



interesting insight into the popularity of various works at the time. Chapter 5 examines the relationship between the treatises of Vanderhagen, Frédéric Blasius and Xavier Lefèvre, considering to what extent the two later authors were influenced by Vanderhagen's work and most particularly whether they used any of Vanderhagen's original material directly. Although this is of interest, Blazich has again missed the opportunity here for some more insightful discussion on the development of clarinet technique as evidenced by any variation or similarity in the authors' individual approaches.

Chapter 6 is a short overview of the legacy of Vanderhagen. Once more it is clear that Blazich's interest in the two treatises focuses largely on their place in the history of clarinet pedagogy, rather than as a relevant and useful source for modern researchers and players. She raises the interesting point that the lack of information on the fundamentals of music in Vanderhagen's first treatise indicates that this work was intended for musicians who wished to learn to play the clarinet, rather than newcomers to music as a whole (247). The final sentence of the book again is rather dismissive of the treatises' relevance today: 'Although most of his treatises' textual content is too archaic for direct use in teaching clarinet today, Vanderhagen's works have enormous significance for the history of clarinet playing and pedagogy, as well as to the formation of the modern method book' (248). Two very useful appendices follow, listing Vanderhagen's complete output of works, compositional and instructional alike, and indicating which of these are currently in print. The third appendix lists the chapter headings for each of the treatises by Vanderhagen, Blasius and Lefèvre.

The translation itself tends to be rather literal, with the effect that some sentences and sections are awkwardly rendered. Article 10 in the 1785 method (44–45), regarding reeds, is a case in point. There are some basic errors, such as a failure to translate Vanderhagen's place of birth from Anvers to Antwerp (10). The volume itself is quite attractively bound in a cloth cover, and contains some reproductions of the original title pages and fingering charts. There is a relatively high number of typographical errors, however, and several pages have been repeated. The explanatory captions or passages accompanying many examples are often not clearly linked, as they are in the original, and it is frequently difficult to tell which text belongs with which example. The duos are printed too small to be of practical use.

Vanderhagen's two treatises are essential literature for anyone contemplating or undertaking a study of the early clarinet. This book may provide a useful first approach to the two works for those unfamiliar with French and unable to tackle the original texts. Yet it would still be advisable to obtain a facsimile of the original in order to have the examples and duets in accurate notation.

MELANIE PIDDOCKE



## RECORDINGS

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### GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

#### *CHANDOS ANTHEMS*

Emma Kirkby (soprano), Iestyn Davies (alto), James Gilchrist (tenor), Neal Davies (bass) / The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge / Academy of Ancient Music / Stephen Layton  
Hyperion, CDA67737, 2009; one disc, 66 minutes

### GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

#### *HANDEL IN THE PLAYHOUSE*

Mary Bevan (soprano), Greg Tassell (tenor) / L'Avventura London / Žak Ozmo  
Opella Nova, ONCD014, 2009; one disc, 52 minutes



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

*PARNASSO IN FESTA*, HWV73

Carolyn Sampson (soprano), Lucy Crowe (soprano), Rebecca Outram (soprano), Diana Moore (mezzo-soprano), Ruth Clegg (alto), Peter Harvey (bass) / Choir of the King's Consort / The King's Consort / Matthew Halls  
Hyperion, CDA67701/2, 2008; two discs, 132 minutes

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)

*TE DEUM IN D MAJOR*, 'DETTINGEN', HWV283, ORGAN CONCERTO NO. 14 IN A MAJOR, HWV296A, *ZADOK THE PRIEST*, HWV258

Neal Davies (bass), Richard Marlow (organ) / The Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge / Academy of Ancient Music / Stephen Layton  
Hyperion, CDA67678, 2008; one disc, 61 minutes

In 2009 Pendragon Press published *A Gedenkenschrift for Howard Serwer*, which contains a series of programme notes written for performances at the Maryland Handel Festival, including one by Graydon Beeks on Handel's ninth Chandos Anthem, *O Praise the Lord with One Consent*. It is a suitable companion to Anthony Hicks's sleeve commentary for a new recording of this anthem with additional 'Anthems for Cannons' (as Handel scholars prefer to call them), *Let God Arise* and *My Song Shall be Always*. Unlike Handel's large-scale works for the Chapel Royal, the majority of the anthems composed for James Brydges, Duke of Chandos, are not well known or widely performed. The first disc reviewed here gives these anthems further exposure with stylish and energetic performances from the Choir of Trinity College, Cambridge and the Academy of Ancient Music under the direction of Stephen Layton, with an excellent team of soloists, amongst whom James Gilchrist is outstanding. *O Praise the Lord* is unique amongst the Chandos Anthems in that it lacks a separate overture-like sonata, having instead an extended introduction to the opening chorus. Graydon Beeks comments upon Handel's substantial borrowings from this anthem for the oratorio *Deborah* (which probably indicated the composer's high regard for the original material) and notes that the opening motive quotes William Croft's hymn tune *St Anne*, best known as the melody for Isaac Watt's 'O God our Help in Ages Past'. However, Hicks's observation that Handel used a similar idea in the cantata *Tu fedel? Tu costante* (Rome, 1707) probably makes any resemblance to the Croft tune coincidental.

The size of the ensemble deployed in this recording prompts discussion in relation to the 'what Handel heard' debate. In so many areas of musicology there are battles between those pursuing the faithfully reproduced historical artefact performed with resources as close as possible to what the composer first heard, and those believing that if larger forces had been available, most composers would not have hesitated to use them. I am not convinced that bigger always means better. Would a composer necessarily have preferred a large ensemble when it might have been detrimental to ideas of instrumental balance, tempo and clarity of articulation for works envisaged as chamber music? The sleeve notes indicate forty singers and an orchestra comprising fifteen strings (including eleven violins) taking part, but Hicks states that the anthems were probably originally performed with quite small forces, 'with perhaps only three or four trebles on the top choral line and just one or two singers on each of the lower parts'. Other Handel scholars have suggested that the 'orchestra' for some of the Chandos Anthems may even have been one-to-a-part, a view that is supported by instrumental textures in these works being frequently more akin to that of the trio sonata. The original performance venue, St Lawrence Whitchurch, is not large enough to accommodate a sizeable orchestra. Having performed *O Praise the Lord* in St Lawrence's myself with a small choir and a single instrument on each part, I can attest to the suitability of small forces in the intimate acoustic there. Whilst it is true that in some instances Handel seems to have preferred large forces for his more festive compositions, I am not convinced that a musician with his perspicacity would always have done this for works requiring the clear articulation of complex contrapuntal ideas. Hicks's argument for the use of comparatively large forces for the Chandos Anthems is based on the spaciousness of Handel's scoring. Although this is a valid point (and this disc in no way harms the overall effect of Handel's masterful writing), I suspect that a more ground-breaking and revelatory recording would have dared to reproduce the Chandos Anthems with something like the original vocal and instrumental forces at Handel's disposal.



Small forces are indeed the order of the day with *Handel in the Playhouse*, recorded by L'Avventura London under Žak Ozmo. This intriguing and enjoyable disc reproduces many of Handel's popular stage tunes of the early 1730s adapted for ballad operas, a genre which emerged out of the controversial 'newfangled' *Beggar's Opera* by John Gay, which 'overshadowed every other theatrical offering' in the 1728 season (Berta Joncus, liner notes to the recording). Gay's imitators effectively invented a new 'English opera' which entertained London audiences through a discourse upholding British values in their native language, the craze for which peaked in the period 1728–1736, fuelled largely by public disdain for endless and expensive Italian operas with elevated mythological themes set in a language many could not understand, performed by egotistical divas. The unpredictable and precarious theatrical world of Italian opera at the King's Theatre, one of Handel's chief sources of income for over a decade, teetered towards financial collapse during the 1732–1734 seasons with the loss of his most important singers to the 'Opera of the Nobility' and the move to Covent Garden. Despite this, Handel's opera arias had achieved independent popularity through their circulation amongst the middle classes, even with their original words altered and their dramatic contexts lost. Ironically, ballad-opera playbooks heaped scorn upon the very Italian operas from which they sought musical inspiration. Joncus argues that this derision helped to obscure the extent to which Handel unwittingly contributed to the period's most popular vocal music.

Much of the performing material had to be reconstructed for this disc. Ozmo points out many of the inherent problems and convincingly justifies his performance decisions. Even when ballad-opera tunes appear in published form, they are frequently incomplete or unidentifiable, and are nearly always single melody lines without bass and with words printed away from the music. Judgment is needed to place the words under the appropriate notes, so the results are by no means definitive. In some cases bass lines can be drawn from other contemporary sources. Ozmo mentions a handful of popular publications consulted for the recording, for example Charles Coffey's *The Devil to Pay* (1731) and Henry Fielding's *The Lottery* (1732). An interesting source of early Georgian printed songs that might have been overlooked is *The Gentleman's Magazine*, whose repertory is mostly in ballad-opera style and usually includes bass lines. Not wishing to propose interpretations 'from a restricted point of view', Ozmo is keen to convey to his listeners an experience of ballad opera based on a broad understanding of performance practice and fresh archival discoveries. Evidence suggests that an ensemble of five to seven key instrumentalists performed in the playhouses, especially in those outside London, so Ozmo uses six of the most common playhouse instruments – oboe, recorder, violin, cello, harpsichord and plucked instruments – in varying combinations. The airs were sung by English actors who Ozmo claims probably had 'natural-sounding' voices without operatic training. Mary Bevan and Greg Tassell are both highly trained professionals, but they nevertheless deliver the songs with appropriate bravado, jollity and slapstick. Listeners who prefer to hear Handel's *Water Music* and the overture from *Rinaldo* produced in altogether more refined circumstances may not like Ozmo's ballad opera versions of these pieces, yet they are lively, attractive and refreshingly different. He and his team should be praised for stepping outside the world of courtly Handelian opulence into the down-to-earth life of small urban theatres, with a disc that demonstrates the huge popularity of Handel's music amongst the middle and lower classes. No doubt *Parnasso in festa*, the next work considered in this review, would also have provided rich satirical pickings, had ballad opera writers thought it more deserving of their attention.

On Monday, 11 March 1734, the London *Daily Journal* announced the forthcoming performance of *Parnasso in festa*, describing it not as an opera but as 'an Essay of several different sorts of Harmony', which was perhaps the writer's way of conveying a new (and ultimately unique) idiom in Handel's output: a full-scale topical serenata or *festa teatrale*. While it was a common form of celebration at Roman Catholic courts on the continent, where ostentatious displays of wealth, power and patronage were traditional, the serenata was much less typical in Protestant England, where more puritanical commentators looked unfavourably upon flattering and expensive allegorical court spectacles as the trappings of proto-absolutism. Nevertheless, Hanoverian monarchs took their roles as rulers of truly European stature very seriously. Although the reign of George I witnessed no royal weddings, many of George's grandchildren had come of age by the 1730s. It was typical of his dynastic ambitions to see his eldest granddaughter, Princess Anne, betrothed to an important European



Protestant prince. The first choice had been Prince Friedrich Wilhelm of Prussia, a hope that was later dashed, but George had also opened negotiations with Prince Willem of Orange-Nassau, a son of King William III's nephew. George I did not live to see this dream fulfilled, but the marriage contract was formally announced by George II in May 1733 and the wedding itself took place on 14 March 1734 at the small Inigo Jones chapel next to St James's Palace. The last wedding of an eldest royal daughter had taken place as far back as 1641, and the last of any member of the royal family in 1683 (the future Queen Anne to Prince George of Denmark), so there was understandable excitement generated by the English–Dutch match, festivities for which undoubtedly had to be lavish. Handel had long been in favour with George II, and Princess Anne had been Handel's favourite royal pupil, so it is not surprising that the commission for a wedding serenata would go to him.

*Parnasso* was first performed at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket on the day before the wedding. As the title suggests, the plot is set on Mount Parnassus and features Apollo, three Muses (Calliope, Clio and Euterpe), Orpheus, Mars and the huntress Clori gathering for the nuptial feast of Peleus and Thetis. In Greek mythology this was an important event, since it involved the uninvited goddess of Discord, Eris, throwing out the golden apple that led to the contest judged by the Trojan prince Paris. In his authoritative sleeve notes David Vickers regards evidence of a conscious connection between war-like omens in the original myth and Handel's *Parnasso* as lacking, and observes that the employment of the bass role of Mars was a 'solution for the provision of musical and poetic contrast with the other roles sung by higher voices'. War-like elements are further played down by the argument that the King's Theatre audience was probably sufficiently convinced by the general parallel between the marriage of Peleus and Thetis and that of Anne and Willem. Nevertheless, an audience comprising members of the royal family, aristocracy and educated upper echelons of society (all of whom were affected by political events taking place both inside and outside England) would surely have recognized the significance of other allegorical and topical elements. Handel's knowledge of current affairs and his ability to work them into dramatic works has often been commented upon. If *Parnasso* is considered in the context of the complicated dynastic affairs of European baroque courts and the extent to which they influenced the design, themes, development and librettos of theatrical forms, then aspects of the work besides the marriage theme would seem to attain considerable significance.

From the late sixteenth century until the Treaty of Utrecht (1713) the power contest between European Protestant and Roman Catholic powers had largely been played out on the battlefields of the Spanish Netherlands, which were themselves on the doorstep of the Dutch Protestant Stadholders. After the Spanish Netherlands had been ceded to Austria, the Dutch and British colluded to use the territory as a bulwark against French colonial expansion. Spain, having lost Gibraltar and Minorca in 1713, had grown more hostile to Britain and was still a major threat. In the course of the 1730s conflict grew increasingly likely as British merchants ignored Spanish commercial restrictions; it eventually broke out in 1739 as 'The War of Jenkins' Ear', a precursor to the War of the Austrian Succession (during which George II led the British army onto the battlefield at Dettingen). George I believed that a union between Princess Anne and Willem of Orange would increase the latter's chances of being elected Stadholder – somewhat presciently, as this indeed happened in 1747. Leading power brokers at the English court were acutely aware of the political significance of a marital union between two European Protestant powers taking place precisely when the drums of war were beating loudly.

In Part Three of *Parnasso* Mars, having paid tribute to Peleus and Thetis, heralds 'martial sounds' and proclaims 'A race of heroes they will give / and nations in distress relieve', reiterated with triumphant rejoicings from the chorus. Orpheus and Calliope then preface their arias with the words 'O glorious race by heaven designed / to bless the hopes of all mankind' and 'The glorious memory of heroic sires / a thirst of glory in their race inspires'. These bellicose and politically charged texts clearly satisfied the demands of the Hanoverian Protestant propaganda machine and were far from being peripheral. Even at the most superficial level, the inclusion of 'martial music' in *Parnasso* would have satisfied George II's well-known preference for it. Whilst the machinations behind Handel's choice of libretto may never be fully known, *Parnasso* should be considered as having been both politically and musically successful.

As would be expected of a work constructed at a brisk pace, *Parnasso* contains recycled material, much of which comes from *Athalia*. A total of nine substantial items are new, including Apollo's aria 'Torni pure'



(sung here with great power and conviction by Diana Moore), the energetic hunting chorus 'O quanto bella gloria' and the pastoral 'Non tardate Fauni ancora': material sufficiently original to prompt Charles Burney's claim that *Parnasso* was 'new to the ears of the greatest part of a London audience'. With a plot involving Apollo and the Muses there are inevitably pastoral items with the requisite recorder accompaniment, deftly played here by Rebecca Miles and Katy Bircher. This was the type of music that Handel often reused for scenes set in grottoes featuring shepherds, sheep and idyllic Arcadian surroundings, and which was often lampooned in ballad opera. Unsurprisingly, pastoral material from *Parnasso* later found its way into the considerably less cohesive *Jupiter in Argos*. On 11 March 1734 the *Daily Journal* reported that with *Parnasso* Handel had 'exerted his utmost skill'. His efforts were rewarded by *The Bee* reporting on 'the greatest Applause' for 'the most exquisite Harmony ever furnish'd from the Stage'. Likewise this disc deserves applause for the vigorous, stylish and precise playing of The King's Consort under Matthew Halls. By far the most outstanding vocal contributions are Carolyn Sampson's effortless and mellifluous soprano tones as Clio in the aria 'Con un vezzo lusinghiero', and Lucy Crowe's subtle and serene handling of 'Ho perso il caro ben' (Orfeo). The brief comment on sources consulted for the recording (principally Hamburg manuscripts and autograph fragments in English archives) is useful, but it could have discussed some of the issues connected with variations between sources. Nevertheless, this disc is to my knowledge the first complete recording of *Parnasso*, and as such is an invaluable contribution to the recorded repertory.

Alas, this cannot be said for the new Hyperion *Dettingen Te Deum*. Layton is unquestionably one of Britain's leading conductors, especially of Handel. The choral and orchestral forces under his control perform brilliantly here, and should please most Handel enthusiasts, but it is not clear what the disc aims to achieve. At a time when recording companies are under pressure to be innovative in the face of recession, another recording of the *Te Deum* seems unnecessary and the somewhat arbitrary addition of a *Zadok the Priest* and an organ concerto (with which there are unfortunate balance problems between the solo instrument and orchestra) must raise some questions. Even after more than twenty years the Archiv recording of the *Te Deum* and *Dettingen Anthem* performed by the Choir of Westminster Abbey under Simon Preston still competes well with this disc. The combination of boys' voices with period instruments in the Preston example also satisfies the demands of the purist. The *Dettingen Te Deum*, composed somewhat belatedly in honour of a victory over the French, must have seemed as noisy at the first performance in the Chapel Royal at St James's Palace in November 1743 as the battle itself. Even George II must have been overpowered by the orchestral forces crammed into the comparatively small space. Some contemporary reports of the rehearsals at Whitehall (reproduced in Donald Burrows's *Handel and the English Chapel Royal* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)) were positive, others less so. The Marchioness Grey apparently found the music 'vastly loud' and 'not agreeable'. The sleeve notes for the disc indicate that a new edition of the *Te Deum* was prepared for this recording, yet they convey nothing about the sources consulted or the editorial decisions that may have had an important bearing on the performance and might also have been interesting to scholars and performers.

PETER LEECH



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GOTTFRIED AUGUST HOMILIUS (1714–1785)

*EIN LÄMMLIN GEHT UND TRÄGT DIE SCHULD, PASSIONS-KANTATE*

Monika Mauch (soprano), Bogna Bartosz (alto), Markus Brutscher (tenor), Hans Christoph Begemann (bass) / Neue Düsseldorf Hofmusik / Basler Madrigalisten / Fritz Näf

Carus-Verlag, Carus 83.262, 2007; two discs, 94 minutes