

NEWSLETTER of The American Handel Society

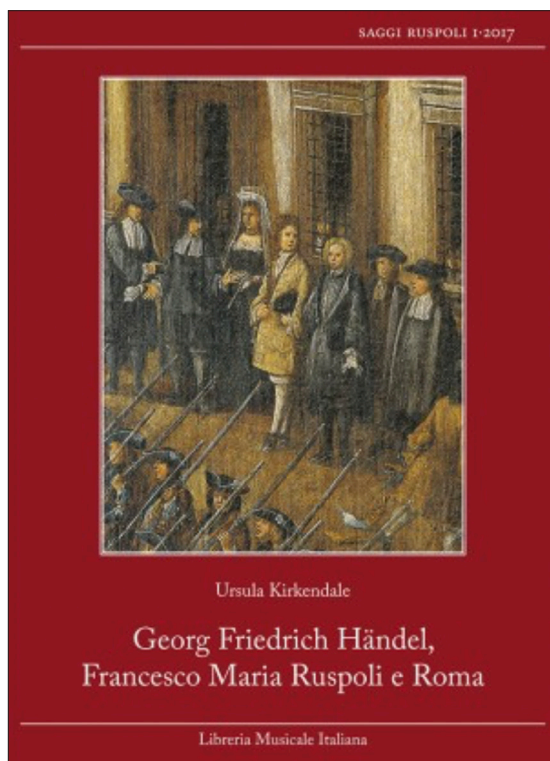
Volume XXXIV, Number 3

Winter 2019

BOOK REVIEW:

**Ursula Kirkendale, *Georg Friedrich Händel, Francesco Maria Ruspoli e Roma*.
Revised by Warren Kirkendale and
translated by Giorgio Monari (Lucca:
Libreria Musicale Italiana, 2017)**

Thomas McGeary, Champaign-Urbana, Illinois



The late Ursula Kirkendale (1932–2013) published but three articles about Handel; yet they transformed our knowledge of Handel's four years in Italy (1706–1710). This book will be an essential resource for Handel scholars, for it contains updated versions of her work. The articles themselves are testimony to her meticulous and persevering research in the Ruspoli and other European archives, and the no-less exacting and devoted

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“A COSMIC NOTION”: PHILHARMONIA BAROQUE ORCHESTRA & CHORALE

Graydon Beeks



*Soprano Arwen Myers and Conductor Nicholas McGegan.
Photography by Frank Wing.*

The 2019/2020 season marks the 34th and final year of AHS Honorary Board Member Nicholas McGegan's tenure as Music Director of the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra & Chorale. During that time the ensemble has performed more works by Handel than by any other composer, beginning with *Acis and Galatea* in February 1985 and including memorable performances of *Theodora*

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assistance of her husband, Warren Kirkendale, to bring them to final publication.

Until 1967, little was known of Handel's movements and the origins of most of his compositions during his time in Italy. It was thought, for instance, that Cardinals Colonna and Pamphilj were his major Roman patrons. During her dissertation work on Antonio Caldara,¹ Ursula worked in the archives of the Ruspoli family, now at the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. Included in the vast accumulation of primary documents were the accounts kept for Ruspoli's household.

Her work on the accounts was the basis for her article "The Ruspoli Documents on Handel," published in 1967.² This article established without a doubt that Ruspoli was Handel's major Roman patron, with whom he resided for almost two years and for whom he composed weekly cantatas as well as Latin sacred music.

Bills, receipts, and accounts from Ruspoli's archive trace Handel's lodgings and movements with Ruspoli's household, provide data about more than 50 compositions, and allow an unparalleled look at the minutia involved in bringing a composition to performance; the accounts yield details about dates and payments for copying scores and parts, number of folios copied, and performers. For Ruspoli's private production of Handel's oratorio *La Resurrezione* on April 8, 1708, for example, the accounts reveal information about hiring musicians, costs of printing and binding of librettos, and the painters, carpenters, costume designers, and tailors hired to prepare the hall and production.

The Kirkendales moved to Rome in 1983, and, despite the physical limitations imposed by a stroke in 1971, Ursula, with assistance from her husband, resumed work in the Ruspoli archive, now without the constraints of a doctoral student's time and budget.

Her 1988 article, "Organ Playing in the Lateran and Other Remembrances on Handel: A

Report in the *Voyage historique* of 1737,"³ reconsidered a traveler's diary entry from 1707:

È giunto in questa città un sassone eccellente sonatore di cembalo e compositore di musica, quale hoggi ha fatto pompa della sua virtù in sonare l'organo nella chiesa di S. Giovanni con stupore di tutti.⁴

There arrived in this city a Saxon, an excellent harpsichord player and composer of music, who today has displayed his splendid ability to play the organ in the church of San Giovanni to the amazement of everyone.⁵

The entry had long been known to biographers and led to speculation as to whether Handel was the "sassone." Drawing on several sources, Ursula was able to demonstrate that Handel was undoubtedly the Saxon.

In 2003, with access to new account books kept for Ruspoli himself, she published "Handel with Ruspoli: New Documents from the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, December 1706 to December 1708,"⁶ which added to her article of 1967 by providing more information about the narrative of Handel's two-year residence as part of Ruspoli's household and new documentation for more than a dozen important works.

The most striking result was the publication of what is likely the earliest known visual image of Handel. On September 9, 1708, Ruspoli mobilized a regiment of troops he raised on behalf of the Pope. To commemorate the event, an enormous painting (more than six-feet wide) that represents the scene in the piazza in front of the Ruspoli palace was commissioned and it shows important members of Ruspoli's household, including Handel wearing a splendid golden frock coat with his tricorne hat under his arm. The full painting is reproduced in color along with detailed views of the group that includes Handel.

¹ Dissertation completed in 1961 at the University of Bonn; published as *Antonio Caldara: Sein Leben und seine venezianisch-römischen Oratorien* (Graz, Cologne: Böhlau, 1966) and in English as *Antonio Caldara: Life and Venetian-Roman Oratorios*, rev. and trans. Warren Kirkendale (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2007).

² *JAMS* 20/2 (1967): 222–272.

³ In *Music and Meaning: Studies in Music History and the Neighbouring Disciplines* (Florence: Leo S. Olschki, 2007), 351–360. Originally published as "Orgelspiel im Lateran und andere Erinnerungen an Händel: Ein unbeachteter Bericht in 'Voyage historique' von 1737," *Die Musikforschung* 41/1 (1988): 1–9.

⁴ From Francesco Valesio, *Diario di Roma*, January 14, 1707.

⁵ U. Kirkendale's translation in *Music and Meaning*, 351.

⁶ *Studi musicali* 32/2 (2003): 301–348; and 33/1 (2004): 249–250. A summary was presented by Warren at the 2002 conference of the Handel Institute, London. The same article was also published in German in the *Händel-Jahrbuch* 50 (2004): 309–374.

All three articles were reprinted (with translation of the second one) in the collection of the Kirkendales' essays *Music and Meaning: Studies in Music History and the Neighbouring Disciplines* (2007). There, the articles are revised and updated, Handel's works are given HWV numbers, and cross-references to the 2003 article are added; the integrity of the original articles is preserved, with supplemental comments by Warren clearly preceded by a boldface "PS." As the title of the collection indicates, beyond presenting archival findings, Ursula emphasized the meaning and context of the compositions, which can be seen, for example, in discussions of "Arresta il passo," "Donna che in ciel," *Diana cacciatrice*, "Udite il mio consiglio," "Dixit Dominus," *Il trionfo del tempo*, and "Oh come chiare e belle." Not all her conclusions, however, have been universally accepted, especially the dating of *Agrippina*.

The present publication, *Georg Friedrich Händel, Francesco Maria Ruspoli e Roma*, collects and translates these three articles into Italian. A final set of revisions and corrections by Warren is again clearly indicated, this time with a boldface "PPS." Although in Italian, this edition can be very useful to anglophone readers, for the 2007 and 2017 collections can be read in parallel, the anglophone reader merely attending to the text following the boldface "PS" and "PPS."

This latest book is given further value by the addition of a bibliography, additional plates, and five indexes that reference names, works, places, manuscript sources, and feast days. A preface by Warren provides a spirited and frank review of recent Handel scholarship and representations of the composer's Roman years in popular media.

SPECIAL OFFER

The American Handel Society is offering back issues of the Newsletter for FREE (plus the cost of shipping) going back to the first year 1986 to one year before the current issue. To order, please contact the Editor.

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

The Board of Directors of the AHS met on November 2, 2019, during the Annual Meeting of the American Musicological Society in Boston. Fred Fehleisen of The Juilliard School and Ileri Chávez-Bárceñas of Bowdoin College, both of whom will be well known to the members of the Society, were welcomed as new Board members. Plans for the next AHS Conference were discussed and details should be forthcoming in the next issue of the *AHS Newsletter*. Changes to the Society's By-Laws and dues structure were considered and will be presented to the membership following some additional committee work. A new dues structure would take effect in calendar year 2021.

The Secretary/Treasurer would like me to remind the membership once again that membership in the AHS is on a calendar-year basis with dues becoming payable each January. The current membership form is available on the AHS Website and is also included in every issue of the *Newsletter*, and dues are payable through PAYPAL on the AHS Website or by check sent to the Secretary/Treasurer. Please remember that the income from dues and from interest on the Society's limited investments is increasingly challenged to keep up with steadily rising operational costs. Members who are able and so inclined are encouraged to contribute over and above the amount of their dues, either with gifts designated for specific purposes or with undesignated gifts. The AHS is incorporated as a non-profit society and the Secretary/Treasurer will provide appropriate acknowledgments for tax purposes.

Finally, I would like to call attention to the upcoming March 2, 2020 application deadline for the J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship, which is offered every other year. The list of previous recipients, which is available on the AHS Website, is an impressive one and through this fellowship the AHS is able to help support significant research in Handel and related fields. Please encourage potential applicants—in particular graduate students, young scholars in the early stages of their careers, and independent scholars—to apply, and also consider whether a gift designated to support this fellowship might be possible.

All the best for 2020.

— Graydon Beeks

with Lorraine Hunt Lieberson in the title role and 50 performances of *Messiah*. Nic has also led the group in significant recordings of the latter two works, as well as of *Susanna*, *Joseph and His Brethren*, and *Judas Maccabaeus*.

I had the good fortune to attend the opening concert of the season entitled “A Cosmic Notion,” given at the Herbst Theatre in San Francisco on October 17, 2019 before an enthusiastic capacity audience. The program, which was given three more times in Palo Alto and Berkeley, began with Handel’s Ode for the Birthday of Queen Anne, HWV 74 (“Eternal Source of Light Divine”), most likely first performed in February of either 1713 or 1714—the date and whether the work was actually performed before the death of the Queen in August 1714 remain in doubt. The work is organized around a repeated refrain for the chorus (“The day that gave great Anna birth, who fix’d a lasting peace on earth”), which is interspersed with relatively short arias and duets for the solo voices. Outstanding among the latter were the countertenor Reginald Mobley, who coped well with the low tessitura of his lines originally written for Richard Elford. In the famous opening arioso he was partnered by the superb trumpet playing of John Thiessen. Soprano Arwen Myers, contralto Avery Amereau, and bass-

baritone Dashon Burton also acquitted themselves well, as did the chorus and orchestra.

The first half of the program closed with a suite of dances from *Terpsichore*, HWV 8b, which Handel composed as a prologue to his 1734 revival of the relatively short opera *Il pastor fido* to take advantage of the presence at Covent Garden Theatre of a French dance troupe led by Marie Sallé. The orchestra continued its distinguished work, which featured the virtuosic and stylish playing of oboists Marc Schachman and Gonzalo Ruiz and the bassoonist Andrew Schwartz.

The second half of the concert consisted of the world premiere of *The Listeners* by the young composer Caroline Shaw, who won the Pulitzer Prize in 2013 for her *Partita for 8 Voices*. The new work, for contralto and bass soloists, chorus and orchestra, is the product of PBO’s *New Music for Old Instruments* commissioning initiative. Described as an oratorio, it derives from the composer’s love of the cantatas and oratorios of Handel, Buxtehude, and Bach, and consists of a mix of arias, duets, and choruses divided into separate movements. The specific inspiration came from the late Carl Sagan’s idea for the Golden Record, which was attached to the Voyager spacecraft in 1977 to carry greetings, sounds of nature, and music from a cross-section of cultures on earth to the outer parts of the universe.



From left to right: Avery Amereau, Arwen Myers, Nicholas McGegan, Reginald Mobley, Dashon Burton. Photography by Frank Wing.

Two of the movements of *The Listeners* consist of archival recordings: track 1 from the Golden Record, which presents a greeting from Kurt Waldheim, Secretary-General of the United Nations in 1977, followed by further short greetings in 55 languages; and an excerpt from Sagan's "lost lecture" given at Cornell in 1994 only rediscovered in recorded form in 2017. Most of the other movements are settings of poems by Walt Whitman, William Drummond of Hawthornden, Alfred Lord Tennyson, Yesenia Montilla, and Lucille Clifton, which the composer has chosen and arranged to "construct a journey . . . looking at the ways we see the sky and wonder about the universe and the ways that we also understand the earth and our planet." The *Prologue* and *Epilogue* set the word "Brillas" ("You shine"), while the penultimate movement, titled *Pulsar*, is a driving instrumental section reminiscent of the music of John Adams.

The Listeners received a committed and accomplished performance by all concerned, with truly outstanding contributions by the two vocal soloists, Amereau and Burton, and it was warmly received by the audience. On first hearing I was not convinced that, despite its many striking moments, the work held together as a whole, nor that it displayed an integrated musical style. I was also surprised that, apart from the distinctive sounds of the baroque oboes and bassoon, there seemed to be so little in the instrumental texture that could not just as well have been produced on modern instruments. However, first impressions are always suspect. Fortunately, we can all hear the piece for ourselves multiple times on the recording to be released by Philharmonia Baroque Productions in March 2020, which will also contain PBO's other commissioned works by the composer.

McGegan will continue his farewell season with more Handel, conducting *Judas Maccabaeus* in December and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* in January and February. For his grand finale, the PBO will mount a fully staged performance of Jean-Marie Leclair's only surviving opera, *Scylla et Glaucus*, with performances in the Bay Area in mid-April, followed by performances at the Royal Opera House at the Palace of Versailles on April 25 and 26. Congratulations to Nic and the PBO are certainly in order, together with best wishes for more exiting projects by both in the future.

THE J. MERRILL KNAPP RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP

The Board of Directors of The American Handel Society invites applications for the J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship to support scholarly projects related to Handel and his world. One or more fellowships may be awarded in a calendar year up to a total of \$2,000. Requests for funding may include, but are not limited to, purchase of microfilms, travel for research, and production expenses for publication. This fellowship may be used on its own or to augment other grants or fellowships.

In awarding the Knapp Fellowship, preference will be given to graduate students, scholars in the early stages of their careers, and independent scholars with no source of institutional support.

The deadline for applications will be March 2, 2020. There is no application form. Each applicant should submit an outline of the project, a budget showing how and when the funds will be used, and a description of other funding for the same project applied for and/or received. In addition, applicants should have two letters of recommendation sent directly to the Knapp Fellowship Committee. Electronic submissions are preferred; letters of recommendation as well as the application itself can be emailed to Ellen T. Harris (eharris@mit.edu). Paper submissions can also be mailed to Professor Ellen T. Harris, Massachusetts Institute of Technology 4-246, 77 Massachusetts Ave. Cambridge, MA 02139. All applications must arrive by March 2, 2020.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Renew your membership for 2020 today!

Go Green! Opt to receive the Newsletter electronically (now in color).

Please contact the editor at minjik@gmail.com.

UPCOMING EVENTS

KARLSRUHE INTERNATIONAL HANDEL FESTIVAL 2020

February 14–28, 2020

<http://www.staatstheater.karlsruhe.de/programm/haendel-festspiele-2019/2020/>

LONDON HANDEL FESTIVAL 2020

“Handel and the Hanoverians”

March 5–April 10, 2020

<https://www.london-handel-festival.com/>

HALLE HANDEL FESTIVAL 2020

“Musical Paintings”

May 29–June 14, 2020

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

INTERNATIONAL SCHOLARLY CONFERENCE, HALLE

“Handel Images—Iconography, Aesthetics, Compositional Practice”

Händel-Haus, Kammermusiksaal

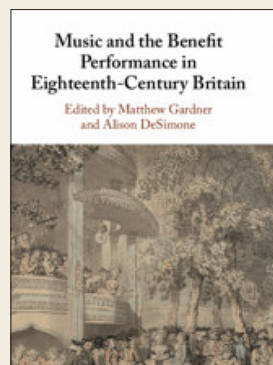
June 8–9, 2020

<https://www.haendel.de/scholarly-handel-conference/?lang=en>

RECENT PUBLICATIONS

Christophers, Harry and Sara Mohr-Pietsch. *A New Heaven: Harry Christophers and The Sixteen*. London: Faber & Faber, 2019.

Gardner, Matthew and Alison DeSimone, eds. *Music and the Benefit Performance in Eighteenth-Century Britain*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.



Harris, Ellen T. “Handel and the Bank of England.” *Bank Underground* (blog), November 8, 2019. <https://bankunderground.co.uk/2019/11/08/handel-and-the-bank-of-england/>.

Hunter, David. “Handel manuscripts and the profits of slavery: The ‘Granville’ collection at the British Library and the first performing score of *Messiah* reconsidered.” *Notes* 76/1 (2019): 27–37.

Kim, Minji. “Handel’s choruses of ‘praise and thanksgiving after victory’ and *Non Nobis Domine*.” *Early Music* 47/4 (2019).

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THE AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY

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

I would like my copy of the Newsletter delivered: ☐ electronically ☐ by mail

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Regular	35	28	30
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Patron	200	145	160
Life	500	400	450
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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*†			
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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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