

The Cambridge Companion to Handel

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The Cambridge Companion to

HANDEL

Edited by DONALD BURROWS

Professor of Music, The Open University, Milton Keynes



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Preface

The aim of this Cambridge Companion is to present you with a rounded view of Handel and his music. While it is neither a biography nor a blow-by-blow survey of each of Handel's works, it is intended to cover the main influences on Handel's life and career, and to give a balanced treatment to his music: approximately equal space has been devoted to opera and oratorio, the two principal genres in which he worked, and some attention has been given to the other genres in which he composed. If a volume of this size cannot be comprehensive, I hope that it will at least be companionable. The chapters introduce the interested musician – whether listener, performer, historian or student – to some of the most important topics and issues which bear on Handel the composer. One topic that the book does not attempt to cover is that of reception history. Given the fact that choices had to be made about content, it seemed more appropriate to approach the subject of Handel through the positive route of presenting and surveying the materials that might lead us to an imaginative recreation of the circumstances of Handel's life and music, rather than exposing the various ways in which subsequent ages 'got it wrong' – more spectacularly with Handel than with many other composers, as it happens.¹ However, a partial exception to this principle has been made in the case of Handel's operas (Chapter 17), since there has been no continuous performing tradition in this genre and our practical experience of it has been gained through modern performances: while, to some extent, imaginative contact can be made with the other genres of Handel's music through recordings and concert performances, the understanding of opera requires the experience of stage presentation.

When I invited authors to contribute to the *Companion*, I on one hand approached established specialists, asking them to provide accessible introductions to topics in which they have developed experience and expertise, and on the other hand involved some younger scholars who are active with new topics and approaches. If in the course of time the result may be seen as the product of the present generations, I take courage from the fact that the second half of the twentieth century has been a particu-

¹ The latter approach might also imply a negative view of the pursuit of reception history itself, which would be unjustified. It would also be simplistic to see 'Handel reception' as a single unitary topic: the reasons for reviving or maintaining Handel's music have varied according to time and place, as have the treatments of his music.

larly fruitful time for Handel scholarship and performance: the contents of the book reflect only part of the bubbling activity. Furthermore, the subject has not been approached from a narrow perspective: several of the authors for Part I of the book would not consider themselves primarily to be ‘Handel specialists’, but have expertise in areas that contribute essential background to his career.

I take this opportunity to thank those who have brought this book into being: to the contributors, for surviving with a good grace successively (and metaphorically) the heavy hand and heavy foot of the editor; to the owners of material used in the illustrations; to Victoria Cooper, who encouraged the book at Cambridge University Press; to Michael Talbot, who translated Chapter 2 and commented on Chapter 13 when it was in draft; to Jacob Simon and Lowell Lindgren for assistance over illustrations; to Anthony Coulson for library assistance; and to Rosemary Kingdon for bearing a substantial brunt of the word processing.

The following conventions are used in the book:

British Currency: Values have not been converted to decimal currency.

There were 20 shillings (s) to a pound (£), twelve pence (d) to a shilling: the columns in Plate 12 show pounds/shillings/pence. Fees were commonly paid in guineas and half-guineas (£1. 1s. 0d and 10s. 6d respectively).

Dates: Years are given in ‘New Style’, with the year beginning on 1 January.

Handel’s works: These are referred to by the ‘HWV’ numbers from Bernd Baselt’s catalogue in vols. I–III of the *Händel-Handbuch*. ‘HWV 70/32’ refers to movement 32 (‘Waft her, angels’) from HWV 70 (*Jephtha*).

Libraries: *RISM* sigla, omitting GB for British locations, are used for references to the libraries with the major collections of Handel’s autographs and performing scores.

Britain: Cfm – Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Lbl – The British Library, London

Germany: D-Hs – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek Carl von Ossietsky, Hamburg
D-MÜs – Santini Collection, Diözesan-Bibliothek, Münster (Westfalen)

Donald Burrows

Chronology

<i>Year</i>	<i>Biography</i>	<i>Music and musicians</i>
1685	Handel born, 23 February, at Halle, son of Georg Händel and his second wife Dorothea (née Taust)	J. S. Bach born at Eisenach, 21 March John Gay born, 30 June Domenico Scarlatti born, 26 October
1686		
1687		Lully dies Geminiani and Galliard born
1688		
1689		
1690		Gottlieb Muffat born
1691		Purcell, <i>King Arthur</i>
1692	Begins to study under Zachow in Halle, following a visit to Weissenfels	Purcell, <i>The Fairy Queen</i>
1693		
1694		Purcell, D major Te Deum and Jubilate
1695		Giuseppe Sammartini born Purcell dies
1696	?Visit to Prussian court at Berlin	Greene born
1697	Handel's father dies	
1698		
1699		Hasse born
1700		G. B. Sammartini born N. A. Strungk dies
1701	Takes first communion at Marktkirche, Halle ?First contact with Telemann in Leipzig	
1702	Registers as a student at Halle University; appointed organist at Domkirche in Halle	
1703	Moves to Hamburg, where he is befriended by Mattheson Begins career at Hamburg opera house as a back-desk violinist	
1704	Composes first opera, <i>Almira</i> (German/Italian)	
1705	<i>Almira</i> and <i>Nero</i> produced in Hamburg	Clayton's English opera <i>Arsinoe</i> Italian opera <i>Gli amori d'Ergasto</i> inaugurates Queen's Theatre, London
1706	Composes operas <i>Florindo</i> and <i>Daphne</i> Leaves Hamburg for Italy, probably going first to Florence	Bononcini's <i>Camilla</i> performed in London
1707	In Rome, composes Latin church music, Italian cantatas and <i>Il trionfo del Tempo</i> Composes <i>Rodrigo</i> for Florence Possibly goes to Venice for Carnival season and meets Alessandro Scarlatti	Buxtehude and Jeremiah Clarke die

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Year	Biography	Music and Musicians
1708	<i>La Resurrezione</i> performed in Rome, with orchestra led by Corelli At Naples, Handel completes <i>Acis, Galatea e Polifemo</i> for the wedding of the Duke of Alvito Possibly goes to Florence and Venice at the end of year	<i>Florindo</i> and <i>Daphne</i> produced at Hamburg, in Handel's absence J. S. Bach appointed organist and chamber-musician to Duke Wilhelm Ernst at Weimar John Blow dies The castrato Nicolini comes to London to join opera company
1709	Goes to Venice, where <i>Agrippina</i> is performed, and he probably receives encouragement from Hanoverian and English visitors	
1710	Leaves Italy and is appointed Kapellmeister to Elector of Hanover Visits court of Elector Palatine at Düsseldorf, and travels to London	Pergolesi, T. A. Arne and W. F. Bach born
1711	Performs before Queen Anne at St James's Palace, and his first London opera <i>Rinaldo</i> performed at the Queen's Theatre, Haymarket Returns via Düsseldorf to Hanover	Boyce born Publication of Vivaldi's Op. 3 concertos (<i>L'estro armonico</i>) in Amsterdam
1712	Returns to London and composes <i>Il Pastor Fido</i> and <i>Teseo</i> During this and following year stays for various periods with the Earl of Burlington and 'Mr Andrews of Barn-Elms'	Zachow dies J. C. Smith jun. born
1713	'Utrecht' <i>Te Deum</i> and <i>Jubilate</i> performed at Thanksgiving Service at St Paul's Cathedral Granted annual pension by Queen Anne	Corelli dies François Couperin, <i>Pieces de clavecin</i> , Premier Livre, published in Paris
1714	<i>Te Deums</i> by Handel performed in Chapel Royal at services marking arrival in London of the Hanoverian family	C. P. E. Bach and Gluck born Publication of Corelli's Op. 6 Concerti Grossi in Amsterdam
1715	Composes <i>Amadigi</i>	
1716	? Composes <i>Brockes Passion</i> Perhaps travels to Germany in second half of year, persuading Johann Christoph Schmidt to come to London from Ansbach	William Croft's music performed at Royal Thanksgiving Service, St Paul's Cathedral
1717	Opera company at King's Theatre, Haymarket, closes <i>Water Music</i> played on the River Thames Begins association with James Brydges at Cannons, for whom he writes anthems and <i>Te Deum</i>	J. S. Bach appointed Kapellmeister to Prince Leopold at Cöthen
1718	Composes <i>Acis and Galatea</i> and <i>Esther</i> , both probably performed at Cannons	
1719	Formation of the Royal Academy of Music for the production of opera: Handel visits the continent to engage singers	Leopold Mozart born
1720	Royal Academy of Music opens, with Porta's <i>Numitore</i> and then Handel's <i>Radamisto</i> 'Premier Volume' of Keyboard Suites published Senesino joins Royal Academy company	

xiii *Chronology*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Biography</i>	<i>Music and Musicians</i>
1721	Composes <i>Muzio Scevola</i> (Act III) and <i>Floridante</i> .	J. S. Bach dedicates concertos to Margrave of Brandenburg
1722	Composes <i>Ottone</i> Cuzzoni comes to London to join Royal Academy company	J. A. Reinken dies
1723	Granted annual pension as 'Composer of Musick' for the Chapel Royal Composes <i>Flavio</i> Established as music master to Royal Princesses by 9 June, and moves into London house at Brook Street	J. S. Bach takes up posts in Leipzig
1724	<i>Giulio Cesare</i> and <i>Tamerlano</i> performed, the cast of <i>Tamerlano</i> including the tenor Borosini Composes 'Solo Sonatas' at this period	First performance of J. S. Bach's <i>St John Passion</i> in Leipzig
1725	Composes <i>Rodelinda</i>	J. P. Krieger and Alessandro Scarlatti die. Publication of Telemann's <i>Harmonischer Gottes-Dienst</i> in Hamburg
1726	Composes <i>Scipione</i> , <i>Alessandro</i> and <i>Admeto</i> London debut of Faustina in <i>Alessandro</i>	First meeting of the 'Academy of Vocal Musick' (later, Academy of Ancient Musick)
1727	Composes <i>Riccardo Primo</i> , also Coronation Anthems for King George II and Queen Caroline Walsh publishes 'Second Volume' of Keyboard Suites	First performance of J. S. Bach's <i>St Matthew Passion</i> in Leipzig Croft dies
1728	Composes <i>Siroe</i> and <i>Tolomeo</i> Last Royal Academy season	Gay/Pepusch, <i>The Beggar's Opera</i> Steffani dies
1729	Handel (with Heidegger) establishes new opera company in London. Travels to Italy to engage singers Completes <i>Lotario</i> as first opera for new London company, with Strada as the leading soprano	Nicola Haym dies
1730	Composes <i>Partenope</i> Senesino returns to London as leading man for Handel's operas Handel's mother dies in Halle	J. B. Loeillet dies (in London)
1731	Composes <i>Poro</i> and <i>Ezio</i> Bass soloist Montagnana joins opera company	Publication of J. S. Bach's <i>Clavier-Übung</i> (Part I) in Leipzig
1732	Composes <i>Sosarme</i> and <i>Orlando</i> Following a performance of <i>Esther</i> by Chapel Royal choristers at Crown and Anchor Tavern, Handel introduces <i>Esther</i> and <i>Acis and Galatea</i> into his theatre season	Arne/Lampe productions of 'English operas' (including <i>Acis and Galatea</i>) at Little Theatre, Haymarket Haydn born <i>Teraminta</i> (Carey and J. C. Smith jun.) produced Opening of Rich's Covent Garden Theatre Walther's <i>Musicalisches Lexicon</i> published in Leipzig
1733	Composes <i>Deborah</i> and <i>Athalia</i> . Visits Oxford and performs oratorios at Sheldonian Theatre and Christ Church Hall Composes <i>Arianna</i> . Loses opera singers (except Strada) to Opera of the Nobility and engages a new castrato, Carestini	J. S. Bach visits Dresden, and presents MS of B minor Mass to Elector of Saxony Couperin dies Opera of the Nobility opens at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre, with Porpora as principal composer

xiv Chronology

<i>Year</i>	<i>Biography</i>	<i>Music and Musicians</i>
	Walsh publishes editions of Handel's 'solo' sonatas ('Op. 1') and trio sonatas (Op. 2) with spurious 'Roger' title pages	
1734	Composes <i>Parnasso in Festa</i> , and anthem HWV 262 for wedding of Princess Anne and Prince Willem in French Chapel, St James's Palace Composes <i>Ariodante</i> Opera of the Nobility occupy King's Theatre and Handel takes his opera company to Covent Garden theatre, opening with revival of <i>Il Pastor Fido</i> featuring Madame Sallé's dancers. Walsh publishes 6 Concerti Grossi Op. 3, all based on earlier compositions, and revised edition of 'Second Volume' of Suites	Opera of the Nobility perform Handel's <i>Ottone</i> J. S. Bach's <i>Christmas Oratorio</i> performed
1735	Includes oratorio performances in his opera season, and introduces organ concertos Composes <i>Alcina</i> Walsh publishes 6 keyboard fugues, composed 15–20 years previously	J. Krieger dies J. C. Bach born
1736	Completes <i>Alexander's Feast</i> and concerto HWV 318, also <i>Atalanta</i> , <i>Giustino</i> , <i>Arminio</i> and <i>Berenice</i> , for Covent Garden season Anthem HWV 263 performed at wedding of Prince of Wales in Chapel Royal Arrival of Annibali, second castrato, to join Conti in Handel's Covent Garden company	John Walsh, sen., music publisher, dies and is succeeded in business by his son Pergolesi, Weldon and Caldara die
1737	Composes new version of <i>Il Trionfo del Tempo</i> Last seasons of Handel's Covent Garden opera company, and of Opera of the Nobility at the King's Theatre Indisposed during last weeks of Covent Garden season: reports of 'paraletick disorder' Visits Aix-la-Chapelle for health-cure. Joins new company, probably managed by Heidegger, at King's Theatre. Composes <i>Faramondo</i> , Funeral Anthem following the death of Queen Caroline, and <i>Serse</i>	Carey and Lampe produce <i>The Dragon of Wantley</i> , partly a parody of Handel's <i>Giustino</i> , at Little Theatre, Haymarket
1738	Publication of full score of <i>Alexander's Feast</i> Receives benefit night at Opera House Roubiliac statue of Handel erected in Vauxhall Gardens Composes <i>Saul</i> , <i>Imeneo</i> and <i>Israel in Egypt</i> Jennens reports that Handel has acquired novel new instruments (carillon, organ) for the next season First set of organ concertos (Op. 4) published by Walsh	C. P. E. Bach appointed harpsichordist to Crown Prince Friedrich of Prussia Two editions of D. Scarlatti's <i>Essercizi per Gravicembalo</i> published in London First meeting of Fund for the Support of Decay'd Musicians (Handel a founder member) Heidegger advertises for a subscription for 1738–9 opera season, but abandons the plan after insufficient response
1739	Gives mixed season of English and Italian works at King's Theatre Trio Sonatas Op. 5 published by Walsh Composes <i>Song (Ode) for St. Cecilia's Day</i> and Concerti Grossi Op. 6 Begins season of performances of English works at Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre	Hickford's Concert Room 'removes' from Poulton St to Brewer St: raffle of Clay (musical) clock, and picture of Handel set up in the new room

xv *Chronology*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Biography</i>	<i>Music and Musicians</i>
1740	Composes <i>L'Allegro, Il Penseroso ed il Moderato</i> and Organ Concerto HWV 306 (with obbligato pedal part) Op. 6 Concerti published Travels to continent in summer: on return to London, revises <i>Imeneo</i> and composes <i>Deidamia</i> , for new season at Lincoln's Inn Fields 'Second Set' of organ concertos published	Lotti dies J. S. Bach visits Halle Samuel Arnold born Mattheson's <i>Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte</i> published in Hamburg
1741	Gives last performance of Italian opera in London Composes <i>Messiah, Samson</i> and Italian duets Attends first performance of the new 'Middlesex' opera company Leaves London for Dublin, travelling via Chester and Holyhead. Begins first subscription concert series at Dublin with <i>L'Allegro</i>	Fux and Vivaldi die
1742	Completes two six-concert subscription series in Dublin, followed by first performances of <i>Messiah</i> Returns to London and completes score of <i>Samson</i>	
1743	Presents oratorio season at Covent Garden Composes <i>Semele</i> , 'Dettingen' Te Deum and Anthem, and <i>Joseph and his Brethren</i>	'Middlesex' Italian opera company opens at King's Theatre, with <i>Rossane</i> , a version of Handel's <i>Alessandro</i> . Boccherini born
1744	Presents second oratorio season at Covent Garden Composes <i>Hercules</i> and <i>Belshazzar</i> Begins ambitious oratorio subscription season at King's Theatre for 1744–5	'Middlesex' opera company collapses
1745	Oratorio season meets difficulties, but continues Visits 'the country' in the summer	
1746	Composes <i>Occasional Oratorio</i> and <i>Judas Maccabaeus</i>	Re-formed 'Middlesex' company opens with Gluck's opera <i>La Caduta de' Giganti</i> : Gluck in London W. F. Bach appointed organist at Liebfrauenkirche, Halle
1747	Presents first non-subscription oratorio season at Covent Garden Contralto Galli joins Handel's company Composes <i>Alexander Balus</i> and <i>Joshua</i>	J. S. Bach visits Friedrich II at Potsdam Bononcini dies
1748	Composes <i>Solomon</i> and <i>Susanna</i>	J. G. Walther dies
1749	New leading soprano, Frasi, joins Handel's company Composes <i>Fireworks Music</i> Gives first charity performance for Foundling Hospital Composes <i>Theodora</i> Visits Bath Writes incidental music for projected production of Smollett's play <i>Alceste</i>	Galliard and Heidegger die
1750	Covent Garden cast includes new castrato, Guadagni	J. S. Bach dies Giuseppe Sammartini dies (in London)

xvi *Chronology*

<i>Year</i>	<i>Biography</i>	<i>Music and Musicians</i>
	Handel's first <i>Messiah</i> performances at Foundling Hospital Makes his will Re-uses much of the music from <i>Alceste</i> in <i>The Choice of Hercules</i> Visits continent: plays organs in Holland	
1751	Composes last instrumental work, Organ Concerto HWV 308 Composition of <i>Jephtha</i> interrupted by problems with eyesight Travels to Bath and Cheltenham Handel's pupil J. C. Smith junior returns to London to assist with management of oratorio seasons	Albinoni dies
1752	Remaining eyesight deteriorates	Pepusch dies J. F. Reichardt born
1753	At Foundling Hospital <i>Messiah</i> performance plays 'voluntary' on organ – the last newspaper report of him playing in public.	
1754	First surviving account list for Foundling Hospital performances Dictates and signs letter to Telemann	
1755	Attains seventieth birthday	<i>The Fairies</i> (J. C. Smith, jun.) produced at Drury Lane Greene dies
1756	Adds first codicil to will, with bequests to Morell and Hamilton	Mozart born
1757	Handel possibly more active, and collaborates with Morell over adaptation of <i>Il Trionfo del Tempo</i> into <i>The Triumph of Time and Truth</i> Adds further codicil to will: bequests to John Rich and Jennens, and copies of <i>Messiah</i> (score and parts) to Foundling Hospital	J. Stamitz and D. Scarlatti die
1758	Visits Tunbridge Wells, possibly with Morell	
1759	Attends <i>Messiah</i> performance on 6 April and intends to travel to Bath, but is too ill to do so Adds 4th (final) codicil to will: bequests include £1000 to Decay'd Musicians Fund and £600 provision for a monument at Westminster Abbey Dies at his home in Brook Street at about 8 a.m. on 14 April (Easter Saturday); funeral at Westminster Abbey, 20 April	