



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER

In this issue we have reviews of three recent Handel opera productions, which show that interest in these works continues to grow; an account by Brian Trowell of a rare 19th-century

project to revive *Ariodante*; and news of the 1994 Maryland Handel Festival and recent developments in the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe.

Terence Best

MICHAEL ROPHINO LACY AND *GINEVRA OF SICILY*
a 19th-century adaptation of Handel's *Ariodante*

Michael M. J. Rophino Lacy (1795-1867) cut an unusually colourful figure in the staid world of Handel scholarship. He was born in Bilbao, the son of an English merchant; his mother was Spanish, so he would have inherited from her the name Rophino and no doubt the two unknown names lurking behind the preceding initials. An infant prodigy on the violin – pupil of Kreutzer and Viotti – he nevertheless acquired a good education at the Collège de Bordeaux and in Paris, learning several European languages and some Latin. He made his London début in 1805, but a few years later gave up the violin and became an actor in genteel comedy. In 1818 he returned to music, becoming an orchestral leader; by 1820 he was directing and no doubt arranging the music for the ballets in Italian opera at the King's Theatre in London.

In 1827 he began a career as translator and adapter of (mainly) Italian and French operas for Drury Lane and Covent Garden, including four by Rossini, *Fra Diavolo* and another by Auber, Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*, an improbable comic opera, *The Casket*, 'after Mozart's *Idomeneo*', and, W. H. Husk believed, an unusually complete version of Weber's *Der Freischütz*. There was even an opera by Fétis, which may explain why Lacy was favoured with an entry in the *Biographie universelle des musiciens*. There are two pieces that defy classification, the 'dramatic spectacle' *Napoleon Buonaparte, Captain of Artillery, General and First Consul, Emperor and Exile* (1831) and twenty years later, when Lacy was also apparently writing straight plays, the 'diorama' *The Route of the Overland Mail to India, from Southampton to*

Calcutta: this exciting cartographical extravaganza was his last musical offering.¹

His career as an adapter was successful but fairly short. It virtually came to an end in 1833, when he conceived the notion of staging Handelian oratorio by spatchcocking the choruses of *Israel in Egypt* into a version of Rossini's *Mosè* and entitling the result 'a dramatic oratorio'. It proved a great success at Covent Garden (and was taken up later on in the USA), and he planned a sequel advertised for 19 February 1834, this time a work deriving entirely from Handel: *Jephtha*, 'interspersed with various admired compositions from other celebrated oratorios by the same composer'. Had it reached the stage, Lacy would have anticipated by ninety years the efforts of the 1920s and 30s to stage Handel's dramatic oratorios. But (as, allegedly, in Handel's own time) the Bishop of London intervened; the performances were banned, and Lacy's connection with the opera is assumed to have ended with his Handelian adaptations.

We know about his *Jephtha* only because Victor Schoelcher devotes a few pages in *The Life of Handel* to Lacy's practical efforts.² Schoelcher approved of costuming the oratorios, but not of full theatrical representation: perhaps he had some knowledge of older Italian traditions in oratorio and serenata, which sometimes permitted what we might call 'semi-staging'. His praise of Lacy as a valued collaborator in Handel studies is well known. Lacy had spent three months researching for him at the British Museum 'into the journals of the Handelian period', so that Schoelcher was 'able to fix positively a great many dates

¹ Biographical information is from F. J. Fétis, *Biographie universelle des musiciens et bibliographie générale de la musique* (Brussels, 2/1860-65); DNB; Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, edn. of 1900; *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (London, 1980): all s.v. 'Lacy, Michael Rophino'.

² V. Schoelcher, *The Life of Handel* (London, 1857), 112ff; xxii; see 296 for Lacy's rehabilitation of the *Occasional Oratorio*.



and facts which have hitherto been considered as doubtful'. He praises Lacy's own knowledge as 'of the utmost value to me. I never met with any man better versed than he is in the music of Handel, be it Italian or English; for it seems impossible to produce a bar of it to him with which he is not perfectly familiar'. He speaks generously of Lacy's assistance with his catalogue of Handel's works, which survives in MS but was not published as Schoelcher had hoped. (Had it been, it might well have anticipated Köchel's Mozart catalogue (1862) as the first great example of its kind.) Schoelcher says that Lacy's help 'amounts really to a collaboration'. Himself no musician, he relied entirely upon Lacy's technical knowledge. We learn that Lacy examined the MSS in the Royal Library and the Lennard collection, and the conducting scores – a surprisingly scrupulous approach to textual scholarship that one might not have expected from the freedom which Lacy permitted himself when adapting other men's music for the stage.

We have independent evidence of Lacy's interest in Handelian MSS from three volumes in the British Library into which he copied numerous works, movements, and even scraps and sketches, from sources such as the Royal Library autographs.³ I have not examined these, but they range widely across the genres in which Handel composed, and reveal a scholarly curiosity about unpublished material. It looks as though Lacy's oratorio project of 1833–4 had aroused his interest in Handel, which grew increasingly through the late 1830s and 1840s when he had more time to indulge it; by the time Schoelcher arrived in London as a republican exile in the early 1850s, Lacy had already made himself into a competent Handel scholar, ready to serve his fellow-enthusiast.

It now seems, however, that the abandoned *Jephtha* was not his last

attempt to stage dramatic music by Handel. Last year, looking through the musical MSS in the library of the Faculty of Music in the University of Oxford, I came across a curious volume, a vocal score in upright format, entitled on the spine 'GINEVRA OF SICILY/HANDEL' with, at the foot, 'M. ROPHINO LACY'.⁴ An ornamental title-page on stiff card bears within a black and brown inked border the legend 'GINEVRA OF SICILY/Grand Serious Opera/Composed in/1734/by/HANDEL/The Libretto written & the Music arranged and adapted/for Dramatic Representation' [pencilled addition: 'on the English Stage'] 'by/M. Rophino Lacy./This Edition of Handel's Opera of Ginevra/of Sicily never before published, being the only one extant in its present form of arrangement/Is Copyright.' The words 'Opera of Ginevra' seem to have been crowded into a space designed for the true original title, *Ariodante*, which otherwise does not appear.

For this is indeed a version of Handel's *Ariodante*, strangely metamorphosed into a romantic opera for the taste of the 1830s. It has as its basis the then unpublished autograph in the Royal Music Library: Lacy uses not merely the words but also the music of many of the recitatives, and a pencilled note on page 374 records a cut indicated by Handel himself in the aria 'Dopo notte' in Act III. There are one or two borrowings from other operas. Berenice's 'Scoglio d'immota fronte' from *Scipione* appears in Act I as 'Like to the Rock, calm rising', sung by Ginevra in C major, with a pencilled note 'in D' recording its original key. The first item after the overture, an apparently original chorus 'These gifts, Ginevra', employs a violin figure which may derive from Oronte's aria 'Semplicetto!' in *Alcina*; and I suspect that a longer search would discover further borrowing amongst the items that do not come from *Ariodante* but

seem Handelian. Other original interpolations are in an unmistakably modern manner, recalling Reeve or Bishop rather than Bellini; but *Ariodante* serves as the backbone throughout.

Why should Lacy have chosen this opera, rather than another, to present to a contemporary audience? Its music shows Handel at his finest, and it has a non-classical plot deriving from Ariosto, with a very strong story-line whose essential situation would have been familiar from Shakespeare's *Much Ado about Nothing*; the latter point may explain why Lacy moved the setting from Edinburgh to Sicily. Since the taste of the 1830s demanded ensembles, choruses, a procession and a 'Rural Ballet', Lacy cut many arias, removing the sub-plot of Dalinda and Lurcanio and reducing the relationship between Dalinda and Polinesso (who becomes Parisino). Some arias were made into duets (e.g., the arioso 'Qui d'amor nel suo linguaggio', where Ginevra joins with Ariodante in 'Here, beneath this shady bower'; Ariodante's 'Tu, preparati a morire' becomes a duet with Parisino, 'Yes! Swift vengeance shall overtake thee'; the King's 'Al senti stringo e parto' is tortured to accommodate Ginevra as well in 'As held by magic spell').

The universal rule of the da capo aria is disestablished, largely by means of a practice known in our century as 'Dentotomy', or something like it: E. J. Dent, noticing a case where Handel himself had inserted the B section of a ternary aria into the middle of the A section at a suitable cadence, advocated the practice's wider use.⁵ Lacy does this, though making further cuts (particularly of coloratura passages): the result is a series of much shorter solo arias, which regularly modulate for their 'second subjects' not to the dominant, as would have been expected in the 1830s, but to related minor keys.

On the whole the new English words are faithful to the originals,

³ British Library, Add. MSS 31555, 31557, 31573.

⁴ MS without shelfmark; Faculty of Music MSS are shortly to be transferred to the Bodleian Library. Its provenance and date of acquisition are unknown.

⁵ I know the 'Dentotomy' from hearsay only; for an authentic example, see W. Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (London, 1959), 459 and plate VII.



elegantly phrased and sympathetic to the singers' needs. There are some transpositions, and Ariodante and Polinesso/Parisino become tenors, whose vocal lines occasionally shoot up unexpectedly to the upper octave. Ritornellos are shortened, violently so on occasion. Less predictably, but not often, they are changed; the wonderful Bachian introduction to 'Il mio crudel martoro' becomes an Italianate melody over the same harmonic progression; the Overture, though its music is truncated here and there, is preserved, but is prefaced and interrupted by original material.

There is an opening chorus of peasants (presumably, for there are few stage-directions and no scene-descriptions) bringing gifts to Ginevra, and later on a quartet in praise of wine by four named peasants, one of whose sons is to marry: this leads to a wedding feast paralleling the coming espousal of the hero and heroine, with a *siciliana* which itself marries the Sinfonia no. 13 in *Ariodante* to something very like the finale of Corelli's Christmas Concerto. Act I ends with a Rural Ballet, whose 'Pas Deux' (sic) derives from the 'Entrée des Songes Agréables', no. 31 in *Ariodante*, but is otherwise new, leading to Handel's gavotte duet and dance 'Si godete al vostro amor' ('Ev'ry joy seems now combined'), and followed by a final Chorus of Hunters.

Acts II and III are less subject to such fashionable interruptions, but there is the obligatory Donizettian *Sestetto* (new: 'Time's flight will clear my fame'). Ginevra has a 'Preghiera', made from 'Giusto ciel', the second part of 'Si, morrò', but provided with a first part 'Thou that hearest', just as in Act I Ginevra's first aria, 'Guardians of true love, befriend me' ('Vezzi, lusinghe') has had tacked on to it a dreadfully trite faster movement, 'In this faithful breast'. Those who love Handel may not be grateful for more details, but for the record let me state

that the following numbers (in Baselt's catalogue)⁶ make their way in some form into Lacy's *rifacimento*: Overture, nos. 1, 4-6, 10, 13-14, 20-21, 23, 25, 27-28, 30-31, 39-40, 42-47, 51 and 57. Twenty-five Handelian numbers, most of them introduced by versions of their preceding recitatives, would have been most unusual fare for an English opera audience of the 1830s.

Ginevra of Sicily is unknown to the pages of Allardyce Nicoll's *A History of English Drama*⁷ and seems never to have reached the stage. The MS has one or two pencilled improvements which suggest that some of it at least has been sung through, but no other signs of use and no indications of instrumentation (though the recitatives look as though they were to be orchestrally accompanied). Had it been acted, Lacy would have scored another first: the only other Handel opera to be staged in the 19th century, also much-mangled in the adaptation, was *Almira*, performed in a 'Historical Opera Week' celebrating the bicentenary of the Hamburg Opera in 1878 and repeated in Leipzig in 1879 and 1885.⁸ But its arranger, J. N. Fuchs, had Chrysander's text to operate on: Lacy's must have been based on his own faithful and scholarly transcription of Handel's autograph.

Brian Trowell

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL

Deidamia

The London Handel Festival's production of *Deidamia* at the Britten Theatre in the Royal College of Music (28-31 March 1995) was, as in previous years, given in collaboration with the Opera Department of the London Royal Schools' Vocal Faculty, allowing alternating casts of young singers (except for the two basses, who sang all four performances) to work with the pro-

fessional period-instrument players of the London Handel Orchestra, alternately conducted by Denys Darlow (the Festival's Director) and Michael Rosewell (the Faculty's Deputy Director of Opera).

Handel's last opera had not been heard in Britain since the Handel Opera Society's production of 1968. Its mood is elusive. Handel seems not to be fully engaged with his characters except Deidamia herself: her journey from the bliss of early love to final betrayal is warmly portrayed in the music. It was therefore regrettable, and indeed baffling, that this central role suffered most from cuts made to keep the opera within a three-hour time limit (including interval). The loss of her opening aria diminished an important aspect of the character, and in the case of the first cast (under Darlow) was compounded by the further omission of the poignant 'Se il timore'; the latter cut left soprano Jeni Bern with no aria at all in Act II, since 'Va perfido' was dropped as well – though hers was perhaps the voice with the greatest promise of distinction among a group of generally high standard.

'Se il timore' was retained by the second cast (with Vasiljka Jezovsek as Deidamia), who gained the extra time by Emma Silversides' adoption of the shorter original versions of those arias for Nereia which Handel rewrote more expansively for Maria Monza. (Hearing the later versions sung by Margaret Kelly Cook in Darlow's cast suggested that Handel's first ideas were the best.) As a result the performance under Rosewell gave a more satisfying account of the opera, though Darlow's singers looked the more confident on stage, with well-observed movement and gesture. For Darlow the role of Ulysses, written for a mezzo-soprano castrato, was taken by the counter-tenor Tobias Cole, who covered the range with remarkable assurance though his higher notes were certain only when taken softly. Simon

⁶ B. Baselt, *Händel-Handbuch*, i (Kassel, 1978), 396-409.

⁷ A. Nicholl, *A History of English Drama, 1660-1900*, iv-v (Cambridge, 2/1955-9).

⁸ See Dorothea Schröder's Preface to her edition of *Almira*, HHA, II/1 (Kassel, 1994), x and xvi.



after an operation and as ebullient as ever. This was a concert of lollipops from *Messiah*, *Samson*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Hercules* and the Dettingen Te Deum: all good stuff, rapturously received.

Scholarship plays an important role at these Festivals. The HHA Editorial Board met, and there were two conference sessions. The first was on the theme 'Handel and his opera librettos and librettists', with papers by John Sawyer on *Agrippina* (he is to edit it for the HHA), Steven LaRue on Rolli, Haym and Handel's last Academy operas, John T. Winemiller on *Orlando*, Steven Zohn and Ronald Rabin on John Walsh, and Channan Willner on 'Sequential expansion and Handelian phrase rhythm'. A busy Saturday was rounded off by a somewhat way-out but surprisingly entertaining evening concert given in the chapel by William Neil and Emerson Head, who treated us to arrangements of Handel pieces for organ and trumpet.

Sunday morning saw the second conference session, on oratorios and sacred music. There were papers by Stephen Miller on Handel and the Roman Mass, Kenneth Nott on Samuel Humphreys and *Esther*, Michael Corn on the libretto of *Solomon*, and Thomas Goleeke on a newly identified borrowing from Galuppi in *Jephtha*.

The grand finale was a performance of *Belshazzar*, given by the same forces as before, in the chapel on the Sunday evening, and conducted with his usual balletic brio by Paul Traver. When watching him conduct one is reminded of Mainwaring's description of Handel's music as being endowed with 'such a degree of fire and force'. These oratorio performances have been the glory of the Maryland Festival since its inception, and this one maintained that noble tradition (and what a delightful idea it was to supply the audience with a facsimile of the original London wordbook). The singing of soloists and chorus and the instrumental playing were excellent; Paul Traver's dramatic pacing of the work was

faultless, and the evening passed very quickly, which does not always happen with this piece.

The performance was preceded by a lively talk by Donald Burrows on the history of the work's creation, made more entertaining by the participation of Graydon Beeks and Anthony Hicks, who, as Handel and Jennens respectively, read passages from their letters concerning the composition of the oratorio.

Add to all this some very charming hospitality from Howard and Nancy Serwer, Paul and Mary Traver, and the American Handel Society, which involved much eating and drinking such as Handel would have approved of, and readers will understand the delights of this Festival. Next one in '96: not to be missed!

Terence Best

HALLISCHE HÄNDEL-AUSGABE

The revised volumes

It is well known among musical scholars that when the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe was inaugurated in 1955, its parent organisation, the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, took the view that the complete edition of Handel's works published by the Deutsche Händel-Gesellschaft between 1858 and 1902, under the editorship of Friedrich Chrysander, was still sufficiently reliable to be the basis of the new edition; that while Chrysander's work might be checked by the editors against the principal primary sources, in general the HHA would be seen as republishing Chrysander's text in a practical format, because the original large volumes were by then out of print and for many works (such as keyboard and chamber music) were too unwieldy for comfortable handling.

The early volumes of the HHA were produced according to this principle. They are listed in a Bärenreiter advertisement in the July,

1959, issue of *Music and Letters*, which shows that the following were then available: four volumes of instrumental works (Series IV, vols. 1-4: the keyboard suites of 1720, the organ concertos Op. 4, eleven sonatas for flute and figured bass, and six sonatas for violin and figured bass; and Ser. I, vol. 1: *Alexander's Feast*, in full score).

The musical text of these volumes is more or less that of Chrysander, although it had been collated with some of the autographs and early editions by Walsh and Cluer. It is clear that when the editing work was done on these volumes the existence of the Handel autographs in the Fitzwilliam Museum, and of the Aylesford, Lennard, Granville and Shaftesbury collections of manuscript copies, was either unknown or disregarded; ignorance of the Malmesbury Collection, to which no-one had had access at that time, is entirely understandable.

The Prefaces to the volumes contain little or no discussion of sources, and only for *Alexander's Feast* was a Critical Report published. In this document, issued in 1958, there is an acknowledgement that Chrysander's edition was no longer adequate as a basis for a modern edition, and some collation of the autograph and the Hamburg performing-score; but no other manuscript sources are mentioned.

The issue of *Music and Letters* that contained the Bärenreiter advertisement also included a damning revue of the *Alexander's Feast* volume by Winton Dean. This, and similar criticism of the other early volumes by such authorities as Thurston Dart, together with representation from a number of eminent scholars, brought about a change of mind in Halle. It was decided that, like the new Bach and Mozart editions already in progress, a proper collation of all the original sources was necessary and that the HHA should become a fully critical edition.

The new policy was implemented from the early 1960s, and the process was further developed by the setting



up in 1984 of an international Editorial Board to oversee the edition. The problem then remained of what to do about the early volumes which did not meet modern scholarly standards. Since four of these were of instrumental works, which tend to sell more copies than full scores of operas or oratorios, the wide dissemination of these volumes was seen increasingly as an embarrassment. The Editorial Board therefore agreed with Bärenreiter that revised editions of these early instrumental volumes should be published alongside the new volumes (of which the latest to appear is *Almira*, Ser. II, vol. 1).

The task of revision, which has fallen largely to me, is now at the following stage. The keyboard suites of 1720 (IV/1) have been published in the revised format. The flute and recorder sonatas (IV/3) are now in proof and will appear in 1996. The organ concertos Op. 4 (IV/2) have been re-edited by William D. Gudger and myself (work on them has just been completed), and I will shortly be tackling the violin sonatas (IV/4).

Volume IV/5, the second set of keyboard suites (1733), was edited by Peter Northway according to the critical-edition formula and published in 1968, but the availability now of important manuscript sources which were then unknown or inaccessible makes a new edition desirable. This has been prepared and should appear within the next two years. Hans Joachim Marx, another member of the Editorial Board, is working on a new text of *Dixit Dominus* (III/1, 1960), and other early volumes will be re-edited as time and resources permit.

So far as Critical Reports are concerned, the present policy of the HHA is to include them in the volumes, at the end of the music text, rather than issue them separately. An exception to this is the Critical Report for the keyboard music (IV/1, 5, 6 and 17), which will appear as a separate booklet after the second volume has been published in its revised form; none of the keyboard volumes has hitherto had a Critical Report.

Terence Best

IL TRIONFO REVIVED

In 'A Question of Terminology' (Handel Institute *Newsletter*, v/2), Donald Burrows misinterpreted some statements from my article about *Il trionfo del Tempo* (*JRMA*, cxix (1994), 43-59) – for example, when he wrote that '[Gianturco] is unhappy about the application of the word 'oratorio' to a work that is in two parts (rather than the 'normal' dramatic three parts)'. I take this opportunity to summarise the salient points of my argument in the article:

At Handel's time, in Italy:

- 1) The subject of an opera could have been either serious, comic, moral or sacred; the subject of a cantata could have been either serious, comic, moral or sacred; the subject of an oratorio was only sacred.
- 2) A sacred subject was taken from some moment in the life of a saint or of Christ or Mary, or was a biblical tale; one or more characters could have been allegorical. A moral subject was explicitly didactic and intended to remind one of the principles of Christianity; all characters were allegorical or were from a source which was not sacred.
- 3) All operas were in three sections (called acts); all oratorios were in two sections (called parts); cantatas could have been in either one or two sections (called parts).
- 4) Operas and oratorios were dramas, cantatas were not.

I reasoned (with help from poets, librettos, scores and contemporary writings) that:

- 1) Handel's first *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, since it was not a drama, could not have been either an opera or an oratorio (in addition its subject would have excluded it from the latter category). *Il trionfo* is instead a cantata. The worklist in Mainwaring's biography of Handel and Charles Jennens's annotated copy of it

consider it a serenata. I accept this because when a cantata was intended to be used as a serenata ('cantata per fare una serenata' is an expression one often comes across), it was often referred to simply as a serenata. *Il trionfo* is didactic and has all allegorical characters. It is therefore a moral cantata.

2) The 1737 *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità* could not have been considered an oratorio by any Italian because it was in three sections, the structure of only operas; even though the plot is not handled in such a way that it becomes a drama, it is clear that it was intended to associate it with that genre, perhaps because of its performance at Covent Garden.

3) Handel's 1757 *The Triumph of Time and Truth* is also in three sections (called acts), but because of 'intensifying and developing changes' it has been brought to 'a different dramatic level' and I would call it, therefore, a moral opera.

Carolyn Gianturco

Donald Burrows writes:

I don't have any problem myself with the description of *Il trionfo del Tempo* (in each of its versions) as a 'drama', nor would I have any difficulty with the idea that a moral cantata might also be an oratorio. But that, of course, is not the point: the 'question' of terminology concerns what was understood by 'drama' and 'oratorio' in Rome in 1707, and in London in 1737 and 1757. I am very pleased that my misunderstandings have provoked this very clear and useful summary from Carolyn Gianturco, whose knowledge of early 18th-century Italian sources must command respect. It remains the case, nevertheless, that there are authoritative contemporary references to *Il trionfo* as an 'oratorio' from Handel's music copyists, his librettists or the original printed librettos, for each version of the work.

AWARDS FOR RESEARCH AND PERFORMANCE

Handel Institute Awards

Applications are invited for the next round of **Handel Institute Awards** of up to £1,000 to assist in the furtherance of research projects involving the life or works of Handel and his contemporaries.

Deadline 1 September 1995.

The Byrne Award (1996)

Applications are invited also for the 1996 Byrne Award (up to £1,000) which is intended primarily to support performance of Handel's music and assist young professional performers at the start of their careers.

Deadline 31 December 1995.

Further particulars on both kinds of award from Professor Colin Timms (address below).

The Byrne Award (1995)

The 1995 Byrne Award has been given to **Catherine Richardson** (mezzo-soprano) for her performance as Arsace in the Cambridge Handel Opera Group production of *Partenope*, reviewed in this issue.

HANDEL AND HIS RIVALS

The next Handel Institute conference will take place on Saturday 30 November and Sunday 1 December 1996 at King's College London. The theme, 'Handel and his Rivals', may be interpreted broadly to include colleagues and associates as well as competitors, living in London but not necessarily exclusively so. As in previous conferences, papers will probably have to be restricted to about 30 minutes' duration. Offers of papers and other enquiries should be addressed to Professor Colin Timms (address below).

The Handel Institute is a registered charity (no. 296615). All enquiries should be addressed to the honorary secretary, Professor Colin Timms, Department of Music, The University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 2TT.



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Edited by **TERENCE BEST**,

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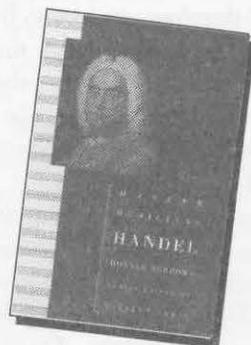
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