

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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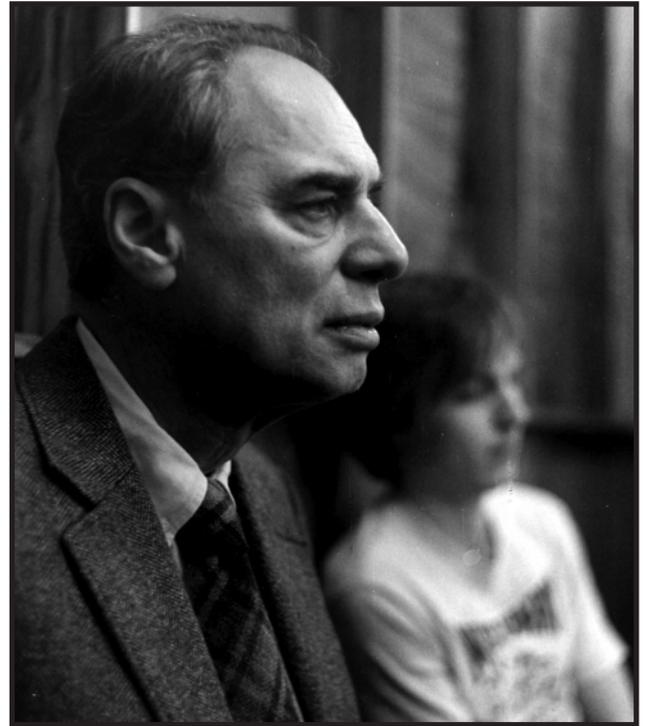
Summer 2006

REPORT FROM HALLE 2006

This year's Handel Festival in Halle took place from June 8-18, 2006 with the theme "Händels Klassizität," which was officially translated as "Handel's Universality." Since this was a Mozart year we, not surprisingly, heard a certain amount of Mozart's music. With less obvious justification we also heard a good deal of Purcell. There were the usual competing events and so I will, for the most part, confine myself to those I actually attended.

The Festival opened, as has now become customary, with the Festakt and Festkonzert in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Halle. The former consisted of welcoming remarks from various dignitaries and the presentation of the Handel Prize by the outgoing Mayor of Halle, Frau Ingrid Häussler, to Klaus Froboese, Intendant and Artistic General Director of the Halle Opera House. The ceremony was bracketed by two suites from the *Water Music* played by the Festival Orchestra under the direction of Michael Schneider, and some music by Schumann and Guilman excellently played by organist Thomas Trotter. The Festkonzert, which followed after a brief intermission, consisted of extracts from *Alexander's Feast* in which the orchestra was joined by Festival Chorus of the Handel House. The orchestra played well and if the ultimate level of precision was not reached it may have been in part because Maestro Schneider had injured his arm in an accident and was hampered in his conducting efforts. The chorus also sang well, although as was the case in their debut performance last year, their English pronunciation left something to be desired. This was even more true of the three young soloists drawn from its ranks, although they all displayed promise.

On Friday, June 9 the new opera production was premiered at the Opera House. The opera chosen was *Admeto* and the overall presentation was very strong indeed. The staging by Alex Köhler updated the scene to the present, and the dying Admeto was first encountered in a hospital bed. This led to some predictable bedpan humor, but otherwise provided few distractions. There was, of course, the usual gratuitous sex and violence, with the two combined in an assault by Trasimede on Antigona in the second act. In general, however, the story was taken seriously and the performers were encouraged to tell it effectively. The singing and acting were outstanding across the board and more than one person remarked that any opera house would be proud to field such a cast. The countertenor Matthias Rexroth, who sang the title role created by Senesino, is a real find and created a telling portrait of the handsome and narcissistic King. Romelia Lichtenstein in Faustina's role as Queen



Alfred Mann 1917-2006

photo courtesy of Eastman School of Music Website and Prof. Kerala J. Snyder

TRIBUTE TO A NOTED AUTHORITY ON HANDEL & EARLY MUSIC

The eminent musicologist and pioneer early music instrumentalist and conductor, Alfred Mann, who also was one of the great Bach and Handel scholars of the 20th century, died in an assisted living facility in Fort Wayne, Indiana, on Thursday, September 21. Alfred, who moved to Fort Wayne several years ago to be near his son, Adrian, who is the principal contrabassist and the manager of the Orchestra there, was 89.

A refugee from Nazi Germany, Alfred emigrated to the United States with his mother, the eminent harpsichordist, Edith Weiss Mann (1886 - 1951). From the beginning, Alfred was a major figure in the early music revival in the United States, and he made major contributions as a scholar as well as as a performer and conductor. He was on the faculty at Rutgers for many years, and later taught at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. In 1953, he succeeded Arthur Mendel as Director of the Cantata Singers in New York City, and in 1970 - 1980 he was the Conductor of the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, in Bethlehem, PA.

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HANDEL CALENDAR

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handeliens. If possible, please include address, telephone number and URL where readers may obtain details. Announcements concerning Handel events from around the world are available by logging onto [http:// gfhandel.org/](http://gfhandel.org/)

Agrippina Virginia Opera

Agrippina: Sujung Kim, soprano
Poppea: Jane Redding, soprano
Nerone: TBA
Ottone: David Walker, countertenor
Claudio: Derrick Parker, bass-baritone
Narciso: TBA
Pallante: TBA
Lesbo: TBA
Giunone: TBA
Stage Director: Lillian Groag
Performances in Norfolk: Jan. 26, 28, 31 and Feb. 2 & 4, 2007
Performances in Richmond: Feb. 16 & 18, 2007 Performances in
Fairfax: Feb. 9 & 11, 2007
<http://www.vaopera.org>

Ariodante Emmanuel Music

Paula Murrihy
Sanford Sylvan
Sarah Pelletier
Charles Blandy
Jeffrey Gall
Jayne West
Michael Beattie, conductor
27 January 2007
Boston, Massachusetts
<http://www.emmanuelmusic.org>

Dixit Dominus Music for the Royal Fireworks

Apollo's Fire
1 February 2007, 7:30pm
Fairlawn Lutheran, Cleveland, Ohio
2 February 2007, 8pm
St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
3 February 2007, 8pm
St. Paul's, Cleveland Heights, Ohio
4 February 2007, 4pm
Rocky River Presbyterian, Cleveland, Ohio
<http://www.apollofire.org>

Giulio Cesare in Egitto Seattle Opera

Cesare: Ewa Podles / Anna Burford(b)
Cleopatra: Alexandra Deshorties / Christine Brandes(b)
Cornelia: Helene Schneiderman / Gloria Parker(b)
Sesto Pompeo: Kristine Jepson / Carolyn Kahl(b)
Tolomeo: Brian Asawa / Mark Crayton(b)
Achillas: Arthur Woodley
Nireno: David Korn
Conductor: Gary Thor Wedow
Director: Robin Guarino
Sets: Paul Steinberg
Costumes: Constance Hoffman
Lighting: Robert Wierzel
24, 25m(b), 28 February 2007
3, 4m(b), 7, 9(b), 10 March 2007
Seattle, Washington
<http://www.brianasawa.com>
<http://www.seattleopera.org>

Messiah
Oxford Harmonic Society
The Orchestra of Stowe Opera
25 November 2006, 7.30pm
Town Hall, Oxford, UK
Tickets £14 and £12 (£12 and £11 concessions)

Tickets can be bought on the door from 7pm on the night or
from The Oxford Playhouse on 01865 305305 or
www.oxfordplayhouse.com/TicketsOxford
<http://www.oxfordharmonicsoc.org.uk>
<http://www.stoweopera.com>

Messiah

Rebecca Evans, soprano
Christopher Ainslie, countertenor
Andrew Staples, tenor
Robert Davies, bass
Cardiff Polyphonic Choir (Conductor: Neil Ferris)
Welsh Chamber Players (Leader: Roger Huckle)
3 December 2006, 3pm
St David's Hall, Cardiff, Wales, UK
Tickets £7.50 to £22.50 from St David's Hall Box Office - 02920 878444
<http://www.cardiffpolyphonic.org.uk>
<http://www.stdavidshallcardiff.co.uk>

Messiah (arranged by WA Mozart)

Soprano I - Roberta Andalò
Soprano II - Sabrina Santoro
Alto - Davide Troia
Tenor - Leopoldo Punziano
Baritone - Stefano Di Fraia
The Choral Scholars of Naples
Ronald Butts-Boehmer, director
3, 10 December 2006, 6:30pm
Christ Church, Naples, Italy

Messiah

Elizabeth Watts, soprano (Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards 2006)
Anna Stephany, mezzo-soprano (Winner of the Kathleen Ferrier Awards 2005)
Tom Raskin, tenor
Christian Immler, baritone
Choir of St George's
London Handel Orchestra
Adrian Butterfield, leader
Simon Williams, conductor
7 December 2006 at 7.00pm
St George's Church, Hanover Square, London, W1 (Handel's parish church)
Box Office
Postal booking opens from 11 September 2006, but tickets will be sent out from 1 October onwards.
Telephone booking opens from 28 September on 01460 54660
Monday-Friday 10am-1pm & 2-5pm
Booking forms and ticket prices will be available online from 11 September, but online payments are not in place yet, but will be, hopefully, by the time Festival booking starts in January.
For a paper booking form please contact us on 01460 53500 or email c-hodgson@btconnect.com
<http://www.london-handel-festival.com>

Messiah

Susan Gritton, soprano
Sara Mingardo, alto
Mark Padmore, tenor
Alastair Miles, bass
Tenebrae
London Symphony Orchestra
Sir Colin Davis, conductor
10, 12 December 2006, 7pm
Barbican Hall, London, UK
<http://www.lso.co.uk>
<http://www.tenebrae-choir.com>
<http://www.barbican.org.uk>

Messiah

Claire Booth, soprano
Iestyn Davies, countertenor
James Gilchrist, tenor
Andrew Foster-Williams, bass
Academy of Ancient Music
Choir of New College, Oxford

HANDEL AT PRINCETON 2007

On behalf of the Princeton University Department of Music and the Board of the American Handel Society, I am delighted to invite you to the American Handel Festival and meeting of the American Handel Society at Princeton University, April 19-22, 2007.

A number of exciting events are planned for the Festival, which will include concerts, recitals, exhibits, and paper sessions devoted to the music of Handel and his contemporaries. On Thursday evening, April 19, 2007, the Richardson Baroque Players, under the direction of Nancy Wilson, will present "Britannia's Invitation" at 8 pm in Richardson Auditorium. Featuring Laura Heimes (soprano), Daniel Gundlach (countertenor), and Curtis Streetman (bass), "Britannia's Invitation" will present the life and musical times of Handel as seen through the eyes of his friend Mrs. Delaney and other commentators, featuring works that are mentioned in contemporary letters, newspaper accounts, and fiction. The program will include excerpts from *Rinaldo*, *Ottone*, *Messiah*, *Alcina*, *Ricardo Primo*, *Messiah*, *Sosarme* as well as *The Beggar's Opera* (Pepusch), and a performance of Handel's Organ Concerto in Bb (HWV 294).

The Princeton University Library will also present a special exhibit of the James S. Hall Collection of George Friedrich Handel, held in the Department of Rare Books and Special Collections. The exhibit will also celebrate a project begun this year by the Arthur Mendel Music Library at Princeton University to digitize major manuscripts and printed materials from the Hall Collection.

On Saturday night, April 21, 2007 we will present a semi-staged performance of Handel's *Hercules*, conducted by Richard Tang Yuk, and featuring the Princeton University Glee Club and professional singers and orchestra.

Princeton University is located in central New Jersey, with easy access to Newark Liberty International Airport.

For more information on the festival, please see <http://www.music.princeton.edu/Handelfestival>

— Wendy Heller
Princeton University

Editor's note: This article is reprinted from the Spring '06 issue. According to the festival website (see above for web address) information on festival registration and lodging will be available as of November 1, 2006.

HANDEL-L

HANDEL-L is a discussion list open to everybody wishing to discuss the music, life and times of George Frideric Handel and his contemporaries. Subscribers are welcome to initiate or respond to a wide variety of topics. "Lurkers" are welcome to monitor proceedings anonymously.

All Handel enthusiasts, at any level of specialisation, are encouraged to provide reviews and feedback concerning recordings, opera productions, concerts, and literature. HANDEL-L combines this appreciation of Handel's music with comments, short reports, and discussion from scholars, performers, and journalists who maintain a serious interest in the composer and his world: the discussion list is a valuable source for breaking the latest Handel news around the world.

To join HANDEL-L visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/handel-l/>

A virtuoso recorder player and a first-class double-bass player, Alfred participated in the first recording of the Bach *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4* in which the recorders that Bach specified, rather than modern transverse flutes, were used. His Vanguard recording of the first 6 *Chandos Anthems* by Handel is a cult item and a true classic among recordings of music from the Baroque period.

Alfred was for many years the Editor of *The American Choral Review*, and his carefully edited and thoughtfully prepared performing edition of Handel's *Messiah* has been used for at least two commercial recordings.

Alfred wrote numerous important scholarly articles and monographs, but he is perhaps best known for having made an English translation of Johann Joseph Fux's famous counterpoint treatise, *Gradus ad Parnassum*, that has been the standard edition throughout the English speaking world for a half a century.

— Teri Noel Towe

Editor's note: To the notable accomplishments listed above, the editor would like to add Prof. Mann's Study of the Fugue (1965), to this day a seminal resource in the history of fugal theory and Theory and Practice: The Great Composers as Student and Teacher (1987). Handelians will also remember Handel: The Orchestral Music (1996). Those familiar with Christoph Wolff's Bach: Essays on His Life and Music (1991) may recall that sixteen of the essays published in that collection were translated from German by Alfred Mann. A regular presence at Bach and Handel conferences, Prof. Mann will be remembered by those who knew him as a rare embodiment of erudition, talent and courtesy. Requiescat in pace!

CHARLES FARNCOMBE (1919-2006)

The American Handel Society mourns the passing of Charles Farncombe, founder of the Handel Opera Society (1955) and tireless champion for he music of Handel. Mr. Farncombe died on June 30 at the age of 86.

CALL FOR PAPERS – HANDEL-FEST 2007

The American Handel Society invites submissions of abstracts for papers to be given at the American Handel Festival, to take place at Princeton University, April 19 - 21, 2007. Festival concerts will include a semi-staged performance Handel's *Hercules* and a chamber concert organized around the theme of "Handel's London". We invite papers on any topic connected with Handel's life and music, but especially encourage submissions related to the music being performed, such as Handel's treatments of myth, masculinity and heroism; the secular oratorios; Handel's chamber works and arrangements for London; or his London circle of friends and colleagues.

Abstracts of no more than 500 words may be sent by December 15, 2006 to Robert Ketterer, AHS Program Chair. Electronic submissions are preferred, and may be sent to robert-ketterer@uiowa.edu. Surface mail may be sent to Prof. Robert Ketterer, Department of Classics, 210 JB, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52245.

Conductor: Edward Higginbottom
 16 December 2006, 8:30pm
 Teatro Principal, Antzokia, Spain
<http://www.vitoria-gasteiz.org/teatros>
 18 December 2006, 7:30pm
 Concertgebouw, Amsterdam, The Netherlands
<http://www.concertgebouw.nl>
<http://www.aam.co.uk>
<http://www.newcollegechoir.com>

Messiah

Gillian Keith, soprano
 Robin Blaze, countertenor
 Tom Randle, tenor
 Christopher Purves, bass
 The Sixteen
 Conductor: Harry Christophers
 17 December 2006
 Sala Iturbi, Palau de la Música, Valencia, Spain
<http://www.palauvalencia.com>
 19, 20 December 2006
 Palau de la Música Catalana, Barcelona, Spain
<http://home.palaumusica.org>
<http://www.the-sixteen.org.uk>

Messiah

Emma Kirkby, soprano
 Iestyn Davies, countertenor
 John Mark Ainsley, tenor
 James Rutherford, bass
 Polyphony
 Academy of Ancient Music
 Conductor: Stephen Layton
 23 December 2006, 7:30pm
 St John's, Smith Square, London, UK
<http://www.aam.co.uk>
<http://www.polyphony.co.uk>
<http://www.sjss.org.uk>

Alcina

Alcina: Petra Nótová
Ruggiero: Denisa Hamarová
Morgana: Adriana Kuřerová
Bradamante: Denisa Ľepkovská
Oronte: Marián Pavlovič
Melisso: Gustáv Beláček / Pavol Remenár
 Musical Director: Jaroslav Kyzlink
 Stage Director: Zuzana Gilhuus
 Set Designer: Zuzana Gilhuus
 Costume Designer: Zuzana Gilhuus
 Choirmaster: Naďa Raková
 27 October 2006, 7pm
 1 December 2006, 7pm
 Slovenské Národné Divadlo (Slovak National Theatre), Bratislava,
 Slovak Republic
<http://www.snd.sk>

Handel: Concerto for Organ in G minor Op.4 No.1 HWV289

Telemann: Concerto à 7 in F major

Handel: Concerto for Organ in B flat major Op.4 No.6 HWV294

Handel: Concerto for Organ in F major Op.4 No.4 HWV292

Telemann: Concerto à 7 A minor

JS Bach: Brandenburg Concerto in G major No.4 BWV1049

Academy of Ancient Music

Director and Keyboard: Richard Egarr

30 October 2006, 7:30pm

West Road Concert Hall, Cambridge, UK

- Free pre-concert talk at 6:30pm given by Richard Egarr

31 October 2006, 7:30pm

Wigmore Hall, London, UK

- Free pre-concert talk at 6:30pm given by Richard Egarr

<http://www.wigmore-hall.org.uk>

<http://aam.co.uk>

Tamerlano**Scottish Opera**

Tamerlano: Max Cencic, countertenor

Bajazet: Tom Randle, tenor

Asteria: Gail Pearson, soprano

Andronico: William Purefoy, countertenor

Irene: Jennifer Johnston

Leone: Jonathan Best

Music Director: Christian Curnyn

Stage Director: John La Bouchardière

7, 9, 11, 16, 18 November 2006

Theatre Royal Glasgow, Scotland

24, 30 November 2006

2 December 2006

Edinburgh Festival Theatre, Scotland

<http://www.scottishopera.org.uk>

Acis and Galatea

Galatea: Rebecca Bottone, soprano

Acis: James Gilchrist, tenor

Damon: Charles Daniels, tenor

Polyphemus: Andrew Foster-Williams, bass

Chorus: Charles Humphries, countertenor

The King's Consort

Robert King, direction

10 November 2006, 8pm

Cité de la musique, Paris, France

<http://www.cite-musique.fr>

Amadigi

- concert version

Amadigi: Maria Riccarda Wesseling, mezzo-soprano (November 2006) /

Susanne Kreuzsch (April 2007)

Melissa: Eleonore Marguerre, soprano

Oriana: Doerthe Maria Sandmann, soprano

Dardano: Clint van der Linde

Lautten Compagny

Director: Wolfgang Katschner

10 November 2006

Warsaw Philharmonic, Poland

3, 4 April 2007

Winterthur, Switzerland

13 April 2007

Opernhaus Halle, Germany

<http://www.lauttencompagny.com>

<http://www.opernhaus-halle.de>

Cantata "Il duello amoroso"**Cantata "Cor fedele, in vano spero"**

Gérard Lesne, alto (director)

Aurore Bucher, soprano

Eugénie Warnier, soprano

Il Seminario Musicale

11 November 2006, 8pm

Cité de la musique, Paris, France

<http://www.cite-musique.fr>

Suite n° 3 pour clavecin**Airs allemands HWV 208 et 205****Suite n° 8 pour clavecin****Air allemand HWV 207****Suite n° 2 pour clavecin****Airs allemands HWV 206 et 210**

Sophie Karthaüser, soprano

Patrick Cohën-Akenine, violon

François Poly, violoncello

Béatrice Martin, harpsichord (clavecin)

Les Folies Françaises

12 November 2006, 4:30pm

Cité de la musique, Paris, France

<http://www.cite-musique.fr>

Orlando

Music Director: Alessandro De Marchi

Stage Director: Tilman Knabe

Set Designer: Alfred Peter

Costumes: Gabriele Rupprecht

12 November 2006, 9:30pm

29 November 2006, 7:30pm

2 December 2006, 7pm

Aalto Theater, Essen, Germany

Alceste, showed again what a fine singing actress she can be, and Mechthild Bach as the put-upon Trojan Princess Antigona – the role created by Cuzzoni – was deeply moving.

The singers in the lesser roles were no less impressive. Raimund Nolte, following in the footsteps of the great bass Boschi, portrayed an appropriately heroic, action-oriented Ercole whose increasing interest in the forlorn Queen was tentatively reciprocated in the concluding tableau. The countertenor Tim Mead was appropriately villainous as Admeto's brother Trasimede, his continued interest in Antigona being greeted with revulsion by her in that same tableau. Melanie Hirsch as the page Orindo and Gerd Vogel as Antigona's confidant Meraspe performed on the same high level, as did the Festival Orchestra – apparently galvanized by the return of their former conductor Howard Arman and a new oboe section. This production of *Admeto* is one of the very best presented by the Festival in recent years and a provided a striking contrast to the dreadful *Rodelinda* of last year (which I did not take the opportunity to see again). Those who chose to attend a later performance of *Admeto* had the opportunity to hear what was by all accounts an exceptional performance of *Messiah* given by the Kammerchor and Barockorchester Stuttgart under the direction of Frieder Bernius, with soloists Carolyn Sampson, Daniel Taylor, Benjamin Hulett and Peter Harvey.

Saturday began with the Festival Lecture given by Professor Laurens Lütteken of Zurich on the subject "From Opera to Oratorio: Handel's Universality and the Aesthetic of the 18th Century." This was followed by the Annual Members Meeting, where following tradition I presented greetings from the AHS and extended an invitation to attend the American Handel Festival "Handel in Princeton" next April. For the remainder of the day there were again difficult choices to be made. I attended the first half of a concert in the Ulrichskirche entitled "Drei Nationen – Ein Klang" ("Three Nations – One Sound") which featured student groups from three neighboring countries. The baroque orchestra Collegium 1704 from Prague, under the direction of Václav Luks, was outstanding and gave a particularly virtuosic performance of Zelenka's typically eccentric *Overture a 7 concertanti in F Major*. The four soloists from the Music Academy "Karol Lipíński" in Wroclaw were also excellent, although the *Missa solemnis* in E Minor by Polish composer Wojciech Dankowski was undistinguished. The Johann Friedrich Reichardt Choir from the University of Halle-Wittenberg rather let the side down in this work and the St. Wenceslas Mass by Franz Johann Wenzel Habermann, which was also included in an overlong first half.

I gather that the performance of Handel's Foundling Hospital Anthem on the second half was more successful, but I had by that time moved along to the Aula of the university to hear a concert of music mostly by Henry Purcell performed by Trevor Pinnock & Friends. This was a curious affair, at once extremely polished and musical and at the same time not entirely satisfying. Both the St. Cecilia Ode *Welcome to all the pleasures* and the anthem *My beloved spake* were well sung and played but the tempi seemed rushed and inflexible. Handel's Concerto grosso Op. 6 No. 9, on the other hand, was beautifully played with admirable rhythmic verve and but also with a sense of breadth. The second half of the concert consisted of a semi-staged presentation of *Dido and Aeneas*. Again, singing and playing were exemplary, the tempos well chosen, and the dramatic commitment of the soloists in particular admirable. Yet

as convincingly as Susan Bickley and Alex Ashworth portrayed the title characters, there was a sense that the voices were a size too big and too overtly dramatic for the venue, the orchestra and, perhaps, the music. The same was true of Della Jones' performance as the Sorceress. Still, I was glad to have heard the performance and moved, as always, by the work.

The City and University Gottesdienst in the Marktkirche on Sunday morning featured rather eccentric sinfonias by Wilhelm Friedmann and Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach, well played by the Lautten Compagny of Berlin under the direction of Wolfgang Katschner. The vocal portion of the service consisted of three movements from Mozart's "Coronation" Mass sung by the Stadtsingchor zu Halle accompanied by the same forces. Since this was not a communion service the Sanctus, Benedictus and Agnus Dei were not performed, but to omit the later with its extraordinary soprano solo was regrettable. The inclusion of a lute in Mozart's Salzburg orchestra was merely perverse.

On Sunday afternoon I attended an interesting and musically satisfying concert in the form of a Vespers service as it might have been celebrated at the court of Duke August of Saxe-Weissenfels between 1643-1680. The liturgical reconstruction was the work of Dr. Erik Dremel from the Theology Department of Mart Luther University and the location was, appropriately, the Dom zu Halle. Large-scale works by Henrich Schütz and the Halle Kapellmeisters David Pohle and Johann Philipp Krieger were performed by the Collegio Halense and its chorus under the direction of Christoph Schlütter. Outstanding among the soloists was the young Polish soprano Magdalena Podkosić.

The annual scholarly conference took place on Monday and Tuesday, also around the theme of "Händels Klassizität." Papers were presented by AHS members Donald Burrows, Eva Zöllner, Annette Landgraf, Richard King and myself. In addition, Katherine Hogg, the librarian for the Foundling Museum in London, gave an illustrated presentation on "Handel and the Foundling Hospital." The proceedings will be published in the 2007 volume of the *Händel-Jahrbuch*.

On Monday night I attended a performance of *Alexander's Feast* in Karl Wilhelm Ramler's translation with the music arranged by the Berlin Handel enthusiast Christian Gottfried Krause for a concert that initiated the Berlin Handel tradition in 1766. "Recomposition" would be a more appropriate description as virtually every aria began with kernel of Handel but quickly became a thematically unrelated composition by Krause. Few of Krause's contributions were distinguished, although he did produce one remarkable *galant* aria for soprano. It did illustrate why Mozart's later arrangements of Handel's works were considered so conservative. The performance by the Körnerscher Sing-Verein Dresden and the Dresdner Instrumental-Concert, under the direction of Peter Kopp, was of a high quality. Among the soloists the soprano Jutta Böhnert was outstanding.

Tuesday evening's concert of music by Mozart and Bach's sons was given by the Capella Angelica and the Lautten Compagny of Berlin under the direction of last year's Handel Prize Winner Wolfgang Katschner. The Mozart portion of the program consisted of three of his smaller sacred works which, while well performed, failed to make much of an impression. Johann Christian Bach's *Laudate pueri* for solo soprano, on the other hand, impressed one as being too long, while Wilhelm Friedemann Bach's Pentacost cantata *Dies ist der Tag* was suitably exuberant but unmemorable. C.P.E. Bach's *Sinfonia III in F Major* was more interesting than the compositions of either of his two brothers.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK (SUMMER 2006)

On Thursday night the forces of the Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk under the direction of Howard Arman gave us Mozart's arrangement of the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* followed by a Symphony by Michael Haydn with a slow introduction by Mozart and Mozart's *Vesperae solennes de confessore*, K339. The over-resonant acoustic of the Dom zu Halle did the performers no favors, but Mozart's seldom-heard arrangement projected well. His retention of the organ has been a puzzle to Mozart scholars, since the lack of organs in the Viennese palaces where these oratorios were performed has always been thought to have been the reason why Mozart wrote such extensive wind parts in his arrangements of *Messiah* and *Alexander's Feast*. As a result, the *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day* arrangement remains closer to Handel's original in terms of scoring. The deficiencies of Classical trumpet playing inspired various solutions, not all of them successful – particularly the substitution of flutes in the Marche. Mozart also retained Handel's lute in the aria "Soft Complaining Flute," but then there was a lute player in Baron von Swietan's circle around 1790. The performance, on modern instruments, was technically adept and reasonably stylish. Among the soloists the soprano Jutta Böhnert was again outstanding. Annette Markert was luxury casting as the alto soloist in K 339.

Friday evening brought the eagerly anticipated return of Robert King and his King's Consort in a program entitled "Welcome to All the Pleasures" given before a packed house in the Marktkirche. To begin we were given another chance to hear Purcell's Cecilian Ode of the same name. In contrast to Trevor Pinnock's performance the tempi in some movements were so relaxed and flexible as to seem self-indulgent. This was followed by a truly outstanding performance of Benjamin Britten's *A Hymn to St. Cecilia* given by the Choir of the King's Consort. This work, which is not well known in German-speaking lands, clearly touched a chord with the Halle audience. The second half of the concert consisted of Handel's *The Choice of Hercules* which King's forces had recorded several years ago for Hyperion. Although the overall performance was stylish and adept, one had the sense that the choir and orchestra did not have a particularly close relationship with the work. Countertenor Daniel Taylor was suitably young-looking and perplexed in the title role, although I thought he failed to promote his music. Carolyn Sampson was overwhelmingly appealing (not to say sexy) as Pleasure and her performance made it difficult to see why Hercules would not have chosen her over Hilary Summer's rather eccentric personification of Virtue. I gather that King would have preferred to perform Handel's *Ode on St. Cecilia's Day*, and it would have been interesting to hear Mozart's arrangement and Handel's original on successive nights.

Next year's Handel Festival in Halle will take place from May 31 to June 10 with the theme "*The Triumph of Time and Truth. Myth and Allegory in Handel.*" The prospectus lists new stagings of *Ariodante*, Purcell's *King Arthur* and Monteverdi's *L'Orfeo*, a revival of *Admeto*, and concert performances of *Riccardo I* and *Jupiter in Argos*. Oratorios will be represented by *Messiah*, *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, *Semele*, and *Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*. Concerts will feature the music of Monteverdi and Buxtehude in addition to Handel. Tickets should be available beginning in December and will no doubt go quickly.

— Graydon Beeks

In late July I had the great pleasure of attending the 12th Biennial International Conference on Baroque Music, hosted with great flair and efficiency by the Institute of Musicology of Warsaw University under the leadership of Szymon Paczkowski. The one session on Handel Studies consisted of excellent papers by Kerry Houston from the Conservatory of Music and Drama in the Dublin Institute of Technology and Fred Fehleisen from Mannes College and The Juilliard School. The former presented the initial results of his investigation of the 55 manuscripts related to charity performances of works by Handel and others in support of Mercer's Hospital in Dublin in the 18th century. The latter presented a Schenkerian analysis of the ways in which Handel employed thematic ideas first presented in the "Sinfony" of *Messiah* to "direct one's attention towards principal theological moments in the oratorio and underscore its most emotional ones." The papers generated a lively discussion chaired by Peter Holman from the University of Leeds.

The closing event of the conference was an excellent performance of Handel's *Imeneo* by the Warsaw Chamber Opera under the direction of Wladyslaw Klosiewicz, given in their lovely 150-seat theater. The staging by Ryszard Peryt was straightforward and convincing, although one would be inclined to argue that having Rosmene and Tirinto expire in each other's arms to conclude the opera contravened the clear indication in both the libretto and the music that she accedes to the demands of gratitude and marries Imeneo. Jacek Laszewski as Tirinto seemed to be a male soprano attempting to sing a role written for an alto castrato, but all the other soloists were strong with Olga Pasiecznik's performance of Rosmene falling into the category of outstanding. The *Musicæ Antiquæ Collegium Varsoviense* was too few in numbers but played musically. The musical text seemed to be basically that of Handel's London performances of 1740, but with the duet "Per le porte del tormento" from *Sosarme* of 1732 inserted into the final scene – one of the additions made by the composer for his 1742 Dublin performances. While it is always a pleasure to hear this duet, it does inhabit a different musical world from the rest of *Imeneo*. A recording of *Imeneo* on compact disc is available from the Warsaw Chamber Opera.

I would not go so far as to say that the performance of *Imeneo* was the high point of the Warsaw Conference, although it was clearly one of the highlights. What struck me most was how moved the members of the audience were by an opera none of them had ever heard before nor knew anything about. It was a salutary reminder of the power of Handel's music. It was also a validation of the principle that a serious staging and a sensitive performance are sufficient to convey that power, without any special pleading or directorial intervention.

— Graydon Beeks

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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, contact the *Newsletter* Editor.

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

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