FEBRUARY 6 – 9

2025

AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

Boston, Massachusetts

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Thursday, February 6 | College Club of Boston (44 Commonwealth Avenue)

6:00 p.m. Opening Reception

6:45 p.m. Welcome—Graydon Beeks, President, American Handel Society

Howard Serwer Memorial Lecture (Chair, Graydon Beeks)

6:50 p.m. **Ayana Smith** (Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music). Deathly Images: Discourses of Sight and Sound in Handel's London Operas

Friday, February 7 | MIT Erdely Music & Culture Space, Linde Music Building (201 Amherst Street, Cambridge)

7:50 a.m. Bus 1 leaves The Colonnade for MIT

8:15 a.m. Bus 2 leaves The Colonnade for MIT

8:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Welcome—Ellen T. Harris, Chair, Local Arrangements

Paper Session 1. Bells and Whistles: Handel's Sounds of Love and Madness (Chair, Mark Risinger)

9:10 a.m. **Minji Kim** (American Handel Society). "Make poor Saul stark mad": Sonic Effect of Bells in Handel's *Saul*

9:50 a.m. **Blake Johnson** (Campbellsville University). "Where Love or Honour Calls": The Role of the Oboe in Handel's Early Operas, 1705–15

10:20 a.m. Coffee Break

Paper Session 2. Handelian Encounters (Chair, Mark Risinger)

10:40 a.m. **Ruth Eldredge Thomas** (Durham University). Bach, Handel, and Religion in the English Nineteenth Century

11:20 a.m. **Kenneth Nott** (The Hartt School). Lou Harrison and "The Divine Mr. Handel"

Paul Traver Memorial Concert

12:15 p.m. Singers of MIT Chamber Chorus and soloists from Emmanuel Music, conducted by Ryan Turner, performing Handel's first setting of "As pants the hart" and works by Palestrina, Victoria, and Schütz. *Free admission.*

Location: MIT Thomas Tull Concert Hall, Linde Music Building

1:00 p.m. Lunch

Paper Session 3. Handel in America (Chair, Wendy Heller)

2:30 p.m. **Joe Lockwood** (Newcastle University). *Zadok the Priest*, the "Hallelujah!" Chorus, and the Imperial Soundscape in Boston on the Brink of Revolution

3:10 p.m. **Berta Joncus** (Guildhall School of Music & Drama). Handel Melodies and Anti-Slavery Activism: Music for the Common Good

3:50 p.m. Coffee Break

4:10 p.m. **Stephen Nissenbaum** (Underhill, Vermont). From Göttingen to Northampton: Handel Operas Arrive in America, 1927–1931

5:00 p.m. Bus 1 leaves MIT for The Colonnade

5:30 p.m. Bus 2 leaves MIT for The Colonnade

Concert

7:30 p.m. ***Love, Handel***. Joélle Harvey (soprano) and the Handel + Haydn Society, conducted by Jonathan Cohen, performing Handel's Cantatas, *Il delirio amoroso* and *Tra le fiamme*, and Concerto Grosso, Op. 6, No. 1. https://handelandhaydn.org/concerts/2024-25/love-handel

Location: Jordan Hall, New England Conservatory (30 Gainsborough Street)

Saturday, February 8 | College Club of Boston

8:30 a.m. Breakfast

Paper Session 4. Reconstructions (Chair, Robert Ketterer)

9:15 a.m. **Graydon Beeks** (Pomona College). Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, 4th Bart. (1749–1789) as a Collector of Handel's Music

9:55 a.m. **Alexander McCargar** (University of Vienna). Johann Oswald Harms and Handel's "Lost" *Nero*

10:35 a.m. Coffee Break

10:55 a.m. **Ruth Smith** (The Handel Institute). Handel's *Solomon* and Solomon's Temple

12:00 p.m. Lunch / AHS Board Meeting (College Club)

Paper Session 5. Oratorios: From Composer to Editor (Chair, Berta Joncus)

2:00 p.m. **Fred Fehleisen** (The Juilliard School). Handel's First Day on the Job: 22 August 1741

2:40 p.m. **Mark Risinger** (New York, New York). On the Rhetorical Structure and Function of Handel's Oratorio Choruses

3:20 p.m. Coffee Break

3:40 p.m. **Annette Landgraf** (Hallische Händel-Ausgabe). The Different Historical Editions of *Judas Maccabaeus* and Challenges for a Modern Edition

4:20 p.m. **Donald Burrows** (Open University). "In the manner of an oratorio": Interpreting the Bottom Stave in Handel's Score of *Messiah*

Concert

8:00 p.m. **Francesco Corti**, harpsichord and organ, performing a solo work for harpsichord, and joining the Boston Early Music Festival Chamber Ensemble and director Robert Mealy to present two Organ Concertos by Handel, Op. 4, nos. 1 and 4. https://bemf.org/concert-season/francesco-corti

Location: First Lutheran Church, Boston (299 Berkeley Street)

Sunday, February 9 | College Club of Boston

8:30 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Open Business Meeting

Paper Session 6. Competition, Prime donne*, and Theatricality* (Chair, Nathan Link)

9:30 a.m. **Francesca Greppi** (University of Bologna). Soprano Pairing at the Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice: Bordoni and Cuzzoni's Early Collaborations in Italy

10:10 a.m. **David Vickers** (Royal Northern College of Music). Giulia Frasi and Italian Music in London

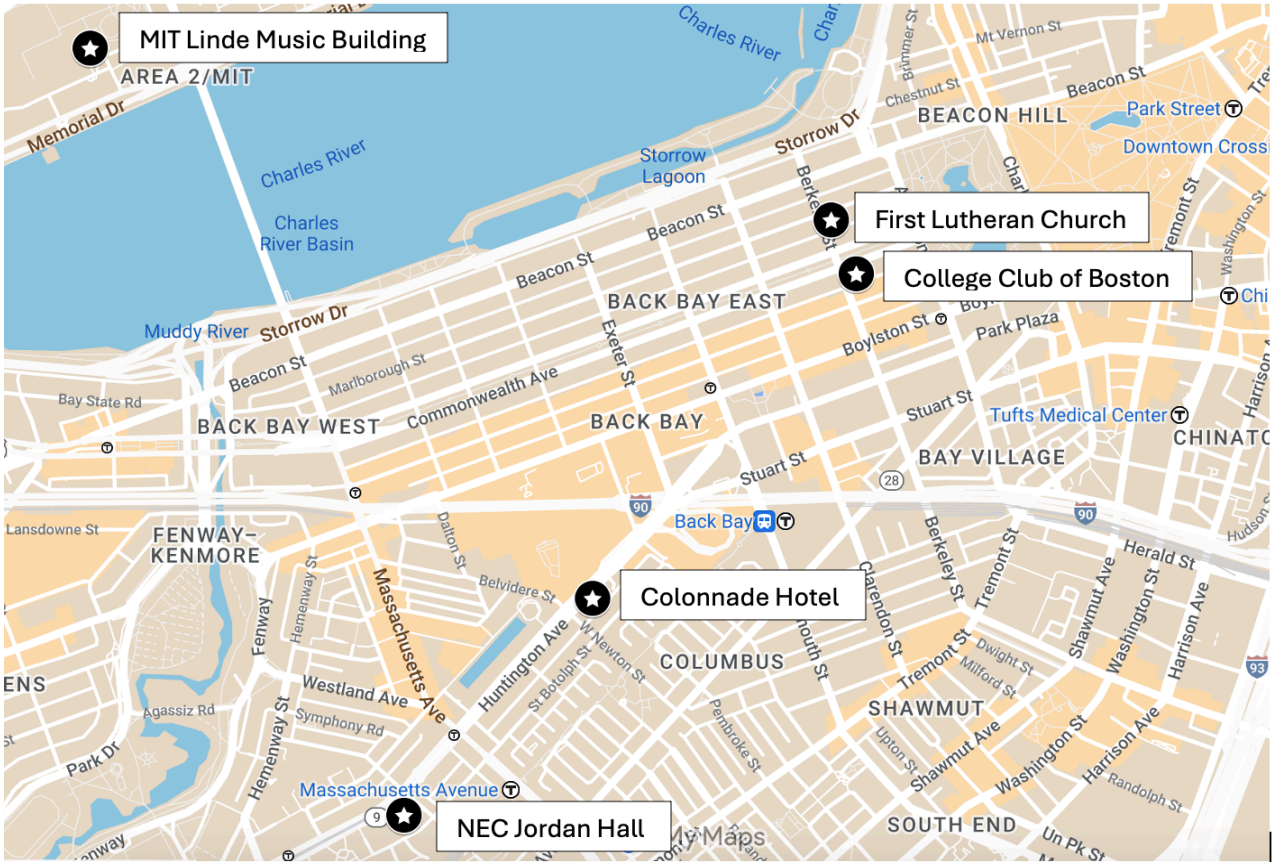
10:50 a.m. Coffee Break

11:10 a.m. **Yseult Martinez** (Sorbonne University). Female Cross-Dressing and Men's Redemption on the London Opera Stage: Handel and Transvestite Heroines during the 1730s

11:50 a.m. **Matthew Gardner** (University of Tübingen). Handel's Theater Singers 1737–1741

12:30 p.m. Closing Remarks—Graydon Beeks

MAP OF VENUES



American Handel Society

www.americanhandelsociety.org

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Graydon Beeks, President, Pomona College
Nathan Link, Vice President, Centre College
Minji Kim, Newsletter Editor/Secretary, Andover, MA

Ireri E. Chávez-Bárcenas, Bowdoin College
Alison DeSimone, Minot, ME
Norbert Dubowy, Mozarteum, Salzburg
Fredric Fehleisen, The Juilliard School
Roger Freitas, Eastman School of Music
William D. Gudger, Honorary Director, The College of Charleston
Ellen T. Harris, Honorary Director, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Wendy Heller, Princeton University
David Hurley, Honorary Director, Pittsburg State University, Kansas

Regina Compton, Web Designer, Sarasota, FL
Marjorie Pomeroy Kelly, Treasurer, Sandwich, MA

Robert Ketterer, University of Iowa
Richard G. King, Honorary Director, University of Maryland
Nicholas McGegan, Honorary Director, Berkeley, CA
Kenneth Nott, The Hartt School
Mark Risinger, New York, NY
John Roberts, University of California, Berkeley
Marty Ronish, Honorary Director, Edmonds, WA
Ellen Rosand, Honorary Director, Yale University
Ayana Smith, Indiana University Bloomington

ABSTRACTS

Howard Serwer Memorial Lecture
Chair, Graydon Beeks

Ayana Smith (Indiana University, Jacobs School of Music). Deathly Images: Discourses of Sight and Sound in Handel's London Operas

In the late seventeenth century, discourses about truth, belief, and how we perceive the world frequently centered on images. Print materials stemming from both intellectual and popular cultures demonstrate fascination with vision, in scientific reports on visual devices including microscopes, telescopes, and the *camera obscura*, and in literary and philosophical treatises through metaphors such as painting and poetry. These discourses had a significant impact on the development of imagistic verisimilitude—or the *immagine del vero* (the "image of truth")—within the Arcadian Academy, a group with which Handel was closely associated. However, within a number of Handel's London operas, we begin to see a reversal of the Arcadian *immagine del vero.* These operas seem to test the limits of vision while privileging sound in meaningful ways. In these operas, images can affect the mind, disturb the viewer, or cause disorientation. In such cases, sound mediates between characters' perception and their reality, and also speaks directly to the audience's dramatic understanding. In this paper, I will show how scenes from Handel's *Giulio Cesare*, *Silla*, *Orlando*, and *Rodelinda* enter into new discourses regarding the science of sound, mediation, and perception.

Paper Session 1. Bells and Whistles: Handel's Sounds of Love and Madness
Chair, Mark Risinger

Minji Kim (American Handel Society). "Make poor Saul stark mad": Sonic Effect of Bells in Handel's *Saul*

According to his librettist Charles Jennens, Handel acquired a special instrument called the carillon (i.e., bells) for his oratorio *Saul* (1738) and with it designed to "make poor Saul stark mad." The carillon imitated the bell-like metallic properties of the ancient Hebrew instrument played by the women singing and dancing in welcoming King Saul and David home from war. Their celebration, however, triggers Saul's madness and initiates the drama of his downward spiral as he perceives their greater preference of David over him and becomes jealous. The impact of the carillon on Saul in this scene in Act 1 has thus far only been discussed to the extent that it accompanies the women's song that offends the king, but in this paper, I will examine the sonic effect of the instrument itself to consider the possibility of its direct role in affecting Saul.

In early-eighteenth-century England where bells pervaded daily life and marked major events on the calendar both personal and national, people regularly heard, interpreted, and responded to ringing. Some aspects of this rich history of English bell culture and ideas that I will explore are people's thoughts on the ringing of church bells during public celebrations, proverbial association of bells with imprudent speech, and the tradition of expelling evil spirits with bells. These diverse contexts will show the manifold potential of bells and provide contemporary bases for exploring Handel's use of his carillon to aggravate Saul. The examination of the bell motif in the chorus, "Envy, eldest born of hell" (Act 2), in particular will strengthen the idea of Handel's employment of bell sounds to enter the psychological/spiritual realm of Saul's madness.

Blake Johnson (Campbellsville University). "Where Love or Honour Calls": The Role of the Oboe in Handel's Early Operas, 1705–15

Handel's operas are filled with extensive obbligato parts written to feature the various sections of the orchestra. From Charles Burney to Winton Dean, critical discourse on the operas has acknowledged the ways in which these obbligato parts serve to complement and elevate the vocal parts. Recent scholarship by Nathan Link and myself has looked beyond the aural experience of these obbligato parts to consider the role of the solo instrument in conveying an aria's affective material and furthering Handel's musical depiction of the text. In such arias, Handel utilizes the solo instrument not as window dressing or a source of additional musical interest, but as a second incarnation of the character it accompanies; an additional depiction of the character's emotional state which weaves in and out of the vocal line and takes over when the voice falls silent. Without the benefit (or burden) of being able to speak the text, the solo instrument relies upon the power of suggestion to draw the listener in with its expression of the aria's affect.

Within Handel's considerable output of obbligato parts, the oboe stands out as an instrument to which he turned regularly. Further, the contexts into which Handel inserted the instrument bear striking similarities, in terms of both affect and of the characters with which the instrument is paired. Link has described the oboe as representing love in these arias, and it certainly does so in a wide-ranging way. The first published oboe treatise, *The Sprightly Companion* (London, 1695), included a verse stating that "the Hautboy charms in War . . . Where Love or Honour calls . . . *This* charms with Love." In line with this description of the instrument's ability to stir the passions, Handel's early operas use the oboe to reflect not only love, but its repercussions; the extreme and often ugly emotions which result from love gone awry. With few exceptions, these extreme emotions are expressed by female characters and more consistently yet by female voices. Handel's deviations from this norm pose compelling narrative implications. These arias largely fall into three broad categories: love arias, impassioned arias (often with elements typical of Handel's mad scenes), and laments. Handel's use of the oboe in each of these contexts serves to strengthen its connotation throughout an opera and connect the arias in which it appears. In this paper, I will analyze his use of the oboe in examples from the early operas, discussing the types of characters and voices typically paired with the oboe, how the oboe interacts with the vocal lines, how this varies between aria types, and the affective importance of the obbligato instrument in conveying an aria's narrative.

Paper Session 2. Handelian Encounters
Chair, Mark Risinger

Ruth Eldredge Thomas (Durham University). Bach, Handel, and Religion in the English Nineteenth Century

The idea that Handel paved the way for English musicians' swift adoption of J. S. Bach makes sense logically, but it might not hold historically or musically. While Handel popularized in England German contrapuntal styles, oratorio as a genre, and higher levels of musical virtuosity, contemporary opinion did not necessarily see Handel as Bach's aesthetic progenitor, or even corollary. William Crotch's early and influential music criticism contrasted Bach with Handel and especially the Handelian iteration of the musical sublime. According to Crotch's assessment, Handel exemplified the musical sublime because of its vast proportions, melodic grace, and setting of religious texts. In contrast, Crotch argued that Bach's music was equally, if not more sublime, for directly opposite reasons. Based largely on his assessment of the Well-Tempered Clavier and a few other keyboard works, Crotch read Bach's music as miniscule, rough, and categorically religious, despite the absence of religious text.

Crotch's Bach criticism aligns with major shifts in English religious thought, especially the religious sublime and various forms of natural theology. In ways both practical and theoretical, nineteenth-century English religion sought methods of accessing transcendence by means of human invention and sensibility, be it through reasoned thought or the creation of transcendent experience through art. In the early nineteenth century, Crotch applied this proto-scientific religious view to Bach, with the outcome that he saw Bach's music as both thoroughly religious and thoroughly English.

It is striking that English musical audiences read Bach, and especially the Well-Tempered Clavier, as religious as it is perhaps Bach's most secular work. Crotch's religious arguments for the Well-Tempered Clavier followed Victorian tendencies to encounter secular subjects as arguments for Christianity, and specifically the benevolent and lawful nature of the Christian God. To track Bach's early English reception, I will briefly survey Victorian religious thought, especially its attraction to empiricist epistemologies, as evidenced in three dominant religious arguments: the sublime, cosmology, and teleology. I will then conduct a close reading of Crotch's Bach criticism, through his public lecture notes and published writings, to demonstrate how religious arguments shaped his ideas of Bach. Finally, I will argue that Crotch inaugurated what would become a longstanding competition between Bach and Handel as definitive of English musical identity.

Kenneth Nott (The Hartt School). Lou Harrison and "The Divine Mr. Handel"

In 1991 Lou Harrison (1917–2003) composed a work for voices, Western instruments and gamelan entitled *Homage to Pacifica* (1991). The second movement, scored for solo harp and gamelan ensemble he named, "In Honor of the Divine Mr. Handel." The seven-minute piece quotes material from Handel's Organ/Harp Concerto in B-flat, Op. 4, No. 6 (HWV 294) and exemplifies Harrison's lifelong love of and interest in the music of Handel.

Harrison is remembered primarily for his exploration of non-Western musics, non-traditional tunings and temperaments, and extensive use of percussion instruments—a maverick experimentalist. Yet he was a lifelong student of early music and frequently drew inspiration from an astonishing array of medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque styles and techniques. His output includes pieces for recorders, *Six Sonatas for Cembalo* (1934–43), a Concerto Grosso for strings and several works that follow isorhythmic procedures.

This paper examines Harrison's interest in Handel and other early composers in three contexts: the first is Harrison's development as a composer. Handel appears twice in the titles of Harrison's work: the aforementioned harp and gamelan movement and an early, unpublished piece for violin and viola entitled, "Music for Handel in Heaven." In between these bookends, Harrison frequently expressed his admiration for Handel, especially his approach to melody and texture. Given the numerous references to Handel's music in his correspondence and conversation, I will discuss examples of Handel's influence on aspects of Harrison's style. Yet, isolating specifically Handelian features in Harrison's music can be tricky, given the fact that his music is marked by, in the words of David Nicholls, "a hotchpotch of chronologically (and ethnically) diverse sources." Pieces by Harrison that will be examined for Handelian or neo-Baroque influences are: *Six Sonatas for Cembalo, First Concerto for Flute and Percussion* (1939) and "In Honor of the Divine Mr. Handel."

The second context is the broader twentieth-century movement known as Neoclassicism. Aaron Copland noted that this trend, in his view beginning with Stravinsky's Octet, was sometimes referred to as "Back to Bach." The centrality of Bach's music to this movement is well known. In fact, Harrison's teacher Arnold Schoenberg was quite vocal in his admiration for Bach and disdain for the music of Handel. Harrison adopted the opposite view. Ever the maverick, he often voiced his preference for Handel over Bach.

Finally, I will consider that, in addition to musical elements, Harrison might have been drawn to Handel for reasons of sexual orientation. Leta Miller and Frederic Lieberman have speculated that Harrison may "have felt a personal bond to" Handel because "they [Harrison and Handel] in some way shared secrets that could only be voiced within a closed circle of colleagues."

Paper Session 3. Handel in America
Chair, Wendy Heller

Joe Lockwood (Newcastle University). *Zadok the Priest*, the "Hallelujah!" Chorus, and the Imperial Soundscape in Boston on the Brink of Revolution

In a paper given at the 2011 AHS Conference, Stephen Nissenbaum first drew attention to the political character of two performances of G. F. Handel's coronation anthem *Zadok the Priest* and the "Hallelujah!" chorus from *Messiah* in Boston—then the chief city of the colonial Province of Massachusetts Bay—in late 1773. On the eve of the "Tea Party" and Revolutionary War, the performances were starkly partisan: one a Loyalist event accompanied by the band of the 64th regiment of the imperial garrison, the other a Patriot riposte accompanied by a militia band. I also identify a third performance, given the previous year (also with the band of the 64th), as *Zadok*'s New World premiere. This paper explores *how* and *why* the coronation anthem and chorus worked as political music in the colonial city on the brink of civil war.

All three performances were connected to the city's elaborate celebrations of the holidays of the imperial calendar: the anniversaries of the accession and coronation of George III. The paper draws on soundscape and cultural-geographical studies to appreciate the way what these events' participants *heard* was crucial to their significance: ritual discharges of cannon, musket volleys, bell-ringing, huzzas, and loyal toasts were the *soundmarks* of a richly meaningful sonic geography which linked the colonial city to the distant monarch across the Atlantic.

The paper also explores how the (apparently paradoxical) increasing popularity in Boston of these royal celebrations in the 1760s and early 1770s was connected with broader political developments. Colonial Whigs, who opposed imperial policy most vehemently in the pre-revolutionary decade, also expressed during the same years a dramatic "flight to the king's love and justice" (Brendan McConville), placing their faith in George III as their deliverer from the series of "tyrannous" legislative proposals Parliament sought to impose.

The paper shows how the warm reception Handel's music received was of a piece with the enthusiasm colonists showed for the imperial calendar festivities in general, and how the bellicose soundscape of the celebrations shaped "Hallelujah!" and *Zadok*'s interpretive possibilities as topical political music in Boston. Their trumpets and kettledrums, performed by military musicians, drew Handel's music into the martial soundworld of Boston's royal festivities. Musical analysis is used to show how the dramatic *tableaux* that made *Zadok* so effective in its original context of the 1727 coronation—the anthem aestheticizing the political rituals surrounding it—were open to re-interpretation in the context of imperial celebrations across the Atlantic. The sonic yoking together of *Zadok* and the celebrations' soundscape underscored the way the anthem's climactic *vivats*—"May the King live for ever!"—echoed the festivities' repeated loyal toasts, just as they had echoed the Acclamation of the Peers in 1727. As the paper sets out, *Zadok* compellingly re-presented one of the emblematic locutions of colonial political discourse: words that had reverberated throughout the constitutional debates which gave the imperial calendar celebrations their remarkable vigor in the pre-revolutionary decade. I also suggest how these performances allow us to recover a sense of the hard edge of Handel's grand manner, and how this might impact recent debates within Handel scholarship.

Berta Joncus (Guildhall School of Music & Drama). Handel Melodies and Anti-Slavery Activism: Music for the Common Good

The discovery of Handel's stock holdings in the Royal African Company has understandably led to charges that he was complicit in the trade in enslaved Africans, and that scholars have been remiss in not addressing slavery's funding of his works. Yet this controversy obscures how Handel's music was perceived by his posterity—and, in particular, its centrality to the early Abolitionist movement.

At the end of the 18th century, two Handel melodies became crucial carriers of anti-slavery messages in Britain and Early America: the tune known as "The Sailor's Complaint," HWV 228(6), and the duet "Come, ever-smiling liberty" from *Judas Maccabeus*. In 1788 the poet William Cowper versified HWV 228(6) to create his renowned Abolitionist ballad "Forc'd from home." In 1792 the painter Samuel Jennings, in *Liberty Displaying the Arts and Sciences, or The Genius of America Encouraging the Emancipation of the Blacks*, depicted staves from "Come, ever-smiling liberty" to symbolize Music itself.

Cowper said he chose HWV 228(6) because of the melody's "seriousness," and the aptness of its associations. Chief among these was its 1740 setting by Richard Glover as "Admiral Hosier's Ghost," in which Glover had protested the needless deaths of thousands of British sailors during the failed blockade of Porto Bello, in present-day Panama. Indeed, 20th- and 21st-century scholars, unaware of the Handel attribution, have generally believed "Admiral Hosier's Ghost" to have been Cowper's source for anonymous music. Thickening the music's association with Caribbean victimization, Cowper's 1788 contrafactum ventriloquized an enslaved male African's reflection on his suffering, and on the horrors of the slave trade. Cowper's ballad reportedly became an anthem of the Abolitionist cause; certain is, its verses cascaded from British into American print markets.

Samuel Jennings was a native of Philadelphia who, after moving to London, arranged to receive a commission for a landmark history painting from the Library Company of Philadelphia, many of whose directors were Abolitionist Quakers. The directors told Jennings to represent Liberty and Emancipation, leaving the artist free to choose the "Symbols" of these. In response, Jennings created the visual equivalent of Cowper's contrafactum, conscripting "Come, ever-smiling liberty" into his painting to strengthen his moral message. The excerpted staves invoke at once Handel's euphonious yet distinct duetting vocal lines, *Judas Maccabeus* librettist Thomas Morell's glorification of Liberty's gifts, and Morrell's tale of morality vanquishing persecution.

In making Handel's music convey anti-slavery sentiments, Cowper and Jennings each positioned music and the composer according to the needs of their cause—a move that invites reflection on the many and various ways in which Handel's life and works can be politicized.

Stephen Nissenbaum (Underhill, Vermont). From Göttingen to Northampton: Handel Operas Arrive in America, 1927–1931

Surprisingly, perhaps, the first American performance of any Handel opera took place in 1927, at Smith College—an elite women's school in western Massachusetts. Unsurprisingly, though, that performance was a consequence of the Handel opera revival that had begun seven years earlier in Göttingen, Germany. My paper will describe the connection between the German and the American productions; it will also explore some intriguing differences between the two.

The Göttingen "Handel Renaissance" was of course the brainchild of the art historian Oskar Hagen, who staged four Handel operas there between 1920 and 1924: *Rodelinde*, *Otto*, *Julius Cäsar*, and *Xerxes*. Three of those four operas were performed at Smith College as well

between 1927 and 1931. That happened only because Hagen himself had moved to America in 1925, to head the Art History department at the University of Wisconsin.

It was another recent German immigrant who led the opera productions at Smith College. Werner Josten (1885–1963). a composer and pianist, had been teaching music at Smith since 1923. Josten knew of Hagen's work, and when he presented *Julius Caesar* there in 1927, it was with Hagen's personal support (including the use of his scores and parts). Josten's staging garnered enthusiastic reviews from critics around the Northeast, including two from the *New York Times*. Productions of *Xerxes* at Smith followed in 1928, and *Rodelinda* in 1931, each using materials provided by Hagen.

But the relationship between Hagen's and Josten's productions is more complicated than that summary suggests. Most importantly, Hagen was trying to make Handel's Italian operas more "German"—and Josten had no interest in doing that. The bold changes that Hagen made to his four Handel operas are well known: very freely translating the libretti (and the titles) into German, of course, but also cutting, adding, and re-orchestrating the scores to make them sound more nineteenth century, even Wagnerian. Hagen's productions in Göttingen elicited an unprecedented response in the nationalistically charged atmosphere of postwar Germany. And Hagen himself absorbed some of that atmosphere.

Josten was more cosmopolitan, in both outlook and experience, and he had no desire to "German-ize" Handel's operas. Most tellingly, the first Baroque opera that he staged at Smith, in 1926, was not by Handel at all: it was Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea.* Josten was evidently interested, too, in the exotic sound of "early music"; for example, the continuo parts in his 1927 *Julius Caesar* employed a piano that (in the words of a reviewer) was "so doctored as to yield the peculiar twing of the harpsichord." It's hard to imagine Hagen caring to try any such thing.

Paper Session 4. Reconstructions
Chair, Robert Ketterer

Graydon Beeks (Pomona College). Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, 4th Bart. (1749–1789) as a Collector of Handel's Music

Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, 4th Bart. of Wynnstay, Denbighshire, was one of the great characters in late eighteenth-century English society. He inherited his title and extensive property before his first birthday, and by the time he embarked on his Grand Tour in 1768 he was immensely wealthy and prepared to enjoy his inheritance. Along with his patronage of the visual arts, architecture, and theater, Wynn's activities in the field of music were extensive. An amateur cellist himself, he supported concert series, hired musicians to perform privately, and arranged for his servants to receive instruction in the playing of instruments and singing. Finally, he became one of the founders of the Concerts of Antient Music in 1776 and one of the Directors of the Handel Commemorations of 1784 and following years.

Sir Watkin also acquired music in quantity, and his preference for "Antient Music"—particularly that of Handel—seems to have been established early on. He seems to have decided to acquire as much of Handel's music in printed form as possible, and to supplement it with manuscript copies of unpublished works. Little has been written about his activities as a collector, largely because his collection was thought to have been destroyed twice: first in a great fire at Wynnstay in 1858 and second when the remainder was ruined by water after having been stored in the stables prior to the family's sale of the of the house in 1948.

In fact, a good deal of Wynn's collection survives, including seven manuscript volumes of miscellaneous works by Henry Purcell in the British Library, eleven manuscript volumes primarily containing Handel's sacred music at Rutgers University, a manuscript volume of

Handel's duets and several volumes of printed operas in the Fisher Library at the University of Sydney in Australia, and a copy of Part 2 of *Messiah* in private hands. Additional material which apparently does not survive can be identified in the surviving account books from Wynnstay and in annotated sale catalogues of the libraries of George Berg, William Boyce, and others. This paper will concentrate primarily on identifying and describing Wynn's collection of Handel manuscripts but will also discuss their possible use in generating performing material for the Concerts of Antient Music.

Alexander McCargar (University of Vienna). Johann Oswald Harms and Handel's "Lost" *Nero*

Among Handel's works which have been labeled as "lost" is the opera *Die durch Blut und Mord erlangte Liebe, oder: Nero*, premiered in Hamburg in 1705. While the musical score may be absent from archives, other aspects of the opera have mainly gone unconsidered and can still be examined. Handel's contemporary, Johann Oswald Harms, was a renowned scenic designer within the German speaking world and created the sets for the premiere of *Nero* in Hamburg. Harms was also responsible for the sets of Reinhard Keiser's *Octavia* which premiered less than six months later and overlaps in many ways with the characters and places found in *Nero*. While much has been written on and speculated about the Handel/Keiser relationship, we can still shed more light on the situation in Hamburg in 1705 through an examination of Harms's designs. As a public opera house, Hamburg relied on entertaining audiences through spectacle to increase popularity and ticket sales. Unlike a court theater, criticism could be voiced and opinions shared.

We are immensely lucky that a large part of Harms's oeuvre is still kept intact at the Herzog Anton Ulrich Museum in Braunschweig. Two small sketches within the several hundred from Harms that still exist are labeled with the inscription "Nerone." Using these two humble drawings as a starting point, along with the scenic descriptions in the printed libretto, we can reconstruct *Nero* and compare it to *Octavia*. Could Keiser have attempted to outdo Handel not only musically, but as a co-manager of the opera house, through visual spectacle as well?

This research coincides with the Boston Early Music Festival's 2025 centerpiece opera, Keiser's *Octavia*. I am the stage designer for the piece, working under director Gilbert Blin. Not only will this exploration and comparison between *Nero* and *Octavia* be pursued through archival research, but also with this unique opportunity for a historically informed staging, we can explore various dramaturgical interpretations and test many scenic ideas at full scale.

Ruth Smith (The Handel Institute). Handel's *Solomon* and Solomon's Temple

Handel's *Solomon* devotes more music to Solomon's Temple than to any other aspect of his kingship. The suggestion by Andrew Pink that the librettist was Moses Mendes accords with this emphasis, Mendes being both Jewish and a Freemason: Solomon was the figurehead of mainstream eighteenth-century Freemasonry.

Solomon's Temple impacted the working lives of Handel and Mendes through a physical representation, apparently unnoticed by Handel scholarship since Chrysander. A gilded wooden model of the Temple stood in a room adjoining the auditorium of the Hamburg opera house when Handel worked there. It was brought to London and exhibited to the public, first in a room at the Haymarket theater, while Handel was working there, and then in a room adjoining the Royal Exchange, Mendes's place of business.

The constitution of Solomon's Temple was a topic of abiding interest throughout the early modern period. Handel would have been aware of at least one other model, because it was

in Halle. In England numerous putative reconstructions were issued, with detailed calculations about the physical aspects of the Temple and its operation.

As builder of the first Jerusalem Temple (if not in other biographical respects) Solomon was regarded in early modern Europe as a divinely approved monarch. Connections can be made between the text of the seemingly out-of-place aria about the Temple in Part 3 of *Solomon* and representations of British monarchy.

Paper Session 5. Oratorios: From Composer to Editor
Chair, Berta Joncus

Fred Fehleisen (The Juilliard School). Handel's First Day on the Job: 22 August 1741

Let us consider Handel's first day on the job of writing out the score of *Messiah*, 22 August 1741, in order to further contextualize the creative events that occurred and their implications for the rest of the work. Handel drafted Part 1 of the oratorio (approximately one hundred pages of music) in just seven days. This means that he had to write down an average of fourteen pages each day during that period. Working at that pace, Handel likely drafted the Overture, "Comfort ye," "Ev'ry valley," and perhaps a portion of "And the glory of the Lord," on the very first day. In this paper I will focus on the compositional events of Handel's first day in isolation, focusing on specific musical and textual details. Studies of the musical language of *Messiah* reveal it to be significantly different from that of his other oratorios, by virtue of its scriptural texts. Throughout the work one senses the coherence of that language, and its individual details argue that much of it was mentally planned and composed in Handel's head before 22 August 1741. The evidence found in the music drafted by him on that day strongly supports that argument.

Mark Risinger (New York, New York). On the Rhetorical Structure and Function of Handel's Oratorio Choruses

Throughout Handel's dramatic oratorios, the chorus takes on a number of different roles, sometimes more than one within the same work. Whether designated as "Chorus of Egyptians" (*Joseph*), "Chorus of Asiatics" (*Alexander Balus*), or "Chorus of Persians" (*Belshazzar*), they generally speak about—or sometimes directly to—central characters in the drama. On occasion, however, the chorus steps outside the dramatic narrative and offers commentary on some aspect of the action or dramatic situation, rather than participating in it themselves.

In works ranging from *Saul* to *Jephtha*, this relatively small subset of "commentary choruses" (as we might call them) comprises movements that function differently from those that are integral to the dramatic narrative; rather than advancing the action, they put a pause in the narrative and make their own contribution to the rhetorical shape of the oratorio, often driving home a cautionary point or moral. In addition to their function on a larger, "macro" level in the structure of the libretto, Handel's musical response to these texts results in internal patterns of phrase repetition and textural variation among vocal parts that possess their own rhetorical structure. Previous examinations of rhetoric in Handel's works have focused primarily on solo arias and recitatives, applying the writings of Mattheson and Quantz to works such as *Aci, Galatea, e Polifemo* and *Messiah*. This paper will seek to analyze the text–music relationships in selected choruses from the dramatic oratorios and to assess their effects in their narrative contexts, particularly in those cases where Handel evidently struggled with how to set their texts. Other related questions to be considered include contemporary reception and interpretation of the works, relative to the understanding of rhetorical techniques among Handel's listeners.

Annette Landgraf (Hallische Händel-Ausgabe). The Different Historical Editions of *Judas Maccabaeus* and Challenges for a Modern Edition

According to the entries in the autograph manuscript, Handel composed the oratorio *Judas Maccabaeus* in July and August 1746. With this work, Handel began his collaboration with Thomas Morell, who had already written the libretto by the end of 1745 or early 1746. The work was intended to honor the Duke of Cumberland for his victory over Prince Charles Edward Stuart ("Bonnie Prince Charlie") and the Jacobites, but at that time, the battle military campaign was not yet over. The decisive Battle of Culloden took place on April 16, 1746. A year later, on April 1, 1747, the premiere took place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden.

Handel revived the oratorio in 1748, and from 1750 to 1759, he performed it annually with various changes, including adjustments within the same season. However, many of the librettos are not correctly dated, making it a challenge to establish the corresponding version for each year. This paper will examine the historical development of the various editions of Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus*. The first prints appeared with Walsh in 1747 and 1749, with Randall publishing the first complete edition around 1768, followed by Wright's edition in 1785. Arnold's edition (nos. 39–40) appeared in 1789. In 1855, the English Handel Society released an edition produced by Macfarren, followed by Friedrich Chrysander's edition in 1865. The most modern edition is the vocal score by Merlin Channon, published by Novello in 2003. The Hallische Händel-Ausgabe, as a critical edition, aims to present all versions of the work. An analysis of the historical editions will show how they differ, which versions of the oratorio were favored, and on what sources and principles they are based. The results of this investigation will be compared with current research findings. Finally, a discussion will take place regarding the questions and decisions faced by the editor of the new edition.

Donald Burrows (Open University). "In the manner of an oratorio": Interpreting the Bottom Stave in Handel's Score of *Messiah*

I am at present engaged in preparing a new edition of *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe*, Serie I, Band 17 (*Messiah*), to replace the volume edited by John Tobin and published in 1965 (as *Der Messias*). Much has happened in Handel scholarship during half a century and expectations are different, especially that the score should now not merely provide a compendium of all the known movements but should present them arranged according to Handel's successive performing versions of the score, with the version of the first performance as the initial main text. However, a collected edition which is published over many decades to completion also needs to remain constant in style of presentation: the present Guidelines for Editors are in recognizable succession to those from the 1950s.

The edition obviously needs to present a music text established from critical examination and interpretation of the sources, while at the same time re-interpreting notational conventions that are no longer current in performance, such as the use of C-clefs for the upper voices. This, however, needs to be done with caution: the editor has to decide what the notation "means," and where equivalents are needed for modern performers, beginning from that assessment of what the composer meant by the notation. The Bassi lines written by Handel in the autograph of *Messiah*, and as found in early copies of the score, present some interesting cases for interpretation because they combine elements relating to both composition and performance, and combine continuo functions with implied directions for scoring. What was their function when Handel wrote the autograph, and what happened when copyists prepared performing materials? In the case of *Messiah*, some evidence can be drawn from the part-books left to the Foundling Hospital by Handel's will. This paper will reflect on examples where the principles seem to be clear, and others where editorial interpretation is necessary.

Paper Session 6. Competition, Prime donne*, and Theatricality*
Chair, Nathan Link

Francesca Greppi (University of Bologna). Soprano Pairing at the Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice: Bordoni and Cuzzoni's Early Collaborations in Italy

The shared engagements between Faustina Bordoni and Francesca Cuzzoni in London are well-documented and have been widely investigated, as is the rivalry that arose from this collaboration. However, the two sopranos were not new to working together: prior to their London activity, they had already performed alongside each other on several occasions in Italy, most notably at the Teatro Grimani di San Giovanni Grisostomo in Venice, a theater of international reputation that was indeed capable of paying adequate fees to two star sopranos rather than just one. From the early eighteenth century, it became accustomed practice for this theater to cast two leading female singers, a tradition that may have inspired similar casting practices in other Italian theaters and abroad, such as in London during the Royal Academy years.

Following a brief reconstruction of the soprano pairings at San Giovanni Grisostomo in the first two decades of the eighteenth century, the present research explores this practice in the Italian collaborations of Faustina Bordoni and Francesca Cuzzoni. In this theater, they appeared together in five operas starting from the autumn season of 1718: *Ariodante* (Pollarolo/Salvi, 1718), *Il Lamano* (Gasparini/Lalli, 1718), *Ifigenia in Tauride* (Orlandini/ Pasqualigo, 1719), *Lucio Papirio Dittatore* (Pollarolo/Zeno-Piovene, 1720), *Nerone* (Orlandini/ Piovene, 1721). In 1718, both Cuzzoni (age 22) and Bordoni (age 21) were in the early stages of their careers, though they had already debuted in several roles across northern Italy. More significantly, both singers had previously shared the stage with other virtuose of great stature and were therefore familiar with this practice: Cuzzoni, for instance, performed alongside Margherita Durastanti and Santa Stella in Parma (*La virtù coronata*, 1714), while Bordoni had been paired with Marianna Benti-Bulgarelli in at least five different operas between 1716 and 1718, prior to her collaboration with Cuzzoni in the autumn season of 1718.

The dramaturgical and musical characteristics of these operas are analyzed to offer insights into the relationship established on the stage between two women, both of whom held dominant roles within the performance. Furthermore, Bordoni and Cuzzoni's collaboration at San Giovanni Grisostomo is compared with other examples of soprano pairing, and in particular Margherita Durastanti and Diamante Maria Scarabelli, to identify recurring patterns that characterize the phenomenon of casting two leading *prime donne*, as well as differences that may depend on the distinctive features of each pair.

David Vickers (Royal Northern College of Music). Giulia Frasi and Italian Music in London

The Milanese singer Giulia Frasi arrived in London in autumn 1742 to join Lord Middlesex's opera company. According to Burney, her early appearances on stage at the King's Theatre revealed a "sweet and clear voice" that served "a smooth and chaste style of singing, which, . . . pleased natural ears, and escaped the censure of critics." Initially assigned second-rank roles, she rose gradually to prominence in productions that indicate changing styles and tastes in musical culture advocated by managers, music directors, and supporters of Italian opera ventures in London during the years immediately after Handel's decision to perform only English oratorio-style works. From 1748 Frasi's engagements at the opera house were concurrent to her working as principal soprano soloist in all of Handel's oratorio concert seasons at Covent Garden, where she created sentimental heroines in *Susanna*, *Solomon*, *Theodora*, and *Jephtha*. Moreover, Frasi also sang for Arne, Boyce, William Hayes (in Oxford). John Christopher Smith junior, John Stanley, and Philip Hayes; her last documented London concert was in 1774.

Having undertaken a reconstruction of Frasi's performance calendar of both operas and concerts in mid-eighteenth-century Britain, I examined extant manuscript and printed sources of music either written for her or sung by her in revivals and concerts. The soprano's English-language concert repertoire was evaluated in my essay "Giulia Frasi in English Music" (*Händel-Jahrbuch* 65 (2019): 205–232). Since then, a few other aspects of her career have been explored in valuable articles by Jonathan Rhodes Lee and Berta Joncus. Nevertheless, there still needs to be a comprehensive appraisal of Frasi's diverse Italian aria repertory. I shall consider surviving musical sources of the soprano's contributions to operas on the London stage (1742–58) and her choices of miscellaneous Italian arias for public concerts. Our perceptions of Frasi's artistic attributes will be broadened by a critical discussion of arias by Galuppi, Porpora, Lampugnani, Gluck, Terradellas, Hasse, Pergolesi, Ciampi, Paradies, Jommelli, Abbos, Cocchi, and, perhaps less predictably, Handel.

Yseult Martinez (Sorbonne University). Female Cross-Dressing and Men's Redemption on the London Opera Stage: Handel and Transvestite Heroines during the 1730s

In the 1730s, Handel composed two operas in which a woman disguised as a man pursues an unfaithful lover. Rosmira/Eurimene sets out to find Arsace, the man who, having promised to marry her, finally abandoned her (*Partenope*, 1730). Bradamante/Ricciardo rushes to the rescue of her husband Ruggiero, who has been bewitched (*Alcina*, 1735).

Their cross-dressing is undoubtedly a key element in the plot, as it leads to many misunderstandings and twists throughout the play. It is also absolutely necessary: Rosmira, like Bradamante, could not act without this disguise. Rosmira pretends to fight a duel to restore her scorned honor, while Bradamante would not be allowed on the Isle of Pleasures.

But their cross-dressing is also highly symbolic. Sexual binarism, based on the complementarity of male and female social roles, is temporarily reversed on the opera stage: the man she has to rescue becomes the damsel in distress. The heroine takes on the hermaphroditic third gender of the virile woman, in order to make up for the mistakes of her male partner and to regenerate her failing masculinity. She is temporarily endowed with an unusual power born of this duality. Through her actions and endurance throughout the drama, she works for the redemption of her male partner and helps him to become worthy of her again.

But because cross-dressing remains a transgression and gender inversion a sign of imbalance, the experience is not an easy one for the heroine, who faces a series of trials. On a symbolic level, cross-dressing is also a visual illustration of the problem of identity that arises when a woman is separated from her other half and thus expresses the importance of the heteronormative family unit in society at a time when marital love was promoted.

Descendants of the warrior women of Renaissance poetry, these heroines feature in many Baroque operas, their cross-dressing likely to titillate audiences. Handel composed three other roles for women disguised as men: Alceste in *Admeto* (1727), Emira/Idaspe in *Siroe* (1728), and Amastre in *Serse* (1738). However, they *belong* to a different typology, in the sense that none of these three women use their crossdressing to transform their male partner.

While the virtuous quality of this type of heroine and the fact that her cross-dressing is a response to a flawed masculinity have already been emphasized, her redemptive mission does not seem to have been discussed. This paper will also attempt to show that this dimension of the transvestite's role as a redeeming agent, which is certainly present in the librettos from which Handel and his anonymous librettist drew their inspiration, is particularly reinforced in the work adapted for the London stage.

Matthew Gardner (University of Tübingen). Handel's Theater Singers 1737–1741

The four theater seasons following the collapse of the two competing London opera companies at the end of the 1736–7 season, which led up to what would be Handel's final season of operas in 1740–1, represent a period of uncertainty within his career. The 1737–8 season, which was arranged principally by Heidegger during Handel's absence from London amidst a serious health crisis, was almost exclusively dedicated to Italian opera with two new operas *Faramondo* and *Serse* by Handel. The cast was made up of the remaining singers from the Opera of the Nobility, but with a new castrato Caffarelli, who was intended as a successor to Farinelli. From Handel's 1736–7 company only the young William Savage was taken on; the more experienced singers such as John Beard and Anna Strada were not. The 1738–9 season centered on English oratorios, with a revival of *Il trionfo del Tempo e della Verità* and the pasticcio *Jupiter in Argos* being exceptions, and the subsequent season (1739–40) was wholly devoted to English language works. 1740–1, however, saw Handel return to Italian operas with two new offerings, *Imeneo* and *Deidamia*, which included roles created for two new Italian singers: the castrato Giovanni Battista Andreoni who had sung for the Middlesex opera company in the previous season and the soprano Maria Monza who Handel likely recruited whilst travelling on the continent in 1740. Alongside operas, he also presented bilingual revivals of English-language works during this season.

Between 1737 and 1741 Handel worked with English and Italian singers, and both with singers that he knew, such as Antonio Montagnana, Beard, Cecilia Arne, and Gustavus Waltz, as well as creating parts for soloists that were new to London and/or Handel, including Caffarelli, Margherita Chimenti, Andreoni, and Monza. Using select examples, this paper explores the recruitment of theater singers in the four seasons between 1737–8 and 1740–1, as well as the consequences for some of Handel's programming, casting, and creative decisions.

2025 American Handel Society Conference

Program Committee

Wendy Heller, *Chair*
Robert Ketterer
Emily Dolan
Ayana Smith

Local Arrangements Committee

Ellen T. Harris, *Chair*
Teresa Neff
Minji Kim