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HANDEL AND IMPROVED PSALMODY

Graydon Beeks

After his death, Handel's music was frequently enlisted in the service of worthy causes, sometimes in ways that he would almost certainly not have anticipated. The performance of *Messiah* and other oratorios to raise money to support charitable foundations such as hospitals paralleled the composer's own activities in support of the Foundling Hospital, while the adaptation of some of his operatic melodies for use as hymn tunes enjoyed a partial precedent in his setting of three texts by Charles Wesley for the same purpose. He was unlikely, however, to have foreseen other uses, including the adaptation of selected works for the purpose of raising the standard of metrical psalm singing in England.

The Rev. William de Chair Tattersall (1751–1829) was a Church of England clergyman and amateur musician who was particularly involved in this endeavor. The late Nicholas Temperley's article on Tattersall in *Grove Music Online* succinctly summarizes his career as far as music is concerned.¹ This present article expands on Temperley's work, with special emphasis on Tattersall's last published collection of metrical psalms.

Tattersall became Vicar of Wotton-under-Edge, Gloucestershire in 1779, took over the running of the choir, and replaced the metrical psalm translations of Sternhold & Hopkins and Tate & Brady—the so-called Old and New Versions—with translations that the Rev. James Merrick (1720–1769) had published in 1765.² Tattersall divided the psalms into stanzas and prepared musical settings of them for the use of his own parishioners, employing both traditional and newly composed melodies. These were subsequently published as *A version or paraphrase of the Psalms originally written by the Rev. James Merrick, A.M. . . . adapted to the purposes of public or private devotion* (London, 1789). It was apparently well received and was reprinted in 1797, 1801, 1804, and 1822.

Tattersall's next project was to provide entirely new musical settings for Merrick's versions of all 150 psalms. He persuaded many of his musical acquaintances to contribute, including Benjamin Cooke, John Wall Callcott, and, most notably, Franz Joseph Haydn, who provided six tunes. Tattersall published the first 75 psalms in 1794 as the first volume of *Improved Psalmody*, with an extensive List of Subscribers including the King and members of the Royal Family.³ In another collection published in 1802, Tattersall announced that he hoped to deliver the settings of the remaining 75 psalms by

A WEALTH OF MUSIC: HARRY CHRISTOPHERS AND THE HANDEL AND HAYDN SOCIETY

Teresa M. Neff



Photography by Robert Torres

On January 24, 2019, Boston's Handel and Haydn Society announced that Harry Christophers, CBE, would conclude his twelve-year tenure as artistic director with the end of the 2020–2021 season. Christophers is the founder and conductor of the UK-based choir and period-instrument ensemble, The Sixteen, as well as the principal guest conductor of the Orquesta Ciudad de Granada, and a regular guest conductor with numerous other symphony orchestras and opera companies.

Christophers began his tenure as H+H artistic director with the 2009–2010 season. His association with H+H, however, began three years earlier when, in September 2006, he led the ensemble in a performance of music by Handel and Haydn at the Esterházy Palace as part of the Haydn Festival in Eisenstadt, Austria. He conducted H+H's annual *Messiah* performance in 2007 and led

¹ I have had the honor of working with the Handel and Haydn Society since 2009 as the Christopher Hogwood Historically Informed Performance Fellow; Harry Christophers and I talked about H+H's oratorio performances on July 17, 2020.

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¹ <https://doi.org/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.27551>.

² J. Merrick, *The Psalms Translated or Paraphrased in English Verse* (Reading, 1765, 2/1766).

³ Tattersall, ed., *Improved Psalmody vol. 1 containing the first twenty-five Psalms* (London, 1794). This publication was apparently first issued as three separate numbers, each containing musical settings for 25 psalms in score. These three numbers were then issued together as volume 1, which was followed by a publication of all 75 psalms in separate part books. Each state of the publication also included an Appendix containing a number of metrical psalm tunes by earlier composers including Thomas Ravenscroft and William Croft, but the contents vary and the texts are by Sternhold & Hopkins in some issues and Merrick in others. The preface to volume 1 is dated June 4, 1794, but some or all of the issues may first have appeared in 1795.

January 1, 1803, but they never appeared in print.⁴

The title of the 1802 publication also begins with *Improved Psalmody* but continues *Sanctioned by the King at Weymouth . . . The music adapted from the sacred compositions of Handel*.⁵ The words are again by James Merrick. In his Dedication to Queen Charlotte, dated "Wotton-under-Edge Jan. ye 18th. 1802," Tattersall states that "His Majesty . . . conferred upon me a peculiar mark of Distinction in allowing me to inscribe the entire Work to him, & having further condescended to sanction the Introduction of it into the Parish Church within the Borough of Weymouth & Melcombe Regis which he constantly attends during the Summer." Tattersall further notes that "Since these Psalms were performed before your Majesty, the Almighty has crowned the Year with his goodness, & Peace as well as Plenty has blessed our Land. I have therefore inserted two Portions from other Psalms, which seem peculiarly applicable to such an occasion." The performances referred to were presumably at Weymouth in summer 1801, and Tattersall was almost certainly referring here to the signing of the Treaty of London on September 30, 1801 preparatory to the signing of the Treaty of Amiens early in 1802 which established peace, albeit only temporarily, with Republican France.

Tattersall's metrical psalm settings were part of a larger effort in the later 18th century to reform the practice of psalm singing in England. The musical settings in all of Tattersall's publications are for three voices, with two higher voices notated in treble clef and a lower part in bass clef, and the text is printed under each part. They were modelled stylistically on contemporary glees, being primarily homophonic with occasional short bursts of counterpoint.⁶

The sophisticated musical settings, relatively high tessitura of the highest voice, and the use of Merrick's words would have made Tattersall's metrical psalms more suitable for town churches that could support a choir and organ, than for rural parishes, which continued to sing psalms in four parts, either unaccompanied or with support from single-line instruments and with the "tune" in the tenor voice. They also seem unlikely to have encouraged the participation of the congregation, although Tattersall would probably have disagreed. In the preface to *Improved Psalmody vol. 1*, he described how he anticipated they would be sung:

The congregation and children, led and supported by good voices, should join in the upper part. In the choir the trebles should be divided, half to the first, half to the second. Men's voices may join each part according to their compass, and there should be sufficient number of basses to support them all, which parts can be performed by men only.⁷

This was presumably the way they were performed at Wotton-under-Edge under Tattersall's supervision.

One assumes that George III's well-known devotion to Handel's music prompted Tattersall to adapt movements from the works of a composer he had apparently not employed in his earlier collections. The bulk of Handel's non-operatic music was available in print, and Tattersall cast his net wide, as can be seen from the table at the end of this article. The settings are strophic and the stanzas (called "verses" in the collection) are the ones created earlier by Tattersall, except for Nos. 9 and 10, which come from the handful of psalms that Merrick, himself, organized into stanzas in his 1765 publication. Each of the psalms is preceded by a heading

that indicates its appropriate use. No. 2, for example, is headed "The King's trust & confidence in God," while the heading for No. 6 reads "A Prayer for the Safety of the King & his Family." The only two headings that do not refer explicitly to the monarch are Nos. 9 and 10, which read "God protects the good Man & preserves him from all Danger" and "A Prayer for Peace & Plenty, & for the Prosperity of the Church" respectively.

The headings to Nos. 1 and 7 are engraved in a more elaborate style than the others, which probably indicates that they were the two Psalms added to the collection in the autumn of 1801. The heading for No. 1, which reads "David the inspired King praises God for subduing his Enemies, and showing Mercy to himself, and his Descendants," presumably refers to the Treaty of London, while that for No. 7, which reads "The King and his Heir, in the Person of Solomon, by their righteous Judgment secure for the People the blessing of Peace," may also refer obliquely to the King's recovery from his second bout of madness earlier in the year.

The musical adaptations are almost all completely homophonic, which would presumably make them easier for the congregation to sing. The texts of Handel's originals, with the exception of those used as the models for Nos. 2 and 10, all employ the same metrical schemes used by Merrick. Only four of the settings are drawn from choruses and all of these retain their original keys except for No. 4, which is transposed down a step from B Minor to A Minor. Handel's choruses used for all but No. 3 are in three parts, although in the Chorus of Virgins from *Samson* that served as the model for No. 4 the original bass part is instrumental. All but No. 2 are homophonic, so the task of adaptation was relatively straightforward. No. 4 retains the unaccompanied soprano solo for its opening phrase.

No. 2, which is based on a short imitative chorus for STB voices with instruments *colla parte* from the Cannons Anthem *O Sing unto the Lord*, is more intriguing. In the adaptation, Tattersall's measures 1–10 consist of the original music as written by Handel. This is followed by the original measures 22–25 with the upper parts switched. A jump to the middle of Handel's measure 33 introduces newly composed music to replace the original Canto part but sung by the second voice with the original Tenor continuing in the top voice for 1 ½ measures. The final section returns to the original scoring from measure 35 to the end but with the closing cadence prolonged. One wonders what the congregation in Weymouth made of this contrapuntal setting that presumably would have presented a challenge to the choir.

The remaining Psalm settings are based on arias and the method of adaptation generally consists of taking Handel's original vocal solo and instrumental bass lines, making necessary cuts, and adding a middle voice. The adaptation does not always begin with the first vocal entry in the model; in No. 6, for example, it starts at measure 73 of "Ye Men of Gaza, hither bring" from *Samson*, which is then substantially rewritten. No. 6 is unusual in that Tattersall begins with a duet, which is followed by a single voice before ending with the full three-voice texture. No. 7 is the only adaptation from an aria for bass voice, and the process of moving the "tune" to the highest voice necessitated a transposition from E-flat Major up to G Major. The only other psalm setting derived from an aria that required a similar treatment was No. 8, in which the high soprano aria "Praise the Lord with cheerful noise" from *Esther* was transposed down from C Major to A Major.

The final exception is No. 10, for which the words are taken from Psalm 122. Merrick, himself, had divided this into six-line stanzas (rather than the usual four-line stanzas) in iambic meter. Tattersall chose as his model the aria and chorus "Blessed be the pow'r who gave us," which was added to *Theodora* in 1759. Although it also sets six-line stanzas, it is in trochaic meter. This required extensive rewriting, in the course of which rhythms were changed and stresses were transferred to different beats in the measure. One wonders why Tattersall should have expended the effort.

Tattersall was appointed chaplain to George III in 1803, which may in part answer that question. Although the timing and the dedication of his 1802 publication appear opportunistic, it is clear that Tattersall was deeply committed to the improvement of Anglican psalm singing, and expended a good deal of his own time,

4 Tattersall, ed., *Improved Psalmody: Sanctioned by the King at Weymouth. The Words selected from a Poetical version of the Psalms originally written by the late Revd. James Merrick, A.M. Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford. Divided into Stanzas by the Revd. William Dechair Tattersall, A.M. Late Student of Christ Church, Oxford. The Music adapted from the Sacred Compositions of Handel* (London, 1802), 58.

5 Ibid. It was registered at Stationer's Hall on June 19, 1802. The publication is relatively rare; a copy was sold at Sotheby's in New York on December 2, 2015, and its description notes another exemplar at Yale. The British Library copy, shelf mark C.481.a, is available as a google book.

6 For a more detailed discussion, see Sally Drage, *The Performance of English Provincial Psalmody c.1690–c.1840* (PhD dissertation, The University of Leeds, 2009).

7 Tattersall, ed., *Improved Psalmody vol. 1*, 16, as quoted in Drage, *Performance*, 128.

energy, and money over a number of years in pursuit of his goal. As part of this crusade, he hoped to expose his parishioners to a more sophisticated musical repertoire, which in the 1794 collection he elicited from composers with whom he had direct contact. In the 1802 publication he sought the assistance of a composer from the recent past whose credentials were unlikely to be challenged—especially not by the King. He was presumably not concerned that his adaptations made nonsense of the scoring, proportions, and intentions of Handel's originals.

Tattersall had at least one more tangential connection to Handel. The St. Martin-in-the-Fields church in London was opened in 1716, and, shortly thereafter, King George I was elected a church warden. In 1725 or 1726, he gave to the church the sum of £1,500 to pay for an organ, which was subsequently built by Christopher Schrider and dedicated in 1727.⁸ By the end of the century the organ was thought to be worn out and was sold, to be replaced with a new instrument built by William Gray (later Gray & Davison) in 1800. Schrider's organ was described as having 22 stops, 3 rows of keys and a set of pedals in an advertisement in *Woolmer's Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* of February 13, 1800. It was purchased by Tattersall for £200 and installed in his church at Wotton-under-Edge, where it remains today.⁹ The specifications have been extensively altered, but the elegant case retains the plaque identifying it as "The gift of His Most Sacred Majesty King George, 1726." The firmly-established local belief is that Handel played for the dedication of the organ at St. Martin-in-the-Fields in 1727.¹⁰ It is not clear whether Tattersall was aware of that story.

List of Psalms in *Improved Psalmody* (1802)

No.	Text Incipit	Psalm & Stanzas	Source
1	Blest be the living God, whose aid	18: 42–45	Air, "Defend her, Heav'n; let Angels spread," <i>Theodora</i> , HWV 68/25b
2	I see, I see th'Almighty shed	20: 6–10	Chorus, "Declare his honour unto the heathen," <i>O Sing unto the Lord</i> , HWV 249b/3
3	By thy unwearied strength upheld	21: 1–5, 10	Chorus, "O Father, whose almighty pow'r," <i>Judas Maccabaeus</i> , HWV 63/5
4	Thy Paths, blest source of light, display	25: 17–19	Chorus, "Her faith and truth, O Samson, prove," <i>Samson</i> , HWV 57/28
5	Let me, (for with pitying ear)	28: 4–5	Chorus, "Welcome, welcome, mighty King," <i>Saul</i> , HWV 53/22
6	Thou, Lord, within thy hallow'd shrine	61: 4–8	Aria, "Ye men of Gaza, hither bring," <i>Samson</i> , HWV 57/2
7	Instruct, great God, the kingly heart	72: 1–4	Aria, "Tears such as tender fathers shed," <i>Deborah</i> , HWV 51/32
8	O, blest the tribes, whose willing ear	89: 15–18	Aria, "Praise the Lord with cheerful noise," <i>Esther</i> , HWV 50a/5 [=50b/13]
9	Lo! From the hills my help descends	121: 1–4	Aria, "From cities storm'd and battles won," <i>Saul</i> , HWV 53/51
10	Be peace by all implor'd on thee	122: 5–7	Solo and Chorus, "Blest be the pow'r who gave us," <i>Theodora</i> , HWV 68/32b
11	Rise, Israel's Father, God, and Friend	132: 7–10	Arioso, "Thou deign'st to call thy servant son," <i>Joseph</i> , HWV 59/29
12	Thy walls, O Sion, to thy Lord	132: 11–14	Aria, "Our fruits, whilst yet in blossom, die," <i>Joseph</i> , HWV 59/17a

8 Edward J. Hopkins, *The Organ; Its History and Construction* (London, 1870), 134.

9 For the early history of the organ and specifications in 1800, see <https://www.npor.org.uk/NPORView.html?RI=N16510>.

10 David A. Strong, "Handel Played this Organ": a newly compiled history of the famous organ in the parish church of St. Mary, Wotton-under-Edge in the diocese and county of Gloucester (Malmesbury, 2001).

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: 2021 HANDEL RESEARCH PRIZE

In 2021, the George Frideric Handel Society will award its International Handel Research Prize for the fifth time: to a young scholar who has completed a research project on the life or work of George Frideric Handel and has presented the results in a formal research document. Research teams also may apply.

The International Handel Research Prize is sponsored by the Foundation of the Saalesparkasse. It is valued at €2000 and entails the presentation of a paper to be read by the prize winner at the scholarly conference to be held during the annual Handel Festival in Halle an der Saale (May 31–June 2, 2021).

Applications may be submitted by graduates of musicology or related disciplines who have completed their Master's or Doctoral studies (or equivalent research) between 2018 and 2020. Historical-critical editions may also be submitted for the prize. Studies in English or German are accepted.

Applications for the International Handel Research Prize should be sent by **November 30, 2020** (postmark) to the:

Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft e.V.
Internationale Vereinigung
Geschäftsstelle
Grosse Nikolaistrasse 5
D-06108 Halle (Saale)

The application must include the scholarly work undertaken (in printed and in electronic form) and be accompanied by a brief curriculum vitae and an account of the applicant's career. Reports can be enclosed.

The prize winner will be selected by a panel from the Foundation of the Saalesparkasse and the George Frideric Handel Society. The prize will be presented in Halle in June 2021, during the scholarly conference of the Halle Handel Festival.

CALL FOR PAPERS: 2021 VIRTUAL AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY CONFERENCE

The American Handel Society will hold its 2021 conference virtually, hosted by Indiana University Bloomington. The provisional dates will be **March 11–14, 2021** (subject to change). The conference is anticipated to include scholarly papers, musical performances, and possibly workshops. More details to follow. Please check for updates on our website, <http://americanhandelsociety.org/events>.

The Society invites the submission of abstracts for papers on any topic connected with Handel's life and music. We are also interested in proposals using alternative formats that are conducive to the digital environment, such as seminar-based panels, workshops, streaming lecture-recitals, or other creative programming. Abstracts of no more than 500 words may be sent by **October 4, 2020** to the Program Chair, Nathan Link at americanhandelsociety@gmail.com. Guidelines on virtual presentations and length of papers will be announced at a later date.

an October 2008 performance featuring selections from Handel's *Jephtha* and *Semele*, works that Christophers would program in full in later seasons.

The longest tenured director since Christopher Hogwood, who led the orchestra and chorus from 1986–2001, Harry Christophers is the 15th artistic director in H+H's 205-year history. His impact on the organization has been far-reaching, yet firmly based in performance: he has hired over 60% of the musicians and issued an unprecedented thirteen recordings, the most of any H+H artistic director. Christophers also led the ensemble for concerts in the United States and Canada. His programming expanded H+H's repertoire by including at least one H+H premiere each season.

As artistic director, Christophers directed ten of the twelve H+H *Messiah* performances. A staple of the H+H repertoire since the Society gave the American premiere on December 25, 1818, *Messiah* became an annual Christmas offering beginning in 1854.

Beyond *Messiah* performances, Christophers' self-professed and acknowledged affinity for Handel informed his programming for H+H. As he planned for each concert season, Christophers included other Handel choral works, which he describes as a "wealth of music" often overshadowed by the popularity of *Messiah*. Christophers' programs featured Handel oratorios and other vocal works each season between 2011 and 2018, including the H+H premiere of The Foundling Hospital Anthem in 2014. Beginning with the 2010–2011 season, in addition to *Messiah*, Christophers programmed six Handel oratorios (*Israel in Egypt*, *Jephtha*, *Samson*, *Saul*, *Semele*, *Hercules*) over the course of twelve seasons.

Each of the six oratorios figured in H+H's history; selections from five of the six works were part of H+H's 1885 concert to commemorate the 200th anniversary of Handel's birth; two (*Saul* and *Hercules*) were H+H premieres; and all were the first performances in the 21st century.

Israel in Egypt was presented in 2011 and is scheduled to be performed in March 2021. Two numbers, "The Lord is a man of war" and "He gave them hailstones for rain," were part of the first H+H concert in 1815. H+H performed the work nine times between 1859 (Boston premiere) and 1974. The H+H chorus also joined in the 1872 performance of *Israel in Egypt* for the World's Peace Jubilee and International Music Festival in Boston and sang in an 1882 performance in New York, conducted by Theodore Thomas.

Although H+H presented the American premiere of *Jephtha* on February 17, 1867, this was the ensemble's only performance of the complete work until May 2013. Selected numbers ("Deeper, and deeper still," "Waft her, angels, to the skies," "Ye sacred priests," and "Farewell, ye limpid springs and floods") were occasionally performed between 1816 and 1917.

"Let the bright seraphim" from *Samson* was part of H+H's inaugural concert in 1815, with two other numbers, "How willing my paternal love" and "Honour and arms," sung for concerts in 1820 and 1821, respectively. H+H gave the American premiere of *Samson* on January 26, 1845 followed by another twelve performances through May of that year. Between October 1845 and May 1877 *Samson* was performed another twenty times, making it one of H+H's most popular works in the 19th century; it had the fourth-highest number of performances of any work (33) and was second only to *Messiah* in the number of performances of a Handel oratorio. The 2014 performance of *Samson* was the first time H+H had programmed the oratorio in 137 years.

Prior to the H+H premiere of *Saul* in 2016, which Christophers described as "the best we've done," only excerpts were heard in concerts given in 1830 and 1841. "Envy, eldest born of hell" and the "Dead March" were performed as part of the 1885 concert to celebrate Handel's 200th birthday.

The May 2017 performances of *Semele* were the first since 1999. The only other performance was over one hundred years earlier when only the opening numbers of Act III (Sinfonia, "Somnus, awake," and "Leave me, loathsome light") were performed at the Handel commemoration concert in 1885. The

performance history of *Hercules* is sparser still; only "Tyrants now no more shall dread" was performed in 1885, making the 2018 performance another H+H premiere.

Christophers finds the stories of the oratorios "brilliant for the modern day." Keenly aware of the inherent drama of each oratorio, he prepares each work by delving into the characters; in looking at Handel's notations in the sources, Christophers sees evidence that Handel approached these works theatrically, focusing on the personality and development of specific characters.

His passion for Handel's music is at the heart of Christophers' interpretations. Approaching the oratorios from a theatrical standpoint, he prefers to think about them as stage productions in order to give the audience "something slightly different," even if presented in a concert setting. In the 2014 performances of *Samson*, Christophers underpinned the tension between Samson and Dalila by placing the two as far apart as possible on opposite sides of the stage, forcing the audience to look back and forth during their exchange. For the 2016 performances of *Saul*, the H+H Young Women's Chorus joined the H+H Orchestra and Chorus for "Welcome, welcome, mighty king." Instead of simply placing these singers on the stage, Christophers had the members of the Young Women's Chorus line the isles of Symphony Hall. In doing so, he established two distinct areas: one for David, complete with banners waving, and the other for Saul, emphasizing Saul's jealousy and isolation in light of the celebrations honoring David.

Other techniques Christophers used to offset a particular character or for dramatic emphasis included assembling the chorus to create *tableau* settings and placing platforms on the stage for the soloists. For *Messiah*, he routinely positioned the two trumpets on opposite sides of the second balcony of Symphony Hall for the chorus "Glory to God." This added element never failed to surprise (and delight) the audience.

With time, H+H audiences came to expect "something slightly different" for oratorio performances, whether planned or not. On May 7, 2017 the fire alarms in Symphony Hall went off during the performance of *Semele*. The timing was such that the house lights came up during "Avert these omens," with some in the audience assuming that this was part of the performance. It was not. No audible alarms sounded within Symphony Hall proper and the concert continued until someone came onstage to announce that the building had to be evacuated. As everyone was leaving, one audience member said, "If this happens in Act I, what will they do when she [*Semele*] dies!" When all were re-assembled, Christophers came forward to announce that the performance would pick up where it had left off.

Each visual cue is chosen to support the musical trajectory and underscore the dramatic arc of the work. Christophers finds that concentrating on developing the story over time is key, as many of the oratorios gradually build in dramatic tension.

Because it can be difficult to bring a narrative alive on a short number of rehearsals, Christophers relies on his experienced soloists, most of whom have collaborated with him in earlier productions. Soloists often participated in multiple oratorios, including Catherine Wyn-Rogers who sang Storgè in *Jephtha*, Micah in *Samson*, and Dejanira in *Hercules*; Matthew Brook who sang Manoah in *Samson*, and Cadmus/Somnus in *Semele*; Joëlle Harvey who sang Iphis in *Jephtha*, Dalila in *Samson*, and Michal in *Saul*; Robert Murray, who sang the title role in *Jephtha*, Jonathan in *Saul*, and Hyllus in *Hercules*. This follows Christophers' belief in building a performance, in part, around the characters. Preferring to engage soloists who have sung the role earlier, Christophers feels the soloists' familiarity with the work and one another sparks an immediate energy that the orchestra and chorus can readily tap into, making rehearsals more efficient.

Christophers sustains continuity within each performance by having soloists take their position even while introductory or closing music is played. Initially met with some skepticism, in performance the motion does not distract from the music and the resulting fluidity is a real bonus to both musical and dramatic unity. When members of the chorus were employed as soloists,

such as in the 2011 performance of *Israel in Egypt*, Christophers asked that they step out from and return to the chorus, part of a seamless visual and aural continuity.

Intricately bound to the storytelling in oratorio is the recitative, which Christophers rarely cuts because “otherwise we don’t get the sense of the character.” He also looks at the recitative as an opportunity to shape the atmosphere of the moment or to lead into something new by means of different instrumental colors in the continuo. His decisions for the continuo are based on Handel’s instrumentation for the whole work, and, although not a frequent practice, he has used instrumentation to define characters, such as the two sisters in *Saul*.

For his final season with H+H, Christophers programmed *Israel in Egypt* and, of course, *Messiah*, while ending the season with Haydn’s *Creation*. All plans changed in the first months of 2020 when the COVID-19 pandemic forced schools, businesses, and arts organizations to shut down the world over. On March 13, 2020, H+H announced the cancellation of its performance of Bach’s St. Matthew Passion, following the directive of the Massachusetts governor to limit gatherings to less than 250 people. The final concert of the 2019–2020 season was cancelled five days later. Then, on July 30, 2020, H+H postponed the first three concerts of the upcoming season due to continuing concerns about the pandemic and the closures of concert halls, particularly Symphony Hall, which plans to reopen in December 2020, and Jordan Hall, which is closed for the remainder of the season. As of this writing, the Symphony Hall announcement effectively cancels H+H’s live performance of *Messiah* that was scheduled for the end of November 2020; the H+H website says it is “considering a livestream option for its performances of *Messiah* on Thanksgiving weekend.”

While the sobering report of concert postponements was one part of H+H’s latest news, there was a second one as well: “Harry Christophers’ decision to extend his contract with H+H is another result of the COVID-19 crisis.” Christophers states, “I was so looking forward to my final season filled with many of the works I have most enjoyed performing with H+H. For all of us, this year will go down as our *annus horribilis* so I am thrilled to be able to celebrate in a proper way next season. H+H is so dear to my heart and I miss you all terribly. However, I look forward to welcoming you, our amazing audience and supporters, back for what will be a joyous and restorative 2021–22 season.”

FROM THE PRESIDENT’S DESK

In view of the current situation with COVID-19 and its unpredictable future, the Board of Directors has decided that the AHS Conference scheduled for March 2021 will be held online. The hope is that it will include, in addition to scholarly papers, musical performances, and possibly workshops. The provisional dates for the Conference will be March 11–14, 2021 and the previously announced deadline of October 4, 2020 for submission of paper proposals will remain in effect. Additional information will be distributed as soon as it is available and will be posted on the AHS website.

The Secretary/Treasurer reminds the members of the Society that its operational expenses, of which the preparation and distribution of the *Newsletter* is a significant one, have not ceased during the current pandemic. Please renew your membership for 2020 if you have not done so, and also consider whether you might be in a position to donate to the AHS this year.

This pandemic will be with us for some time to come, and while music cannot fight the root cause, it can help to ameliorate some of the side effects. It can also instill and reinforce hope, so let me urge all of us to seek out ways in which we can support musicians who, during this difficult period, are endeavoring to make musical performances—whether archived, newly recorded, or live-streamed—available.

— Graydon Beeks

CALL FOR PAPERS: 2021 INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE

The International Scholarly Conference “Redemption and Modern Age—Handel’s *Messiah* in the 19th to 21st Century” will be held from **May 31 to June 2, 2021** during the Handel Festival 2021 in Halle (Saale), which has the theme “Heroes and Redeemers.” The Conference will focus on the performance history, the history of the arrangements and the history of the impact of *Messiah* which stands for the worldwide reputation of the composer more than any other work. Conceptualised by the librettist Charles Jennens as a response to contemporary deistic doubts about the Messianic mission of the Christian Redeemer, *Messiah* attained the status of an overall spiritual, transconfessional work in the course of its performance history, which has continued unbroken from 1741 to the present day. In its significance for the reception of Handel, *Messiah* is only exceeded by the Hallelujah Chorus from that work which—to name just two examples—could be used at the opening of the Olympic Games on August 1, 1936 in Berlin as well as in an open-air performance by the choir and orchestra of the “Resistenza musicale permanente” on the occasion of the resignation of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi on November 12, 2011.

The Conference aims to find out what has happened with the original Christian message of Redemption in the oratorio by using it in secular contexts, but also with the adaptations and transformations (some of which are problematic) that have led to the present global significance of *Messiah* and Handel’s most famous chorus.

The Festival keynote lecture by Andreas Waczkat (University of Göttingen) on May 29, 2021 will give an introduction to the topic. The Conference welcomes scholarly contributions addressing performance history and the history of the adaptations of the work beginning in the late 18th century. It will also explore the religious, political, cultural, and socio-historical problems of interpretation associated with the global dissemination of the work in the 20th and 21st centuries.

The organizers invite interested scholars to contribute to the Conference with a 25-minute presentation and ask for an application with a proposal of a topic and an abstract by **September 30, 2020**. Travel and accommodation costs will be covered for the Conference days.

Organizers: Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft e. V., Internationale Vereinigung; Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, Institut für Musik, Medien- und Sprechwissenschaften, Abteilung Musikwissenschaft; Stiftung Händel-Haus Halle.

Contact: Dr. Annette Landgraf, landgraf@musik.uni-halle.de; Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschman, wolfgang.hirschmann@musik.uni-halle.de; gesellschaft@haendel.de.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Burrows, Donald. "In Handel's Shadow: Performances of *Messiah* in Dublin during the 1740s." *Musical Times* 161/1950 (2020): 9–19.

——, Helen Coffey, John Greenacombe, and Anthony Hicks, eds. *George Frideric Handel: Collected Documents. Volume 4: 1742–1750*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Cunningham, John, and Bryan White, eds. *Musical Exchange between Britain and Europe, 1500–1800: Essays in Honour of Peter Holman*. Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2020.

Jerold, Beverly. "Distinguishing between Dotted Notes and Notes Inégales." *Musical Times* 161/1950 (2020): 61–76.

Lee, Jonathan Rhodes. "Giulia Frasi: Singer of Sentiment." *Music & Letters* (2020): 1–35, doi:10.1093/ml/gcaa008.

Händel-Jahrbuch 66 (2020) [select titles in English]:

Beeks, Graydon. "'Thy Hand, Dalinda': Characterization, Contrast and Maturity in *Ariodante*," 287–94.

Burrows, Donald. "Beyond *Theodora*. Handel's oratorio soloists in the 1750s," 181–96.

Ćurković, Ivan. "Pastoral disguise and identity conflict in Handel's *Atalanta*," 269–86.

Gardner, Matthew. "Female Virtue in Early English Oratorios: Handel's *Deborah*," 87–101.

Harris, Ellen T. "Deranged, Defiant, Dutiful: Innocence in the face of death," 115–36.

Heller, Wendy. "Handel's Women and the Art of Dissimulation: A Legacy from the Seicento," 253–67.

Joncus, Berta. "Fixing her Reputation: Giulia Frasi and her Ranelagh Garden Concerts," 137–80.

Roberts, John H. "Semiramide: Handel's Unknown Queen," 215–33.

Smith, Ruth. "'Ho un gran cor': Dorinda's great-heartedness," 295–312.

Varka, Natassa. "'For Wisdom far renown' d': Jennens's Nitocris and her role in *Belshazzar*," 103–113.



NEW RECORDING

Handel. *Saul*. Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale, conducted by Nicholas McGegan. 2020.



"Thirty-five Year Tenure of Music Director **Nicholas McGegan** reaches a triumphant finale with commercial release of Handel's *Saul*. As part of the organization's ongoing efforts to bring recorded music to audiences the world over, and especially during the COVID-19 crisis, Philharmonia Baroque Productions releases the live audio recording of Handel's *Saul*, the award-winning performances from April 2019, led by Handelian expert and outgoing PBO Music Director Nicholas McGegan. This digital-only release marks the 14th on Philharmonia's recording label, and Nicholas McGegan's final recording with the ensemble he has led for 35 years." —Media Relations, *Philharmonia Baroque*

UPCOMING EVENTS

International Scholarly Conference, Halle (Saale)

"Handel Images—Iconography, Aesthetics, Compositional Practice"

Händel-Haus

November 30–December 1, 2020—*Postponed New Date!*

<https://www.haendel.de/news/haendels-bilder-ikonographie-aesthetik-kompositorische-praxis/?lang=en>

2021 Virtual American Handel Society Conference

March 11–14, 2021

<http://americanhandelsociety.org/events>

International Scholarly Conference, Halle (Saale)

"Redemption and Modern Age—Handel's *Messiah* in the 19th to 21st Century"

Händel-Haus

May 31–June 2, 2021

2021 Handel Festival in Halle (Saale)

"Heroes and Redeemers"

May 28–June 13, 2021

<https://haendelhaus.de/en/hfs/festspiele>

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Class of Membership — Circle applicable cell(s) (for current calendar year, unless otherwise specified)	\$	£	€
Regular	35	28	30
Joint (one set of publications)	42	34	38
Donor	56	45	50
Student or Retired	20	15	18
Sponsor	100	80	90
Patron	200	145	160
Life	500	400	450
Subscriber (Institutions Only)	42	34	40
Donation – Travel Grant, Serwer Lecture, Knapp Fellowship, Traver Concert, ongoing activities (please specify intent)			
Friends of the Handel Institute, London*			
Regular	30	20	-
Student	15	10	-
Membership in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft*			
Regular	45	-	40
Student*	20	-	15
Dual Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Göttinger-Händel-Gesellschaft*†			
Regular	75	-	65
Regular (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	90	-	75.50
Student	27	-	21
Student (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	42	-	33.50
Dual Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Händel-Gesellschaft Karlsruhe*			
Regular	63	-	55
Student*	23	-	17.5
Triple Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Göttinger-Händel-Gesellschaft / Händel-Gesellschaft Karlsruhe			
Regular	93	-	80
Regular (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	108	-	92.50
Student	30	-	24
Student (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	45	-	36
TOTAL REMITTANCE			

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

† This organization has additional categories of Regular Membership that require a higher membership fee but provide additional benefits (see its website). Arrangements for these other categories may be made directly with Mrs. Pomeroy Kelly (see below).

Those paying in dollars should make their checks payable to THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail them to Marjorie Pomeroy Kelly, 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 Handel Institute, London 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, United Kingdom, with the appropriate annotation. Please do not send checks in Euros or sterling directly to the AHS as we are no longer able to process them.

Online payment options are available at www.americanhandelsociety.org/join

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

The American Handel Society

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