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JOINT MEETING OF THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY AND THE SOCIETY FOR SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF IOWA, 23–26 APRIL 2015

The nearly one hundred attendees at this joint meeting were treated to a wealth of scholarly papers, concerts and opportunities for engagement between the two societies. The meeting alternated plenary sessions comprising papers by members of both societies with parallel sessions that focused on topics of particular interest to Society for Seventeenth-Century Music (SSCM) or American Handel Society (AHS) members. This report emphasizes Handel-related papers, but a few additional presentations are discussed to hint at the breadth of the joint meeting.

The first AHS session began with Jonathan Rhodes Lee (University of Chicago) investigating the concept of heroism in mid-eighteenth-century England. Lee argued that while action-based heroism shapes the title character of *Judas Maccabaeus*, moral and religious heroism is a critical component in other late Handelian oratorios, such as *Theodora*. Regina Compton (Eastman School of Music) examined the relationship between stage directions and musical gestures in Handel's secco recitatives. Focusing on a variety of stage actions and character expressions (some based on convention and others specific to the dramatic context), she demonstrated Handel's remarkably insightful correlation between harmonic relationships, rhythmic gestures and on-stage action (including thwarted actions). Careful attention to this aspect of Handel's secco recitative has implications for performance practice, including matters of pacing and continuo realization.

A session on 'Transmission and Transformation' provided an intriguing view of the ways in which musicians and their music can become recontextualized. Rebekah Ahrendt (Yale University) provided crucial documentary information that will enable us to revise the biographies of Charles and William Babell. In particular, she proved that William was born, not in London, but in Hanover, that the family's assimilation into English culture was aided by their conversion to French Calvinism in 1696, and that their extensive personal and musical connections to Hanover and the Dutch Republic shaped their influence on London's musical culture. Stephen Nissenbaum (University of Massachusetts Amherst) presented the story of how the March from Act 3 of *Riccardo Primo* was reimagined as a Methodist hymn, under the new title of 'Jericho Tune'. In detailing the transformation, Nissenbaum compared music and text of the march and hymn, revealing the factors that may have prompted the Wesleys to use Handel's music. Remarkably, Nissenbaum proposed that the entire affair was triggered after Charles Wesley attended a performance of *Riccardo* in 1727 where the staging represented the destruction of a walled city – albeit on the island of Cyprus.

Annette Landgraf (Hallische Händel-Ausgabe), Matthew Gardner (Goethe Universität Frankfurt am Main) and Donald Burrows (The Open University) presented important source studies of three of Handel's oratorios. Landgraf's work on revisions of the 1732 version of *Esther* (HWV50b) for the forthcoming Hallische Händel-Ausgabe edition has raised significant questions about the contents and ordering of the bilingual versions of the work heard at productions between 1735 and 1740. While modifications to extant scores have eliminated key pieces of information, Landgraf has used clues from the surviving gatherings and pencil annotations to offer a hypothetical reconstruction of the order of the movements that features certain differences from that previously proposed by David Vickers. Gardner analysed the transformation of the Italian *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità* into the English *The Triumph of Time and Truth*, looking at changes made to suit the needs of the performers and those made for conceptual reasons. One of his most striking suggestions was that *Trionfo* was chosen for adaptation instead of *La Resurrezione* in part because the focus on Christ in the latter was not appropriate for the theatre, whereas the more generalized allegorical content of *Trionfo* also allowed that work to draw upon the precedent set by *The Choice of Hercules*. Burrows examined the facts and questions surrounding the relationship between Handel and the firm of Walsh with regard to the publication of *Messiah*. New documentary information suggests that Handel and Walsh may have formed a contractual relationship whereby Handel was obligated to provide access to scores shortly after performance.



As Burrows demonstrated, Walsh apparently intended to publish *Messiah* in the 1740s (as suggested by blank lines in the list of available oratorios), but, for reasons that are not yet fully understood, the project did not come to fruition until Walsh's engraving of 1763–1765.

Handel's oratorios were also the subject of a presentation by Kenneth Nott (University of Hartford). Echoing some of the ideas addressed in Jonathan Lee's paper, Nott focused on issues of genre and style in Handel's collaborations with Thomas Morell, showing how their final project (*Jephtha*) weaves together traditions of victory narratives with an emphasis on profound spirituality and realistic characterizations.

The Howard Serwer Memorial Lecture was delivered with enthusiasm by Nicholas McGegan, who offered a personal narrative of the changing fortunes of Handelian performance history over the past forty-five years. He emphasized how much greater an awareness there now is of Handel's music (especially the operas) and how, regardless of changing approaches to performance practice, the ever-expanding interest in Handel's music has been partly driven by a wide array of dedicated and enthusiastic performers who have brought the delights of Handel's music to audiences within and beyond the 'early music' community.

The meeting itself was opened with a plenary session devoted to biographical research. Beth Glixon (University of Kentucky) unveiled documents that shed important new light on the life and activities of Vittoria Tarquini, the celebrated singer active in Italy and Germany who performed in many of Alessandro Scarlatti's operas and enjoyed the patronage of Grand Prince Ferdinando de' Medici. John H. Roberts (University of California Berkeley) revealed that Johann Rosenmüller's Venetian career was not centred on activities at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice, as previously believed, but probably involved a fair number of operatic activities and travel outside of Venice. Colleen Reardon (University of California Irvine) drew attention to the important career of Girolamo Gigli, a librettist and playwright who took control of Siene opera in the 1670s. Of particular importance, she noted that Gigli provided the first known printed contract for an opera singer and explored changes in theatre design to improve audibility between the singers and the orchestra.

The second plenary session began with Jonathan Gibson (James Madison University) delving into the notion of disorder in Lully and Quinault's *tragédies en musique*. Citing the work of French rhetorical theorists in the 1670s, Gibson showed how disorder was dependent on the relationship between 'natural' and 'artificial' expression and was achieved in the theatre by abrupt (yet carefully planned) shifts from the pastoral mode to the tragic mode (rather than shifting expression within a single mode). The discontinuity of rhetorical mode not only imparted a feeling of disorder but, as Gibson noted, provided a commentary on the decorative pastoral mode of many divertissements, asserting a greater expressive and poetic significance for the tragic style. In a comprehensive examination of markings in the autograph scores of Charpentier's vocal works, Shirley Thompson (Birmingham Conservatoire) detailed just how variable the size and distribution of the vocal ensemble were, a fact that she attributed to his 'portfolio career'. Certain works appear to have been composed to suffice with one-to-a-part performance (or two-to-a-part for the uppermost and lowest parts), but Thompson showed that many other works were designed for multiple singers on each part and often contrast two different choirs – in some cases both choirs are nearly equal in size, while in other cases there is a *petit chœur* (with various configurations of single and multiple singers per part) that is contrasted with a *grand chœur*. The session concluded with a re-evaluation by Graham Sadler (University of Hull) of the influence of French music on the operas of Steffani. After looking at specific French works that appear to have left an imprint in Steffani's mind, Sadler proposed several aspects relating to orchestration (such as the use of mutes), nomenclature and orthography (including ornamentation symbols) that demonstrate the composer's gradual assimilation of French elements.

The entire event was preceded, on 22 April, by a roundtable discussion on the challenges of editing early opera. Attendees were also treated to several performances, including Monteverdi's *Vespro della Beate Vergine* (University of Iowa Kantorei, soloists and instrumentalists, directed by Timothy Stalter) and, for the Paul Traver Memorial Concert, Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* (Chamber Singers of Iowa City, soloists and orchestra, directed by David Puderbaugh). The entire event ran very smoothly and projected a warm,



gracious atmosphere that held the unseasonably cold weather in check. Thanks are due to the local organizer, Robert Ketterer (University of Iowa), and the University of Iowa for their spectacular work planning and operating the meeting.

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A GEOGRAPHY OF THE TRIO SONATA: NEW PERSPECTIVES
UNIVERSITÉ DE FRIBOURG, 21–22 MAY 2015

Not for nothing has it been said that the trio sonata occupied in its golden age a position comparable to that of the string quartet in later music history. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the trio sonata proved to be the single most important genre of chamber music, encapsulating central developments in compositional history. Equally, it may be considered as an important instance of musical transfer, as it spread from Italy to encompass all of Europe. As a way of giving a new perspective on the genre, Inga Mai Groote (Université de Fribourg) and Matteo Giuggioli (Universität Zürich) organized a conference focusing on the idea of ‘cultural geography’. This was intended to help us get beyond well-known facts and to bring into focus those regional characteristics that are seldom discussed. An additional stimulus for organizing the conference was the completion of the source documentation *Die Triosonate: Catalogue raisonné der gedruckten Quellen*, a project funded by the Balzan Foundation and directed by Ludwig Finscher (Wolfenbüttel) and Laurenz Lütteken (Universität Zürich). Publication of the catalogue is being prepared.

In his keynote presentation, ‘Geography as a Paradigm for Studying the Trio Sonata: Some Reflections’, Matteo Giuggioli suggested that the examination of different and often neglected regions and places could help to deepen our knowledge of the development of the genre. Local perspectives could bring to light as yet unknown sources and composers and enable us to differentiate between local peculiarities and internationally common features. Methodological observations were also the focus of Laurenz Lütteken’s paper, entitled ‘Die Zirkulation der Triosonate im Druck: Ergebnisse und Fragen aus der Quellenkatalogisierung’ (The Circulation of Trio Sonatas through Publication: Results and Questions from the Cataloguing of Sources). He outlined the history of the *Catalogue raisonné* project and explained the reasons for its conception. He stressed the importance of exploring neglected contexts of trio-sonata production and the new opportunities that the database provides in this respect. He also underlined the usefulness of the concept of cultural geography as it has been deployed in literary and art studies.

The contribution of Gregory Barnett (Rice University), ‘Solo Keyboard versus Trio Ensemble: Repertory, Milieux, and Modes of Dissemination, c. 1700’, dealt with questions of genre within the Italian context. By about 1700 Italian publishing houses had successfully popularized the trio sonata, whereas keyboard music was disseminated mainly in manuscripts. In comparing this keyboard repertory with that of the trio sonata, Barnett noted substantial differences with regard to style, popular success and modes of dissemination. As a reason for the great success of the trio sonata, he convincingly referred to its flexibility in performance matters and its adoption of features of the keyboard repertory. Rudolf Rasch (Universiteit Utrecht) also focused on the history of the genre. He considered the ‘Solos, Trios and Concertos in the Oeuvre of Francesco Geminiani’ as a special case of convertibility between different types of music and instrumentation. He argued that in Geminiani’s oeuvre, the trio sonata shared basic structures with other genres. In particular, he discussed the relationship of the trio sonata to compositions for larger instrumental ensembles.

In contrast, Antonella D’Ovidio (Università di Firenze) used a source-based approach. Her presentation, ‘Mapping the Roman Trio Sonata before Corelli: History and Dissemination’, focused on mid-seventeenth-century networks for manuscript dissemination across Europe. She accentuated the importance of Italian