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2013 AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY FESTIVAL  
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY, 21–24 FEBRUARY 2013

The American Handel Society holds a conference every other year. It gathers together the most prominent Handel scholars and diverse specialists in eighteenth-century music to share their latest research on a variety of topics related to the composer's life and work. The 2013 American Handel Society Festival was hosted by the Princeton University Department of Music. The conference offered eighteen papers on a variety of topics including archival sources, reception, performance practice, compositional issues, opera production and sacred oratorios. Participants also had the opportunity to attend several performances of music by Handel and his contemporaries.

The highlights of the conference were the 2013 Howard Serwer Memorial Lecture delivered by Reinhard Strohm (University of Oxford) and a panel discussion on The Metropolitan Opera's pasticcio *Enchanted Island*. Strohm's lecture, 'Handel: Opera and Ritual', discussed various ritual scenes within Handel operas and opera itself as a ritual act, working from the anthropological research of scholars such as Victor Turner. Strohm included not only such obvious rituals as weddings, coronations and dances, but other operatic conventions such as laments, courtship and disguise, arguing that the repetition of these motifs in baroque opera made them rituals of a sort.

The panel on *Enchanted Island* (2012), chaired by Wendy Heller (Princeton University), discussed the creation of the project and its relationship with the musical and literary sources on which it is based. Paul Cremo (Metropolitan Opera, dramaturg for *Enchanted Island*) commented that the project aimed to introduce audiences to baroque music with which they may not be familiar. He also discussed the process by which the pasticcio was put together, beginning with a new English libretto by Jeremy Sams (Metropolitan Opera) that combined plot elements from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Tempest*. Subsequently, Ellen Rosand (Yale University, musical advisor for *Enchanted Island*) made a selection of works by numerous composers such as Handel, Vivaldi, Purcell, Rameau and Campra. She explained how the English text was adapted to the music, and the process of transcribing and creating the musical score. Anthony Costanzo (Metropolitan Opera, Ferdinand and Prospero in *Enchanted Island*) and Bradley Brookshire (City University of New York, continuo for *Enchanted Island*) commented on the final stages of the project, which consisted of a workshop with singers where the story, music and libretto were tested. The workshop also gave the opportunity for a creative construction of characters when the final details of the project – such as costumes, scene design and stage directions – were being defined. Lawrence Manley (Yale University) went on to discuss the pasticcio project of *Enchanted Island* in terms of Shakespeare's reception, suggesting that the mixture of styles and genres in this piece may be a good representation of the variety of sources that stand today for *The Tempest* itself. The panellists concluded that the creation of a twenty-first-century pasticcio might remind us of an essential practice of the baroque spectacle, the collaborative process with which baroque composers were so familiar.

Among the most useful papers of the conference for illuminating the state of Handel scholarship were those related to document studies and archival research. The paper 'When *Giulio Cesare* Was Not "Handel's" *Giulio Cesare*: The Opera on the London Stage in 1787' from Michael Burden (University of Oxford) described the revival that took place at the King's Theatre in London in 1787. Burden detailed the changes that were made to adapt the opera to the tastes of the 1780s. He also considered the possible reasons for these changes and for the performance itself, exploring the upheavals and scandals that surrounded the King's Theatre, the continued English taste for the Handelian style and the desire for royal patronage at the opera, which was notably lacking in these years.

The presentation from Donald Burrows (The Open University) focused on Handel's *L'Allegro, Il Penseroso, ed il Moderato* (1740), taking into account the initial adaptation of John Milton's poems *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* discovered among James Harris's papers and the later revisions carried out in collaboration



with Charles Jennens incorporating *Il Moderato*. Burrows also discussed the choices that Handel made in subsequent revivals of the work, which included new movements drawing on additional lines from Milton's poems and the radical reshaping of *Il Penseroso* when Handel decided to drop Jennens's *Il Moderato*.

Ellen Harris (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) provided a description of the oaths of allegiance, supremacy and abjuration required by those who took the position of directors of the Royal Academy of Music. Drawing on sources from the National Archive, London Metropolitan Archives and Royal Academy Records, such as those of John Percival from 1720 to 1723, Harris argued that this requirement needs to be taken into account when considering the political nature of Handel's opera librettos.

Triona O'Hanlon (Dublin) examined the extant manuscript sources for works by Handel that were performed in the annual and biannual series of charitable concerts in eighteenth-century Dublin. These materials survive today in the Mercer's Hospital Music Collection. Joseph Darby provided an analysis of five thousand subscribers for thirty-two subscription concertos published in Britain between 1726 and 1797, uncovering interesting demographic information about the buyers. The data were compiled from contemporary subscription lists and newspaper advertisements.

Several scholars spoke on performance practice in music of Handel's time and the history of Handel's performers. Richard King (University of Maryland) convincingly made a case both for the cello's realizing continuo chords without the harpsichord in performances of Handel's operas and oratorios and for the double bass's being a frequent part of the continuo ensemble that accompanies recitative. Matthew Gardner (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg) explored the successful career of Anastasia Robinson, the only English soprano who performed significant roles in Handel's Italian operas, demonstrating that before the Royal Academy of Music, Handel was already associating singers with character types. Geoffrey Burgess (Eastman School of Music) gave a new perspective on the work *Les caractères de la danse*, composed by Jean-Féry Rebel for Françoise Prévost and later performed by her student, and Handel's choreographer, Marie Sallé. Burgess's paper examined the relationship between poetic narrative, pantomimic dance and the personal life of the dancer herself.

Ruth Smith (Cambridge University) shared some slides of the exhibition dedicated to Charles Jennens at the Handel House Museum in London (21 November 2012–14 April 2013). As curator of the exhibition, Smith provided new insights into Jennens's achievements and character not only as Handel's collaborator, but also as a modern editor of Shakespeare who established new standards for scholarly editions. Smith is also the author of the exhibition catalogue *Charles Jennens: The Man Behind Handel's Messiah* (London: Handel House Trust and The Gerald Coke Handel Foundation, 2012).

Luca della Libera (Conservatorio di Musica di Frosinone / Università di Roma Tor Vergata) explored recurring motives in several sacred works by Alessandro Scarlatti, including the *Missa Defunctorum* and the *Salve Regina*. He noted echoes of the madrigal tradition in these works, as well as elements taken from more theatrical styles. Evan Cortens (Cornell University) shared some of his work on the cantatas of Christoph Graupner, written by the composer when he was Kapellmeister in Darmstadt. His paper showed the ways in which church cantatas were heavily influenced by operatic style. In Graupner's case, his idiom was developed while working at the Hamburg opera, at the same time as Handel.

Handel in America was explored by Todd Jones (University of Kentucky) and Stephen Nissenbaum (University of Massachusetts, Amherst). The former discussed the reception of Handel in America before 1815, using American and British newspapers in order to consider the composer's performances and reputation in the context of America's developing middle class. Nissenbaum also examined some of the circumstances in the first half of the nineteenth century that transferred the traditional association of the performance of *Messiah* from Easter to Christmas. Apparently Christmas was the best time of the year for charitable and benefit concerts in both Britain and America. The performance of *Messiah* was also an important part of an organized campaign to bring Christmas itself back to Puritan New England.

The final session of the conference explored the use of texts in Handel's oratorios. In his paper 'Psalms and Psalm Genres in Handel's Old Testament Oratorios', Kenneth Nott (University of Hartford) examined the uses of psalms in three of Handel's Israelite oratorios, *Samson*, *Joshua* and *Susanna*. Nott showed how



Handel followed the process created by Milton of reworking psalms for a greater dramatic impact in the context of the oratorio. As well as expanding the often vaguely detailed stories found in scripture, Handel's adaptation of the psalms helped to create a story of national deliverance, even when such a story is not found in the original text. Joyce Irwin (Princeton) detailed the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century theories of Saul's illness and how David's music worked to alleviate it in 'Saul, David and the Power of Music'. Irwin showed how, in Handel's oratorio, the conflicting Biblical accounts of Saul's first encounter with David are reconciled. Handel's account seems to downplay the effectiveness of David's music in healing Saul, in contrast with other musical representations of the same story. Handel's oratorio met with some criticism because of this depiction, including by John Brown, who was led to publish his own oratorio in 1763, *The Cure of Saul*.

The festival included two exhibitions and four concerts. A number of Handel materials were on display in the Eighteenth-Century Room of the Firestone Library. The centrepiece of this exhibit was the library's newly acquired scribal copy of Handel's three-act opera *Berenice* (1737), which complements the James S. Hall Collection of George Frideric Handel in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections of Princeton University. This manuscript was very close to the initial performances of *Berenice* and was part of the library of Charles Jennens. Additionally, the Mendel Music Library offered a visual overview of the late John Merrill Knapp, a professor emeritus of music of Princeton University and renowned Handel scholar, the collection of Handel materials assembled by James S. Hall, and a number of works performed during the festival.

The festival opened with a performance by The English Concert conducted by Harry Bicket, in a programme that included Handel's Concerto Grosso Op. 3 No. 2, a selection from the Water Music and concertos for violin and viola by Telemann and J. S. Bach. The second concert featured Handel's *Dixit Dominus* and Scarlatti's *Stabat mater* from the Princeton University Chamber Choir, conducted by Gabriel Crouch (Princeton University), and Handel's *Let God Arise*, performed by the choir Kantorei (Westminster Choir College) and conducted by Amanda Quist. Concert participants had the opportunity to attend the concert performance of *Radamisto* at Carnegie Hall by the English Concert under Harry Bicket, featuring David Daniels and Luca Pisaroni. Princeton's Handel Festival concluded with a performance of *Israel in Egypt* by the Princeton University Glee Club and the Nassau Symphonia conducted by Gabriel Crouch.

The papers and concerts at this festival show the strong state of current Handel performance and scholarship. This is the second time that the Festival has been hosted by Princeton University (the first was in 2007), but the American Handel Society has a strong history at this institution. The late J. Merrill Knapp founded the festival in 1986 with Howard Serwer and Paul Traver of the University of Maryland, where the event was previously held. The next American Handel Society Festival will be in Iowa in 2015, held jointly with the Society for Seventeenth-Century Music.

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HEROISM IN THE AGE OF BEETHOVEN  
STANFORD UNIVERSITY, 22 FEBRUARY 2013

As part of the events commemorating the inaugural season of Stanford University's new Bing Concert Hall, the Stanford Arts Institute and Stanford Humanities Center Seminar on Enlightenment and Revolution organized a one-day conference on the role of heroism in the music of Beethoven and its reception. The conference was one of a series of Beethoven-oriented presentations and exhibits intended to complement