

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Volume 5: 1750–1755

The life and career of George Frideric Handel, one of the most frequently performed Baroque composers, are thoroughly documented in a wide variety of contemporary sources. This multi-volume publication, the most up-to-date, fully annotated collection of these documents, presents them chronologically, providing an essential resource for anyone interested in Handel and his music. The collection also gives insights into broader topics such as court life, theatre history, public concerts, and music publishing. Volume 5 begins with the composition of Handel's last original scores for his London oratorio seasons – *The Choice of Hercules* and *Jephtha*. The death of the Prince of Wales curtailed his 1751 season and deteriorating eyesight delayed the completion of *Jephtha*. Nevertheless, his annual Lenten oratorios and *Messiah* performances at the Foundling Hospital continued. At the same time, his music was increasingly heard in the provinces and referred to in the new literary genre of the novel.

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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

COLLECTED DOCUMENTS

1609–1763

VOLUME 5

1750–1755

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- Westminster City Archives: 10

INTRODUCTION

Scope

This book collects together texts dating from Handel's lifetime that contain references to him (directly, or by implication) and his music. Selected passages from later eighteenth-century publications (such as Mainwaring's 1760 biography of Handel, and books by Burney, Coxe and Hawkins), where they cover otherwise undocumented areas of Handel's life, are included at relevant periods in the main sequence. Although these may be unreliable in some aspects, including chronology, they may also have preserved first-hand information from earlier years which is not available from any other source. A few other texts are also incorporated near the dates to which their contents refer. Where a document has been the subject of previous attention (and was thus, for example, included by Deutsch), but is now regarded as doubtful, this is treated in a commentary.

The description 'Handel documents' covers several categories of materials. Manuscript sources include legal, institutional, financial and ecclesiastical records, as well as contemporary letters and diaries. Printed sources include London newspapers which, in addition to relevant news reports, carried routine advertisements for theatre and concert performances, and for music publications; there are also relevant items in newspapers from European and provincial British cities. Handel's musical scores are in themselves 'Handel documents', but their detailed history, as elucidated for example in books by Winton Dean about his operas and oratorios, is beyond the present scope. However, documents which establish dates of composition and performance, including annotations from Handel's musical autographs, are transcribed; the distribution of music between singers in the oratorios, and musical revisions which relate to performances, are summarised in commentaries. Documents relating to the circumstances of Handel's performances (such as lists of performers, and newspaper reports noting the arrival or availability of his singers) are included.

During the period covered by this volume, Handel's oratorio performances took place on different nights from those of the successive opera companies at the King's Theatre and he was not involved with the management of the companies, except perhaps marginally in 1754 through the provision of a score of *Admeto*, the only Handel opera production of the decade. The London opera seasons are summarised with entries for the first night of each season, and the repertory is listed there, with the names of the composers for each work. Thereafter documents referring to the operas are only included where they have some relevance to Handel or to changes in the

general pattern of musical activity. The most significant connection was through singers for Handel's performances who were, or had been, associated with the opera companies; the most direct professional competition to Handel during this period came from occasional oratorio-style theatre performances given by Thomas Augustine Arne in 1754 and 1755.

Presentation of the Documents

Entries for individual documents begin with a dated title-line, followed by a transcription of the document text, an English translation (for foreign-language texts) and a commentary. Texts from foreign-language documents are usually followed immediately by a complete English translation, printed in *italics*; translations of incidental foreign-language passages may sometimes be included in the transcriptions as interpolations within square brackets. Footnotes in original printed documents are transcribed at the end of the document text or relevant section and are not placed (unless by coincidence) at the bottom of a page. Editorial dates, whether in headings or annotations, use '5 July 1750' as the standard form; ordinal forms ('5th July', 'the 5th') are retained in quotations and used occasionally elsewhere if convenient and there is no possibility of ambiguity.

Entries are generally presented in chronological sequence of the documents themselves, under the date of writing (for manuscript items) or publication (for printed items). Where a document refers directly to an event that occurred on a different date, an additional brief descriptive entry may be added under the relevant date, with a cross-reference. In some cases (for example, if a performance was advertised on preceding days but not on the day itself) the date of the event is given precedence and the date of the source is given at the beginning of the commentary.

As in previous volumes, documents are presented in chapters that follow the cross-year pattern of the London theatre seasons. The year-chapters begin with a calendar of Handel's theatre performances in London; first performances of his works are indicated by bold type. Handel's theatre performances were given during the weeks of Lent, so that (for example) the calendar for his 1750–1751 season refers to February and March 1751. In previous volumes the year-breaks were principally defined by the dates when Handel commenced composition on new scores for the following season, but that does not apply here after the first season. Thereafter mid-year breaks occur at places convenient to the content, but do not have a consistent calendar date. The documents for the 1752–1753 season begin in September 1752 at the change of calendar in Britain from Old Style to New Style.

Items from diaries or registers are generally given individual entries under the relevant dates, but where the items form a related sequence they are given as a single group covering a span of dates. Documents relating to recurring financial transactions in Handel's accounts at the Bank of England, and the payment of parish rates on his London residence, are mainly covered by brief descriptive entries under the relevant dates, and overviews are provided by the Appendices in Volume 6.

Where several documents have the same date, the order of presentation is to some extent pragmatic, but newspaper announcements (presumed to appear at the start of a day except for the evening papers) are generally given before documents from letters or other manuscript sources, and documents defining past events are placed before those defining future events; in references from newspapers, news items are generally presented before advertisements. Advertisements and notices for first nights of performances or revivals of works with which Handel was involved are however generally placed last under the date, immediately before any document texts deriving from the wordbooks. Full texts are given of notices for the first performances of Handel's oratorio seasons as published on the day; where notices for subsequent nights repeat details without change, then only outline texts are given.

Publications of books, pamphlets and music, including publications to which Handel subscribed, are documented, as far as possible, by the date of publication; significant preceding documents relating to the announcement of publication or subscription are also included, with notes in the commentaries on their progress. Preference has been given to the earliest or most comprehensive advertisements, but there are often a number of variations in successive notices, and not all of these are recorded. 'Published this Day' was frequently retained in later repeats of advertisements, so it is possible that a quoted document had predecessors that have not been traced.

Documents for which precise dates have not been determined are placed at a position in the chronological sequence that is appropriate to the content; more difficult cases are allocated to a year in the most likely period, or the end of the relevant month. Quotations without specific dates from contemporary printed books are as far as possible entered under the date of first publication, usually determined from advertisements in newspapers; there are cases where publication preceded or followed the imprint year. Where the imprint date is the only evidence, preference is given to placing the documents at the end of the 'season year' (instead of the calendar year), so that they do not interrupt related sequences of texts around the change of calendar year. The change to the New Style (Gregorian) calendar in 1752 (see 14 September 1752) brought an end to the previous ambiguity in year-dates.

Transcriptions of advertisements and other documentary evidence are given for all identifiable performances and events with which Handel was involved. For individual works performed in the oratorio seasons, the announcement on the day of the first performance (or the nearest to it if there is no document for the day itself) is given documentary status; if there is a run of performances, the dates are listed in the commentary. Other significant variants in the notices of repeat performances (e.g. the indication of additional music) will usually also be described in commentaries, but a separate new document may be introduced if the variants are substantial, have accumulated into a significantly different text or require annotation in their own right. Within each season, recurring elements in subsequent notices (such as ticket prices and starting times) are generally not repeated if they remain unchanged. The development of Handel's annual *Messiah* performances at the Foundling Hospital is

comprehensively reported in the Hospital's minute books as well as in advertisements and reports from the London newspapers.

The last decade of Handel's life saw a considerable expansion in performances of his music by other musicians in Britain, and beyond London. The burgeoning provincial newspapers provide a record of this activity, supplemented in some cases by institutional records. Performances of Handel's major English works were already well established in Dublin by 1750, and similar patterns developed in (among other places) Oxford, Salisbury, Bath, Edinburgh and the cities of the Three Choirs Meetings. Individual songs and instrumental works are also substantially represented in mixed concert programmes. For some events, complete concert programmes are included here to provide context for the Handel items; elsewhere, outlines of the programmes are summarised. For those unfamiliar with the conventions of eighteenth-century programmes, it is perhaps useful to note that 'song by' or 'concerto by' often refer to the performer rather than the composer. This volume also sees the appearance of Handel and his music in the new literary genre of the novel.

Conventions for the transcription of documents are described in the Introduction to Volume 1.

Title lines

The chronological sequence takes into account the different calendars that were in current use. At the beginning of the period covered by this volume the Julian (Old Style) calendar is treated as primary. Britain adopted the New (Gregorian) Style in 1752, with the calendars coinciding from 14 September 1752; previously, the New Style calendar, as used in continental Europe, was consistently eleven days ahead of Old Style. Where a document is not dated in the principal style for the period or clarification is needed, equivalent dates are given in brackets – e.g. '1(12) September 1750', or '22 November (3 December) 1750'. The year is always considered to begin on 1 January, although the beginning of the legal year in Britain remained 25 March until 1752. In document texts dates are transcribed in the form they appear on the originals, which may be in a different Style and thus may not appear to be identical to those in the title lines.

Following the date, the title line will usually identify the source document, by (for example) the name of the newspaper (e.g. *The Daily Advertiser*) or the archive source (e.g. 'Minutes of Mercer's Hospital, Dublin'); for letters, it will give the names of the writer and recipient, with their locations where they can be identified (e.g. 'Earl of Shaftesbury, London, to James Harris, Salisbury'). Alternatively, there may be a descriptive title specifying the event concerned (e.g. 'Handel completes the score of *The Choice of Hercules*'); this convention is also used in the case of summary entries for which fuller details are given in an Appendix (e.g. 'Handel's Stock Account at the Bank of England'). For Handel's performances, title-lines take the form as 'First performance of *Jephtha*' or 'Revival of *Alexander's Feast*', unless subsumed by a more general topic, such as 'First night of Handel's oratorio season at Covent Garden'. Where

performances of Handel's works by other people are not documented to a specific date but are (for example) recorded from a printed wordbook, the title takes the form 'Performance of *Esther* at the Castle Tavern'. Square brackets are used to indicate dates, names or places which are not immediately derived from the document, and which have been attributed by the editors: where the attribution is uncertain, it may be preceded by '?'. Sometimes the description may specify the event and its date, where the date of the document itself is liable to cause confusion. Occasionally square brackets occur in the original texts of advertisements; if they alternatively are used to incorporate lines from subsequent versions of a document, this is indicated in the commentary. Texts from literature that is later in date than the position in the chronological sequence have headings in the form 'From Mainwaring's *Memoirs* (1760)'.

For English newspapers and journals that were published three-times weekly under multiple dates (e.g. '20–22 November'), the last date is used to determine the placing of the document, and is given in the title line (as '22 November 1750 *The London Evening-Post*'): the date as found on the original is cited at the beginning of the commentary with the title in abbreviated form (as '*LEP* 20–22 November'). Where newspapers included an anthology of items from sources contributed under different dates, the publication date defines the title line, and any relevant sub-heading date is included as part of the transcribed text. News items were frequently repeated in several newspapers, entries from daily or thrice-weekly papers were also gathered in the weekly papers (usually published on Saturdays), and items from London newspapers were repeated elsewhere, for example in *The Salisbury Journal* or the *Hamburger Relations Courier*. In these cases, one text, usually the best or earliest that we have been able to discover, is given documentary status, and other occurrences are not included or recorded unless they contain some significant variation.

For letters where a correspondent is usually identified by a landed title (e.g. Earl of Shaftesbury), this form is used; however, other titles (e.g. Mr, Signora, Dr, Revd) are not generally included with personal names, except in those cases where no forename is identified.

Document texts

Where the 'document' is an extract from a longer text, sections of the text additional to those referring directly to Handel may be included in order to establish a context for the reference; otherwise, an indication of context is given in the commentary. Where a text is presented in a shortened form, internal elisions are shown by . . . ; if the quoted text is free-standing (i.e. does not depend on surrounding material), the existence of preceding or succeeding text is not indicated.

Dates not immediately obvious as stated within a document text are glossed with an explanatory date in square brackets, e.g. 'Friday next [19 October]'. In texts from correspondence, if the document itself includes a date of origin, a place of origin, or

the address of the intended recipient, these features are included as part of the transcription, and the general layout of such features is reproduced. Greetings and relevant parts of subscriptions, where available, are included as establishing the identity and relationship of correspondents, even where the relevant extract from the letter is brief. The original line-arrangement of subscriptions and address panels is shown by oblique strokes, except where the layout has some significance and in the case of Handel’s autograph letters, where the original arrangement is transcribed. Abbreviations are expanded in formulaic subscriptions (e.g. ‘y[ou]r most obed[ien]t and aff[ectiona]te humble ser[van]t’ is completed without the inclusion of brackets) unless some unusual or ambiguous element is involved, and matching greetings (e.g. ‘Dear B[rothe]r’) are also expanded. Where line-arrangements have been simplified in transcriptions from letters, diaries and newspaper announcements, the original line-breaks are indicated by oblique strokes; if such strokes occur in the original texts, that is indicated in the commentary. Abbreviated forms in diaries (e.g. for days of the week in George Harris’s diary) are not expanded in places where the meaning is clear. Where an abbreviation recurs in the same text (for example, in legal documents or institutional minutes), the word is usually expanded on the first occurrence only. Within document texts square brackets are used for editorial interpolations and clarifications, for example where text has been accidentally omitted or lost from the original, or the meaning is potentially ambiguous.

Wordbooks for Handel’s oratorios do not usually include the names of the singers; editorial reconstructions of the cast-lists, mainly derived from evidence in the performing scores and contemporary printed music editions, are added after the names of the characters if the *Dramatis Personæ* page is included as a document, or are elucidated in the commentaries. In date-annotations on Handel’s musical autographs from September 1739 onwards he often added astrological symbols for the days of the week:

- ☾ Monday
- ♂ Tuesday
- ♀ Wednesday
- ♃ Thursday
- ♀ Friday
- ♄ Saturday
- ☼ Sunday

These are occasionally also found in other documents, including German church records.

Commentaries

The source that has been used for the transcribed text is given as the first element of the annotation, except where that source has already been fully identified in the title line. As far as possible, archive locations are identified by abbreviated geographical codes

(see below). Identification of the source may be followed by a reference to a previously published transcription of the text, and to published facsimiles (of all or part of the original). One or two other references to relevant literature, such as the earliest or most complete previous publication of the text, or a survey of documents of the same type, may be included. No attempt is made to cover all previous references to a document, but particular publications which have led to the inclusion of that item during the preparation of this collection may be noted.

Where the content of a document text relates to other comparable references or events, the connections are indicated by (for example) 'see 25 June 1751'. A number of documents may be entered under the same date, but the appropriate cross-reference should generally be easy to find. For cross-references to documents that are 'double-dated' in Old and New Styles, only the filing date in the chronological sequence is given: a reference to '14(25) December 1750' will therefore appear as 'see 14 December 1750'. Titles of newspapers may be given in the shortest form which identifies the publication without ambiguity.

The commentaries elucidate the content of the transcribed texts, including (for example) identification of the principal persons or musical works that are mentioned, and explanations of words and references that occur within the quoted passages. For Handel's performances, the vocal soloists and their roles are identified as far as possible in the commentaries to entries for individual works, with a general summary also in the commentary to the first performance of his season.

Abbreviations in commentaries, and bibliographical references

See Libraries and Archives (p. 681) for the codes used in the commentaries to identify source locations in abbreviated form, employing *RISM* sigla as far as possible but omitting the national code for British references: thus the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery appears as 'US-SM', but the Bodleian Library in Oxford appears as 'Ob'.

Bibliographical references are given in 'author/date' form (e.g. Zöllner 2002) with reference to the full citations in the Bibliography, which are arranged alphabetically by author and chronologically within author entries; music editions are entered under the name of the composer. Exceptionally, the following frequently cited sources have short forms without the year-date:

'Burney, *History*' refers to Burney, Charles. *A General History of Music, from the Earliest Ages to the Present Period*, 4 vols. (London, 1776–1789).

'Deutsch' refers to Deutsch, Otto Erich. *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London, 1955; Adam & Charles Black).

'Hawkins, *History*' refers to Hawkins, John. *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, 5 vols. (London, 1776).

'*HHb*' refers to volume 4 of the *Händel-Handbuch*, a revised version of 'Deutsch'; see the Bibliography under 'Eisen and Eisen'.

‘Smith’ refers to Smith, William C. *Handel: A Descriptive Catalogue of the Early Editions*, 2nd edition (Oxford, 1970; Blackwell), for printed editions of Handel’s works, with references to page numbers and edition sequence numbers, as for example ‘Smith p. 78 no. 1’.

Where an entry is taken from a later source which is identified by author, title and date in the title-line, the source-reference in the commentary may have a short form without date: thus if the title line says ‘From Mainwaring’s *Memoirs* (1760)’, the reference will be ‘*Memoirs*’.

‘os’ and ‘ns’ refer to dates in the Old Style and New Style calendars, respectively. Eighteenth-century currency in Britain, shown in two or three columns in financial ledgers, had 20 shillings to the pound (£), 12 pence (d.) to the shilling (s.). A guinea was 21 shillings or £1.1s.

Acts and scenes in operas and oratorios (and plays) are identified by upper and lower case roman numerals: ‘III/ii’ refers to Act (or Part) Three, Scene Two. Music volumes from the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* have references by Series and Volume numbers: *HHA* II/41 refers to Serie II Band 41; references to the *Händelgesellschaft* (‘Chrysander’) music edition are by volume number, as for example ‘HG 48’.