NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XIII, Number 2

August 1998

A Curious Handel Performance at Keynsham

Lady Caroline Brydges (1730–1804), granddaughter of Handel's patron James Brydges, First Duke of Chandos, was a lively young lady who wrote a number of entertaining letters to various relatives prior to her marriage in 1755. Very few contain references to music, although it is clear that she had received some training in it; in fact, she was reprimanded at one point for refusing to play the harpsichord for her cousin and later husband James Leigh of Adlestrop (1724–1774). Therefore it is a little surprising to find three musical references in a single letter, written to her older brother James, later Third Duke of Chandos, in 1751. James was undertaking his Grand Tour, and his sister had apparently promised to keep him informed of her activities in his absence.

The letter¹ is dated "Biddesden August ye 13th," but the first part was written the evening before. It describes a recent stay at Keynsham Abbey, where her father, Henry, Second Duke of Chandos, had moved his family for a portion of the summer, probably in an attempt to keep one step ahead of his creditors. Keynsham Abbey, which had been in the extended Brydges family for generations, was located on the outskirts of the town of Keynsham not far from Bristol and Bath; only the entrance gate remains.

Lady Caroline writes:

I enclos'd a plan of Keynsham house with as good a description of the place as I am able to give which I am afraid you will find but a very lame one. The Lodge house I mentioned is a most beautiful situation & Mrs Bridges [a cousin] is building to it in order to spend some time there every Summer as she is very fond of the Park. We were twice at the long Room at Bristol. There was a great deal of company there. I danc'd two dances with Mr. Hoskyns but found it very hot & disagreeable. I was one morning at the pump room which is a poor shabby place & only one scurvy fiddle by way of musick. The



Master of ceremonys at Bristol is one Mercie formerly a Hautboy in my Grandfather's band of musick. He scrap'd an acquaintance with me to my great astonishment & [I] was more amazed when I found all the acquaintance he had with me was by knowing my Grandfather before I was born.

"Mercie" was Lewis Mercy or Merci (fl. 1708–1751), a renowned recorder player who is not otherwise known to have played the oboe.² Lady Caroline seems unlikely to have mistaken a recorder for an oboe, but her reference to Mercy as "Master of ceremonies" and the fact that his last documented appearance as a performer occurred at a benefit concert for himself in 1735, may indicate that she did not hear him play and

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Handel Calendar

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelians. If possible, please include the address and telephone number where readers may obtain details. Much of the information listed below has been taken from the web site "Hear Handel," to the organizers of which the Newsletter is much indebted.

Agrippina. August 13, 14, 16, 20, 21, 22, 23, 29, 30. Wilhering Monastery, Linz. Karen Robertson, Barbara Payha, Markus Foster, Dean Ely, Robert Hillebrand, Lydia Vielinger, Manfred Mitterbauser, Orlando Mason. Opera de Camera Linz, on Baroque Instruments, William Mason, conductor. Henry Mason, producer. E-mail: w.mason@demut.or.at

Dixit Dominus. August 15. Abbaye de Noirlac. Ensemble Vocal et Instrumental de l'Orchestre de Lausanne, Michel Corboz, conductor (plus Haydn's Nelson Mass). Also August 23: La Chaise-Dieu, Abbatiale.

Semele. August 16, 18, 20, 22. Tiroler Landestheater, Innsbruck, Austria. Jeffery Francis, John Bowen, Tomsa Tomasson, Quentin Hayes, Graham Pushee, Patricia Bardon, Deborah York, Rosemary Joshua. Akademie für Alte Musik, RIAS Kammerchor, René Jacobs, conductor. The first setting of the libretto, by John Eccles (1710), will be given in concert with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under John Toll on August 17.

Athalia. August 30. Melbourne Town Hall, Melbourne, Australia. Athalia: Deborah Riedel; Joad: Graham Pushee; Josabeth: Sara Macliver; Mathan: Michael Terry; Abner: Peter Axford. The Melbourne Chorale and Orchestra, Graham Abbott, conductor.

Choice of Hercules. August 30. St Mary's Church, Stokeby-Nayland. Essex Baroque Orchestra and Psalmody, Peter Holman, conductor. (Plus music for Comus, English songs, and the Suite from the Water Music.) Tel: 44 (0)1473 827718

Rodelinda. September 3. Stravinsky Auditorium, Montreux-Vevey. Anna Caterina Antonacci, Louise Winter, Artur Stefanowicz, Daniel Taylor, Paul Nilon, Umberto Chiummo. Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, William Christie, conductor. Jean-Marie Villegier, producer. (1998 Glyndeburne production)

Orlando. September 4. Queen Elizabeth Hall, London. Orlando: Louise Mott; Angelica: Geraldine McGreevy; Medoro: Sally Bruce-Payne; Dorinda: Anna-Clare Monk. Early Opera Company Orchestra, Christian Curnyn, conductor. Sarah Alexander, producer. (semi-staged)

Messiah. September 6. Concert Hall, Queensland Performing Arts Centre, Brisbane. Lynda Russell, Elisabeth Campbell, Thomas Randle, Michael George. The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, The Sixteen, Harry Christophers, conductor.

Delirio amoroso; Water Music Suite. September 7. St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane. Lynda Russell, The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, Harry Christophers, conductor. Also Bach's Brandenberg Concertos Nos. 3, 5.

Alexander's Feast. September 8. St Stephen's Cathedral, Brisbane. Lynda Russell, Thomas Randle, Michael George. The Symphony of Harmony and Invention, Siobahn Armstrong (harp), Harry Christophers, conductor.

Israel in Egypt. September 11. Bremen (Musikfest). Anna Maria Panzarella, Jeanette Wilson-Best, R. Ben Abdeslam, H. Marks, M. Koningsberger, François Bazola. Les Arts Florissants, William Christie, conductor. Also September 12: Poissy, France; September 14: Warsaw Festival; September 16: Metz; September 20: Ambronay.

Partenope. September 11, 16, 19, 22, 26. New York City Opera, New York. Glimmerglass production, George Manahan, conductor.

Messiah. September 17, 20. St. Andreas, Düsseldorf. Sabine Schneider, Elisabeth Graf, Florian Simson, Franz Gerrhiesen. Orchester Westdeutscher Sinfoniker und Chor der ehemaligen Hofkirche St. Andreas und des Görresgymnasiums, Ulrich Brall, conductor.

Belshazzar. September 18, 21, 22, 23. Schlößchen im Regierungspräsidium, Cäcilienallee, Düsseldorf. Coproduction with Karlsruhe Handel Festival, combining Handel's music with modern video art. The audience will be part of the action.

Rodelinda. September 20. Zoetermeer. Rodelinda: Sophie Daneman; Bertarido: Ryland Angel; Grimoaldo: Mark Padmore; Eduige: Marianna Mijanovic; Unulfo: Robert Expert; Garibaldo: Franz Fiselier. Combattimento, Jan Willem de Vriend, conductor. Mirjam Koen and Gerrit Timmers, production. Tel: 31 (0) 104 78 02 81, fax 31 (0) 104 25 79 15. Also September 29: Groningen; October 2: Utrecht.

Messiah. September 24. Teatro Regio, Turin. Orchestra del Teatro Regio di Torino, B Casoni, conductor.

Judas Maccabaeus. September 25. Kreuzherrenkirche, Düsseldorf. Csilla Zentai, Carola von Schmettow, Eugène Holmes. Orchester und Chor der Basilika St. Lambertus, Heinz Terbuyken, conductor.

Poro. October 1, 2. St Bartholomew the Great, Smithfield, London. Poro: William Towers; Cleofide: Betsabee Haas; Gandarte: André Sanpaio; Erissena: Ebba Wallin; Alessandro: Miguel Fontes; Timagene: Jonathan Gunthorpe. Ian Page, conductor. Peter Shayne, producer. Tel: 44 (0) 7050 030614.

Giulio Cesare. October 3, 6, 10, 14, 17, 19. Lyric Theatre, Brisbane. Giulio Cesare: Graham Pushee; Cornelia: Roxanne Hislop; Sesto: Suzanne Johnston; Cleopatra: Jennifer McGregor; Tolomeo: Andrew Dalton; Achilla: Andrew Collis. Opera Australia production. Graham Abbott, conductor. Francisco Negrin, producer.

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1996 American Handel Society Recording Prize

The American Handel Society Recording Prize for a 1996 release goes to the recording of Almira, Königin von Castilien by Andrew Lawrence-King and Fiori musicali on the Classic Production Osnabrück label (CPO 999 275-2). The recording features soloists Ann Monoyios (Almira), Patricia Rozario (Edilia), Linda Gerrard (Bellante), Jamie Mac-Dougall (Fernando), Douglas Nasrawi (Osman), Christian Elsner (Tabarco), David Thomas (Consalvo), and Olaf Haye (Raymondo). A coproduction with Radio Bremen, the recording was made in connection with a 1994 staged performance of the work in Bremen-Halle, prepared and conducted by Thomas Albert, artistic director of Fiori musicali, who was unable to participate in the recording sessions because of illness.

The prize recognizes a superlative performance of a work that constitutes a significant contribution to Handel's recorded oeuvre. The committee, consisting of Graydon Beeks, chair, Martha Ronish, and Roger Freitas, faced an especially difficult task owing to the unusually large number of excellent recordings issued in 1996 which fit these criteria (see "Recent Recordings" in the April 1997 issue of this Newsletter). Almira was chosen because of its high standard of singing and playing, the dramatic sweep of Lawrence-King's direction, and the crucial role the work plays in an understanding of Handel's development as an opera composer.

A committee is presently at work on the 1997 prize; readers who wish to nominate any recording not in the discography in the April 1998 Newsletter should write to Richard King at the address of the American Handel Society.

The winners of the prize since it was founded in 1991 are listed below:

- 1991 Giulio Cesare (Harmonia Mundi France HMU 901385.87) Jennifer Larmore, Barbara Schlick, Bernard Fink, Marianne Rørholm, Derek Lee Ragin, Furio Zanasi, Dominique Visse, Olivier Lallouette. Concerto Köln, Rene Jacobs, conductor.
- Judas Maccabaeus (Hyperion 66641/42)
 Jamie MacDougall, Emma Kirkby,
 Catherine Denley, Michael George,
 James Bowman, Simon Birchall. Choir of
 the New College, Oxford. The King's
 Consort, Robert King, conductor.
- 1994 Radamisto (Harmonia Mundi France HMU 907111-113) Ralf Popken, Juliana Gondek, Lisa Saffer, Dana Hanchard, Monika Frimmer, Michael Dean, Nicolas Cavallier. Freiburger Barockorchester, Nicholas McGegan, conductor.
- 1995 The Occasional Oratorio (Hyperion CDA66961/2) Susan Gritton, Lisa Milne, James Bowman, John Mark Ainsley, Michael George. Choir of the New College, Oxford. Choristers and Choir of The King's Consort. The King's Consort, Robert King, conductor.

The J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship 1998

The Directors of the American Handel Society are pleased to announce that the recipient of the J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship in 1998 is Dr. Todd Gilman of Boston. Dr. Gilman received the Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Toronto in 1994. He is presently a lecturer in the Literature Section of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, and in the Departments of English at Suffolk University and Fisher College. Dr. Gilman's project is a book entitled "Our English Amphion": The Theater Career of Thomas Augustine Arne, 1732–78. He will use the fellowship to study Arne sources and materials at the Britten-Pears Library in Aldeburgh, England. The Fellowship Committee consisted of William D. Gudger, chair, Raymond Erickson, and Olga Termini. The winners of

the Fellowship since it was established in 1989 are listed below:

1989	David Ross Hurley	University of Chicago
1990	Richard G. King	Stanford University
1991	John Winemiller	University of Chicago
1993	Michael Corn	University of Illinois
1993	Channan Willner	City University of New York
1995	Mark Risinger	Harvard University
1996	Barbara Durost	Claremont Graduate School
 1998	Todd Gilman	Massachusetts Institute of Technology

1998 Maryland Handel Festival & Conference

November 6–8, 1998 University of Maryland, College Park

Paul Traver, Artistic Director Richard G. King, Associate Director Jesse Parker, General Manager

Hallische Händel-Ausgabe Editorial Board Meeting

Friday November 6, 9:00 AM

Room 2114, Inn and Conference Center, University of
Maryland University College
(closed to the public)

American Handel Society Board of Directors Meeting

Friday November 6, 1:00 PM Room 2114, Inn and Conference Center, University of Maryland University College (closed to the public)

Concert I

Friday November 6, 7:30 PM

Alexander Balus

Sherri Karam, soprano

Leneida Crawford, mezzo-soprano

Charles Reid, tenor

Phillip Collister, bass

Paul Traver, conductor

University of Maryland Chorus

Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra

Memorial Chapel, University of Maryland

Tickets: \$25.00 / 21.00 / 16.00 / 10.00

Conference Session I

Saturday November 7, 9:00 AM

Handelian Constructions Of Women

Speakers:
Susanne Dunlap, "The Magic of Alcina: Transformations of the Sorceress from Caccini to Handel"

Wendy Heller, "The Pleasures of Self-Sacrifice: Handel's Admeto on the Journey from Venice"

David Hurley, "Hercules in Drag"

Kenneth Nott, "Injur'd Queen, L'indegna usurpatrice:
The Portrayal of Athalia in 18th-Century Oratorio"

Ken McLeod, "Masculine Anxiety in Handel's Semele"

Room 1109, Inn and Conference Center, University of
Maryland University College

American Handel Society Membership Meeting

Saturday November 7, 2:00 PM
Room 1109, Inn and Conference Center, University of
Maryland University College

American Handel Society Lecture

Saturday November 7, 3:15 PM Anthony Hicks, *Handel's Jephtha: A Sacrifice to Theology?* Homer Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Fine Arts Building, University of Maryland

Concert II

Saturday November 7, 5:00 PM

Chatham Baroque

Homer Ulrich Recital Hall, Tawes Fine Arts Building,

University of Maryland

American Handel Society Dinner

Saturday November 7, 7:30 PM Location TBA

Conference Session II

Sunday November 8, 9:00 AM Handel in London Society Speakers:

Donald Burrows, "Handel's Women in the mid-1740s" David Hunter, "Lady Margaret Cecil Brown: 'Otherwise Unknown to History'"

Richard G. King, "'The Flower of Princesses': Anne of Hanover"

Thomas McGeary, "Handel as Art Collector"
Stanley C. Pelkey II, "Political Discourse and the
Representation of Kingship in the Music of Handel"
Room 1109, Inn and Conference Center, University of
Maryland University College

Pre-Concert Lecture

Sunday November 8, 2:00 pm Speaker: Ellen Rosand (Lecture Title TBA) Maryland Room, Marie Mount Hall, University of Maryland

Concert III

Sunday November 8, 3:00 PM

Joshua

Amanda Balestrieri, soprano

Lorie Gratis, mezzo-soprano

Charles Reid, tenor

Phillip Collister, bass

Paul Traver, conductor

University of Maryland Chorus

Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra

Memorial Chapel, University of Maryland

Tickets: \$25.00 / 21.00 / 16.00 / 10.00

Concert II, the Lectures, and the Conference Sessions are free. Subscription tickets for Concerts I and III at reduced prices are also available. For more information or to purchase tickets call (301) 405-5568 or write to the Maryland Handel Festival Box Office, Room 2140, School of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, MD 20742.

ADVICE TO

Dr. Hunter:

On his Exposition of the ADVICE to Mr. Handel*

You may be right, my Friend, when you propose A Name for One who Handel did oppose When first he sang of Israel set free From *Egypt*'s Bondage, by the LORD's Decree. 'The Fiend' who stopped 'her' ears to Sounds divine, May well be she who, gorged with Spite malign, In very Person on the London scene Made Mischief to defame his Art serene. And yet I wonder if the 'Fiend' could be That 'Envy' mentioned earlier in Line Three; She there to Merit is set up as Foe, And Merit's her 'Superior' just below. The ancient Poets often Persons make Of abstract Things, and for their Genders take That which their Names in Latin do possess. (Thus Envy from Invidia gains her Dress.) 'Let Envy then conceal her Head' recall, A jolly Song, known to Handelians all; Or Pope's fine Lines, writ in the self-same Year, On Windsor Forest, charged with Hope most dear For lasting Peace beneath a Stuart's sway, And echoed (as a Tribute, I would say) By Jennens, sometime Squire of Gopsall Hall, Telling the Story of Belshazzar's Fall: 'O stretch they Reign, Fair Peace! from Shore to Shore Till Conquest cease, and Slav'ry be no more... Exiled by thee from Earth to deepest Hell, In brazen Bonds shall barb'rous Discord dwell... There hateful Envy her own Snakes shall feel And Persecution mourn her broken Wheel...' 'Tis but a Thought; no Certainty I claim, Though certain 'tis, my Verse is pretty lame.

Anthony Hicks

* Editor's Note.

For Dr. Hunter's "Exposition," see the Newsletter of the American Handel Society 12/3 (December, 1997).

The Handel Institute Awards

Performance

Applications are invited for the *Byrne Award* (up to £1,000) to support performance of Handel's music and assist young professional musicians at the start of their careers. Deadline April 1.

Research

Applications are invited for *Handel Institute Awards* (up to £1,000) in support of research projects involving the life or works of Handel or his contemporaries. Deadline September 1.

Further details from:

Professor Colin Timms
Department of Music
University of Birmingham
Edgbaston
Birmingham B15 2TT
United Kingdom
Tel/fax: 0121-414 5781

Email: C.R.Timms@bham.ac.uk

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simply remembered incorrectly his explanation that he had been a wind player in the service of her grandfather. This is the last known reference to Mercy.

On the evening of the 13th, she continued in the same vein:

It rained every day while we were there which was no improvement to the country which is very bad. Notwithstanding the rain we went a fishing every day that we were not otherways engaged which I preferred to the Rooms at Bristol & what is extraordinary I caught a number of fish & not one cold though good Madam scolded every time I went out in the rain but I escaped cold & was never better in my life for the novelty of the place tempted me out every day & I am become by it a very stout walker. My father talks of spending two or three months there next summer. I think it a very pleasant place in summer but it must be bad in winter as the country is too bad for riding but very pleasant for walking. I think it the better for having no Neighbours for it is always in one's power to meet company by going to Bath or Bristol which is more agreeable than formal Visiting. They have a Vauxhall at Bristol. I did not go to it but I heard the music was very good but the gardens something worse than Marybon & the company in the same stile.

Lady Caroline was not possessed of a robust constitution, and the success of this country expedition was somewhat of a surprise. It may have prompted a painting of her, in rather formal attire fishing by the side of a river, which was formerly in the collection of A Gilbey, Esq.³ I have been able to learn nothing further about the Bristol pleasure garden.

The final and most intriguing reference to music occurs in the midst of Lady Caroline's description of the family's arrival:

We were received at Keynsham with great rejoycings ringing of bells bonfires squibs serenades dancing staring gaping &c. The church is a very fine one for a country Parish & what surprised me excessively there are about 14 of the common people that sing in the Church all Handel's Anthems & with out any instruments sing as Just as ever I heard any body in my life & some of them with very fine voices. The Minister of the Parish & his wife are young people very polite & well behav'd & were often with us.

To what extent the details of her description of the "great rejoycings" are exaggerated for dramatic purposes is unclear. Her father was, however, Duke of Chandos, and this may well have been his first visit to Keynsham Abbey.

Lady Caroline's comments on St. John the Baptist, Keynsham are of particular interest to Handelians. Local tradition holds that Handel visited the church on more than one occasion, and among the church plate are several pieces inscribed as gifts from the composer in the early 1750s. It would seem natural that the parishioners might have taken a particular interest in the famous composer. But what manner of performance does Lady Caroline describe? The phrase "with out any instruments" would seem to imply unaccompanied singing, but which of Handel's anthems could be performed in that manner? Perhaps she meant accompanied only by the organ, presumably playing a transcription of the orchestral parts. If so, this is surely a very early example of that mode of performance in a parish church.

And finally, which of Handel's anthems could she have heard performed? Only the Coronation Anthems and the Funeral Anthem had been published by 1751. All other works circulated only in manuscript copies, such as those I described in an earlier issue of this Newsletter.⁴ Could Lady Caroline have heard movements extracted from oratorios and performed as anthems in a manner similar to that employed by William Boyce some years later?⁵ Or is it possible that she heard portions of the Anthems for Cannons which Handel had composed for her grandfather more than forty years earlier?

Graydon Beeks

- Huntington Library Stowe MS STB Box 11 (2), quoted by permission.
- ² See David Lasocki, "The French hautboy in England, 1673–1730," Early Music 16 (1988): 354.
- Reproduced in Joan Johnson, Excellent Cassandra: The Life and Times of the Duchess of Chandos (Gloucester, 1981), facing p. 116.
- ⁴ See Graydon Beeks, "More Handel Anthems in American Libraries," Newsletter of the American Handel Society 12/1 (April, 1997).
- ⁵ G. Beeks, "William Boyce's Adaptations of Handel's Works for Use in the English Chapel Royal," Händel-Jahrbuch 39 (1993): 42-59.

HANDEL-L on LISTSERV@UMDD.UMD.EDU

HANDEL-L is a list sponsored by The American Handel Society at the University of Maryland, College Park. The list offers a forum for discussion of the life, times, and works of George Frideric Handel as well as related topics. HANDEL-L is open to all and welcomes comments, questions, and short reports from scholars, performers, and others interested in Handel.

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Howard Serwer serves as owner and moderator of HANDEL-L. In that capacity he reviews all postings for relevance and suitability and communicates with submittors if necessary. Serwer's electronic address is hs7@umail.umd.edu.

Special Offers from the American Handel Society

The American Handel Society is offering sets of back issues of the Newsletter for the price of \$10 per year (three issues each), going back to the first year, 1986. All volumes are available, but some numbers are in short supply. We reserve the right to supply photocopies of individual numbers where necessary. In addition, the AHS has a limited number of copies of Handel and the Harris Circle at the price of \$7. This attractive and important booklet, written by Rosemary Dunhill, provides a useful introduction to the rich Harris family archive, recently deposited at the Hampshire Record Office in Winchester and discussed by Donald Burrows in the December 1996 issue of the Newsletter. For further details, see the subscription notice inserted in this month's Newsletter.

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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The Editor welcomes comments and suggestions for future issues.

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