



THE HANDEL INSTITUTE
NEWSLETTER

It has come to my attention that in Spring 1999 some subscribers were sent vol. 9, no. 1 (1998) of this *Newsletter* instead of vol. 10, no. 1. I apologize for this mistake, which arose during the hand-over of the editorship and should not recur. Please check that you received the right issue and, if you did not, let me know; the correct issue will be sent out immediately.

The Spring 1999 issue included an article by Duncan Chisholm dealing with, among others, Lady

Brown. Lady Brown reappears in a piece by David Hunter in the present issue, which also provides details of our forthcoming conference, reviews of *Admeto* (Cambridge Handel Opera Group) and the Göttingen and Halle festivals, and news of some recent Handel editions. Please remember to complete and return the conference booking form and *Newsletter* subscription slip!

Colin Timms

Handel, women and the war with Spain

In the summer 1998 issue of *Musical Quarterly* Tom McGeary laid out the evidence concerning Farinelli's departure from London for Madrid and the use of this 'loss' by critics of Sir Robert Walpole's policy toward Spain (widely regarded as submissive), which they wished to change. Two women – Mary Granville (Pendarves, Delany) and Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown – who figure regularly in Handel biographies as the archetypal good and bad female characters were also engaged on opposite sides of the debate over Spain. Mary Granville was party to one of the more extraordinary parliamentary events of the eighteenth century; in Lady Brown's case, her husband's close involvement with Walpole led to his being used as a secret envoy.

Britain and Spain were engaged in naval and diplomatic sparring over trade disputes in the West Indies and the Americas during the 1730s. By late 1738 it seemed that 'diplomatic compromise was within the grasp of the ministry, [but] public opinion was more hostile than ever to the idea of even the smallest concession',

according to Philip Woodfine, the historian who has commented most recently on the matter.¹ When the convention of the Pardo (signed 10 January 1739, New Style) came before the House of Lords for debate, the Opposition, led by the Duke of Bedford, presented a protest against the address to the throne accepting the convention. It was on this day, 1 March, that a group of about fourteen society women, led by Catherine Hyde, Duchess of Queensbury, and including Granville, marched to the chamber and demanded entry. When this was refused, they remained outside until their silence lured the doorkeepers into opening the doors, whereupon they rushed in.² Such female attendance at parliamentary debates was unprecedented.

The motion on the protest was lost, so the Opposition put forward a resolution of discontent, supported by the Prince of Wales (Duke of Cornwall). That resolution also was defeated. Though the ministry won these parliamentary battles, it lost the campaign for peace in the next few months. The convention collapsed, and war was

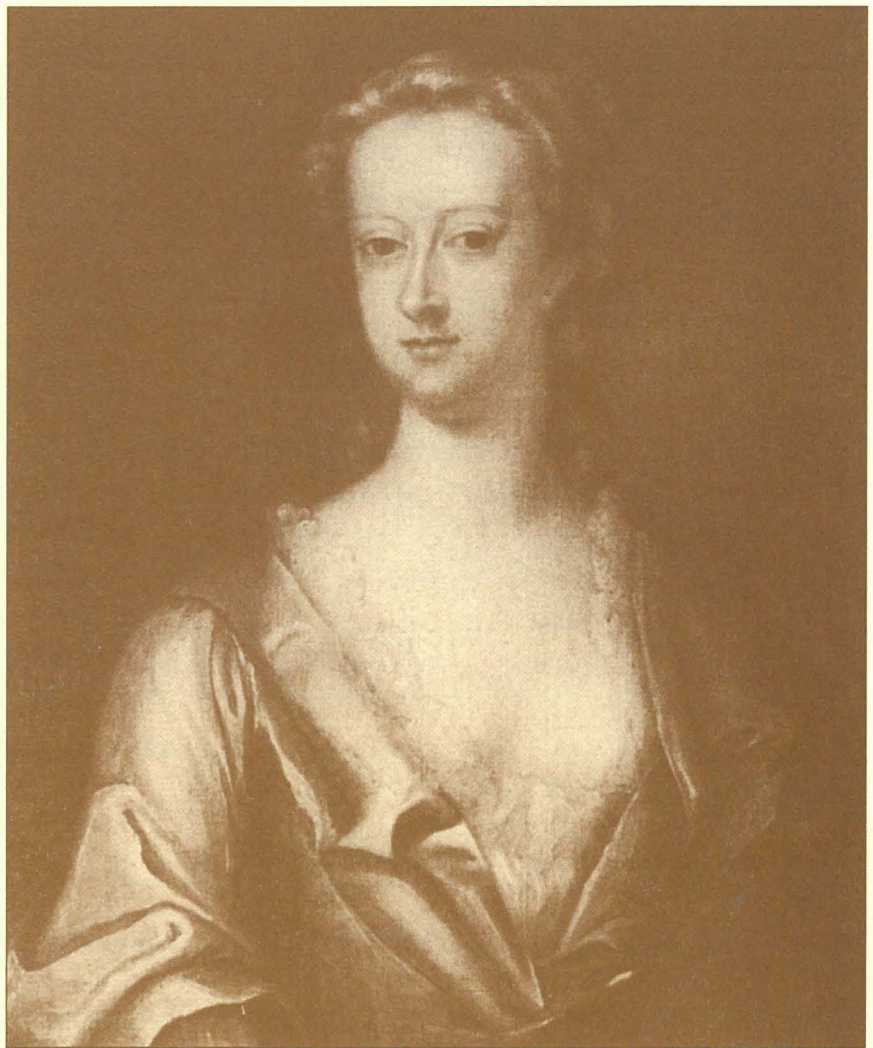
¹ Philip Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories: The Walpole Ministry and the 1739 War with Spain* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1998), 183.

² See Mary Granville, *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs Delany*, ed. Lady Llanover, 4 vols. (London: Bentley, 1861), ii. 42-6, and A. S. Turbeville, *The House of Lords in the XVIIIth Century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 14-15, 238-240. For the involvement of Selina Hastings, Countess of Huntington, see Boyd Stanley Schleuther, *Queen of the Methodists: The Countess of Huntington and the Eighteenth-Century Crisis of Faith and Society* (Bishop Auckland: Durham University Press, 1997), 9-10.

declared by England on 19 October.³ But Walpole did not give up peace-making. In January 1740 he instructed Sir Robert Brown to conduct private negotiations via the Spanish ambassador to London, Don Thomas Geraldino, at that time in Spain, to secure a settlement of the conflict.⁴ That these negotiations did not lead to the desired goal was a direct result of the bellicose pressure in both countries at the time. Geraldino had been one of the subscribers to the aborted 1738/39 opera season, subscription solicitation to which had so involved Lady Brown.⁵

The Browns epitomized Walpole's supporters.⁶ Lady Brown's father had been the other MP for Castle Rising when Walpole was first elected. On the Browns' return from Venice in late 1734 or early 1735 Sir Robert, who had been knighted and elected MP *in absentia*, became Walpole's money manager. Sir Robert Walpole's son Horace seems to have become a close friend of Lady Brown. He included her in his verse tale 'Patapan', written in the summer of 1743, and later presented her with a copy of his *Anecdotes of Painting*. The Walpoles were visitors to Lady Brown's Sunday concerts, which were held until the summer of 1745 at her house in Pall Mall, near St James's Square. Lady Brown was a friend of Farinelli - she records a visit that he paid her in 1735. As McGeary remarked, satirists used the figure of Farinelli as a symbol of 'luxury, corruption, patronage of foreign artists, and Walpole'. The Browns were the embodiment of such depravity! Criticism of a like kind was directed also toward Handel.

While Granville and Brown reputedly held opposing views on Handel



Mary Granville, Mrs Pendarves, later Mrs Delaney (1700-88)

and certainly on Walpole's Spanish policy, they seem to have shared a taste in chocolate and art. Granville, in the only specific reference to the Browns in her published correspondence, wrote from Dublin on 2 February 1760 to her sister Ann in London, requesting that she purchase 'six pounds of Mr. Mawhood's best Vanilla chocolate, such as he made for Sir Robert Brown'.⁷ In the 1730s Granville was a student of the London artist and dealer Arthur Pond, from whom Lady Brown purchased pictures. Pond also painted some of Granville's friends, such as the countesses of Dysert, Pomfret and

Hertford, and Catherine Dashwood (purchased by the Duchess of Portland). Lady Brown's neighbour, landlord and friend John Perceval, Earl of Egmont, had his daughter Helena and daughter-in-law Catherine (Lady Brown's cousin) painted by Pond.⁸

Though the social standing of the women who have been used to represent the forces for and against Handel has been described as middle-class, such a portrayal can no longer be upheld. They were members of London's élite, and intimately involved with the political issues of the day.

David Hunter

3 Woodfine, *op. cit.*, 217.

4 Woodfine, *op. cit.*, 228.

5 See Carole Taylor, *Italian Operagoing in London, 1700-1745* (PhD diss., Syracuse University, 1991), 321.

6 For the most detailed study to date of Lady Brown, see my 'Margaret Cecil, Lady Brown: "Persevering Enemy to Handel" but "Otherwise Unknown to History"', *Women & Music*, iii (1999).

7 *Autobiography and Correspondence*, iii. 583.

8 See Louise Lippincott, *Selling Art in Georgian London: The Rise of Arthur Pond* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), 38, 40.



'GREAT AMONG THE NATIONS'

Handel Conference at King's College London

20-21 November 1999

'Handel and the national musical styles of his period' are the theme of the fourth Handel Institute conference, which begins at 2 pm on Saturday 20 November and ends at 5.30 pm on Sunday 21 November. 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. Those interested in attending the conference may also like to know of the following events at around the same time:

Friday 19 and Saturday 20 November, The British Library, Euston Road, NW1: Royal Musical Association Conference on **Vaughan Williams in a New Century** (contact Hugh Cobbe, Music Collections, The British Library, 96 Euston Road, London NW1 2DB; hugh.cobbe@bl.uk).

Friday 26 November, Institute of Historical Research, Senate House, Malet Street, WC1: Fifteenth Annual Conference on **Music in 18th-Century Britain** (contact Claire Sharpe, 30 Coleman Road, London SE5 7TG; c.sharpe@ram.ac.uk).

Abstracts

Graydon Beeks

'Imitate these Beauties':
Purcell as Reflected by Croft

It is generally thought that William Croft (1678-1727) was a protégé of John Blow, but an examination of his works reveals that some of them are modelled on Purcell – on secular works from the 1690s, anthems or services from the Chapel Royal and Westminster Abbey, and early pieces in manuscript. This paper investigates

how Croft initially modelled his compositions on Purcell and later included references to him in works dating from as late as the 1720s – notably his famous Burial Service. It also examines evidence that Croft passed on this referencing technique to his pupils and considers the influence of Purcell on Handel – and how far it was filtered through Croft.

Eddy Bénimédourène

Stylistic Metamorphoses in
Handel's Overtures

Handel's ability to transform German or Italian musical borrowings into overtures in the French style is illustrated with the help of two examples. In the overture to *Orlando* Handel made use of a canzona by Johann Caspar Kerll, and he reused the opening of the Largo of his E minor flute sonata (HWV 379) in the overture to *Alessandro*. After an analysis of the stylistic modifications inherent in French style, this paper proposes some reflections on that style and its meaning in Handel's works, and on stylistic aspects of Handel's borrowings and self-quotations.

Xavier Cervantes

'The Phoenix of our Age in all Modes
of Musical Expression':
the Handelian Exception

This paper explores the reasons for Handel's unique position as a vocal composer in comparison with his Italian contemporaries working in London. While the latter were sometimes alluded to in the vast satirical literature targeting Italian opera,

Handel remained comparatively aloof and was regularly praised in poems and other pieces. This Handelian 'exception' at a time of xenophobia and anti-Italian propaganda can be partly accounted for by purely musical factors (the quality of Handel's music), but also by social and national factors that were deeply ingrained in the imagination of English contemporaries. This combination sheds light on the complex process of myth-making that made Handel a towering national figure.

Duncan Chisholm

'Au service de cette Cour':

Handel's Use of French Literature

The literature of the court of the Sun-King had a major cultural influence throughout Europe during Handel's ascendancy. The composer was linked through both philosophy and patronage to Hanover, especially the younger members of the family, and the Whig politics of the Grand Alliance. This paper touches on his use of and interpretation of themes and subject-matter drawn from French literature, with particular reference to the origins and adaptations of opera and oratorio librettos. Special attention is given to the epic 'Faramond' and its eventual transformation into Handel's *Faramondo*.

Graham Cummings

Handel and the Confused Shepherdess

The aria 'Son confusa pastorella' was possibly the most popular number in Handel's major operatic success of 1731, *Poro, re dell'Indie*, of which the libretto is an altered version of Metastasio's *Alessandro nell'Indie*. In

the text of this aria the poet presents the perhaps confusing image of an Indian princess 'playing [at] pastoral'. To convey this complex picture to his London audience, Handel composed a beguiling set piece with strong French connections, through his use of the musette and allusions to the fêtes galantes, combined with borrowings from cantata 16 of Telemann's *Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst*. Handel's multi-layered response is examined and contrasted with that of Metastasio's chosen composer, Leonardo Vinci.

Annette Landgraf

The German Tradition in Handel's English Oratorios

German, French and Italian influences are combined in Handel's works. From his beginnings as a German composer he invented the English oratorio. There is evidence in this new English genre that Handel was deeply rooted in the German tradition. Selected examples show how Handel dealt with musical material from his native country in his English oratorios. Consideration is given also to the question of whether the origin of a borrowing has an influence on the style of a movement.

Sarah McCleave

Grotesque and Genteel: Two Sides of 'Terpsichore'

Some fourteen of Handel's stage-works, from *Almira* (1705) to the unstaged *Alceste* (1749-50), included dances. Many of these dances formed part of a dramatic framework; some were entr'acte entertainments. The dancing master and critic John Weaver recognized the different functions that dance could assume, describing some as 'genteel' and others as 'grotesque'. Applying Weaver's theories to Handel's work, we see many genteel

or generic dances in ceremonial or celebratory scenes, whereas a distinct musical style is employed for scenes where dance depicted a character or an emotion (Weaver's 'grotesque'). This paper explores Handel's response to these styles and asks whether, in the case of theatrical dance, the concept of 'style' transcends national boundaries.

Konstanze Musketa

Handel and the Central German Musical Tradition

The foundations of Handel's musical education were laid in Halle. Contemporary musical practice in central Germany influenced his compositional technique and style, and pervades all of his creative work. This paper looks at Handel's life and music in comparison with such Halle composers as D. Pohle, F. W. Zachow, J. P. Krieger, G. Kirchoff and J. G. Ziegler, and shows where Handel stood in the tradition of German musical practice.

John Roberts

Handel's Opera Ghosts: Musical Relationships with Italian Settings of his London Librettos

After 1720 most of Handel's opera librettos were adaptations of texts previously set by Italian composers, and he sometimes drew musical inspiration from the earlier settings. The borrowings from Bononcini in *Serse* are quite conspicuous, but more typically Handel used such sources in a highly transformative way so that the relationships easily pass unnoticed. As an example of his normal practice this paper considers the reliance of *Poro* on Vinci's *Alessandro nell'Indie* (Rome, 1729). It was probably because Handel obtained the Vinci score before he had access to the libretto that he

composed the arias for Act 1 without writing out the text of the intervening recitative in his accustomed manner.

Graham Sadler

Rameau's Debt to Handel

According to Hawkins, 'Mr. Handel was ever used to speak of Rameau in terms of great respect'. Sadly we have no such report of what the Frenchman thought of his outre-Manche contemporary. Yet just as Handel's music shows some evidence of having been influenced by Rameau's, so the reverse process may be observed. This paper explores a number of pieces in which Rameau borrowed ideas or, more interestingly, formal processes from Handel.

Howard Serwer

Handel and the Coordination of National Styles: Bukofzer Revisited

Chapter 9 of Manfred Bukofzer's *Music in the Baroque Era* (1947) is entitled 'Coordination of National Styles: Handel'. Bukofzer used the term 'coordination' three times: in connection with comments on Steffani's operas, in his description of Handel's choral technique, and in the chapter's peroration. 'Coordination' implies simultaneous independence and interdependence, but Bukofzer never quite demonstrated how 'coordination' operated in Handel's music. This essay re-examines a few of Bukofzer's examples and adduces others to show how Handel coordinated national styles for dramatic purposes.

Michael Talbot

Sacred Music at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice in the Time of Handel
Since Marc Pincherle's work in the 1920s and 1930s our knowledge of musical life at the Ospedale della Pietà



has grown enormously. Today we are able, thanks to recent discoveries, to trace the lives and careers of individual members of the *coro* and reconstruct much of their repertory. The praise heaped by contemporaries upon these female musicians was evidently no mere act of gallantry but a genuine response to their achievement as performers, even though their unconventional handling of tenor and bass parts caused surprise to some. The Pietà's *figlie di coro* were professional musicians at a time when this status was normally denied to females, apart from some singers.

Colin Timms

What did Handel Learn from Steffani's Operas?

The musical language of Handel's operas, essentially Italian but with elements of French, was first learnt in the opera house at Hamburg, where he was influenced between 1703 and 1706 by Reinhard Keiser. Later on, presumably, he studied the scores of the operas of Agostino Steffani. That six of Steffani's operas were staged at Hamburg during Keiser's first four years at the theatre raises the question of Steffani's influence on Keiser and of his early indirect influence, via Keiser, on Handel. These issues are the subject of this paper.

Bruce Wood

Handel and English Music

If Handel's borrowings from other composers have gained him notoriety as a musical jackdaw, he may also appear, in light of the English tradition, as something of a chameleon. Yet worthy of consideration alongside the ideas he appropriated from Blow, Purcell and others are borrowings that he might have been expected to make but, for whatever reason, did not.

ADMETO AT CAMBRIDGE

Admeto, first performed in January 1727, was the second of the five operas that Handel composed for a company containing three of the greatest singers of the age, the castrato Senesino and the prima donnas Francesca Cuzzoni and Faustina Bordoni. None of these operas, unlike the three masterpieces of 1724-5, has been much favoured by modern productions. That is not altogether surprising. The need to supply the two ladies, who were bitter rivals, with parts of equal importance, musically and dramatically, as well as a parallel amorous relationship with the hero, restricted the scope of the librettos and cramped Handel's style, though it never failed to elicit magnificent music. All too often they appeared in succession to sing arias that were better designed to display their sensational gifts than to illuminate the characters they represent.

Admeto is the most rewarding of the five, for a reason that at first glance seems a defect, the split nature of the libretto. Based on a Venetian original of 1660, it yokes the plot of Euripedes's tragedy *Alcestis* to a typical Venetian imbroglione of confused identities, disguises and dropped portraits. *Alcestis* heroically chooses death to save the life of her sick husband Admeto. Antigona, a Trojan princess formerly betrothed to Admeto but rejected as the result of some hanky-panky with portraits on the part of his brother Trasimede, who wants her for himself, comes in disguise to show Admeto the error of his ways and then falls in love with him. The two ladies, who do not meet till halfway through the opera, are so sharply distinguished in the libretto that Handel, with his incomparable insight into human idiosyncrasy, was able to create two fully rounded but very different characters. In addition, Hercules's expedition to Hades to

rescue Alceste from Cerberus and the Furies inspired one of his grandest scenes of supernatural horror.

The Cambridge Handel Opera group gave the 1727 score without cuts, perhaps for the first time since the original run. It made a long evening, just over four hours with one interval, but a rewarding one. Visually this was one of the most satisfying of the Group's productions. Emma Thistlethwaite's sets and costumes displayed a nice compound of classical and baroque. Richard Gregson's direction succeeded in clarifying the complexities of the plot, no simple matter, while supplying a few glosses that did no violence to the spirit of the opera. He evolved an ingenious method of covering breaks between scenes, which all too often let down the tension; the curtains separating the front from the back stage were opened or closed by whichever singer or super happened to be present, providing a neat substitute for the changing scenery of the baroque theatre.

The singing was rather variable. Catherine Griffiths played the Senesino part of Admeto with intelligence and great dignity, but her voice has developed a slight but disturbing buzz, as if a grain of sand had got into the works; no doubt this will be only temporary. Kay Jordan did justice to Alceste's contrasted moods, especially the slow arias. Though understandably taxed by her Act II jealousy aria, she had it under control by the second performance. Majella Byrne, taking the part of Antigona at short notice and acting it with spirit, was inclined to go into overdrive above the stave; the top notes fairly shook the rafters, but not always at the specified pitch. Christine Botes was a reliable Trasimede and managed to evoke some sympathy for that not very

dignified figure. The two basses, Rodney Gibson (Hercules) and Douglas Bowen (Meraste) provided steady support. Hercules might have done more swaggering, and he should surely have been equipped with a more formidable weapon. Andrew Jones conducted with his usual firm control, perhaps a trifle inflexibly on occasion. The orchestra, after a scramble in the overture, played with increasing conviction.

Winton Dean

GERMAN HANDEL FESTIVALS 1999

GÖTTINGEN

This year I could attend only the last three days of the Göttingen festival, but these enabled me to take in three of its major events. *Theodora* was given a magnificent performance in the vast but acoustically friendly space of the St Johannis-Kirche. The Balthasar-Neumann-Chor Freiburg is ideal for this music – a smallish, youthful ensemble with a fine sense of the drama of the text, which they delivered in excellent English. The playing of the Fiori Musicali of Bremen was, as always, immaculate and stylish, and the soloists were mostly first-rate. Ann Monoyios as Theodora, Bernhard Landauer as Didymus, Knut Schoch (a last-minute replacement for an unwell Howard Crook) as Septimius and Harry van der Kamp as Valens were all on top form, but Daniela del Monaco as Irene suffered from poor English, compared with the rest, and a voice that lacked balance. The performance was quite enthralling, and I even found myself excusing the lamer parts of Morell's libretto. Thomas Albert, one of the best Handel conductors

around, directed with sensible tempi and a good feel for the overall design.

The ballet evening, directed in the Opera House by Göttingen's long-standing musical director Nicholas McGegan, was also a delight. The music was by Campra, Lully, Geminiani, the odd Anon, and of course Handel, whose *Terpsicore* was given complete, the singing roles being well taken by Christine Brandes as Erato and Jennifer Lane as Apollo, with the Göttinger Knabenchor. American artists were predominant in the pit and on the stage: the dancing was by the New York Baroque Dance Company, and the playing by the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra of San Francisco, with whom McGegan has worked before. Scenery, costumes and dancing were elegant without being mannered or coy – a most unusual and rewarding evening.

And so to *Arianna*, the latest in a long line of excellent, no-nonsense productions that have made McGegan's Göttingen shows some of the best Handel opera performances anywhere. Catherine Turocy directed sensibly, Scott Blake was responsible for the sumptuous décor, the New York dancers were again on show, and McGegan conducted his fine Californian orchestra with his usual irrepressible enthusiasm and skill. Sophie Daneman's Arianna and Jennifer Lane's Carilda were superb, and a particularly pleasing aspect of the performance was the excellence of the female castratos (you know what I mean): both Wilke te Brummelstroete as Teseo and Cécile van de Sant as Tauride managed not only to sing well but also to act properly, effortlessly adopting manly postures and gestures that made them very convincing. I was sorry not to hear more of Göttingen's many offerings, but clearly all is well in this charming town's Handel festival.

HALLE

At Halle the Händelfestspiele have been extended to ten days. There has been so much on offer in recent years that too many attractive concerts have clashed. The organisers have responded to criticism by spreading things out so that people can now attend almost everything. But this time there were complaints that on several days there was practically nothing to go to before the evening; hardly anyone I met stayed the course, and there were still clashes. It is difficult to get it right.

An attractive feature of this year's festival was the availability of the newly-opened Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Halle, a fine concert hall right in the centre of town, not far from the Marktplatz. Some reservations were expressed about the acoustics, but the hall is pleasant and spacious, and met with general approval.

The opening Gala concert, at which speeches are made and Handel prizes awarded, was musically a great disappointment. We had the overture to the Fireworks Music, an aria from *Giulio Cesare*, the Anthem on the Peace, the *Concerto a due cori*, HWV 333, and the Foundling Hospital Anthem – all good stuff if well performed; but alas, that was not the case. The soloists were fine, so was the Dresdner Kammerchor, but the Händelfestspielorchester was under-rehearsed and in places hopelessly rushed by Paul McCreesh, who was having a very off day. At times, especially in the concerto, the ensemble was so ragged as to verge upon breakdown; and dogmatism in performance practice was at its worst when the opening F major chord included initial Ds and Gs as everyone trilled vigorously from the upper note in parallel fifths.

The next concert in the new hall was quite different. This was Rameau's *Platée*, given semi-staged (or in a



concert performance with gestures and movement - take your pick) by Marc Minkowski and the Musiciens du Louvre. It was beautifully presented and great fun - one of the most effective of such halfway-house performances I have ever seen. I had the impression that Minkowski's favourite habit of ratcheting up the tempo was in evidence, but it was difficult to judge because the work is unfamiliar. A delightful experience, though it was a pity not to have the ballets which are at the core of this piece.

Agrippina in the Opera House, conducted by Marcus Creed, with the star countertenor Axel Köhler as Ottone, was well produced and sung, if not so well played by the Händelfestspielorchester, but it too suffered from some over-rapid tempi. A few of the sets were odd, but the acting and production were sensible and realistic, without any modernist interpretations. Some of Act III took place around Poppea having a bath (in foam) and involved Nerone and Claudio stripping down to their underpants, or whatever passed for them in decadent Rome, and the recitative harpsichordist, who was placed just at the edge of the stage, being offered (and accepting) a glass of champagne as part of the action; this didn't seem tiresome, although at the beginning, before the lights went down, didn't we just *know* from the position of the instrument that such frolics were bound to occur? Perhaps the comedy of Agrippina's role was overplayed and her sinister aspect sidelined. One of the highlights of the evening was the performance of a real soprano countertenor (is this possible linguistically?), Robert Crowe as Nerone.

Alcina at Bad Lauchstädt was also well sung in a good production (so often the animals and other magic

paraphernalia in this opera can set the teeth a-gritting). The director could not resist, however, the red rope bonding Alcina and Ruggiero in a familiarly trite symbolism that we have all seen too many times. The production was an offering by the Lautten Compagnie of Berlin, who unfortunately lived up to their title by employing a whole battery of lutes and guitars in the rhythm section - I use the latter term advisedly, because the continuo was at times quite out of hand, with strumming and even *tapping on the body* of these instruments, making it sound less like a Baroque orchestra than a 1920s jazz-band. All this luting and guitarring seems to be the current fashion and reminded me of Anthony Hicks's complaint about 'silly pluckers' in his recent debate with Peter Holman in *Early Music Review*. Johnny Maldonado as Ruggiero was outstanding, and Annette Reinhold a fascinatingly deep-toned Bradamante; Katharina Warken and Angela Gilbert were radiant as Alcina and Morgana. A cute trick was to omit the Tambourin at the end and play it as an encore after the curtain-calls.

Another major event in the Händel-Halle was *Samson* by The Sixteen under Harry Christophers, with a powerful team of British singers led by Thomas Randle in the title-role. As one would expect, it was magnificently done, but with substantial cuts, especially in the first act, where they are indeed merciful (though they are not so welcome later in the work). Like *Platée*, this was a concert performance with action. Skilful use was made of the huge platform of the new hall, soloists being placed strategically, often at some distance from each other. This was specially effective in the spat between Samson and Dalila (Linda Russell) in Act II, though the final scene was a little over the top. Samson

made his exit to the temple by walking through the audience to the back of the hall; then some choir members went off to bring him back on to the platform as a corpse during the Dead March. Randle had to lie there for the rest of the proceedings, and never twitched a muscle.

Admeto in Bad Lauchstädt featured one of the world's finest countertenors, Brian Asawa, in the title-role. Playing, singing and staging were of the highest quality (though a single dancer for the dream scene in Act I, scene 1, was rather short measure). There was a largely French cast, with Les Talens Lyriques (orchestra) and Les Fragments Réunis (ballet) - what splendidly precious titles some of these Baroque groups give themselves! - all under the experienced direction of Christophe Rousset. The work was heavily cut, which particularly ruined the Faustina-Cuzzoni scene with the portraits in Act III; no matter: it was very enjoyable.

Poro was revived from last year, when one of the two performances was given in a truncated concert version because of illness. The production was fine, with gorgeous oriental costumes and a state barge, but the opera seemed a little under-rehearsed, especially in Act III. Poro was Patricia Spence, who sang stylishly and acted in a properly kingly way. Romelia Lichtenstein's Cleofide was superb throughout: she is really one of the finest Handel sopranos of our time. Sally Bruce-Payne as Erissena had sustained a nasty leg injury in rehearsal - this opera is jinxed in Halle! - and had to sit on a chair at the side of the stage to sing while an understudy mimed the part, but the arrangement worked well enough. Rufus Müller was a rather underpowered Alessandro, as if he was having trouble with his voice. But

the playing was good, and the performance was well conducted by Paul Goodwin.

Space does not permit detailed coverage of all of this huge festival. There were chamber concerts, among them a most delightful one given by the young students of early music performance in the Konservatorium G. F. Händel; a robust *Alexander's Feast* by a youth choir at the end of a course directed by Paul Goodwin; and several concerts of Italian church music of the period (Vivaldi, Alessandro Scarlatti, Pergolesi *et al.*), which was this year's theme and the subject of the Wissenschaftliche Konferenz.

A very welcome consequence of choosing this topic was the involvement of distinguished British scholars who are specialists in the field - Michael Talbot and Colin Timms, who read

papers on 'Sacred Music at the Ospedale della Pietà in Venice in the Time of Handel' and 'Italian Church Music in Handel's London' (respectively), alongside the Institute's most regular performer at the lectern, Donald Burrows on 'The "Carmelite" Antiphons of Handel and Caldara'. Percy Young celebrated forty years of Halle visits with a fascinating retrospective of his experiences in a special lecture entitled 'George Frideric Handel: Inspiration in a Troubled Century'.

Halle's contribution to the celebration of its most famous son remains as vigorous as ever; its encouragement of young musicians and of studies in Baroque performance practice is particularly commendable. We all hope that the city will keep up the scale of its festival for many years to come.

Terence Best

NEW HANDEL EDITIONS

Three of Handel's major vocal works have been published in new editions in recent months. Oxford University Press has produced a new vocal score, full score and set of parts for *Messiah*, ed. Clifford Bartlett, and a full score of *Giulio Cesare*, ed. Winton Dean and Sarah Fuller (£95; vocal score to follow). The *Messiah* edition (vocal score £6-95) contains 'virtually all the music which Handel wrote' for the oratorio. Earlier this year, Novello issued Merlin Channon's new edition of *Judas Maccabæus*; the vocal score contains the music of the original 1747 version and of the 1750 and 1758-9 revivals, and costs £14-95.

The Handel Institute is a registered charity (no. 296615). Correspondence relating to the Newsletter should be sent to the editor, Professor Colin Timms, Department of Music, University of Birmingham, Edgbaston, Birmingham, B15 2TT, England (email: C.R.Timms@bham.ac.uk). All other enquiries should be addressed to the Honorary Secretary, Dr Elizabeth Gibson, 15 Pyrland Road, Highbury, London, N5 2JB (email: gibson@attmail.com).
