

Cambridge University Press

978-0-521-88192-0 - The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia

Edited by Annette Landgraf and David Vickers

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## The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia

George Frideric Handel was born and educated in Germany, flourished in Italy and chose to become British. One of the most cosmopolitan great composers, some of Handel's music has remained in the popular repertory since his lifetime, and a broad variety of his theatre works, from Italian operas to English oratorios, has experienced a dramatic renaissance since the late twentieth century. A large number of publications devoted to Handel's life and music have appeared from his own time until the present day, but *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia* is the first resource to gather the full range of present knowledge and leading new scholarship into a single volume for convenient and illuminating reference. Packed with well over 700 informative and accessible entries, both long and short, this book is ideal for performers, scholars, students and music-lovers who wish to explore the Handelian world.

ANNETTE LANDGRAF is a member of the editorial office of the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* based at the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, and has edited Handel's *Israel in Egypt* (1999) and the *Anthem for the Funeral of Queen Caroline* (2004). She has published numerous articles about Handel, is currently working on an edition of the 1732 version of *Esther*, specialises in the reception history of Handel's music and has recently published a collection of six oratorio librettos.

DAVID VICKERS was Gerald Coke Handel Foundation scholar at the Open University, teaches at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and is currently preparing new editions of Handel's *Semele* and *Partenope*. Producer of GFHandel.org and chairman of the annual Stanley Sadie Handel Recording Prize, he is a journalist, author, project consultant and musicologist. He writes essays for most leading classical record labels, is a critic for *Gramophone* and frequently appears on BBC Radio 3.

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‘An incredible achievement! Articles are extensive, both well documented for scholars and eminently readable. No stone appears to have been left unturned and the result is an amazingly comprehensive A–Z of anyone and anything connected to the great master of the baroque and the legacy with which he has enriched our lives.’

*Harry Christophers, conductor of The Sixteen and artistic director of the Handel and Haydn Society, Boston*

‘The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia is remarkable: a well-researched, elegantly written, oftentimes witty, cornucopia of Handelian lore and miscellany.’

*William Christie, conductor and founder of Les Arts Florissants*

‘The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia is a fitting tribute to one of the greatest composers. It is extremely comprehensive, dealing not only with the background to Handel’s musical masterpieces, but also with his contemporaries, colleagues, friends and singers who performed in his operas and oratorios. Eighty-eight experts from a range of scholarly disciplines examine Handel’s life and work from a wide variety of aspects, and the encyclopedia will serve to emphasise the composer’s genius in such a wide range of musical styles. The editors are to be congratulated on producing such an indispensable adjunct to every musical library.’

*Sir Charles Mackerras, conductor*

‘The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia will be warmly welcomed by all Handelian scholars and performers. The descriptions of musical works are concise and to the point; the numerous biographical entries are especially interesting, and recreate the vivid and colourful musical worlds of Germany, Italy and London that formed the background to Handel’s great works.’

*Paul McCreesh, conductor and director of the Gabrieli Consort & Players*

‘What a glorious resource this book is! It is an absolute must for all lovers of Handel’s music. It is a terrific mine of information about his music and the fascinating cast of characters who performed it.’

*Nicholas McGegan, conductor and artistic director of the Göttingen Handel Festival*

‘The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia will never gather dust on my bookshelf. The wealth of information that it contains is so enticing that frequent reference is inevitable, and it is impossible to restrict myself to a single topic of enquiry at any one time. Music lovers, performers and scholars should not be without this book.’

*Trevor Pinnock, harpsichordist, conductor and founder of the English Concert*

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This book is fondly dedicated to Bernd Baselt and Stanley Sadie;  
both devoted Handelians, great lexicographers and  
much-missed mentors.

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## Foreword

We are told that Beethoven pointed at his Arnold edition of Handel and declared ‘Handel is the greatest and most capable composer; from him I can still learn’. Today we seem to have lost the art of praising Handel; even our most ardent Handelian anoraks find it difficult to applaud their hero in the sort of terms that for earlier generations were second nature. Faced with *The Apotheosis of Handel* – that familiar 1787 engraving with the laurel wreath, the supporting angels, the upturned eyes – we simply blush and turn to the critical notes, hoping they will let us off the hook.

During his lifetime Handel was subjected to extremes of both reverence and dismissal – from Goupy’s caricature of the glutton seated at the organ, to Roubiliac’s sculpture of the great composer which took its place in Vauxhall Gardens alongside Homer and Milton. But Roubiliac immortalised Handel in a remarkably informal pose, relaxed, wearing slippers and free from his wig, as a reminder that, though larger than life, he was still living and, though unique, very human.

Who cou’d like Handel with such art controul  
The various passions of the warring soul?  
With sounds each intellectual storm assuage,  
Fire us with holy rapture, or with rage?

This question, posed by an anonymous poet writing *On the Death of Mr Handel* in 1759, was very specifically musical in its praise. A century later the eulogies had become much more generic, more moral than musical:

this was a man who had done honour to music as much by the nobility of his character as by the sublimity of his genius. He was one of the too few artists who uphold the dignity of art to the highest possible standard. He was the incarnation of honesty. The unswerving rigidity of his conduct captivates even those who do not take him for a model. He worked ceaselessly for the improvement of others without ever feeling weary. He was virtuous and pure, proud and intrepid. His love of good was as unconquerable as his will. He died at his post, working to the last hour of his life. He has left behind him a luminous track and a noble example.

This was the Revd T. Hanly Ball speaking to the Wimbledon Village Club in 1864, whose Victorian superlatives would be more acceptable were we not so aware that they were often used not so much to praise the past, but to slay the present, and criticise (or at least minimise) the products of later writers. ‘The works of Haydn, Beethoven, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Spohr, and others – great masters – are performed, and they are admired, and justly so, but they have

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not the hold upon the taste and feelings (of Englishmen at least) that Handel has', wrote Dean Ramsey in 1862, adding, in a pre-echo of Elvis-mania: 'He is the greatest, and the favourite. He stands alone.' William Crotch agreed: 'The choruses of Mozart and Beethoven are frequently magnificent, but seldom sublime', and listening yet again to the opening of *Zadok the Priest*, it is hard to disagree that Handel stands highest.

These comments all come from a century whose essential listening experience was by and large limited to a smallish selection of Handel's oratorios, a few instrumental concertos and his keyboard works. The rediscovery of Handel's operas during the twentieth century initially set the cause back through appearing to demonstrate that, as far as the modern theatre was concerned, they were archaic constructions that failed to hold water and needed drastic surgery and cosmetic changes before they could be presented. To a certain extent this opinion still survives, although some operations are nowadays more sympathetic to the patient than others. 'Critical appraisal' may have faulted some of Handel's librettos, just as 'moral appraisal' had earlier been brought to bear on his liberal 'borrowings' of musical material from others, both living and dead – with similarly negative conclusions – but our awareness of the breadth of Handel's output is now greater than at any previous period, including his own lifetime.

We are also more voluminously informed than ever before on every aspect of his work and life. My own passion for Handel's music was first sparked by the sheer power of the product – rather like an encounter with a vintage 8-litre Bentley – immediately followed by a desire to see under the bonnet, and to admire, if not to understand, the source of this power. I thus have one foot in the 'Handel is the greatest' camp and the other in the critical world of present-day scholarship. On Handel's moral supremacy we are now allowed to be sceptical or noncommittal, but on the nuts-and-bolts approach to composing – at which he wins hands down – we are surrounded by eager and well-informed researchers, and almost overwhelmed with facts and theories demanding our attention. For me (and I hope for you) such a ready-reference volume as the present publication makes the perfect Baedeker.

CHRISTOPHER HOGWOOD  
Cambridge



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## Preface

Soon after Handel's death on 14 April 1759 literature devoted to him began steadily to flow. John Mainwaring's *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (1760) was the first published biography of its kind devoted to a composer, and it remains indispensable for Handelians today. Over the next century or so, further seminal writings about Handel and his music were penned not just in England by Charles Burney and John Hawkins, but also by the French collector Victor Schoelcher and the German musicologist Friederich Chrysander. During the twentieth century an increasing amount of scholarly (and sometimes unscholarly but very popular) literature was produced that explored all kinds of aspects of the composer's life, music, cultural circle and the intellectual context of his career. Books by Otto Erich Deutsch, Winton Dean, and more recently Donald Burrows and Ruth Smith, have provided abundant sources of fascinating information that throws considerable light on our appreciation of Handel's achievements as a composer, performer, businessman and intellectual figure. Many other scholars have also made important contributions with articles, collections of essays, critical editions of scores, conference papers and performance projects. With such a rich legacy of Handelian literature, it is surprising that the present volume is the first ever compendium devoted to the composer. Whilst other musical geniuses of similar stature who worked in the 'long eighteenth century', (his exact contemporary Bach, but also Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven) have all received one or more major dictionary-style publications collecting much valuable information under one roof, this service has not been undertaken for Handel. The celebration of the 250th anniversary of his death in 2009 is a timely opportunity to redress this.

The *Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia* will by no means supplant some of the seminal writings that have preceded it (for a thumbnail view of these one could do worse than to consult our list of abbreviations below), but we hope that it performs a valuable function for all kinds of readers eager to have an unprecedented range of information about Handelian topics at their fingertips. Performers, teachers, students, music-lovers, and perhaps even scholars, will undoubtedly learn a few useful things from dipping into these pages.

It scarcely requires justification to claim that such an ambitious 'one-stop-shop' for accessible, up-to-date and illuminating information about Handel is necessary and long overdue. This book is devoted to a composer of consistent and significant popularity, and one who has come to epitomise 'European-ness': Handel was born in Saxony in 1685, spent several years pursuing a glittering career in Italy (1706–10), worked in at least two major German cities (Hamburg

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## PREFACE

and Hanover), spent most of his creative life based in London producing a tremendous variety of music (usually for the theatre), and in 1727 became a naturalised British citizen. From a twenty-first-century perspective, Handel has come to represent what it means to be multi-national. His career was almost as dramatic as the plot of one of his operas, and so his life continues to fascinate his legions of admirers, although we know little about his personal life and there are major gaps in our biographical knowledge. Indeed, Handel remains a figure of interest, admiration and affection principally because of the enduring appeal of his music. A remarkably full amount of his works is preserved more or less intact (it seems that only a few early German works are lost, and perhaps some music composed in Italy only survives in fragmentary form). Moreover, a broad variety of the composer's music has never been out of the repertoire since his own lifetime: *Zadok the Priest* has been performed at every British coronation since 1727, festive performances of *Messiah* are a firmly established tradition (though more seldom at Easter, for which Handel and the oratorio's librettist Charles Jennens intended it), and parts of the *Water Music* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* have entered the public consciousness. Although the renaissance of Handel's operas has taken longer to permeate public awareness, a few popular arias were long admired in arrangements, such as the ubiquitous 'Largo' based on 'Ombra mai fu' (actually marked *larghetto*) from *Serse*. Even the music used in recent years for the UEFA *Champion's League* (both at football matches and on television broadcasts) is a blatant parody of *Zadok the Priest*. Handel is undoubtedly an icon of the Western classical tradition with very few comparable peers, and his music has never been more widely available, performed and appreciated than it is today. John Hawkins, in his epic *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, aptly concluded his tribute to Handel (whom he knew):

The character of an author is but the necessary result of his works, and as the compositions of Handel are many and various, it is but justice to point out such of them as seem the most likely to be the foundation of his future fame. Many of the excellencies, which as musician recommended him to the favour and patronage of the public during a residence of fifty years in this country, he might perhaps possess in common with a few of the most eminent of his contemporaries; but, till they were taught the contrary by Handel, none were aware of that dignity and grandeur of sentiment which music is capable of conveying, or that there is a sublime in music as there is in poetry. This is a discovery which we owe to the genius and inventive faculty of this great man; and there is little reason to doubt that the many examples of this kind with which his works abound, will continue to engage the admiration of judicious hearers as long as the love of harmony shall exist.

It is hoped this book will be read with pleasure and satisfaction by inquisitive Handelians. We have endeavoured to make it much more than a mere dictionary, and anticipate that its discussion of places, people, venues, major musical works and themes associated with Handel will lead readers happily to browse its content for pleasure, whilst also proving an effective tool for those wishing to lay their hands rapidly on essential information for specific purposes. It is inevitable that some of the articles here will contain discussions that might be familiar to some readers already wise to the Handelian world, but many of this book's articles represent the latest research into areas of Handel scholarship

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## PREFACE

that have been shrouded in erroneous received thinking, garbled by misleading popular opinion, or simply under-explored. Plenty of articles provide valuable new information and ideas (for example, iconography, pasticcios, numerous *cantate con stromenti*, venues, audience, cities and reception). Most of the world's leading Handel scholars contribute articles pertinent to their latest research, and we have invited scholars from other musicological fields to write about the connection between their subject and Handel. Moreover, our list of eighty-eight contributors forms a remarkably broad church of different historians (not only musical, but also architectural, military, political, literary etc.).

The book consists of a simple A–Z dictionary, with a few illuminating illustrations, and helpful cross-references (indicated in small capitals). In a few cases we have dispensed with cross-references to topics that are obvious (Italy, London, Handel). Secondary or minor singers and instrumentalists do not all receive their own individual articles, but full cast lists are given for major works. Castrato voices were frequently described in contradictory terms by contemporary eyewitnesses, and could often change pitch over time, so we have taken the liberty of labelling such singers simply as 'Castrato' (although the range of particular singers is indicated in relevant biographical articles, using the Helmholtz system). In Handel's lifetime there was a difference of eleven days between the Julian calendar, still in use in Britain until 2 September 1752, and the Gregorian calendar, already adopted on the continent. Double dates are given only when the person in question was both on the continent and subsequently moved permanently to Britain. Select bibliographies are placed at the end of each article where it has been deemed useful. We petition hunter-gatherer bibliophiles to forgive us for the fact that our indications of further reading must necessarily serve as friendly signposts for the uninitiated. Inquisitive readers are encouraged to investigate excellent reference works such as *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, *The New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, *Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart* (MGG), and the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (ODNB) in conjunction with the present volume. Abbreviations for commonly cited literature have been used throughout the book (see below for a list). Appendices include various helpful lists, not least a select bibliography, chronology, discography and an up-to-date HWV catalogue of Handel's compositions. Reference to the worklist might occasionally be helpful for identifying full titles of songs, cantatas and chamber sonatas referred to only by HWV number in some articles.

Navigating a course through the vast ocean of Handel studies towards a safe harbour is, as opera seria simile arias frequently tell us, difficult to manage without experienced helmsmen and/or guiding stars. Therefore, we particularly wish to thank all of the contributors, both for their articles and their active interest in guiding the book to fruition; Cambridge University Press, and in particular Vicki Cooper, Becky Jones and Mary Worthington, for their enthusiasm and support for our project; and especially Andrew Jones, Elizabeth Gibson, Ruth Smith and Donald Burrows, who gave us plenty of useful advice throughout the project, not least during the early planning stage. Individual articles in this encyclopedia were improved by helpful suggestions from Jeremy Barlow, Clifford Bartlett, Terence Best, Alessandro Borin, Sandra Bowdler, Melania Bucciarelli, David Coke, Pierre Dubois, Eleanor Selfridge-Field, Philippe Gelinaud, John Greenacombe, Anthony Hicks, Richard King, Ursula and Warren Kirkendale, Claudia

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PREFACE

Korsmeier, Kurt Markstrom, Thomas N. McGeary, Clarissa Campbell Orr, John Roberts, Lynda Sayce, Giovanni Andrea Sechi, Carlo Vitali, Mark Windisch and Edwin Werner. We received useful assistance from Angela Baier, Stephan Blaut, Brigitte Gaul, Michael Pacholke and Teresa Ramer-Wünsche. Götz Traxdorf and Jens Wehmann shared material from the library of the Händel-Haus in Halle. We are particularly grateful to the Händel-Haus, and to Sarah Bardwell and Martin Wyatt at the Handel House Museum in London, for their generous donation of several illustrations. Rory Lalwan at Westminster City Archives and John Fisher at the Guildhall Library were very helpful with advice about eighteenth-century maps of London. The staff of the Gerald Coke Handel Collection (at the Foundling Museum) deserve our profound thanks for their friendly assistance behind the scenes, which has frequently gone beyond the call of duty. Above all, we offer our heartfelt gratitude to our families for giving us encouragement and tolerating our obsession.

ANNETTE LANDGRAF and DAVID VICKERS

# Abbreviations

AMZ	Allgemeine Musikalische Zeitung
Bianconi	L. Bianconi and G. Bianconi (eds.), <i>I libretti italiani di Georg Friedrich Händel e le loro fonti</i> , 1* & 1** (Florence, 1992)
Burney	Charles Burney, <i>A General History of Music from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period</i> , vol. 4 (London, 1789), ed. F. Mercer (London, 1935; repr. 1957)
Burrows	Donald Burrows, <i>Handel</i> (Oxford, 1994)
Burrows, Chapel Royal	Donald Burrows, <i>Handel and the English Chapel Royal</i> (Oxford, 2005)
Burrows and Dunhill	Donald Burrows and Rosemary Dunhill, <i>Music and Theatre in Handel's World</i> (Oxford, 2002)
Burrows and Ronish	Donald Burrows and Martha J. Ronish, <i>A Catalogue of Handel's Musical Autographs</i> (Oxford, 1994)
Dean, Operas	Winton Dean, <i>Handel's Operas 1726–1741</i> (Woodbridge, 2006)
Dean, Oratorios	Winton Dean, <i>Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques</i> (London, 1959)
Dean and Knapp, Operas	Winton Dean and John Merrill Knapp, <i>Handel's Operas 1704–1726</i> (rev. edn, Oxford, 1995)
Deutsch	Otto E. Deutsch, <i>Handel: A Documentary Biography</i> (New York and London, 1955)
EM	Early Music
GHB	Göttinger Händel-Beiträge
Harris, Librettos	Ellen T. Harris (ed.), <i>The Librettos of Handel's Operas</i> (New York, 1989)
Hawkins	John Hawkins, <i>A General History of the Science and Practice of Music</i> (London, 1776)
HG	Händel-Gesellschaft edition (ed. Friedrich Chrysander)
HHA	Hallische Händel-Ausgabe
HHB i	Händel-Handbuch, vol. 1: Siegfried Flesch, <i>Lebens- und Schaffensdaten</i> ; Bernd Baselt, <i>Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis: Bühnenwerke</i> (Kassel and Leipzig, 1978)
HHB ii	Händel-Handbuch, vol. 2: Bernd Baselt, <i>Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis: Oratorische Werke; Vokale Kammermusik; Kirchenmusik</i> (Kassel and Leipzig, 1984)

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

HHB iii	Händel-Handbuch, vol. 3: Bernd Baselt, Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis: Instrumentalmusik; Pasticcis und Fragmente (Kassel and Leipzig, 1986)
HHB iv	Händel-Handbuch, vol. 4: Dokumente zu Leben und Schaffen (Kassel and Leipzig, 1985)
HJb	Händel-Jahrbuch
HWV	Thematisch-systematisches Verzeichnis der Werke Georg Friedrich Händels
JAMS	Journal of the American Musicological Society
JRMA	Journal of the Royal Musical Association
Mainwaring	[John Mainwaring], Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel (London, 1760; repr. 1964, 1967)
MGG	Die Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart, 2nd edn (Kassel etc., 1994–2008)
ML	Music and Letters
MT	The Musical Times
MQ	Musical Quarterly
NG	New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 2nd edn, ed. Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (London, 2001)
NG Opera	New Grove Dictionary of Opera, ed. Stanley Sadie and Christina Bashford (London, 1992)
PRMA	Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association
Sartori	I libretti italiani a stampa dalle origini al 1800, 7 vols. (Cuneo, 1990–4)
Smith, Oratorios	Ruth Smith, Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought (Cambridge, 1995)
Strohm	Reinhard Strohm, Essays on Handel and Italian Opera (Cambridge, 1985)