

*The Documents*

1742–1750



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Excerpt  
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# 1742–1743



## Calendar of Handel's Performances (1743)

### Covent Garden

#### First Subscription

<i>Samson</i>	18, 23, 25 February; 2, 9, 11 March
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#### Second Subscription

<i>Samson</i>	16 March
<i>L'Allegro ed il Penseroso + Ode for St Cecilia's Day</i>	18 March
<i>Messiah</i>	23, 25, 29 March
<i>Samson</i>	31 March

The opera season at the King's Theatre ran from November 1742 to May 1743: see 2 November 1742. For performances during the period of Handel's season, see 15 February 1743.

### 9 September 1742 Handel, London, to Charles Jennens, Gopsall, Leics.

Dear S<sup>r</sup> London Sep<sup>r</sup>: 9<sup>th</sup>. 1742.

It was indeed Your humble Servant which intended You a visit in my way from Ireland to London, for I certainly could have given you a better account by word of mouth, as by writing, how well Your Messiah was received in that Country, yet as a Noble Lord, and no less then the Bishop of Elphin (a Nobleman very learned in Musick) has given his observations in writing of this Oratorio, I send You here annexed the Contents of it in his own words. \_\_\_\_\_

I shall send the printed Book of the Messiah to M<sup>r</sup> Isted for You. As for my Success in General in that generous and polite Nation, I reserve the account of it till I have the Hoñour to see You in London. The report that the Direction of the Opera next winter is comitted to my Care is groundless. The gentlemen who have undertaken to middle with Harmony can not agree, and are quite in a Confusion. Whether I shall do some thing in the Oratorio way (as several of my friends desire) I can not determine as yet. Certain it is that this time 12 month I shall continue my Oratorio's in Ireland, where they are a going to make a large Subscription allready for that Purpose. \_\_\_\_\_

If I had know'n that MyLord Guernsey was so near when I pass'd Coventry, You may easily imagine, Sir, that I should not have neglected of paying my Respects to him, since You Know the particular Esteem I have for His Lordship. I think it a very long time to the month of November next when I can have some hopes of seeng You here in Town. Pray let me hear mean while of Your Health and Wellfare, of which I take a real Share beeng with an uncommon Sincerity and Respect

S<sup>r</sup>

Your

most obliged humble Servant

George Frideric Handel.

[address panel:] To / Charles Jennens Esq<sup>r</sup> Junior / at Gopsal near Atherstone / Coventry bag —

[enclosure, in the hand of Christopher Smith:]

As Mr. Handel in his Oratorio's greatly excells all other Composers I am acquainted with, so in the famous one, called the Messiah he seems to have excell'd himself. The whole is beyond any thing I had a notion of till I Read and heard it. It seems to be a Species of Musick different from any other, and this is particularly remarkable of it, That tho' the Composition is very Masterly & artificial, yet the Harmony is so great and open, as to please all who have Ears & will hear, learned & unlearn'd.

Without doubt this superior Excellence is owing in some measure to the great care & exactness which Mr. Handel seems to have us'd in preparing this Piece. But some reasons may be given why He has succeeded better in this than perhaps He could with all his skill fully exerted, have done in any other.

1. One is the Subject, which is the greatest & most interesting, It seems to have inspir'd him.
2. Another is the Words, which are all Sublime, or affecting in the greatest degree.
3. a third reason for the superior Excellence of this piece, 'Tis this[,] there is no Dialogue. In every Drame there must be a great deal, & often broken into very short Speeches & Answers. If these be flat, & insipid, they move laughter or Contempt.

Whereas in this Piece the attension of the Audience is Engag'd from one end to the other: And the Parts Set in Recitativo, being Continu'd Sentences, & sometimes adorn'd with so much applause by the audience as the rest. —

They seem'd indeed throughly engag'd from one end to the other. And, to their great honour, tho the young & gay of both Sexes were present in great numbers, their behaviour was uniformly grave & decent, which show'd that they were not only pleas'd but affected with the performance. Many, I hope, were instructed by it, and had proper Sentiments impres'd in a stronger Manner on their Minds.

If these observations be just, they may furnish Mr. Handel with some hints for any future pieces, which He may undertake to Compose.

9 SEPTEMBER 1742

5

Instead of giving Rules for this, I'll point out an instance or two.

Plan for an Oratorio

Title. the Penitent.

- Part: 1. To be made up of passages describing the Righteousness of God. That He is of purer Eyes than to behold iniquity – is just to punish Sinners, mercifull to them that repent, loves & cherishes the good, but shews indignation against them that do evil – a number of particulars will easily offer them selves here
- Part 2d. Two Characters to be introduc'd 1. a Good man obedient to the Laws of God, flourishing like a green bay tree, enjoying peace of mind & prosperity, & on a reverse of fortune patient & resign'd in adversity, trusting in God, and by him supported & reliev'd & 2. a wicked man acting in defiance of God, saying Tush I shall never be mov'd[,] strenghtening himself in his wickedness for a time, but at last visited with Evils, under which He falls into misery & some horrors, at first without any Compunction or thought, of returning to God. These two Characters may be mix'd, as the *L'Allegro ed il Penseroso* are, which would have a very good effect, & it would not be amiss to introduce the wicked man as insulting the good in affliction & tempting him to forsake God. The Book of Job will furnish variety of fine passages for this purpose.
- Part. 3. To begin with the good man exhorting the wicked loaded with afflictions, and sunk under them, to return to God by repentance, then on these Exhortation having their effect, The wicked man to address himself to God, Confess his guilt, beg pardon & forgiveniss. The Psalms commonly Call'd the Penitential Psalms will furnish variety of fine passages for this. Lastly to conclude with the joy of the Penitent on his prayers being heard, and the Good man & He joyn in Celebrating the mercy & goodness of God, who pardons sinners on sincer[e] Repentance & Reformation. This to be further carried on into the Grand Chorus.

[annotation in Handel's hand:]

I send you this S<sup>f</sup> only to show you how zealous they are in Ireland for Oratorio's. I could send you a number of Instances more from others in Print and in writing.

Lfom Gerald Coke Handel Collection 2378 (letter), 2379 (enclosure); facsimiles of first page of letter and final lines of enclosure in Christie's 1973. The exact date of Handel's return to his house in Brook Street is not known. David Garrick had left Dublin on 23 August and arrived in London on 5 September; if Handel had a comparable journey, he would have been in London on 26 August. He wrote here that he had considered the possibility of visiting Jennens at Gopsall in the course of his journey, but in terms suggesting that he might have sent a message in advance, rather than making a deviation on his journey for a speculative visit. Gopsall is about 6 miles north-east of Atherstone, which had been on Handel's route on from Chester to London, following the Watling Street: it was Jennens's family estate, which he subsequently inherited on the death of his father, Charles Jennens senior, in 1747. Gopsall is in Leicestershire but the closest mail stages (Atherstone and Coventry) were in Warwickshire.

The Bishop of Elphin was Edward Synge (1691–1762). Christopher Smith [John Christopher Smith senior] was Handel's principal music copyist and professional assistant. For Mr Isted, see 25 April 1738; Jennens was scornful of the Dublin wordbook for *Messiah* as printed by George Faulkner (see 21 February 1743). For Handel's praise of the Irish 'Nation', see also his letter of 29 December 1741. The word 'middle' may have been intended as a pun – as a reference to Lord Middlesex, the chief organiser of the London opera season.

Handel was probably intentionally vague about his plans for the forthcoming season. It was not long before his supporters believed that he would perform in London: negotiations for singers and the use of Covent Garden theatre had probably already begun by the time of Richard Warner's letter on 25 September (q.v.). He may have made a tentative arrangement in Dublin to return there for the 1743–1744 season, but his oratorio performances in 1743 set him on a new career in London instead and he did not do so, though his music was extensively performed at Dublin in the following seasons.

For Lord Guernsey, Jennens's nephew, see 5–12 July 1733 and 19 September 1738; he later succeeded as the 3rd Earl of Aylesford and eventually inherited Jennens's collection of Handel scores and other music, subsequently part of the Aylesford Collection (see Roberts 1993). This collection was sold by the Earl's descendants in 1918, and a large part of it was purchased by Newman Flower, after whose death it was acquired (in 1965) by the City of Manchester, where it is now part of the Henry Watson Music Library (Mp). Packington (Warwicks.), the family estate of the Aylesford family, is less than 20 miles south-east of Gopsall.

**10 September 1742 Edward Holdsworth, Westminster, to Charles Jennens,  
 [Gopsall, Leics.]**

Dear Sir Mrs Drake's in Downing Street / Westminster. 7ber. 10. 1742

I suppose you have heard of Mr Handel's return to London, which would have been great joy to you, if you did not at the same time hear that He is to return again to Ireland for the winter.

I am, Dear Sir, Most sincerely & affectionately / Yours

E Holdsworth

[address panel:] To / Charles Jennens Junr. Esq

Lfom Gerald Coke Handel Collection 7678. For Holdsworth and his correspondence with Jennens, see 13 August 1730; see also Babington 2014. Holdsworth had returned to London in June from a tour to Italy as tutor-companion to George Pitt: he intended to set off again on another tour with William Drake a few days after this letter, but his departure was delayed until October. He was then abroad for three years, and from this circumstance resulted the correspondence with Jennens about *Messiah*, written at the time of the first London performances in 1743, and about Handel's oratorio seasons.

Holdsworth does not mention the source of his information about Handel, but it had obviously not come from Jennens, who probably received this letter soon after the one from Handel (see the previous item). In his reply Jennens informed Holdsworth that Handel was not planning to return to Dublin until the 1743–1744 season: see 29 October.

23 SEPTEMBER 1742

7

**18 September 1742** *The Daily Advertiser*

MUSICK.

*This Day are publish'd,*

SIX Solos for a Violin, with a thorough Bass for the Harpsichord or Violoncello.  
 Compos'd by Sig. PROSPERO CASTRUCCI.

Printed for J. Walsh, in Katherine-Street in the Strand.

*Of whom may be had,*

i. The British Orpheus, Book II. being a Collection of favourite English Songs, compos'd by Mess. Howard, Trevor, Russell, Boyce, &c.

For *The British Orpheus*, see 11 November 1741. Book II included three songs from Handel's revival of *L'Allegro* on 31 January 1741; see 2 July 1742. No music by Handel was included in Books III and IV; no copies of Books V and VI have been located. See Smith and Humphries 1968, pp. 61–2. The volumes may have been issued in pairs: publication of Book IV was advertised in February 1743 and Book VI in July 1744.

**21 September 1742** *The Dublin Journal*

The Organ in the new Musick-Room in Fishamble-street, being almost up, the Committee are desired to meet next Wednesday Evening, to settle the Musick for the ensuing Winter. Signed by Order. Will. Neale, Treas[urer].

DJ 18–21 September. This reveals that the instrument that Handel had brought with him to Dublin (see mid-October 1741) was no longer in the concert room. The 'Musick' referred to was the season of concerts by the Charitable Musical Society based at the Music Room: see 28 September.

**23 September 1742** *The Daily Advertiser*

*New MUSICK, and Editions of MUSICK,*

*Just publish'd by J. WALSH.*

For a German Flute, Violin, or Harpsichord,

Hasse and Gallupi's Airs from all  
 the late Operas,  
 Handel's Chamber Airs from all his  
 Operas, 4 vol.  
 Ranish's twelve Solos,  
 Wiedeman's Solos,

Prosper[o] Castrucci's Solos,  
 Tartini's Solos,  
 Veracini's Solos,  
 Hasse's Solos,  
 Lanzetti's Solos,  
 Geminiani's Solos.

Sonatas for Violins and German Flutes, in three Parts,

Cervetto's Sonatas,  
 Handel's Sonatas, two Sets,  
 Hasse's Sonatas,

Humphreys's Sonatas,  
 Quantz's Sonatas,  
 Loeillet's Sonatas.

## Concertos for Violins, &amp;c.

Hasse's eighteen Concertos for German Flutes and French Horns,	Handel's forty-two Overtures,
Handel's twelve grand Concertos,	Castrucci's twelve Concertos,
Handel's Select Harmony,	Geminiani's Concertos,
Locattelli's twelve Concertos,	Tessarini's Concertos.
	Alberti's Concertos.

## Musick for the Harpsichord.

Handel's Lessons, Overtures, and twelve Organ Concertos,	Scotch Country Dances, three Books,
Hasse's Concertos and Comic Dances,	Bononcini's Lessons,
	Roscengrave's Lessons.

## Vocal Musick, English.

Handel's Odes and Oratorios, viz. L'Allegro, Alexander's Feast, Saul, Esther, Athalia, Deborah, and Acis and Galatea.	The British Orpheus: A Collection of favourite English Songs, by Mess. Howard, Trevor, &c.
Spenser's Amoretti, and the Chaplet, by Dr. Greene.	Milton's Hymn of Adam and Eve, by Mr. Galliard.

All printed for J. Walsh, in Katherine-Street in the Strand.

Walsh's regular advertisements in the newspapers usually announced a few of his recent publications, but occasionally larger and more general lists appeared. Advertisements devoted entirely to editions of Handel's music had commenced during the 1730s, probably initiated by John Walsh junior: see 4 December 1734. Lists of Walsh's Handel publications were also included from time to time in the music editions, on title pages (see, for example, 25 November 1732 and 26 February 1743) and then on contents pages below the list of the songs: see 9 April 1743. Some of Walsh's newspaper advertisements in the 1740s end with reference to 'A complete Catalogue of Vocal and Instrumental Musick Price 6d'. This was probably an updated issue of the separate publication referred to by Smith as the 'Great Catalogue' (Smith p. xix, see also Smith and Humphries 1968 pp. xii–xiv), but no copy from this period is known: the latest entry in the only surviving exemplar (Lbl C.120.b.6; 28 pp., undated) is 'Favourite Songs in Hymen' (1741).

A general catalogue of Walsh's music publications is also found in copies of the first edition of *Joshua an Oratorio* (see 2 April 1748), and newspaper advertisements occasionally have a general list of Walsh's editions including items by Handel (see 23 September 1743). For subsequent newspaper advertisements devoted to Walsh's Handel editions, see 9 February 1745 and 3 April 1746.

The repertory given here does not include Handel's Coronation Anthems, which were probably published early in 1743: see 15 January 1743. The omission of Handel's Op. 3 Concertos was probably accidental. For *Select Harmony*, see 9 December 1740.



25 SEPTEMBER 1742

9

### 25 September 1742 *The Daily Advertiser*

*For the Benefit of Mr. SLEEP and Mr. WOODBRIDGE, Musicians.*

AT Ruckholt-House, Essex, on Monday next, the 27th instant, will be perform'd a Grand CONCERT of Vocal and Instrumental

MUSICK.

With additional Hands. The Vocal Parts by Mr. LOWE, &c.

The Concert to begin at Ten in the Morning, and end at Six in the Evening; in which Mr. Handel's Coronation-Anthem of *God save the King* will be perform'd once in the Morning, and conclude with the same in the Evening.

Note, There will be (by Desire) a BALL for the Ladies, and Care will be taken to keep the House warm.

This will be positively the last Time of performing there this Season.

Tickets to be had at Mr. Wenman's Punch-House behind the Royal Exchange, and at the Place of Performance, at 2s. 6d. each.

Ruckholt House at Leyton in Essex was an Elizabethan house which stood about a mile to the south of the church. In 1742 it was opened as a place of entertainment by William Barton, offering breakfasts (with fine carp and tench as specialities) and morning and afternoon concerts on Mondays during the summer season. A particular attraction was the gardens with their fountains and canals. Amos Wenman was involved with the undertaking, possibly on the catering side: some of the advertisements appeared above his name. In the early years of its existence Ruckholt House was popular with the nobility and quality. The tenor Thomas Lowe often sang there; other Handel singers who appeared there included Cecilia Arne, Avolio, Sibilla, Miss [?Esther] Young and Waltz. This is the earliest known Ruckholt House advertisement to mention any music by Handel: his name does not appear again in the advertisements until *Alexander's Feast* was performed on 3 October 1743 (q.v.). The Ruckholt House entertainments came to an end in August 1750; the old house was demolished in 1757.

Joseph Woodbridge was a kettle-drummer. The anthem was *Zadok the Priest*, or perhaps just the last movement of it, which begins with the words 'God save the King'. Advertisements and reports often refer to Handel's 'God save the King' and occasionally it can be established that the complete anthem was involved: see 6 and 18 February 1735. Usually, however, there is no further information. From 1745 onwards, if Handel's name is not mentioned, there is the possibility of further confusion with the song (not by Handel) that later became the British national anthem: see 9 and 30 September 1745.

### 25 September 1742 *The Dublin Journal*

The Charitable-Musical Society for the Relief of Distressed Families, have removed from College-Green, to Mr. Johnson's Musick-Room in Crow-Street, where their first Concert will be Wednesday the 29th Instant, and every Wednesday following, as they cannot have it as formerly on Tuesdays.

Sep. 21. 1742.

Signed by Order,

William Manwaring, Treas[urer].

NB. Those who intend becoming Members of the Society, are desired to get a Member to propose them, or send their Names, Places of Abode, and Subscription Money, to the Treasurer Mr. William Manwaring, who will propose them.

*DJ* 21–25 September. A further notice in the same newspaper on 5–9 October said that the Society, ‘finding the Number of their Members considerably increased of late, have removed their Assemblies from the Bear on College-green, to Mr. Johnson’s large Room in Crow-street’.

In Dublin there was a succession of ‘Charitable Musical Societies’, some of which may have combined or changed their identities in the course of time: see Boydell 1988, pp. 267–9. At this time there were two principal societies so named: this one based at Crow Street for the support of Distressed Families (subsequently supporting the Hospital for Incurables – see 24 January 1744), and another based at the Music Hall in Fishamble Street, for the relief of those imprisoned for debt (see 30 September). Both now established themselves at new venues, with the first moving to the Crow Street Music Room, in which John Johnson had already presented concerts. The other society, formerly at the Bull’s Head in Fishamble Street, had recently built their own hall in the same street (see 19 September 1741), and this is where Handel had given his performances. The increase in public interest may have been encouraged by the success of Handel’s recent performance of *Messiah* for the benefit of Dublin’s charities (see 27 March 1742).

There was also an established Philharmonic Society, which seems to have been primarily an association of musicians, perhaps based around the professional instrumentalists in Dublin, and provided the core of orchestral players for performances: see, for example, 12 January 1741 and 4, 23, 28 January 1742. This Society also had a new venue. A news item in *The Dublin Journal* 12–16 October 1742 announcing that ‘The Phil’harmonic Society will open their Concert for this Winter at their Room, opposite St. John’s Church in Fishamble-street, on Wednesday next the 20th Inst.’ is the earliest specific reference to the room, though the Society had previously been referred to as meeting in Fishamble Street in December 1740. There is a published wordbook, dated 1741, of works ‘As they are performed by The Philharmonic Society in Dublin’ (see the entry at the end of 1740–1741), covering a repertory that included many items performed under the patronage of other Dublin institutions. In September 1741 the Governors of Mercer’s Hospital had provided a loan of 500 guineas to the Philharmonic Society for the purchase of an organ (see 16 July 1745), presumably for their new room. As revealed by the newspaper notice in October 1742, the Society had its own concert series: see also 2 October 1744 and 14 October 1746. The Charitable Musical Society that supported the Hospital for Incurables, which had probably developed from the Crow-Street society, was subsequently associated with concerts in the Philharmonic Room: see 14 October 1746, 6 October 1747, 27 August 1748, 7 January 1749 and 23 September 1749.

For the various musical societies in Dublin and their venues see Boydell 1988, Appendices II and III.