

NEWSLETTER

of the
American Handel Society

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2025 AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

Boston, Massachusetts

February 6–9, 2025

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

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

6:00pm Welcome Reception
6:45pm **Howard Serwer Memorial Lecture**
Ayana Smith (Indiana University Bloomington), “Deathly Images: Discourses of Sight and Sound in Handel’s London Operas”

Friday, February 7 | Thomas Tull Concert Hall, Linde Music Building at Massachusetts Institute of Technology (77 Massachusetts Avenue, W18, Cambridge)

8:00am Bus 1 leaves The Colonnade for MIT
8:30am Bus 2 leaves The Colonnade for MIT
8:30am Breakfast
9:00am Welcome

Paper Session 1. Bells and Whistles: Handel’s Sounds of Love and Madness

9:10am **Minji Kim** (Andover, MA), “‘Make poor Saul stark mad’: Sonic Effect of Bells in Handel’s *Saul*”
9:50am **Blake Johnson** (Campbellsville University), “‘Where Love or Honour Calls’: The Role of the Oboe in Handel’s Early Operas, 1705–15”
10:20am Coffee Break

Paper Session 2. Handelian Encounters

10:40am **Ruth Eldredge Thomas** (Durham University), “J. S. Bach, the Handelian Sublime, and the Natural Theological Argument in 19th-Century Anglo-American Thought”

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TWO SETS OF LESSONS FOR PRINCESS LOUISA

Graydon Beeks

Princess Louisa, the youngest daughter of King George II and Queen Caroline, was born on December 7, 1724—exactly three hundred years ago as I write this. In 1743 she married Crown Prince Frederick of Denmark, who became King Frederick V in 1746. As Queen, she endeared herself to her new countrymen by learning to speak Danish and by presiding with her husband over a lively and cultivated court. She died in Copenhagen on December 19, 1751, after a failed operation for a hernia caused by multiple pregnancies.

Like her sister Princess Mary, who was just less than two years older, Louisa received lessons on the harpsichord from Christopher Ebelin (or Ebeling) and probably also in singing. In 1751, Baron Otto von Flemming, the Swedish ambassador to Denmark, reported that “She finds her pleasure in reading and music; plays the *klavier* really well and amuses herself with teaching her little girls to sing.”¹ Vilhelm Carl Ravn, in his book on Danish musical life published in 1886, quotes from a diary recording musical life at court that on her father-in-law, King Christian VI’s birthday in 1744, Crown Princess Louisa played harpsichord continuo at an afternoon concert. Ravn further notes that Louisa had a particular love for Italian music and opera and arranged for an Italian opera company to be engaged in Copenhagen, with performances beginning on her birthday in 1747.²

There is no documentary evidence that Handel was actively engaged in Louisa’s musical education as he had been in that of her eldest sister Anne, the Princess Royal. However, he would likely have shown an interest in this intelligent and musical member of the royal family, and there are indications that he did so. Michael Talbot has used circumstantial evidence to produce a strong argument that a volume of miscellaneous compositions in the Bibliotheca Bodmeriana in Cologny-Genève, Switzerland, was compiled as a gift for Princess Louisa

¹ Cited in Michael Talbot, “A Leaving Present for Princess Louisa?”

Handel, Barsanti and Bodmer *Ms. 11461–7*,” *Händel-Jahrbuch* 61 (2015): 379.

² *Ibid.*

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