

NEWSLETTER

of

The American Handel Society

Volume XXVI, Number 1

Spring 2011

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK SPRING 2011

"Handel in Seattle" was a great success, and I am sure that all of us who attended came away inspired by the outstanding performances of Handel's music at the American Handel Festival and stimulated by the papers and discussions at the American Handel Society Conference. Once again I want to express the thanks of the Society to our Board Member Marty Ronish who had the vision, enthusiasm and energy to make it all happen. The Festival consisted of more than thirty concerts and workshops over the course of seventeen days during the month of March 2011, only a small portion of which were available to those of us attending the AHS Conference. Thanks are also owing to the clergy and musical staffs of St. James Roman Catholic Cathedral and Trinity (Episcopal) Parish Church for providing venues and technical support for so many of the concerts and also for the AHS Conference. Finally, on behalf of the Society I would like to congratulate the musical community of Seattle for wholeheartedly participating in the Festival, both as performers and audience members. Other cities will be hard-pressed to match this achievement.

As the festivities in Seattle were drawing to an end, all of us were saddened to learn of the death of our last Founding Member, Paul Traver. There will be an obituary in a forthcoming issue of the Newsletter, but I would like to acknowledge here just how much the Society owes to Paul's wise counsel and his leadership, together with Howard Serwer, of the Maryland Handel Festival which hosted the American Handel Society Conferences for so many years and was the venue for stirring performances of important works by Handel and his contemporaries. It is difficult to remember, in this day when all of Handel's major works have been recorded – sometimes in multiple versions – how important it was in the 1980s and 90s to be able to hear at Maryland performances of Handel's oratorios in chronological order in the versions in which they first appeared. Paul's insistence that this plan should be continued through to the end, concluding with *Theodora* and *Jephtha*, and that every Maryland Handel Festival should have a scholarly conference as part of its makeup, played a crucial role in the spread of interest in Handel's music, in the development of Handel scholarship, and in the growth and success of The American Handel Society. And, of course, it was Paul who conducted those memorable performances with his beloved University of Maryland Chorus. He will be greatly missed.

— Graydon Beeks



AHS Festival 2011 logo: Handel with Mt. Rainier in the background.

CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS (PART I)

American Handel Society Conference
Seattle, Washington
March 24,-27, 2011

1. **Singers and Their Contexts,**
Friday, March 25 9:00-11:45 PM
(Chair, Roger Freitas)

Kathryn Lowerre (East Lansing, Michigan), "An English Opera Singer in Handel's London: Framing Narratives and Professional Networks"

Musicologists have examined Anastasia Robinson's roles in Handel and Bononcini's operas within the context of the composers' oeuvres. Robinson's self-description as a "patient Grisel" who "cannot scold" is firmly documented and often repeated, but it is hardly the last word. The Anastasia

continued on p. 2

The American Handel Society
The Hartt School
University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue
W. Hartford, CT 06117

ISSN 0888-8701
xxvi/1

Robinson of 1724, husbanding her vocal resources after illness, and playing to her perceived strengths in an increasingly competitive company should not be retroactively written over her early career.

Although the ambiguity surrounding her relations with the English aristocrat who acknowledged her, just before his death, as his wife continues to intrigue scholars, the woman described by most later eighteenth century writers never falters in the path of virtue. In this paper, I briefly review existing scholarship on Robinson, challenging the ways in which the virtue narrative has been carried forward from Burney, Hawkins, and the *Westminster Review*, both presenting new and reframing previously-examined material regarding Robinson’s career.

“Music, the Opera, and Other Relative Particulars” from Dibdin’s *A Complete History of the English Stage* (London, 1800) refers to court singer Arabella Hunt “in PURCELL’s time as celebrated as was afterwards Mrs. TOFTS, and after her Mrs. ROBINSON.” The central link is English diva Catherine Tofts, the star of *Arsinoe* (1705), the first fully sung Italian-style opera on the London stage. Using this implied ‘singer genealogy,’ I trace the means by which Robinson and her family initially positioned the young soprano to succeed.

While women of even moderate social status were typically represented as “falling” into the public sphere, concerts at the Robinson home and appearances at court under Queen Anne (Hunt’s primary patron) altered the typical trajectory. I examine the training, risks and rewards involved in Robinson’s decision to perform publicly, and Robinson’s involvement in patronage and social networks involving a number of aristocratic women (such as the Duchess of Portland), networks which overlapped with those of Bononcini and Handel.

A revealing comparison can be made to earlier actress-singer Anne Bracegirdle, the “celebrated Virgin” of the London stage, whose roles include wittily chaste heroines in Congreve’s plays but also a (largely ignored) series of adulterous wives—usually musical ones. Similarly, Robinson’s turn as the adulterous queen in *Crispo* and her variety of early roles counterpoint the ‘virtuous wife/widow’ of her best-known performances: the title character in *Griselda* and Cornelia in *Giulio Cesare*. while Robinson’s public successes and guarded personal life prompted poems ranging from panegyrics to scurrilous satires, insisting on her sexual availability to aristocratic male patrons.

The English singers prominent in London during Robinson’s childhood offered varied models for a successful career. Robinson’s public and professional activities shaped a new singer persona, her Englishness, social connections, and reputation for sexual virtue counterbalancing her Catholicism and her involvement in Italian opera, both highly suspect in the early eighteenth-century London that she and Handel knew.

Matthew Gardner (Ruprecht-Karls-Universität, Heidelberg, Germany), “Esther and Handel’s English Contemporaries”

Following the success of Esther’s first public performance in 1732, Handel began discovering the potential of English oratorio as a new genre, quickly following it with two further works, Deborah and Athalia. It was, however, not only Handel who saw possibilities English oratorio; in 1732 both Willem De Fesch and Maurice Greene produced their

own works, Judith (music lost) and The Song of Deborah and Barak, with Handel retaliating, at least against Greene, with Deborah in 1733. Thomas Arne followed a different strategy, performing a pirated version of Handel’s Acis and Galatea instead of writing his own oratorio, which, as is well known, resulted in Handel updating the work and performing a newer version. A similar situation presents itself in the late 1730s following the initial performances of Handel’s first setting of an ode for St Cecilia’s day, Alexander’s Feast, in 1736 – between 1736 and 1739 William Boyce produced two odes for St. Cecilia’s day and Michael Christian Festing one, and in 1737 Greene made a further attempt at English oratorio with Jephtha; all of these works were no doubt encouraged by the success of Alexander’s Feast.

This paper explores the works and competitive situation that arose between Handel and his contemporaries in the 1730s primarily as a result of the 1732 Esther performances. Through detailed inspection of selected compositions by Greene, De Fesch and Boyce, their performance contexts, formal design, content and how they relate to Handel’s works will be considered, thereby offering new light on early English oratorios and odes.

David Vickers (Royal College of Music, Manchester), “Reassessing the Italians in Esther: Handel’s Bilingual Versions of his First English Oratorio”

In 1995 the late Howard Serwer published an article presenting his preliminary speculation about Handel’s possible casting of Italian opera singers in revivals of *Esther*. In several respects this enabled discussion of the topic to progress from the pioneering study of the oratorio by Winton Dean in *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (1959). Both Dean and Serwer made logical assumptions about the origin and purpose of several substantial Italian-text interpolations in *Esther*, particularly suggesting that they were designed for the castrato Conti in 1737. This hypothesis cannot be sustained in light of new research. Using material abridged from chapters of my recent doctoral dissertation, I shall present evidence drawn from first-hand inspection of pencil cues and musical material in the conducting score, a consideration of new information about Handel’s contemporary bilingual revivals of *Deborah* (1734 version) and *Athalia* (1735 version), and an evaluation of Handel’s later revision practices in *Esther* (last revived by him in 1757), to shed significant new light on the composer’s use of Italian texts and singers in revivals of his first English oratorio. In addition to demonstrating the certainty that the majority of Italian insertions in *Esther* were devised originally and specifically for Carestini to perform in 1735, observations and suggestions will be made regarding the textual, musical and dramatic implications of the Italian additions. In addition to establishing more correct historical details about the oratorio, a larger question shall be considered: are bilingual versions of oratorios artistically viable?

Graydon Beeks (Pomona College), “Sweet Bird:” The Story of Dame Nellie Melba’s 1907 Recording”

On March 30, 1907 the soprano Nellie Melba entered the studios of the Victor Talking Machine Company to record her three showpieces with flute obbligato: the “Mad Scene” from Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Sir Henry Rowley Bishop’s “Lo! Here the Gentle Lark,” and Handel’s “Sweet Bird” from *Il Penseroso*. Melba was then at the height of her career and was in New York appearing in a season of

The American Handel Society

School of Music, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20742

Telephone (909) 607-3568 email: info@americanhandelsociety.org

www.americanhandelsociety.org

OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

Graydon Beeks, *President*, Pomona College
Kenneth Nott, *Newsletter Editor*, Hartt School of Music

Norbert Dubowy
Roger Freitas, Eastman School of Music
William D. Gudger, The College of Charleston
Ellen T. Harris, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Wendy Heller, Princeton University
David Hurley, Pittsburg State University, Kansas
Richard G. King, University of Maryland
Robert Ketterer, University of Iowa

Nathan Link, *Vice President*, Centre College
Marjorie Pomeroy, *Secretary/Treasurer*

Lowell Lindgren, Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Nicholas McGegan, Honorary Director, Berkeley, CA
John H. Roberts, University of California, Berkeley

Marty Ronish, Producer, BP Chicago Symphony Broadcasts
Ellen Rosand, Yale University
*Paul Traver, Honorary Director, University of Maryland

*Founding Member

The American Handel Society – Membership Form

Please mail the completed form and appropriate membership dues as instructed below:

Name _____ Date _____

Address _____

State/Country _____ Postal code _____

E-mail address _____ Phone _____

I agree to have the following listed in a printed Directory of AHS Members (check as appropriate):

- Home address Phone number E-mail address

Class of Membership — Circle applicable cell(s) (for current calendar year, unless otherwise specified)	\$	£	€
Regular	25	15	20
Joint (one set of publications)	30	17	25
Donor	40	23	34
Student or Retired	15	8	10
Sponsor	65	38	55
Patron	-	80	110
Life	-	250	320
Subscriber	30	20	24
Membership in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft – Regular	35	-	25
Membership in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft – Student*	15	-	10
Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Regular	35	20	-
Friend of the Handel Institute, London – Student*	18	10	-
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 Stephan Blaut, 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 Ms. Sylvia Levi, Hon. Treasurer, The Handel Institute, 254A Kew Road, Richmond TW9 3EG, with the appropriate annotation.

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

Hervey to assist him with the utmost attention.”¹³ Whatever her contribution might have been, the announcement of Handel’s comeback barely two weeks after her arrival cannot be a coincidence.

While it is true that Handel was lowering his high-brow profile in order to survive, his move was to be of historic significance, as Covent Garden would eventually become the venue of English oratorio for decades to come. And even though he would never offer theatre prices for his performances, he did make a symbolic move towards the middle classes. When Handel apologized, on August 27, for not honoring Sir Wyndham Knatchbull’s invitation because of his “being engaged with Mr. Rich to carry on the Operas at Covent Garden,”¹⁴ he was effectively making a statement: during the summer of 1734 his cultural orbit was expanding.

Whatever assistance Anne may have offered to Handel in July 1734, she would continue her strong musical interests in her new life as Princess of Orange.¹⁵ Two years later, Pockocke described her as a “perfect mistress of musick” participating in concerts and singing duets with Handel’s soloist Signora Strada. The excerpt below is representative of his observational acuity:

[Hanover July 30th O.S. August 10th N.S. / 1736]

... 19–30 [July] went ... / to Loo calld Lo the brief seat of the Prince of Orange built by King William / iii in a barren sandy country, ... the Prince & / Princess being here, we went to Court ... being / introduced, we kissed y^e Princesses hand she asked whether we came from England & / London, were introduc’d to y^e Prince ... invited to dine by y^e Lady of the Bed chamber / Lady Herbert ... we went into a Grotto of Queen maries after dinner to drink tea, the / Queens dairy near archd & all coverd wth dutch tiles. ... the house & offices are large & fine, the beds damask mostly, & as Dierer, / in y^t cart. one of mazanin blue & y^e room hung with the same lookd mighty well. the / gardens here are very fine laid out in Parterres & a double row of trees on each of a / walk y^t crosses y^e Garden in the middle, a semicircular colonade at the end statues / & water works, on one side a very large grove meadows surrounded with fine planed / walks statues & waterworks & at the end a very large square peice of water with / shady walks of Lime round, & all this is in a very fine taste, at eight the Princess / came to walk in y^e garden, walk’d an hour on the terras joyning to the house / then there was a private Consort to w^{ch} Gent^m. are admitted y^e Princess play’d on the / harpsicord, there was a fine base viol three fiddles & Strada who has sung so long in England / I heard her at Oxford &c the Princess herself sung one song w^{ch} was in two parts with her, her / highness is a perfect mistress of musick & has a very agreeable voice, she looks / big was dressd in a round green gown.¹⁶

Pockocke’s recollection was accurate. Strada did sing in Handel’s performances at the Oxford Commencement.¹⁷ Although no details are given on the music performed at Loo,

¹³ Lord Hervey, *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Second* (London: John Murray, 1860), 1:411.

¹⁴ Deutsch, *Handel*, 369

¹⁵ Richard G. King, “Handel’s Travels in the Netherlands in 1750,” *Music & Letters* 72 (1991), 372–86; Veronica P. M. Baker-Smith, *A Life of Anne of Hanover, Princess Royal* (Leiden et al.: E. J. Brill, 1995), 61.

¹⁶ British Library, Add. Ms. 19939, f. 40^v.

¹⁷ *Parker’s Penny Post*, no. 1275, Friday 22 June 1733, [3].

we can safely assume that the song in “two parts” was very likely one of Handel’s Italian duets, originally written for Anne’s mother, later Queen Caroline.¹⁸ After all, during 1734–7 the Princess regularly ordered copies of Handel’s music from John Christopher Smith, Sr.¹⁹ If she continued her financial support to Handel well after she had left England, one wonders if Strada, who returned to London on October 4,²⁰ or other visiting musicians were used to deliver much needed cash to the embattled composer. It’s a pity that the otherwise inquisitive Pockocke didn’t ask them.

— Ilias Chrissochoidis

¹⁸ [Mainwaring], *Memoirs*, 85.

¹⁹ King, “Handel’s Travels in the Netherlands in 1750,” 378–80.

²⁰ *The London Evening-Post*, no. 1386, Saturday 2–Tuesday 5 October 1736, [3].

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, contact the *Newsletter* Editor.

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/>

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

Kenneth Nott, *Editor*
The Hartt School University of Hartford
200 Bloomfield Avenue
West Hartford, CT 06117-1599
Tel: (860) 768-4895 Fax: (860) 768-4441
E-mail: Nott@hartford.edu

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

operas presented by Oscar Hammerstein’s Manhattan Opera Company.

Melba had recorded this repertoire with piano accompaniment in 1904 for the Gramophone and Typewriter Company of London. On that occasion the flutist had been the young Philippe Gaubert. She recorded it again for Victor in 1910 with her favorite flutist and business manager, John Lemmoné. In 1907, however, she employed the American-born flutist Charles Kelsey North, who had accompanied her on tours in 1895 and 1904-05 and in concerts in 1906-07. All of these recordings have now been released on CD, but in one crucial way the 1907 recordings are the most interesting.

North had a successful career as a teacher and freelance player in the Boston and New York areas. He was briefly the principal flute of the Detroit Symphony after World War I and ended his career playing with the largest movie theater orchestra in Chicago during the 1920s. He was an avid collector of music, always intending to publish an anthology of orchestral and operatic excerpts for flute. Through one of his students his collection ended up at the Honnold Library of The Claremont Colleges. It includes the flute parts from his 1904-05 tour with Melba.

This paper will discuss the differences between what Melba actually sang in concert and what it was possible for her to record, given the time limitations of the process. It will examine the range of articulation and dynamics available to the performers but not conveyed by the early recordings; in particular it will look at Melba’s famous double cadenza which was published without any dynamics at all by Estelle Liebling in her famous collection of coloratura soprano arias. Finally, it will encourage us to hear through the obstacles of limited technology and surface noise and catch a glimpse of the technique and musicianship that caused admiring players to liken Melba to “another instrumentalist.”

2. **Ancients and Moderns,**
Friday, March 25, 2:30-5:00 PM
(Chair, Wendy Heller)

Corbett Bazler (University of Rochester), “Reforming Handel: The Failed Heroics of Imeneo and Deidamia”

Metastasio’s *Achille in Sciro* (1736) was one of the most popular opera librettos of the eighteenth century, receiving no fewer than twenty-seven musical settings over a period of sixty years. It tells the story of Achilles, who, foretold to die in the Trojan War, is sent by his mother to the island of Skyros disguised as a girl. When Ulysses hides weapons within a chest of jewelry and presents it to the women at court, Achilles is unable to hide his true nature: tearing off his female attire at the call to battle, Achilles takes up a sword and is immediately enlisted for the war. Wendy Heller has seen this story as representing an important transitional moment in the history of eighteenth-century opera, when librettists and composers intent on reforming the genre turned away from plots centered on love and romance—widely perceived as “feminine” values—and moved toward those that reinforced “masculine” virtues such as reason, honor, and civic responsibility.

This paper will explore the ways in which Handel’s final two operas, *Imeneo* (1740) and *Deidamia* (1741), fit oddly within this trend toward reform. The two operas are unique in Handel’s oeuvre in that neither ends with a reconciliation between the young lovers: in *Imeneo*, Rosmene rejects her betrothed out of obligation to the man who saved her life; in *Deidamia*, also centered around the Achilles myth, the heroine

sacrifices her personal feelings to Achilles’s patriotic duty. Yet in contrast to other settings of these stories, including Metastasio’s *Achille* and Nicola Porpora’s *La festa d’Imeneo* of the same year (which I will discuss with reference to the unpublished manuscript, detailed here for the first time), Handel’s two last operas demonstrate a highly ambivalent attitude toward the masculine values that Heller identifies as central to mid-century operatic reform. Handel’s musical settings are strikingly lighthearted in tone, occasionally even comic, and they often tend to shift the dramatic focus onto women who are forced to accommodate the heroic prerogatives of men. Thus, unlike the roaring cannons, blaring trumpets, and authoritarian tone of Porpora’s “festal” serenata, Handel’s *Imeneo* is characterized by extremely sparse orchestration, intimate textures, and an unorthodox choice of voice types for the principal roles. Handel gave his leading castrato the part of Rosmene’s young suitor, Tirinto, rather than that of the hero Imeneo, a minor, almost insignificant role sung by a bass. Similarly, Handel’s decision to set an opera that takes its name from Achilles’s distraught lover, Deidamia—not to mention the fact that the young warrior himself is played by a female soprano—betrays its unique female perspective. Despite their concessions to changing, “enlightened” tastes, in other words, Handel’s final operas seem to resist the mid-century reforms sweeping the European continent. Instead, they stage a kind of failed heroics, which dramatize the loss that often accompanies civic compromise. Written when Handel was conscious that his operatic career had come to an end, *Imeneo* and *Deidamia* might even be said to betray Handel’s own sense of loss over Baroque opera’s passing.

Ruth Smith (Cambridge University, UK), “The Choices of Hercules and Handel”

The Choice of Hercules, the best-known account of moral decision-making in early-modern European culture, portrayed by esteemed artists and described by esteemed writers, was an obvious challenge for a master musician. It was also a topic intimately connected with the family of Handel’s friends the 4th Earl of Shaftesbury and James Harris. Handel’s friends were keen for him to set the story, and in 1751 he did. But he had treated the theme long before he made an explicit setting of it, in *Orlando*, and even earlier in *Rinaldo*. His treatment of it there indicates his understanding of the story’s potential.

Robert Ketterer (University of Iowa), “Iphigenia at Covent Garden”

Oreste has been a neglected opera. Based on the story in Euripides’ *Iphigenia in Tauris*, and adapted from a 1723 Roman libretto by Barlocchi, *Oreste* was a self-pasticcio that Handel concocted to fill December of 1734, his first season at Covent Garden. It received only three performances, sandwiched between a revival of *Arianna in Creta* in November, and the premiere of *Ariodante* in January, 1735. It was not revived until 2000, and has had little in-depth scholarly treatment beyond the HHA edition (1991) and related articles by Bernd Baselt. Despite this, recent assessments by Baselt, Burrows, and Landgraf of the libretto and of Handel’s use of his own music have been positive, and the opera seems worth examining in greater detail. The aims of this paper are 1) to locate *Oreste* in the context of eighteenth-century English perceptions of the Iphigenia story; 2) to compare the final scenes of the opera with their parallels in the original Greek versions of the story;

3) to observe in these scenes how Handel’s pasticcio enhances the way in which the Iphigenia story is told; and 4) to suggest how *Oreste* fits thematically with the Covent Garden season of 1734-35, and with the contemporary London Theater scene.

1) The story of the sacrifice of Iphigenia at Aulis and her subsequent transference to the land of the Taurians in the Crimea was very familiar to late 17th and early 18th-century England. As Hall and MacIntosh have pointed out (*Greek Tragedy and British Theatre, 1660-1914*, 30ff), in the previous two generations there had been Iphigenia plays on the English stage by Racine, Davenant, Boyer (with a plagiarized version by Johnson,) Dennis, and Theobald. Theological scholarship and the popular press debated the debt of the pagan Iphigenia story to the Biblical Jephtha, and a Jephtha oratorio was written in 1737 (l. Hoadley, m. Greene). A ship in the royal navy was named *Iphigenia*, and the story could be found popularly on painted fans, and referred to in poems in the weekly journals. In consequence, the brevity of exposition and apparent lack of dramatic motivation in Handel’s libretto (adapter unknown) ceases to be a dramatic problem, given the wide familiarity the audience would have had with Iphigenia’s story and its characters.

2/3) The very long central scene in Euripides *Iphigenia in Tauris* was praised by Aristotle (*Poetics* 54a7, 55a18) for the effective way in which it blended the play’s recognition with its *peripateia*; by means of a letter and the agency of Oretes’ friend Pylades, brother and sister come to recognize one another and the plot turns from threatened sacrifice to an rescue-drama, whereby the Greeks escape the Taurian king Thoas. Handel’s opera emphasizes the roles of Pylades and Orestes’ wife Hermione, who also arrives on the scene early in the opera. The recognition of brother and sister is delayed to the final scenes, in which the music carefully builds pathos into tension and excitement as the Greeks turn the Taurian people against the tyrannical Thoas; the king is overthrown and assassinated by a combination of male and female forces; the Greek family relations are re-established in ways that combine events and themes from plays about the house of Atreus by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; and the opera ends with a celebratory ballet. The *scena ultima* of *Orestes* anticipates Liberty operas produced in France and Italy during the French revolution.

4) Far from functioning as a mere pasticcio and “filler” for the 1734-35 season, *Oreste*, participates in Handel’s program for Covent Garden, sharing with *Arianna in Creta* and *Ariodante* themes of mythology, maidens endangered and abandoned at the edge of the world, and the defeat of tyrannical males. It also is in accord with other productions in London at the time, specifically Theobald’s comic *Orestes*, and the 1737 *Jephtha*. Neither its abbreviated plot nor its character as a pasticcio affected its reception. It evidently struck a familiar chord with its first audiences and was “perform’d with great Applause”.

Jonathan Rhodes Lee (University of California, Berkeley), “Must She her Acis Still Bemoan? Acis and Galatea and Sensibility”

In 1732, Londoners were treated to the first public performance of Handel’s *Acis and Galatea* at the Little Theatre in the Haymarket. The composer himself was not the driving force behind this capital city premiere. In May of that year, just one month before Handel himself had the masque performed, a group of Englishmen presented *Acis* as part of a

fledgling company that aimed, as poet and playwright Aaron Hill famously put it, “to deliver English music from Italian *bondage*, and demonstrate, that *English* is soft enough for Opera.”

Many historians have written about the nascent English company that stole Handel’s thunder with its so-called “pirated” *Acis*. Most recently, Judith Milhous and Robert Hume have demonstrated how difficult it is to ascertain who funded and artistically led this first production. Setting aside for the moment these questions of “who” and “how,” the question of “why” this company chose to present *Acis* has rarely been addressed. My paper explores the possible motivations of the production team, considering how the work followed in the aesthetic footsteps of their previous theatrical success, and how this approach both fostered and utilized the persona of a budding young starlet named Susanna Cibber (née Arne).

The “pirated” production came closely on the heels of *Amelia*, a sentimental English opera produced that year, with music by John Frederick Lampe. This opera’s libretto, by Henry Carey, features a young, innocent heroine, whose attempts to protect her beloved place her virtue under dire threat from an ominous villain. The work’s themes of endangered chastity, its triumphal celebration of the domestic, and its prolonged scenes of suffering and weeping place it squarely in a tradition now recognized under the names “sentimental drama” or “theater of sensibility.” Such pathetic atmospheres and strong moral messages characterized the famous novels of sensibility by Samuel Richardson and like-minded authors in the 1740s. These works achieved a sort of artistic summa of tendencies that were first born on the London stage and given musical treatment in *Amelia* and other English operas in the 1732-33 season. *Acis and Galatea*, with its mythological storyline and less overtly weepy atmosphere, at first seems a strange followup to Lampe’s successful English opera. Yet, when it is borne in mind that both leading female roles were played by the capable Susanna Cibber, a marked aesthetic similarity emerges between them. Cibber, who went on to become one of the most celebrated actors of her era, was frequently hailed by her contemporaries as the embodiment of sensibility on the English stage. My paper considers the persona that Cibber cultivated and the typecast roles that she adopted in the 1730s, and demonstrates how both *Amelia* and *Galatea* as characters suited this actress’s particular skills. These early forays into sentimental performance helped establish Cibber’s reputation, and a perceived kinship between *Amelia* and *Galatea* may have influenced the decision to “pirate” Handel’s masque.

**DR. PAUL TRAVER
MARCH 27, 1931—MARCH 27, 2011**

The American Handel Society announces the passing of Dr. Paul Traver, founding member of the American Handel Society and Artistic Director of the Maryland Handel Festival.

A memorial article detailing the professional accomplishments of Dr. Traver will appear in a future issue of this Newsletter.

**HANDELIAN REFERENCES IN
RICHARD POCOCKE’S EARLY
CORRESPONDENCE (1734–7)**

The cleric and pioneer anthropologist Richard Pocke (1704–65) spent a considerable part of his life exploring continental Europe, the Near East, and remote parts of the British Isles. His writings abound in details on places and people little known to his contemporaries. Famous for the two-volume *Description of the East* (1743, 1745), dedicated to his patron Lord Chesterfield, he also left many manuscript travelogues. The earliest of these is a set of letters to his mother during his first two European tours, in 1733–4 and 1736–7 (BL, Add. Ms. 19939). A monument of micro script, they demand exceptional concentration, patience, and physical strength to read. Thanks to a year of research in London, sponsored by the British Economic and Social Research Council, I had the opportunity to go through the entire manuscript and extract information about music and musicians as well as two detailed descriptions of Venice. Two of the excerpts relate to Handel and deserve reproduction.

[Venice, 7 June (O.S.) 1734]

Faranelli y^e top voice in Italy we shall hear at / Vicenza[:] he is to go to England, Caristini who went last season to London sings well but is saucy & so comes back, Hendl is laid on his back / by Heddeger, & goes over with y^e Princess of Orange.¹

Pocke’s source is the British community in Venice, members of which were avid opera goers and even served as recruiters of Italian vocal talent (e.g. Owen Swiney).² The agreement with Farinelli was announced by Joseph Smith to Lord Essex on May 14.³ Carestini had replaced Senesino after the latter’s departure from the Haymarket opera company in the early summer of 1733, and his vocal skills are praised by none other than Mary Pendarves.⁴ The reference to Handel’s bad year corresponds to the reputed loss of 3000 pounds mentioned by Thomas Bowen to the Earl of Essex (Jul 8).⁵

Given the accuracy of the above, we should take seriously the charge that Heidegger forced his business partner out of the King’s Theatre. This offers a new twist to the standard assumption of expiring contractual obligations in their partnership.⁶ During the 1733–4 season, Heidegger witnessed both the resilience of Senesino’s rebel company and Handel’s

1 British Library, Add. Ms. 19939, f. 15^v; also [with “Heydegger”] in Add. Ms. 22978, f. 82^v [p. 142]; the Farinelli reference has already appeared in Thomas McGeary, “Farinelli’s Progress to Albion: The Recruitment and Reception of Opera’s ‘Blazing Star,’” *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (2005), 339–60: 344.
2 Elizabeth Gibson, *The Royal Academy of Music, 1719–1728: The Institution and Its Directors* (New York and London: Garland, 1989), 348–82.
3 British Library, Add. Ms. 27733, f. 80r; repr. Carole Mia Taylor, “Italian Operagoing in London, 1700–1745” (Ph.D. dissertation, Syracuse University, 1991), 212.
4 *The Autobiography and Correspondence of Mary Granville, Mrs. Delany*, ed. Lady Llanover, 3 vols. (London: Richard Bentley, 1861), 1:462.
5 British Library, Add. Ms. 27733, ff. 114v–115r; repr. Taylor, “Italian Operagoing in London, 1700–1745,” 205.
6 The issue has been probed in Robert D. Hume, “Handel and Opera Management in London in the 1730s,” *Music & Letters* 67 (1986), 347–50.

strong publicity thanks to the impending nuptials of his great patroness Princess Royal Anne. A shrewd businessman and veteran manager, he understood that London could support only one opera company and that he would soon have to take sides. Anne’s move to Holland as Princess of Orange and Farinelli’s recruitment by his competitors promised to knock Handel off the scene. Whether his agreement with the latter was for three (Mainwaring) or five (‘Shaftesbury’ memoirs) years,⁷ Heidegger was left with no choice but to switch sides.

The supreme confidence of anti-Handelists at this time is reflected in the reference to the composer’s exile to Holland, a rumor also recorded in Prévost’s magazine *Le Pour et Contre* (the destination here is Germany).⁸ Yet something occurred and things changed dramatically, for a news report from July 13 (not included in Deutsch) announced:

We hear that the Town will be entertain’d next Season with an Opera at the Hay-market, and with another under the Direction of Mr. Handel (twice a Week) at the new Theatre in Covent-Garden, Plays being to be acted only four Days a Week in the latter Theatre.

The former will consist of Signor Senoseni, Signora Cuzzoni, Signora Celesti, Signora Bertolli, and Signora [*sic*] Montagnana, with the Addition of the famous Signor Farinelli, who is now on the Road from Italy, and is expected to land shortly at Dover, from whence he will repair to the Right Hon. the Earl Cowper’s Seat in Kent, in order to pass some Time with his Lordship.

The Opera under the Direction of Mr. Handel will be compos’d of Signor Carestini, Signora Strada, the Signore Negre, and some celebrated Voices who have been sent for over from Italy. We hear also that Mademoiselle Salle is to dance in the said Opera at Covent-Garden Theatre.⁹

Robert Hume has rightly called Handel’s move to Covent Garden “astonishing” and John Rich’s hosting a high-brow composer as “baffling.”¹⁰ Although Hume does pay attention to Handel’s withdrawal of £1300 on June 26 (part of which could have been used for a deal with Rich), he fails to notice the rather exceptional visit of Princess Anne to London on July 2,¹¹ for whom Handel extended his season by three nights.¹² The news of Heidegger’s abandoning Handel and the rumors about her beloved master’s professional demise could not have left her indifferent. Indeed, upon her quitting England, on October 21, “she had Handel and his opera so much at heart, that even in these distressful moments she spoke as much upon his chapter as any other, and begged Lord

7 [John Mainwaring], *Memoirs of the Life of the Late George Frederic Handel* (London: R. and J. Dodsley, 1760; repr. New York: Da Capo Press, 1980), 112-13; Public Record Office 30/24/28/84, ff. 425^r; repr. Otto Erich Deutsch, *Handel: A Documentary Biography* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1955), 845. A more accurate transcription of the latter appears on http://ichriss.ccarh.org/HRD/1760_Shaftesbury_Memoirs_of_Handel.htm.
8 Deutsch, *Handel*, 369.
9 *The London Evening-Post*, no. 1037, Thursday 11–Saturday 13 July 1734, [2].
10 “Handel and Opera Management in London in the 1730s,” 352, 354.
11 *The London Evening-Post*, no. 1033, Tuesday 2–Thursday 4 July 1734, [2].
12 Friedrich Chrysander, *G. F. Händel. Band 2* (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1858), 363.