during the first half of the 18th century, although its role in opera decreased during the second and third decades. Handel evinced an interest in dance even during the Royal Academy years: he was also the only composer of Italian operas in London known to have written his own dance music. His 'Sallé' operas will be examined in the context of this background. New documentary evidence provides a possible explanation as to how this extraordinary duo came to be collaborators.

### **Graham Cummings**

*The Composition of Handel's Opera Poro, re dell'Indie (1731)*

There is a considerable fascination in trying to reconstruct a major composer's compositional process. The contents of the autograph manuscript of *Poro* (Lb1 RM 20.b.13), as well as their details and unusual order of presentation, provide valuable clues as to the ways in which Handel worked in this specific case. Complementary evidence from the autograph fragments of the unfinished opera *Genserico* (1728) and the autograph of *Alcina* (1735) will also be considered.

### **Richard King**

*Handel's 'Rival Queens': Faustina and Cuzzoni in Satirical Opera, Literature and Prints*

An instructive example of the connections between opera and other aspects of theatrical life in 18th-century London is seen in the relationship

between Nathaniel Lee's play *The Rival Queens* (1677) and Handel's opera *Alessandro* (1726). This paper explores two facets of that relationship, showing first how Lee's famous drama may have shaped the reception of Handel's opera, and second, how *The Rival Queens* and *Alessandro* together provided a context within which the competition between Faustina and Cuzzoni was viewed. The two singers became known as 'rival queens' shortly after the first performance of *Alessandro*, and this label stuck with them for many years thereafter. In a more general way, 'rival queens' were to become a favourite English *topos* for Italian singers in the 1720s and 1730s.

### **Bernd Baselt**

*Handel and the Pasticcio in the 1730s*

Although Handel continued to perform operas mostly of his own composition during the 1730s, his repertory is characterized by a growing proportion of music by other composers, offered in the form of pasticcios arranged by himself. Earlier scholars viewed these pasticcios as minor works: no attempt was made to place them textually and musically within his *oeuvre*, and they were dismissed as 'crude makeshift constructions' (Leichtentritt) with which he purportedly attempted to challenge his competitors and gain the favour of the audience. This paper takes a fresh look at Handel's pasticcios and at his compositional methods in them: several kinds of pasticcio opera can be distinguished, and the same methods can be found in his church music and oratorios.

### **John Roberts**

*Handel's Adaptation of Vinci Recitatives in his London Pasticcios*

Between 1733 and 1737 Handel arranged and performed pasticcios based on three operas by Leonardo



Vinci. In addition to revising the original recitatives in response to the range of his singers, the replacement and transposition of many arias, and extensive cuts, he also altered some of Vinci's cadential patterns. Where Vinci had often sought to vary the truncated cadence (in which the voice ends before the harmony reaches its goal) either by delaying the final chords or by realigning them with the voice-part to produce a simultaneous close, Handel frequently imposed the truncated effect; at other times he accepted Vinci's innovations or even followed his example. His choices throw light on his principles of recitative construction and on the relationship of his practice to that of his contemporaries.

#### **William Gudger**

*Another Source for Handel's Borrowings: Telemann's XX Kleine Fugen of 1731*

Previously overlooked as a source of Handel borrowings, Telemann's *XX Kleine Fugen* (1731) is the sort of publication that could have been exchanged in the composers' correspondence. The borrowings from these keyboard works, which appear in such places as organ concertos and *Israel in Egypt*, help to paint a more complete picture of Handel's compositional process in the 1730s. This period was characterised by a move away from the composition of operas to other works - odes, oratorios, and instrumental works - employing a greater variety of compositional techniques, especially counterpoint. Building on the research of John Roberts and others, I endeavour to present an overview of Handel's compositional process by looking at how we interpret his borrowings from Telemann's fugues.

#### **Graydon Beeks**

*Handel's Chandos Anthems in the 1730s*

In 1732, with revivals of *Acis and Galatea* and *Esther*, Handel renewed his interest in works he had written more than a decade earlier for James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos. He then turned to the Chandos Anthems as sources of material for his new oratorio, *Deborah*, employing only a limited number of them, chosen for structural convenience or textual relevance; his use of these anthems provides insights into his attitude toward self-borrowing in this highly individual oratorio. During the remainder of the decade he borrowed from the anthems infrequently. In the mid-1730s only a set of copies made by the scribe S3 indicates any interest in the works. In 1739, however, two of them were performed by John Christopher Smith, Jr., and instrumental movements from the anthems were published in Handel's trio sonatas, op. 5. Both events must have had his approval. They may also have been related to the preparation of 'Oxford' copies of the anthems and have prompted an echo of the Chandos Anthems in *L'Allegro, il Penseroso, ed il Moderato* (1740).

#### **Ruth Smith**

*Alexander's Baggage*

What resonance did the story told in *Alexander's Feast* have for the 18th-century audience? What does Dryden's poem say about the role of the artist? Where does St Cecilia fit in? And what preconceptions about the purpose and effect of music did Handel's audience bring to the first performance? This paper aims to encourage a new look at the music and effect of Handel's *Alexander's Feast* by considering it from the viewpoints of its moral and aesthetic hinterland, Handel's position in 1735, and the meaning of the text he set.

#### **Donald Burrows**

*Handel's 1738 'Oratorio': a Benefit Pasticcio*

From the time of the formation of the Royal Academy of Music to the end of his career, Handel is known to have had only one personal benefit performance, in March 1738. For this performance he chose to give a mixed programme of his own compositions, in contrast to the complete works (*Alexander's Feast*, *Parnasso in Festa*) that he presented for the benefit of the Fund for Decay'd Musicians. This paper will outline the background to his benefit performance and examine the programme, dealing particularly with questions on the origins of the music, the coherence of the musical sequence, and the performing forces that the programme required.

#### **Julie Anne Sadie**

*Handel and the Composer Museum*

Composer museums are visited by thousands of people every year but their significance tends to be overlooked by scholars. Largely a European phenomenon and representing composers only from the time of Bach and Handel, they number around 70. The finest are inevitably the best endowed - though there are notable exceptions - because in addition to normal museum activities they offer research, conference and educational facilities, and generate important publications. Through displays they relate aspects of a composer's life and work in uniquely appropriate contexts, while through temporary exhibitions they present the latest thinking to a wider public than would be served by scholarly journals. Recitals in composer museums endow both performers and audiences with fascinating insights perhaps otherwise unobtainable. This paper explores the implications of the foregoing for a London Handel House Museum.