Music and the Benefit Performance in Eighteenth-Century Britain

In the early eighteenth century, the benefit performance became an essential component of commercial music-making in Britain. Benefits, adapted from the spoken theatre, provided a new model from which instrumentalists, singers, and composers could reap financial and professional rewards. Benefits could be given as theatre pieces, concerts, or opera performances for the benefit of individual performers, or in aid of specific organizations. The benefit changed Britain’s musico-theatrical landscape during this time, and these special performances became a prototype for similar types of events in other European and American cities. Indeed, the charity benefit became a musical phenomenon in its own right, leading, for example, to the lasting success of Handel’s *Messiah*. By examining benefits from a musical perspective – including performers, audiences, and institutions – the twelve chapters in this collection present the first study of the various ways in which music became associated with the benefit system in eighteenth-century Britain.

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Music and the Benefit Performance in Eighteenth-Century Britain

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1703–1726 (Bibliographical Society, 1997), The Lives of George Frideric Handel (Boydell Press, 2015), twenty-seven entries in the Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia (Cambridge University Press, 2009), and over eighty articles in journals such as Music & Letters, Early Music, Eighteenth-Century Music, London Journal, and Notes, as well as chapters in collected volumes.

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Alison DeSimone
Matthew Gardner
Abbreviations


GMO  Grove Music Online (Oxford Music Online), oxfordmusiconline.com


Library Sigla

D-Dl  Dresden, Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek (SLUB)

D-HRD  Arnsberg-Herdringen, Jagdschloss Herdringen, Bibliotheca Fürstenbergiana

D-Hs  Hamburg, Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietzky, Musiksammlung

GB-AB  Aberystwyth, National Library of Wales

GB-AY  Aylesbury, Centre for Buckinghamshire Studies

GB-BGul  Bangor, Bangor University Library

GB-Cfm  Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum
**List of Abbreviations**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GB-DRcro</td>
<td>Durham, Durham County Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-En</td>
<td>Edinburgh, National Library of Scotland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ep</td>
<td>Edinburgh, Public Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Eu</td>
<td>Edinburgh, University Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-GLr</td>
<td>Gloucester, Gloucestershire Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-HFr</td>
<td>Hertford, Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-LEwyas</td>
<td>Leeds, West Yorkshire Archive Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lam</td>
<td>London, Royal Academy of Music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lbl</td>
<td>London, British Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB-Lfom</td>
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<tr>
<td>GB-Lna</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Lrcs</td>
<td>London, Royal College of Surgeons</td>
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<td>GB-NH</td>
<td>Northampton, Northamptonshire Record Office</td>
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<td>GB-NO</td>
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<td>GB-NOr</td>
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<td>GB-Ob</td>
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<td>GB-SHEals</td>
<td>Sheffield, Sheffield Archives and Local Studies</td>
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<td>GB-SHR</td>
<td>Shrewsbury, Shropshire Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GB-Ybi</td>
<td>York, University of York, Borthwick Institute for Archives</td>
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<td>IRL-Dm</td>
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<td>IRL-Dmh</td>
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<td>IRL-Dna</td>
<td>Dublin, National Archives of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRL-Drcb</td>
<td>Dublin, Representative Church Body, Library</td>
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<td>IRLN-Bpro</td>
<td>Belfast, Public Record Office of Northern Ireland</td>
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<td>PL-Kj</td>
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<td>S-Uu</td>
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<td>US-Cn</td>
<td>Chicago, The Newberry Library</td>
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