

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

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Summer 2010



Anthony Hicks (1943 - 2010)

ANTHONY HICKS REMEMBERED

Anthony Hicks died in London on May 26, 2010 at the age of 67. David Vickers has published an eloquent and informative obituary in *The Gramophone* for June 23, available online. I could not hope to improve on it. Instead I would offer a few recollections from a more personal perspective. I first met Tony (or Anthony, as he was then called) in 1966, when I was living in London working on a Berkeley dissertation. I initially noticed him as the person who always seemed to be using the Senate House copy of the 1960 *Händel-Jahrbuch* whenever I needed to consult the catalogue of the Santini manuscripts it contains. Finding myself sitting across from him in the Music Room of the British Museum, I introduced myself, and the following day he brought me a handlist of the Flower manuscripts, which had recently arrived in Manchester. It was always like that: Tony going out of his way to give me any information that he thought I might find useful or interesting. I was already a confirmed Handelian and, like a typical graduate student, thought I knew a good deal about my subject, but Tony, a couple of years younger than I and trained in mathematics rather than music, knew vastly more, and he soon became

continued on p. 2

REPORT FROM HALLE 2010

The Handel Festival in Halle opened this year on June 3 with the Traditional Ceremony at the Handel Memorial in the Market Square, followed by the Official Opening Ceremony and the Opening Concert. The latter two events were separated from each other for the first time, allowing for a more extensive concert. The guests invited to the Opening Ceremony witnessed the Handel Prize of the City of Halle being awarded to Cecilia Bartoli, who had performed a hugely popular concert in the city last October and who would present another on the final night of this year's festival.

The theme for this year's festival was "Knights and Heroes" and the musical focus was on operas derived from Ludovico Ariosto's 16th-century epic poem *Orlando furioso*. As usual there were more concerts and other events than one person could attend. The Opening Concert featured the Händelfestspielorchester Halle conducted by Karl-Heinz Steffens, since 2008 the General Music Director of the Staatskapelle Halle, in music by Antonio Vivaldi, Johann Adolph Hasse, Giovanni Batista Mele and Nicola Porpora, as well as by Handel. Arias from Vivaldi's *Orlando furioso*, Hasse's *Ruggiero, ovvero L'Eroica gratitudine*, Porpora's *Angelica e Medoro*, and Mele's setting of the same text by Pietro Metastasio alternated with arias and duets from Handel's *Alcina*, *Ariodante* and *Orlando* and instrumental works by Vivaldi, Mele and Handel. Because the concert was being broadcast live, we were treated to occasional spoken interludes by Grit Schulze from MDR Figaro. Among the soloists the soprano Yeree Suh and the bass Christian Senn sang particularly well and the orchestra was on good form. The audience seemed pleased with the new format for the evening.

Friday evening brought the premiere of a new production of Handel's *Orlando* at the Opera House. Musically it was very satisfying. The young cast sang and acted well and the English countertenor Owen Willetts was outstanding in the title role, written by Handel for Senesino. One would like to hear him in a role with a higher tessitura – something written for Carestini, perhaps. Marie Friederike Schröder, although exhibiting a slightly peculiar vocal production, is a true coloratura soprano who met the technical demands of Angelica's role with aplomb. She needs to work on her lyrical singing. The

continued on p. 3

my mentor as well as my close friend. For many years he often sent me cassette tapes of BBC broadcasts he thought I would want to hear; when he learned that I didn't own a cassette player, he brought me one as a house gift. I'm still using it.

Of course Tony was equally generous with countless other scholars and performers, distributing tidbits of recondite knowledge far and wide, becoming a nearly invisible collaborator on several noteworthy books, providing detailed guidance to performers and sometimes creating editions specially for their use. For many years it seemed he was to a greater or lesser extent behind every major Handel publication or performance in England, while always remaining discreetly in the background. It was a reckless scholar or conductor who did not seek his advice. Although never a member of the Editorial Board of the *Hallsche Händel-Ausgabe*, Tony played a major role in reshaping its editorial structure and policy in the mid-1980s. A founder and guiding spirit of the Handel Institute, he will also be remembered for his many sterling contributions to the symposia and conferences of the Maryland Handel Festival and the American Handel Society.

Tony constantly sought new sources of information about Handel and his times. No relevant publications escaped his eagle eye, and he was ever on the track of additional primary sources. No less important, he approached every received fact and opinion with penetrating skepticism, overturning many long-held assumptions and opening the way to fresh discoveries. Generous as he was with his scholarly expertise, he had no patience with those didn't do their homework or wandered down what he considered errant paths in musical performance. He was famous as a scourge as well as a sage. Yet Tony was also extremely self-critical, and it is primarily for this reason that he only reluctantly committed himself to print in scholarly settings. When he did so, his work was always of the highest order. His Handel worklist for the 1980 edition of *The New Grove* set a new standard in Handel bibliography and remained an essential resource even after the appearance of Bernd Baselt's HWV; in the second edition, he wrote the entire article, as he had written the bulk of the Handel articles in Grove opera dictionary. Much of his rich store of information and insight, however, went into the notes he produced to accompany performances and recordings, a body of literature unfortunately not covered by standard indexes and often difficult to locate in libraries. And inevitably much of what he knew remained buried in his voluminous files, accessible only when someone asked the right question or broached a particular subject.

In 1967, I was invited to revise Otto Erich Deutsch's documentary biography of Handel, then out of print and obviously in need of extensive correction. I rashly agreed but soon enlisted Tony as my collaborator. Before long, however, when I temporarily abandoned Handel research, I told him he would have to continue alone, a decision he accepted with characteristic grace. It is for others to

describe the many turnings in the long road that led from there to the inception of the Handel Documents Project in 2007, a monumental replacement for Deutsch, with Tony as its primary researcher. Regrettable as it is that he did not live to see the fruits of his labors in published form, we must all be glad that in the end he was able to bring his immense learning to bear on this essential task.

Edward Holdsworth, bosom friend of Handel's librettist Charles Jennens, used to refer to the composer as "The Prodigious." There is no better way to describe Anthony Hicks.

— John H. Roberts

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK SUMMER 2010

This issue of the Newsletter contains reports on events that occurred during summer 2010, but it is not too early to begin thinking seriously about "Handel in Seattle" which will take place in March 2011. Board Member Marty Ronish has worked very hard to put together an outstanding event, and she and her local colleagues are looking forward to welcoming us to the Northwest. Please take the time to visit the festival website (<http://www.americanhandelfestival.org/>) and get the appropriate dates in your calendar. The festival registration form will be up soon, and early registration is never discouraged.

Speaking of websites, the society again owes a debt of thanks to our Webmaster and Vice President, Nathan Link, and his student assistants at Centre College. They have now scanned and posted on the AHS website (<http://americanhandelsociety.org/>) the back issues of the Newsletter. We are fortunate to have the website in such good hands, and Nathan is always interested in hearing suggestions for improvements.

Finally, this issue of the Newsletter contains Board Member John Roberts's remembrance of Anthony Hicks, who died this past May. Many of us were Tony's friends of long standing, and even more remember him from his participation in AHS conferences in College Park, Iowa City and Princeton. We have all profited from his scholarly and musical insights, encountered as often in reviews and sleeve notes as in formal articles. It is worth remembering as well his work behind the scenes; Tony was always available to provide counsel to performers and scholars in planning their concerts and recordings and in undertaking their research. The Handel world has lost a major presence and The American Handel Society a loyal member. We have all lost a good friend.

— Graydon Beeks

Russian countertenor Dmitry Egorov was a real find in the role of Medoro, exhibiting a strong voice and singing very musically. Dressed in the style of PeeWee Herman his Medoro was largely a passive character, but he acted convincingly with both his face and his voice. Sophie Klu mann sang and acted convincingly as the shepherdess Dorinda without quite effacing the memory of Dorothea Röschmann in the same role some twenty years ago. Christoph Stegemann was a majestic Zoroastro.

The Händelfestspielorchester Halle played very well under their Music Director, the baroque violinist Bernhard Forck. He adopted generally sensible tempi and the orchestra and singers clearly enjoyed working with him. Someone had apparently delivered an organ to the orchestra pit of the opera house by mistake and Michaela Hasselt, one of the two continuo harpsichordists, felt she ought to make use of it in minor-key arias. Perhaps this could be remedied in the future. I am sure that others were more pleased than I was that Petra Burmann, who played very well, brought along her baroque guitar in addition to her Chitarrone.

The staging by Nicola Hümpel, played on an open stage with little scenery and few props, was consistently annoying. The principal characters convincingly enacted the story of the opera and not a story superimposed on the plot. Unfortunately, they were accompanied onstage by two dancer/mimes, members of Nico and the Navigators, representing Amor and Mars. These two sometimes mirrored the actions of the main characters, sometimes interacted with them, and sometimes commented on their actions. At all times, however, they upstaged the main characters and generally interfered with the audience's ability to concentrate on what was really important. German opera audiences are used to this sort of thing and many people seemed to enjoy the added humor. Most of the Handelians in the crowd were convinced that this would have been an outstanding production if the director could bring herself to limit the cast to those characters required by Handel's librettist. Of course that doesn't take into account the video projections, about which the less said the better.

The Festival Lecture on Saturday morning was given by Dr. Albert Gier of the Otto Friedrich University in Bamberg. Under the title "Ladies, Knights, Weapons and Love. Ariosto's *Orlando furioso* on the Opera Stage" it presented an overview of operatic treatments of scenes and

characters from Ariosto's poem in the 17th through 19th centuries. This was followed by the Membership Meeting of the *G.F. Händel Gesellschaft* at which Terence Best, who has recently turned 80, was named an Honorary Member in recognition of his enormous service to Handel scholarship and in particular his work as editor of nineteen volumes for the *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe* which is financially supported by the Gesellschaft. I presented greetings from the AHS and tendered an invitation to all present to attend "Handel in Seattle" next spring.

On Sunday morning the Festival Gottesdienst was held in the Dom in the context of an Evangelical-Reformed service. A retiring collection was taken in aid of the restoration of the 1851 Wäldner organ. The "Coronation" Mass of Mozart was well performed by the Choir of the Robert Franz Singakademie and the Staatskapelle Halle under the direction of Professor Gothart Stier, although the decision to have the solos sung by multiple voices was regrettable.

The International Scholarly Conference held on Monday and Tuesday was sponsored jointly with the Bach-Archiv Leipzig; the second half will be held in Leipzig on 19-20 November 2010. The theme was "Wilhelm Friedemann Bach and the Protestant Church Cantata after 1750" in celebration of the composer's birth in 1710. In addition the W.F. Bach House has been restored as a museum celebrating the life and music of the one-time organist at the Marktkirche and other musicians important in the history of Halle. The conference included only one paper on Handel, but that was an important one by John Roberts entitled "Souvenirs de Florence: Additions to the Handel Canon." It was concerned primarily with "Amore ucellatore," which includes Handel's cantatas "Venne voglia ad Amore" (HWV 176) and "Vedendo Amore" (HWV 175), followed by five additional arias and recitatives. It survives only in a Florentine manuscript now in Cambridge. Although Andrew Jones has challenged the authenticity of the additional arias, Roberts argues that concordances with other music by Handel demonstrate that the complete extended cantata is, in fact, by Handel and was probably composed either in Venice or Florence before Handel arrived in Rome. Roberts also suggests that the "Prelude" printed by Walsh together with the overture to Handel's Florentine opera *Rodrigo* as incidental music to Ben Jonson's play *The Alchemist* is also authentic since it evidently served as the basis of the March in B-flat Major in *Rinaldo*.

The conference organizers generously allowed Donald Burrows and me to present papers focusing on the

HANDEL CALENDAR

The American Handel Society welcomes news or information about events of interest to Handelians. 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/>

RECENTLY PUBLISHED BY AHS MEMBER CHANNAN WILLNER:

Channan Willner, "Beethoven and Handel:
The Significance of a Borrowing," 2009.
<http://www.channanwillner.com/online.htm>

music of William Croft, the senior English composer of sacred music on Handel's arrival in Britain. I argued, on the basis of a manuscript in the William Andrews Clark Library in Los Angeles, that Croft's involvement in the composition of secular music was more extensive and continued later into his career than has been generally acknowledged. Burrows, focusing primarily on the revisions Croft made in his orchestral setting of the Te Deum and his later orchestral anthems, proposed that the composer adopted a more "modern" style after hearing Handel's Utrecht setting. Next year's conference will take place from 6 to 8 June 2011 and the theme will be "Handel and Dresden: Italian Music as a European Cultural Phenomenon."

Thursday evening brought a concert performance of *Alessandro* in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel Halle. The conductor was Eduardo López Banzo with his ensemble Al Ayre Español. The sopranos Ann-Helen Moen and Marita Solberg in the Cuzzoni and Faustina roles of Lisaura and Rossane were excellent. The mezzo Delphine Galou sang and acted the title role well but her voice was centered too high for the music Handel wrote for Senesino. The tempi were more sensible than is sometimes the case with this conductor and the orchestra played well without a baroque guitar in sight.

On Friday evening I attended a performance of *Siroe, Re di Persia* at the Goethe Theater in Bad Lauchstädt. The libretto is by the young Pietro Metastasio, and the staging by Wolf Konold, with minimal and vaguely modern sets and costumes by Dietlind Konold, treated the story seriously. There was a minimum of gratuitous sex and violence and the temptation to elicit easy laughter was largely held in check. The decision to portray Siroe as a petulant teenager wearing sneakers was, I thought, a mistake. The character needs a certain amount of *gravitas* from the very beginning – he is, after all, the elder brother and future king, torn between love for his tyrannical father and the Princess Emira, whose secret identity as Idaspe he is bound to protect, even though she intends to kill his father to avenge the murder of her family. It would also have been helpful to establish King Cosroe's tyrannical side more strongly at the beginning to give the other characters something more concrete to react against – they are, after all, each afraid of him at some level.

The star of the show was the soprano Melanie Hirsch as Emira/Idaspe. The most experienced member of the cast of young singers, she has learned to sing expressively while acting in a convincing manner. She was certainly successful in this highly dramatic role, although her quicksilver comic reactions were occasionally inappropriate. Having been a member of the ensemble at the Halle opera, she is currently a member of the company in Nuremberg and we will no doubt hear more of her. Baritone Sebastian Myrus was also successful in the role of Cosroe, particularly in portraying the King's remorse after he thinks his son has been executed by his command.

Gerda Lischka sang the role of Siroe very well, although her voice does not really lie low enough for a Senesino part. She needs to work on stage presence, although the great dungeon scene was exceptionally well

sung and acted. Diana-Marina Fischer had all the notes for Laodice but not the ability to mold them into a musical line. Her acting was serviceable but rarely penetrated the surface of the character. The remainder of the cast was adequate.

The music was directed from the harpsichord by Wolfgang Wiechert who let it speak for itself. Too many arias were truncated by the removal of the da capo after the repeat of the opening ritornello. Once more it became clear that it is much better to omit an entire aria if time is a factor. The orchestra was really too small, even given the confines of the pit of the Goethe Theater, and far too much of the violin part was played as a solo by concertmaster Friedemann Wezel – although played very well. It would have been better to involve the oboe and bassoon more in the later stages of the opera. The cellist, Alessandro Andriani, was outstanding. The decision to take a single intermission in the middle of the second act was, as always, a mistake.

On Sunday I attended the Festgottesdienst in the Marktkirche where the church's choir and the instrumental ensemble *Concentus musicus* performed W.F. Bach's cantata "Lobet Gott unsern Herrn Zebaoth" under the direction of the organist Irénée Peyrot, who is to be admired for challenging his amateur choir and his congregation with difficult and interesting music throughout the service. The Psalm was one of Heinrich Schütz's settings from the *Becker Psalter*. The Prelude and Postlude were the outer movements of Vivaldi's Concerto for Two Trumpets.

The 2011 Handel Festival in Halle will take place from 2 to 12 June and will feature performances of the *Occasional Oratorio* and *Jephtha* with performing material drawn from newly published volumes of the HHA edited by Merlin Channon and AHS Newsletter Editor Kenneth Nott respectively. The Opera House will present a new production of *Ottone*. The theme of the Festival will be "Handel and Dresden" and will focus on the role of that city in supporting Italian music and musicians. Tickets should be available beginning in December.

— Graydon Beeks

**NEWSLETTER
of
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The Editor welcomes comments, contributions,
and suggestions for future issues.



Handel in Seattle

AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE 2011

Thursday, March 24 to Sunday March 27
Seattle, Washington

Please join the American Handel Society for three days of concerts, papers, lectures, discussions, great food and Seattle coffee. Come a day early to experience Baroque dance and sing Handel choruses.

Name _____

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Registration Fees: \$100 for AHS members	Qty. _____	Total _____
\$125 for non-members (includes one-year membership)	Qty. _____	Total _____
\$50 daily rate	Qty. _____	Total _____

All scheduled meals and concerts are included in the registration fee except for the following:

Fri. Mar. 25: Boston Early Music Festival: *Acis and Galatea* Qty. _____ \$35 for conference participants; \$50 for guests Total _____

Sat. Mar. 26, 1:15 pm: AHS Luncheon Qty. _____ \$15 Total _____

Sat. Mar. 26: Pacific Musicworks & Tudor Choir: *Esther* Qty. _____ \$30 for conference participants; \$40 for guests Total _____

Sun. Mar. 27: Seattle Baroque Orchestra: *Grand Concertos* Qty. _____ \$30 for conference participants; \$40 for guests Total _____

(Post-festival dinner: pay for your own.)

Total including registration fee _____

There are two ways to register:

1. Print out and mail, with check made out to *Sweet Bird Classics*, 14308 61st Pl W, Edmonds WA 98026
2. Register online and pay via PayPal: www.americanhandelfestival.org/conference

Conference Schedule:

Thursday, Mar. 24

*(Thursday daytime events have separate fees)**

- 10 - 11:30 Baroque Dance Lecture-Demo
(Anna Mansbridge)
- 11:30 – 1 Catered lunch and Country Garden
slide show (Paul Willen)
- 1 – 5:30 Sing Handel choruses
- 6 - 8 Opening reception
(performance of Handel's harp music
at 6:30 pm by Maxine Eilander)

Friday, Mar. 25

- 9 Snacks and coffee
- 9:30 – 11:45 Paper Session
- 12 – 1 pm Janet See baroque flute recital
- 1:15 – 2:30 Catered Lunch/AHS Board Meeting
- 2:30 – 4:45 Paper Session
- 7 Serwer Memorial Lecture: David Hurley
- 8 Concert: Boston Early Music Festival:
Acis and Galatea

Saturday, Mar. 26

- 9 Snacks and coffee
- 9:30 – 11:45 Paper Session
- 12 – 1 Handel Chorus concert
- 1:15 – 3 AHS luncheon,
General Membership Meeting
- 3 - 6 Afternoon free
- 7 Pre-Concert Lecture: John Roberts
- 8 Concert: Pacific Musicworks
and Tudor Choir: *Esther*

Sunday, Mar. 27

- 11 – 1:30 Brunch and overflow paper session
or roundtable discussion
- 2 Pre-Concert Lecture
- 3 Concert: Seattle Baroque Orchestra
- 6 Post-Festival Dinner

* \$15 for Baroque Dance
\$25 for Country Garden
\$20 for Singing

FESTIVAL SCHEDULE:

www.americanhandelfestival.org

INFORMATION:

mronish@flash.net

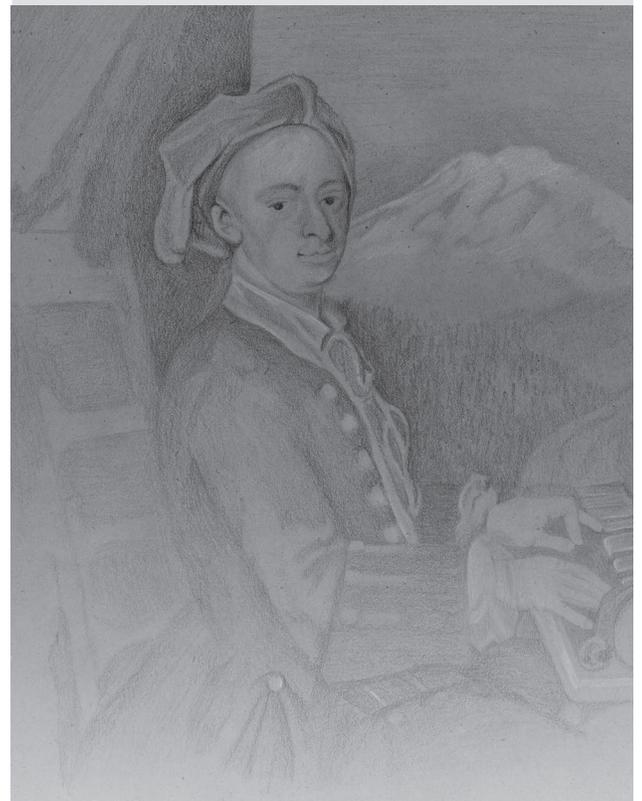
HOTELS

Discounted Festival hotels:

www.americanhandelfestival.org/housing/

PARKING

Parking is limited and very expensive.
You will not need a car.



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Donor	40	23	34
Student or Retired	15	8	10
Sponsor	65	38	55
Patron	130	80	110
Life	400	250	320
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Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Regular	30	15	-
Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Student*	10	5	-
TOTAL REMITTANCE			

* - This organization does not have a reduced rate for retirees.

Those paying in dollars or sterling should make their checks payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail them to Marjorie Pomeroy, Secretary/Treasurer, THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, 49 Christopher Hollow Road, Sandwich, MA 02563. Those wishing to pay in Euros should remit to Prof. Dr. Manfred Rätzer, Treasurer, Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, Gr. Nikolaistrasse 5, 06108 Halle (Saale), Federal Republic of Germany, and indicate that the payment is for the account of the AHS. Friends of the London Handel Institute may also pay their AHS dues in sterling by making their checks payable to The Handel Institute and mailing them to Malcolm London, Hon. Treasurer, The Handel Institute, 108 Falcon Point, Hopton Street, London, SE1 9JB, with the appropriate annotation.

Payments in dollars for GFH or HI memberships must be received before 1 June.

The American Handel Society

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xxv/2