

The Documents

1734–1742



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Excerpt
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1734–1735



Calendar of theatre season

	Covent Garden (Handel)	King's Theatre (Nobility)
29 October		<i>Artaserse</i> (Porpora / Hasse / R. Broschi)
2 November		<i>Artaserse</i>
5 November		<i>Artaserse</i>
9 November	<i>Terpsicore</i> / <i>Il pastor fido</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
12 November		<i>Artaserse</i>
13 November	<i>Terpsicore</i> / <i>Il pastor fido</i>	
16 November	<i>Terpsicore</i> / <i>Il pastor fido</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
19 November		<i>Artaserse</i>
20 November	<i>Terpsicore</i> / <i>Il pastor fido</i>	
23 November	<i>Terpsicore</i> / <i>Il pastor fido</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
26 November		<i>Artaserse</i>
27 November	<i>Arianna in Creta</i>	
30 November	<i>Arianna in Creta</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
3 December		<i>Artaserse</i>
4 December	<i>Arianna in Creta</i>	
7 December	<i>Arianna in Creta</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
10 December		<i>Ottone</i> (Handel)
11 December	<i>Arianna in Creta</i>	
14 December		<i>Ottone</i>
17 December		<i>Ottone</i>
18 December	<i>Oreste</i> (Handel P)	
21 December	<i>Oreste</i>	<i>Ottone</i>
23 December		<i>Ottone</i>
28 December	<i>Oreste</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
31 December		<i>Artaserse</i>
4 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
7 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
8 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	
11 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
14 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
15 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	

18 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
21 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
22 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	
25 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
28 January		<i>Artaserse</i>
29 January	<i>Ariodante</i>	
1 February		<i>Polifemo</i> (Porpora)
4 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
5 February	<i>Ariodante</i>	
8 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
11 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
12 February	<i>Ariodante</i>	
15 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
18 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
20 February	<i>Ariodante</i>	
22 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
24 February	<i>Ariodante</i>	
25 February		<i>Polifemo</i>
28 February		<i>David e Bersabea</i> (Porpora)
3 March	<i>Ariodante</i>	
4 March		<i>Polifemo</i>
5 March	<i>Esther</i>	
7 March	<i>Esther</i>	
8 March		<i>Polifemo</i>
11 March		<i>Polifemo</i>
12 March	<i>Esther</i>	
14 March	<i>Esther</i>	
15 March		<i>Artaserse</i> (ben. Farinelli)
18 March		<i>Artaserse</i>
19 March	<i>Esther</i>	
21 March	<i>Esther</i>	
22 March		<i>Artaserse</i>
25 March		<i>Polifemo</i>
26 March	<i>Deborah</i>	
28 March	<i>Deborah</i>	
29 March		<i>Polifemo</i>
31 March	<i>Deborah</i>	
1 April	<i>Athalia</i>	<i>David e Bersabea</i>
2 April	<i>Athalia</i>	
3 April	<i>Athalia</i>	<i>David e Bersabea</i>
8 April		<i>Issipile</i> (Sandoni)

9 April	<i>Athalia</i>	
12 April	<i>Athalia</i>	<i>Issipile</i>
15 April		<i>Issipile</i>
16 April	<i>Alcina</i>	
19 April	<i>Alcina</i>	<i>Issipile</i>
22 April		<i>Artaserse</i>
23 April	<i>Alcina</i>	
26 April	<i>Alcina</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
29 April		<i>Artaserse</i>
30 April	<i>Alcina</i>	
3 May	<i>Alcina</i>	<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i> (Porpora)
6 May		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>
7 May	<i>Alcina</i>	
10 May	<i>Alcina</i>	<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>
13 May		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>
14 May	<i>Alcina</i>	
17 May	<i>Alcina</i>	<i>Artaserse</i>
20 May		<i>Ifigenia in Aulide</i>
21 May	<i>Alcina</i>	
23 May		<i>Artaserse</i>
27 May		<i>Artaserse</i>
28 May	<i>Alcina</i>	
31 May		<i>Artaserse</i>
3 June		<i>Artaserse</i>
4 June	<i>Alcina</i>	
7 June		<i>Polifemo</i>
12 June	<i>Alcina</i>	
18 June	<i>Alcina</i>	
25 June	<i>Alcina</i>	
28 June	<i>Alcina</i>	
2 July	<i>Alcina</i>	

12 August 1734 Handel begins the composition of *Ariodante*

August^t.12.1734 / anfangen [*begun August 12 1734*]

Lbl R.M. 20.a.7, fo. 1r: annotation in Handel’s autograph score. This was the first time that Handel had written the commencement date on the first page of the score: for his only previous annotation about the beginning of a score, see 3 July 1724. This was also the first time that Handel had used German for a date-annotation on one of his London scores, though that would become a regular practice from *Arminio* (September 1736) onwards. For progress on *Ariodante*, see 28 August, 9 September and 24 October.

12(23) August 1734 Wilhelm Willers’s list of Hamburg opera performances

	Anno 1734. . . .
Aug. 23.	Parthenope 66 [Thalers]

Merbach 1924, p. 365. Willers’s list (see 23 October 1718) covered the period 1718–50; the original is lost. 66 thalers were the takings for the performance. For previous performances of *Partenope* in Hamburg, see 17(28) October 1733. Further performances (Merbach pp. 365–6) took place on 3(14) October 1734 (with takings of just 18 thalers), and in 1735 on 2(13) January, 30 January (10 February; takings of 30 thalers), 9(20) June (‘schlecht’ [*bad*]), 16(27) June (40 thalers) and 28 August (8 September; 9 thalers), continuing in 1736 (see 14 January 1736).

19 August 1734 *The Daily Post-Boy*

Last Saturday Night [17 August] died, at her House at Kensington, Miss Lee, Daughter and sole Heiress of the Honourable Colonel Lee of Addington [*recte* Adlington] Hall in the County of Chester, reputed worth £45,000.

Two days later, *The Daily Post-Boy* reported: ‘Last Night the Corpse of Miss Lee . . . was carried from her House at Kensington, in great Funeral Pomp and Solemnity, to Westminster-Abbey, where it was interred according to her Desire.’ For Elizabeth Legh, see April 1721. Her unsigned will included a wish that ‘all my Musick books that are composed by Mr Handel may be put in some Library or publick Room at Cambridge there to be seen or copied’ (see Dean 1993, p. 29), but instead they passed into her family and to her second cousin John Robartes, who subsequently gave them to James Harris (see 6 December 1737).

[19(30) August 1734] Antoine-François Prévost, *Le Pour et Contre*

M. Handel, Chef d’un des deux *Operas* de Londres, avoit entrepris de soutenir son Théâtre malgré l’opposition de tous les Seigneurs Anglois. Il s’étoit flatté mal à propos que sa réputation lui attireroit toujours une assemblée nombreuse; & manque de ce fondement il a fait tant de dépenses ruineuses & tant de beaux *Operas* à pure perte, qu’il se trouve forcé de quitter Londres pour retourner dans sa patrie.

Mr Handel, director of one of the two London opera houses, had undertaken to keep his theatre going in spite of the opposition of all the English nobles. He had wrongly convinced himself that his reputation would always bring him a large audience; and without this support he has had so much ruinous expense and [composed] so many fine operas which have made a loss, that he finds himself compelled to leave London and return to his own country.

Le Pour et Contre, vol. iv, no. lrv, p. 216. For this publication, see 30 July 1733. The source for Prévost’s gossip is unknown, but Handel’s commencement of a new opera score on 12 August (q.v.) confirms his commitment to a forthcoming opera season in London: see 13 July 1734.

27 AUGUST 1734

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[26 August] 1734 Subscribers to Thomas Chilcot's *Six Suites of Lessons*

A LIST of the SUBSCRIBERS.

[names include:] : Mr. John Clegg, *Musick-master in* Dublin; Mr. Henry Carey; Mr. Michael Christian Festing; Mr. Barnabas Gun, *Organist of* Gloucester; Mr. George Frederick Handel; Henry Harrington *of* Kelston, *Esq*; Mr. Abraham Jordan, *Organ-Builder*; Mr. John Ladyman, *Harpsicord-maker*; Mr. John Mason *of* St. Patrick's and Christ-church, Dublin; Mr. Mahoon, *Harpsicord-maker*; Mr. Walter Powell *of* Ludlow; Mr. Ralph Roseingrave, *Organist of* St. Patrick's and Christ-church Dublin; Mr. William Smith; Mr. John Stanley, *Organist of* St. Andrew's Holborn, *and one of the Organists of the Temple*; *The Hon. Lieutenant-General Wade.*

Six Suites of Lessons for the Harpsicord or Spinet Compos'd by Mr Thomas Chilcot Organist of Bath (London, Printed and Sold by Wm Smith, at Corelli's Head, near St. Clement's Church in the Strand and by the Author, at his House, in Barton Fields Bath. as also by Mr: James Leake, Bookseller in Bath.). There were 84 subscribers for 100 copies. William Smith had served his apprenticeship with the elder Walsh. A decade later Handel also subscribed to Chilcot's *Twelve English Songs*: see 6 April 1744. Thomas Chilcot was Organist at Bath Abbey and this was his first music publication: see Rishton 2000. A proposal for the subscription had appeared in *The Country Journal* on 14 October 1732; an advertisement in the same paper on 24 August 1734 announced publication 'On Monday next', 26 August, with a note that 'Subscribers may have their Books deliver'd to them by the Author, now at Mr. Ladyman's, Harpsicord-Maker in Dean-street, Fetter-Lane, London'.

27 August 1734 Handel, London, to [Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, Mersham le Hatch, Kent]

London August 27. 1734

Sir

At my arrival in Town from the Country, I found my self honnour'd of Your Kind invitation. I am very sorry that by the situation of my affairs I see my self deprived of receiving that Pleasure beeng engaged with Mr Rich to carry on the Opera's in Covent Garden. I hope, at Your return to Town, Sir, I shall make up this Loss. mean while I beg You to be perswaded of the sincere Respect with which I am

Sir Your

most obedient and most humble

Servant

George Frideric Handel

[address panel:] [To Sir Wyndham Knatchbull, Bart., / of Mersham le Hatch near / Ashford, Kent.]

US-NYpm Mary Flagler Cary Music Collection, Letters (Unbound) MFC H236.X (Handel, George Frideric); facsimiles in Sotheby's (1954, lot 200) and Stargardt 1961 (lot 83). Chrysander 1858 printed this letter (pp. 366–7), then in possession of the musician Charles Salamon in London, with the address shown above in brackets. Since then the envelope or address panel has become separated from the letter and its present location is unknown: it was missing when the letter was sold in London in October 1954, as part of the estate of the late W. Westley Manning. Müller 1935 (pp. 32–3) printed the letter twice (with minor differences in layout and spelling), once as a letter dated 27 August to an unknown correspondent, and secondly as an undated letter addressed to Knatchbull. Deutsch concluded they were the same and added Knatchbull's address to the dated letter, thus reinstating Chrysander's version.

This is the earliest known personal letter written in English by Handel. The recipient, Sir Wyndham Knatchbull (1699–1749), was a social acquaintance of Handel's with a family home in Kent and a London residence in Golden Square (see 6 January 1736); his wife was the half-sister of James Harris of Salisbury (see 6 January 1736). He subscribed for six of the ten editions of Handel's music that were published with subscribers' lists, beginning with *Atalanta* in 1736.

It is not known where Handel had been when he was in 'the Country' (i.e. out of London), but it is unlikely to have been Tunbridge Wells (though he went there in 1735 and 1737), as he would have expressed himself in different terms in replying to Knatchbull if his travels had taken him close to Mersham, which is less than 30 miles from Tunbridge Wells. For news of the removal of his performances to Covent Garden theatre, see 13 July 1734.

28 August 1734 Handel completes Act 1 of *Ariodante*

Agost 28: 1734

Lbl R.M. 20.a.7, fo. 36v: annotation in Handel's autograph score. See 9 September and 24 October for further progress.

5 September 1734 *The St. James's Evening Post*

We hear that the Gentlemen of the Apollo Society at Temple-Bar have agreed with the famous Mrs. Celestini Hempson, to sing to them at their Concert every Wednesday Night this Season.

SJEP 3–5 September. The Apollo Society was founded by Maurice Greene in 1731, following his secession from the Academy of Vocal Music (see 20 December 1726 and 31 August 1731). According to Hawkins (*History*, v, p. 342), Greene 'drew off with him the boys of St. Paul's cathedral, and some other persons, his immediate dependents; and fixing on the great room called the Apollo at the Devil tavern, for the performance of a concert, under his sole management, gave occasion to a saying not so witty as sarcastical, viz. that Dr. Greene was gone to the Devil'. *The Standing Orders of the Apollo-Society made at a General Meeting of the Members on Wednesday the 4th Day of April, 1733* (London, 1733) give a detailed constitution for the Society, including the following:

26 SEPTEMBER 1734

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§ VII. *Of the Concerts.*

1. The Members of this Society shall have a Concert of Musick for the Entertainment of themselves and Ladies on every *Wednesday* Night in the Winter Season, viz. in the Months of *October, November* and *December, January, February* and *March*.
2. Every Concert shall begin at Seven of the Clock precisely, and shall consist of Two Acts, between which there shall be an Interval not exceeding half an Hour.

Handel performed on Wednesday nights at Covent Garden, but had been playing Tuesday nights at the King's Theatre at the time this constitution was drawn up. For Celeste Hempson, see 13 March 1735.

7 September 1734 *The Country Journal: or, The Craftsman*

MUSICK

This Day is Published, [Price One Shilling] For August 1734.

Numb X.

The British Musical MISCELLANY; or, The Delightful GROVE. . . .

With choice Songs by the best Masters. Printed for and Sold by John Walsh, at the Harp and Hoboy in Catherine-street in the Strand. Where may be had, just Published,

I Thirty Overtures for Violins in 7 Parts. Containing the Overtures out of all the Opera's, compos'd by Mr. Handel. N. B. the same Overtures are set for the harpsicord.

For *The British Musical Miscellany*, see 24 October. Walsh had published five Collections of Handel's Overtures: it is uncertain whether they were published together with a single title page. See Smith p. 286 no. 24 for the harpsichord version (no copy known).

9 September 1734 Handel completes Act II of *Ariodante*

Fine dell Atto 2^{do} li 9 di Settembre 1734

Lbl R.M. 20.a.7, fo. 61r: annotation in Handel's autograph score. See 24 October for the completion of the score.

26 September 1734 *The Daily Advertiser*

Signior Farinelli, a famous Singer, is arriv'd here from Italy, in order to perform in the Operas the ensuing Winter.

The castrato Carlo Broschi, known as Farinelli, had been engaged to sing for the Opera of the Nobility, the opera company in competition with Handel; see 12 October and 29 October below. On 10 and 21 October he performed for the royal family, and made his public debut in London at the King's Theatre on 29 October (q.v.). He never sang for Handel and his only Handel role was Adelberto in the Opera of the Nobility's production of *Ottone* (see 10 December).

26 September (7 October) 1734 Wilhelm Willers’s list of Hamburg opera performances

Anno 1734. . . .

Oct. 7. Admetus. NB. fürn Rath [*for the council*]

Merbach 1924, p. 365. According to Willers, further performances of *Admeto* took place on 4(15) November 1734 (with takings of 24 thalers), 25 June (6 July; 60 thalers) 1735, and 26 May (6 June) 1736 (Merbach 1924, pp. 365–7). For previous performances of *Admeto* in Hamburg, see 9 January 1730, 22 September 1731, 7 January 1732 and 23 November 1733.

30 September (11 October) 1734 Wilhelm Willers’s list of Hamburg opera performances

Anno 1734. . . .

Oct. 11. Cleofida 40 [Thalers]

Merbach 1924, p. 365. *Cleofida* was a version of Handel’s *Poro*: see 14(25) February 1732. 40 thalers were the takings for this performance. According to Willers, further performances took place on 17(28) October 1734 (with takings of 54 thalers); then in 1735 on 16(27) January (12 thalers), 6(17) February (60 thalers), 30 June (11 July; 21 thalers) and 22 September (3 October; 7 thalers), continuing on 2(13) October (q.v.).

2 October 1734 *The Daily Advertiser*

This Day the Malefactors will be executed at Tyburn, the three Men hang’d, and the Women burnt. Antony l’Anglodge, alias l’Anglois, one of those who had his Majesty’s gracious Reprieve, had a Petition presented to the King in his Favour by Mrs. Strada, the famous Singer.

12 October 1734 *The London Evening-Post*

On Thursday last [10 October] the famous Signor Farinelli was introduc’d to their Majesties at Kensington by the Right Hon. the Earl Cowper; he is just arriv’d from Rome, is the principal Chorister in the Pope’s Chapel, and is allow’d by all Judges to be the first Voice in the World: The Court receiv’d him with particular Marks of Esteem, and he had the Honour to sing before their Majesties, and the rest of the Royal Family, in the Queen’s Anti-chamber, with vast Applause. He is engag’d for a large Sum of Money to sing during the Winter, at the Opera’s in the Hay-Market, the Noblemen Subscribers having taken that House for the ensuing Season; and Mr. Handel has agreed with Mr. Rich, to perform Opera’s two Days in a Week at Covent-Garden Theatre for the ensuing Season.