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Edited by Donald Burrows , Helen Coffey , John Greenacombe , Anthony Hicks

Excerpt

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The Documents

1750–1755



1750–1751



Calendar of Handel's Performances (1751)

	Covent Garden theatre
<i>Belshazzar</i>	22, 27 February
<i>Alexander's Feast</i> + <i>The Choice of Hercules</i>	1, 6, 8, 13 March
<i>Esther</i>	15 March
<i>Judas Maccabaeus</i>	20 March

The death of the Prince of Wales on 20 March (after 10 p.m.) brought Handel's theatre season to an abrupt end, losing five performing nights. He had planned to perform *Alexander Balus* this season: see 20 March 1751.

	Foundling Hospital Chapel
<i>Messiah</i>	18 April; 16 May

There was a short season of opera performances at the Haymarket Theatre from 26 January (q.v.) to 19 March 1751, and one additional performance on 20 April. The company included three singers who also sang in Handel's oratorio season – Frasi, Galli and Guadagni.

15 June 1750 *The Belfast News Letter and General Advertiser*

By Particular Desire,

At the Assembly Room in Belfast, On Wednesday next, being the 20th of June, will be perform'd,

A CONCERT of Vocal and Instrumental Musick. Act the First, Overture: Songs, Shepherd, what art thou pursuing? by Mrs. STORER. Wou'd you gain the tender Creature? by Mrs. LAMPE. Act the second, A Concerto. Songs, Hush ye pretty Warbling Quire, by Mrs. LAMPE. To Wisdom's cold Delight, by Mrs. STORER. Act the third, A Concerto, by Mr. ROCKE. Songs, 'Tis Liberty, by Mrs. STORER. You tell me I'm Handsome, by Mrs. LAMPE. A Solo, by Mr. Manwaring. Jocky and Jenny, a Dialogue by Mrs. LAMPE and Mrs. STORER. After the Concert will be a BALL. Tickets to be had at the Royal Boot opposite the Assembly Room, at half a Crown each.

N.B. This will be the last Time of Performance.

The songs 'Shepherd, what art thou', 'Wou'd you gain' and 'Hush ye pretty' are from *Acis and Galatea*; 'Tis Liberty' is from *Judas Maccabaeus*. Isabella and John Frederick Lampe, Elizabeth Storer (with her husband Charles) and the violinist Bartholomew Manwaring

were en route to Edinburgh from Dublin (see 16 July below). This was their second concert in Belfast; their first had been on 13 June (*BNL* 12 June); Roche, a flautist, performed at both. They then gave four concerts at Downpatrick in July during Race Week (*BNL* 29 June); subsequently, on their return journey from Edinburgh to Dublin, they gave another in Belfast on 7 September (*BNL* 4 September). The music performed is advertised only for this concert on 20 June. ‘To Wisdom’s cold Delight’ is by John Stanley: there are several settings of ‘You tell me I’m Handsome’ or *The Judicious Fair*; ‘Jocky and Jenny’ is a traditional Scots song. For the previous careers of Lampe, Storer and Manwaring in Dublin, see 23 February and 8 October 1748.

These are the first recorded public concerts in Belfast: no more are documented until the 1760s (Johnston 2015, pp. 21–2).

28 June 1750 Handel begins the composition of *The Choice of Hercules*

The Choice of Hercules a Musical Interlude . . . angefangen den [27 deleted] 28 Juny. ♀
1750 [*begun the 28th of June (Wednesday) 1750.*]

Lbl R.M. 20.e.6, fo. 1r: annotation in Handel’s autograph score. His new ‘musical interlude’ was a one-act drama which could be combined with the two-part *Alexander’s Feast* to provide an evening’s entertainment of conventional length for the next oratorio season. (In the past Handel had performed his setting of Dryden’s Cecilian Ode *From harmony, from heav’nly harmony* with that function.) *The Choice of Hercules* adapted unused music that Handel had written for Tobias Smollett’s play *Alceste* (see 8 January 1750), but extra composition was also required, and this annotation records the start of work on the new music. For the completion of the draft score, see 5 July.

The complete libretto for *The Choice of Hercules* would have been prepared after the final cancellation of the project for *Alceste* at Covent Garden. The source was a poem by Robert Lowth (see 1 March 1751) and it is probable that Thomas Morell arranged Lowth’s text for Handel’s use: he claimed to have written the texts for the *Alceste* songs (see 8 January 1750) and may have collaborated with Handel to produce a libretto that would make best use of that music. However, he does not mention *The Choice of Hercules* in the letter to John Nichols in which he describes writing libretti for Handel (see Volume 6, Supplementary Texts, under c. 1780).

3–4 July 1750 Two oratorios performed in the Music Room at Oxford

An intention to perform two oratorios in the Holywell Street Music Room at Oxford on the days following the University’s Commemoration of Benefactors on 2 July had been reported in *The Whitehall Evening-Post* 23–26 June 1750: see the entry under that date in Volume 4. The performances were presumably directed by William Hayes, the Professor of Music, who also gave ‘A Grand Performance of Musick’ in the Sheldonian Theatre on 2 July, when his setting of William Collins’s *The Passions: An Ode for Music* was performed. Hayes also performed at the Salisbury Festival this year: see 8 October. Handel’s own performances at Oxford in 1733 had taken place during a more extended ‘Act week’ around the Commemoration: see 20 June 1733.

For the Music Room, see 13 July 1748 (Volume 4, pp. 586–7 and the additional entry in Volume 6, Additions and Revisions, for 13 July 1748). According to a memoir by William Hayes, the cost of construction for the Music Room ‘was entirely paid by the Year 1752’ (see Volume 4, p. 762); another version of the text added that ‘In 1754 the Alteration of the Seats took place; for they were originally upon a Level’ (quoted in Mee 1911, p. 9).

The celebrations in Oxford for the opening of the Radcliffe Camera in 1749 had included performances of three Handel oratorios in the Sheldonian Theatre (see 15 April 1749). Earlier in 1750 the Master of Balliol College had written that ‘about the beginning of July, the first Commemoration will be celebrated, & there is to be forever hereafter an annual Festival, with entertainments of Musick and Oratory, in praise of our Benefactors’ (see 30 April 1750, also 26 June 1750 in Volume 4). In the event, the oratorio performances took place at the Theatre only in those years when the University’s annual Commemoration of Benefactors involved some exceptional celebration: see 15 June 1754, 7 June 1756 and 29 June 1759. Otherwise, performances were given in the Music Room during the period of the Commemoration: see 25 June 1751 and 23 June 1752, also 5 July 1753, 28 June 1755, 9 July 1757 and 1 July 1758. The Music Room was the venue for the monthly ‘choral nights’ of the Oxford Musical Society at which works by Handel were often performed. The Society’s regular meeting night was a Monday, but during the Commemoration performances were sometimes given on other days.

The oratorios performed this year are likely to have been by Handel, but no record of the repertory has been found and information about Oxford performances is sparse until *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* began publication in 1753.

5 July 1750 Handel completes the score of *The Choice of Hercules*

G. F. Handel völlig geendiget July.5. [☞ *deleted*] 24.1750. [*completely finished 5 July (Thursday) 1750.*]

Lbl R.M. 20.e.6, fo. 58r: annotation in Handel’s autograph score. See 28 June. The new music here, to ‘finish’ *The Choice of Hercules*, complemented seven airs, four choruses and two instrumental movements rescued from the abandoned score for *Alceste*. *The Choice of Hercules* was a one-act work: Handel did not, as in previous years, go on to draft a new full-length oratorio during the summer. On 10 August he left London for the continent and did not return until early December. It is not known whether he had any oratorio libretto to hand in July 1750 for which he might have considered making preliminary drafts before leaving. The score of *Jephtha*, his next full-length oratorio, was not begun until 21 January 1751 (q.v.), and it is doubtful that Morell’s libretto for that was already written in the summer of 1750: see 20 July below.

The Choice of Hercules was first performed, with *Alexander’s Feast*, on 1 March 1751 (q.v.).

7 July 1750 *The Newcastle Journal*

*This is to give Notice,
That on Thursday, in the Race Week being the 19th of July,
will be performed at the Assembly Room in Durham,*

ALEXANDER's FEAST, with the Choruses composed by Mr Handel; to begin at 11 o'Clock in the Forenoon.

Tickets to be had at Mr Blenkinsop's, and at the Assembly Room, at Two Shillings and Six Pence each.

NJ 30 June–7 July. *Alexander's Feast* had previously been performed in Durham on St Cecilia's Day (22 November) 1749: see 18, 22 November and 7 December 1749. Entertainments during 'Race Week' in Newcastle, Durham and other places usually included a concert, but details of the programmes are rarely given in the newspapers.

[7 July] 1750 *The Memoirs of Michael Clancy, M.D.*

This [Trinity College, Dublin] is the only Place of Instruction, where there is no Intercourse between the Professors and the Pupils; the young Men may learn, if they please, no body hinders them, but who advances their Progress. Not one single Branch of Learning is taught methodically, but every Science is pointed to at a Distance, wrapt up in Obscurity. . . . There is a gradual Progression to every Perfection, and that Mind must deviate, whose every onward Step is not diligently attended to. *Handel* wou'd not have been much better than any common Organist, had not his delicate Ear been form'd to exquisite Sensations, by hearing skilful Masters execute with Power and Judgment.

The Memoirs of Michael Clancy, M.D. Containing, His Observations on many Countries in Europe: Particularly, The Southern Parts of France, the Province of Guienne, Part of Spain, Paris, London, and Ireland, where he resided at different Times, for the Space of twenty-five Years (2 vols., Dublin, 1750), vol. 1, p. 39; advertised as 'Just published' in *The Dublin Courant* 5–7 July. The Irishman Michael Clancy (1703/4–76) trained to be a physician but after losing his sight in 1737 became a writer. He had studied at Trinity College, Dublin, from 1721 to 1724, and may have heard Handel perform at Dublin in 1742.

16 July 1750 *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*

AT ST. MARY'S CHAPEL,
 ON Wednesday the 18th of July, will be performed
 A CONCERT

Of VOCAL and INSTRUMENTAL MUSICK.

ACT the FIRST. Overture in Ariadne. Come, ever smiling Liberty; by Mrs. [sic] Lampe. See, from the silent Grove; by Mrs. Storer.

ACT the SECOND. Overture in Alcina. Myself I shall adore; by Mrs. Lampe. Solo, by Mr. Manwaring. Duetto, Let Cesar and Urania live.

ACT the THIRD. Concerto, the 12th of Vivaldi, Ellen Aroon; by Mrs. Storer. Dialogue, Jonny [sic] and Jenny.

30 JULY 1750

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Tickets to be had at John's and Exchange Coffeehouses, and at Mr. MacGibbon's[,] Head of Flesh-market Close,

At Half a Crown each.
 (To begin at Six o'Clock.)

The Handel songs were from *Judas Maccabaeus* and *Semele*. This performance took place during a brief visit to Edinburgh by John Frederick and Isabella Lampe, Elizabeth Storer and the violinist Bartholomew Manwaring. They had travelled to Scotland from Dublin via Belfast, where they had given two concerts (see 15 June). By early October they were back in Dublin but returned to Edinburgh the following month (see Johnston 2004): see 18 March 1751 for their subsequent performance of *Acis and Galatea*. For MacGibbon, see 30 July.

20 July 1750 *The General Advertiser*

This Day are Publish'd,

PROPOSALS for *Printing by SUBSCRIPTION.*

A VOLUME of POEMS: Miscellaneous, Extemporary, Political, Serious and Divine. Amongst the latter will be Susanna, an Ethick Poem; Judith, an Heroic Poem, in Three Cantos; Jephtha, an Oratorio.

By JOHN FREE, D.D.

Vicar of Runcorn in Cheshire, and Lecturer of Newington in Surry.

John Free's collection, published as *Poems, and Miscellaneous Pieces formerly Written By John Free, D. D.* (London, 1751), did not include his libretto for *Jephtha*, which appears to predate Morell's on the same subject for Handel. An 'Advertisement' on the last page of the volume explains the omission: 'By taking in certain other Pieces the Oratorio of Jephtha could not be inserted as intended in this Volume, without running to a greater Expence, than the *Subscription Price* would bear. It will therefore be printed separate, when the Musick is finished.' No separate publication has been traced, but the libretto was published in Free's *Poems on Several Occasions . . . The Second Edition, with Additions of later Pieces* (London, 1757): see the end of calendar year 1757. John Stanley began composing a setting of Free's libretto early in 1751 (see Zöllner 2002, pp. 130–1, and Gardner 2008, pp. 92–101); there is no record of a public performance at that time and a manuscript copy of the music (D-Hs MB/2453) names performers from a much later period.

30 July 1750 *The Edinburgh Evening Courant*

At St. Mary's Chapel, on Wednesday the 1st of August, will be performed the celebrated Masque of

ACIS AND GALATEA.

The MUSICK composed by Mr. HANDEL.

Tickets to be had at the Coffeehouses, and Mr. MacGibbon's, at half a Crown each.

This appears to be the first recorded public performance of *Acis and Galatea*, or any of Handel's theatre works, in Edinburgh. No further details are known: it might have been a benefit for Mr MacGibbon, presumably the Scottish composer and violinist William MacGibbon (1690–1756). Baxter (1999, pp. 97–100) suggests that the Italian tenor Filippo Rochetti may have sung in this performance and also in another the following March (see 18 March 1751): he is known to have been resident in Edinburgh from 1744 to 1753, during which time he received a salary from the Edinburgh Musical Society. (For the Society, see 10 October below.) In 1731 he had sung the role of Acis at the first public performance of *Acis and Galatea* in London (his benefit concert – see 26 March 1731), and he did so again, under Handel himself, at Oxford in 1733 (see 20 June 1733).

1 August 1750 *The Daily Advertiser*

We hear that Mr. Handel is going to some Courts in Germany and Italy.

Also reported in the *Amsterdamse Courant* 15 August [4 August OS], under a section headed 'London den 11 Augusty': this may suggest that there had been a report in a London newspaper on 31 July (i.e. 11 August NS), although none has been found.

See 11 August for a correction to this report and a summary of references to Handel's travels this year; he went to the Netherlands in the first instance.

Johann Sebastian Bach had died at Leipzig on 17 July (28 July NS).

2 August 1750 Handel sells stock at the Bank of England

I *George Frideric Handel of Brook Street Hanover square Esqr.* this *Second Day of August* in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred *fifty* do Assign and Transfer *Two hundred pounds of my* Interest or Share in the Capital or Joint Stock, erected by an Act of Parliament of the *Nineteenth* Year of the Reign of his Majesty King GEORGE II. (intituled, An Act for granting to his Majesty several Rates and Duties upon *Glass*, and upon *Spirituous Liquors*; and for raising a certain Sum of Money by *Annuities* and a *Lottery*, &c.) and in the Proportional Annuity of *four* Pounds per Centum per Annum attending the same, unto *John Fleming of Exchange alley Broker his* Executors, Administrators, and Assigns. *Witness. my* Hand

George Frideric Handel [signature]

I Do Freely and Voluntarily Accept the above Stock Transferred to *me*

John Fleming [signature]

No. 785 Witness *Jno Hall* [signature]

[left margin:] 874/673

...

I *George Fredrick Handel of Brook Street Hanover Square Esqr.* this *Second Day of August* in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred *Fifty* do Assign and Transfer *One Hundred Pounds of My* Interest or Share in the Capital or Joint Stock . . .

4 AUGUST 1750

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[as above] . . . and in the Proportional Annuity of **f**our Pounds per Centum per Annum attending the same, unto *Thomas Barwick of Fryday Street Mercer his* Executors, Administrators, and Assigns. *Witness. My hand*

George Frideric Handel [signature]

I Do Freely and Voluntarily Accept the above Stock Transferred to *Me*

Tho Barwick [signature]

No. 786 Witness *H Griffith* [signature]

[left margin:] 874/106

Lbe AC 28/931, p. 57(1 and 2); see also Harris 2004. Stock transfers at the Bank of England were recorded on printed pro-forma entries in Transfer Books (see Illustration 8, p. 548). For the earliest surviving certificate of a stock transaction by Handel, see 19 March 1746. The handwritten components within the text are shown in transcriptions by italic. Where the pro-forma text is repeated in subsequent transactions, only the opening and closing sections are transcribed, with a reference to the common element as, for example, '[text as 2 August]'. The two sets of figures in the left margin (separated in the original by a horizontal line) are cross-references to the record of the transaction in the Stock Account ledgers. The printed part of stock transfers includes a bracket to the right, against which the nominal value of the stock is written, repeating information within the text: these features are not included in transcriptions.

Stock transactions required the various parties (or their attorneys) to attend in person at the Bank of England to sign the documents. Handel's signature appears on all thirty-three surviving transfer documents in which he was involved, even those executed after his eyesight had deteriorated: see, for example, 19 July 1754. The stock referred to here was £4 per cent Annuities 1746 (1st Subscription): on 2 August it was quoted at '103'. These transactions were also recorded in Handel's Stock Account (Lbe AC 27/228, p. 874: see Appendix 1 in Volume 6).

4 August 1750 *The London Evening-Post*

NEW MUSICK.

This Day are publish'd, Price 10s. 6d.

For CONCERTS,

A Fifth Set of HANDEL'S SONGS, selected from his latest Oratorios, for Violins, &c. in six Parts. The Song Part with the Words for a Voice, a Hautboy, German Flute or Harpsichord. Done in the original Keys, to be perform'd either by Voice or Instruments. These Collections contain some of the most Capital Songs ever publish'd.

N. B. The Song Part may be had separate without the Instrumental Parts, which is intended for the Improvement of young Ladies and Gentlemen in Singing and on the Harpsichord.

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

LEP 2–4 August. This set (Smith p. 193 no. 6) commenced the second volume of *Handel's Songs Selected from His Latest Oratorios* (see 20 December 1748). The songs are numbered 81–100: nos. 81–96 are from the repertory that Handel had performed in 1749 (*Solomon, Samson, Hercules*), followed by songs from *Esther, Athalia* and *Judas Maccabaeus*. The other Sets for Volume II (see Smith pp. 193–4) were advertised as follows:

Set 6: 22 November 1750 (Smith no. 7)

Set 7: 12 February 1751 (Smith no. 8)

Set 8: 26 February 1751 (Smith no. 9)

and a collected edition of vol. II (Smith no. 10) was advertised on 9 March 1751. None of these sets included any music from *Theodora*, the new oratorio in 1750, which still awaited publication (see 20 June 1751). For the Ninth Set, which commenced vol. III, see 6 October 1753.

9 August [1750] Charlotte Hanbury Williams, [?London], to Charles Hanbury Williams, Berlin

My Dear Papa,

Thursday 9th. of August

I return you a thousand thanks for your frequent Assurances of your health which I have received since you went.

I only waited till I heard of your arrival in Berlin to write to you. . . .

You desir'd I would write you an Acc[oun]t of Cuzzoni, her voice is reckon'd much decay'd by those who heard her before, & the 2 first Songs of farinelli's which she Sung did not please me, but she afterwards sang one within her own Compass, which charm'd me, & I think her manner is beyond anything I ever heard. She proposes staying in Town next winter, & it is thought Mr. Handel will take her into the Oratorio. . . .

I long to hear of you again & am with the greatest sincerity My Dear Papa's most affectionate & Dutiful Daughter

Sharlote H. Williams

[address panel:] A Monsr. / Monsr Le Chevalier Charles Hanbury Williams

US-FAY 52–10902, fos. 164–5. Charlotte's father, Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, was in Berlin to take up his post as British Ambassador. The soprano Francesca Cuzzoni, who had sung in Handel's operas during the Royal Academy period in the 1720s and with the Opera of the Nobility in the 1730s, had returned to England earlier this year: see 12 February and 7 May 1750. Charlotte (and her sister Frances) probably heard her at one or both of her two benefit concerts in May (see 18 May 1750): Charlotte would have been eleven at the time, Frances three years older. Details of the programme were not advertised, but it is possible that the song Charlotte enjoyed was 'Falsa imagine' from *Ottone*, which Handel had written for Cuzzoni's London debut in 1723: she sang it at least three times in 1751 (see 16 April, 20 and 23 May). By December 1750 her voice appears to have further deteriorated (see 6 December): any sympathy Handel may have felt for Cuzzoni did not extend to employing her in his oratorios.

[10 AUGUST] 1750

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9 August 1750 Handel buys stock at the Bank of England

I *David Abarbanel of London Merch[an]t.* this *Ninth* Day of *August* in the Year of our Lord One Thousand Seven Hundred *Fifty* do Assign and Transfer *One Hundred & fifty Pounds of My Interest or Share in the Capital or Joint Stock . . .* [text as 2 August] . . . and in the Proportional Annuity of *Four* Pounds per Centum per Annum attending the same, unto George Friderick Handel of Brook Street near Hanover Square Esqr his Executors, Administrators, and Assigns. *Witness.* My hand

David Abarbanel [signature]

I Do Freely and Voluntarily Accept the above Stock Transferred to *Me*

George Frideric Handel [signature]

No. 828 Witness *H Griffith* [signature]

[left margin:] 23/874

Lbe AC 28/930 p. 98(2); see also Harris 2004. For stock transfer certificates, see 2 August above. The stock was £4 per cent Annuities 1746 (1st Subscription): on 9 August it was quoted at ‘103 1-8th’. The transaction was also recorded in Handel’s Stock Account (Lbe AC 27/228, p. 874: see Appendix 1 in Volume 6). The following day Handel left London for the continent.

Deutsch p. 693 associates the transactions on 2 and 9 August with the release of funds to finance Handel’s forthcoming trip to Europe, but this may not have been the reason for the stock transfers.

[10 August] 1750 *The Life and Adventures of Joe Thompson*

We had hardly advanced half Way up the Walk, when we were met by Sir *Walter* himself, his Nephew, and his aimiable Daughter. . . . I saluted Miss *Louisa*, and could see her Colour come and go at this Interview; and indeed I found her so, past all Description, improved in her Person, that I lost at once all my Assurance, which was converted into a timid Awe, and a Reverence that made my Address little less than the Stile of Adoration. . . . Such was this delightful fair one, and no Wonder then, if all my Faculties were absorbed in Admiration! Oh! have we heard the thrilling Notes breathed in the inspiring Airs, the gentle Cadences of the inimitable *Handel!* Such was her Voice, whose melodious Accents diffused around unutterable Gladness; nor tuneful *Philomel’s* was half so sweet, who, *most musical, most melancholy*, chaunts her Griefs to the responsive Groves; or the towering *Lark’s*, who chears the Morn, when the *dappled Dawn doth rise!*

The Life and Adventures of Joe Thompson. A Narrative founded on Fact. Written by Himself (2 vols., London and Bath, 1750; John Hinton and W. Frederick), Vol. 1, pp. 177–9; announced as published in *The Daily Advertiser* 10 August, though *The Whitehall Evening-Post* 11–14 August promised publication on ‘Thursday, Aug. 16’. This anonymous novel was written by the prolific editor and writer Edward Kimber (1719–69) and became his most popular work, running to six editions and receiving French and German translations. The references by the narrator to the tuneful Philomel and the morning lark relate to lines by Milton set by