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ANNETTE LANGRAF AND DAVID VICKERS, EDS
THE CAMBRIDGE HANDEL ENCYCLOPEDIA
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Let me start this review with a thumping cliché by declaring *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia* to be a landmark. Its publication denotes the end of a major phase in that process of recovery and redemption that has taken place in Handel studies during the past twenty-five years – the period since the 1985 tercentenary celebrations allowed us to take stock of both what we knew about the composer and his music and, more significantly, how much we didn't know. For the Handelian diet offered to audiences and performers during most of the twentieth century was a pretty meagre affair. Its basic constituents were *Messiah*, the *Water Music*, the *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, *Acis and Galatea* (now and then), *Zadok the Priest* and a handful of opera arias sung to Victorian words unconnected with the original Italian texts. Oratorios now and then surfaced at the Proms under the inexhaustibly educative baton of Charles Mackerras – I recall an *Alexander's Feast* whose 'rattling peal of thunder' and 'ghosts that unburied remain' sent shivers down the spine. As for the stage works, Decca's recording of *Alcina*, with Joan Sutherland in the title role, whatever its textual solecisms, gave us a thrilling taste of how operatic Handel might spring to life with the help of big voices and genuine theatricality. Essentially, however, the composer's oeuvre remained an archaeological site, its composite picture recalling those eighteenth-century views of the Roman Forum as a rolling pasture where fragments of a triumphal arch, a colonnade or a temple pediment stick up tantalizingly among the grazing cows and sheep.

The present encyclopedia bears witness to a wondrous alteration which, over recent decades, has brought the sheer monumentality of Handel's achievement back into the daylight. This is not simply a guide to the music from *Almira* to *Jephtha*, as it were, but a panoramic vista of the composer in the context of his age, his professional career, his compositional practices and his links with publishers and fellow musicians. The peripatetic life of a baroque musician is well reflected in the articles on specific places associated with the composer – whether Hamburg, Florence, Dublin or Rome – and there are individual entries on members of the Hanoverian royal dynasty whose favour and enthusiasm provided dependable encouragement throughout Handel's working life.

Each of the operas and oratorios is given a separate profile. Thankfully, those writing on them, including the two editors, Annette Landgraf and David Vickers, have been allowed, according to inclination, some liberty to evaluate Handel's achievement in each case, as well as establishing a precise background to the work. Thus Suzana Ograjenšek, discussing *Tolomeo*, finds the libretto's pastoral connotations offer little room for dynamic contrast in Act 1 but notes the dramaturgical inventiveness of the aria *per due* 'Dite, che fa' later in the opera, in which the voices of the lovers lost in the wood echo among the trees. Elsewhere Ruth Smith speaks up for *Judas Maccabaeus*, formerly among Handel's most popular oratorios but nowadays almost in the neglected masterpiece category. Its composer, in her reading, 'magnificently realizes the libretto's aims', and his particular fusion of solo and chorus in individual numbers 'heightens the sense of national togetherness' (368).

Performance histories and original casts are given for the large-scale works, along with some account of the borrowings routinely made by Handel in each of them. John H. Roberts, the doyen of borrowing studies, contributes a judicious overview of the entire issue, highlighting, in the process, its singular complexity in relation to the different methods adopted in a given score or within a particular number. Lifting of entire arias seems to have occurred only from Handel's own music. In other cases a new piece could be modelled on the structural armature provided by another master, fragments might be developed from alternative sources in the shape of a ritornello, an opening phrase or a contrapuntal subject, and stock musical figures from the works of other composers were easily absorbed into Handel's personal discourse.

Roberts dismisses the hallowed view that borrowing was a universally accepted practice during the baroque period, noting in this respect that Handel had been anxious to cover his tracks when transferring material to *Giustino* and *Arminio* from Vinci's *Didone abbandonata* (though a lynx-eyed Charles Jennens evidently identified the thefts). He nevertheless concedes that the practice was widespread during the eighteenth century, and we can hardly declare it to have vanished utterly in the 250 years since Handel's death. What is interesting is the degree to which he pushed his luck, with such continuous trawling through everything from a Jacob Gallus motet to a Galuppi serenata. As Roberts observes, reinforcing a point first made by Winton Dean, 'it is hard to escape the conclusion that he lacked some facility in the invention of ideas' (101). How he coped with this problem is part of his singular fascination as a creative personality.

Handel's self-borrowing habit was often sustained with the help of his cantatas, mostly composed during his sojourn in Italy. Sensibly, *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia* divides its coverage of these works between a single article by Andrew V. Jones on those written for voice and continuo, and individual entries on the cantatas with larger instrumental forces. Some of the latter are occasional pieces designed to promote the initiatives and prestige of a princely patron such as the Marchese Francesco Maria Ruspoli, while others, like the two-part *Cor fedele, in vano speri*, are dramatic in form and may indeed have been staged, partially or fully, at their first performances. Jones is justly admiring of the variety and imaginative flexibility with which Handel addresses the conventions of the continuo cantata, seeing his achievement in this field as something altogether more impressive than a mere test drive for experiments in larger-scale forms.

We know the names, social backgrounds and cultural milieux of a number of those who heard these works at their respective premieres. A serious study is waiting to be written on the different Handelian audiences, whether in Hamburg, Rome or London, on their canons of taste, their expectations as to the music and their recorded reactions to it. David Hunter's recent work in this field has been usefully condensed in the 'Audience' article, but several of its points are, to say the least, debatable. A traditional view of Handel's shift from opera to oratorio sees him welcoming a new bourgeois public for the Covent Garden seasons of sacred drama, as opposed to the aristocratic patrons of the King's Theatre opera seria performances. The argument advanced in Hunter's article 'Patronizing Handel, Inventing Audiences: The Intersections of Class, Money, Music and History' (*Early Music* 28/1 (2000), 32–49), and repeated here, that a middle-class echelon could scarcely have afforded tickets for the oratorio evenings, is too narrowly based on financial statistics. Other nuancing factors, such as the beleaguered snobbery of a nobility increasingly challenged by the potency of new money, the 'democratic' aspects of evangelical Christianity in the age of Wesley and the perpetually uneasy relationship of Londoners with opera as a medium of entertainment, all need to be taken into account here.

At the Encyclopedia's centre stands an article entitled simply 'Handel, George Frideric', principally the work of Donald Burrows, which essentially crystallizes current wisdom on the life and oeuvre. Additional contributors develop perspectives on religion, nationality, reputation and influence. Many of Burrows's insights enhance those in his 'Master Musicians' Handel study, the best single-volume work on the composer now available (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994). The observation, for example, that in the London of 1710 'the opera house formed a relatively closed community that did not seek close integration with local cultures, even musical ones' becomes more apposite in the light of the picture we are now able to form of the Italian theatrical community in London and its sense of itself as a bringer of light to the dark corners of the earth (288). From the letters of such figures as Paolo Rolli and Giuseppe Riva there resonates a disdainful chauvinism, seemingly incapable of understanding Handel as anything but a tiresome obstruction to the triumph of Bononcini and his satellites over a musically ignorant London audience.

On the issue of Handel's sexuality David Hunter and Thomas N. McGeary are both a good deal wiser than those who have recently rushed to assume that the absence of a Mrs Handel automatically denotes homosexuality. McGeary, while noting Gary Thomas's suggestion that biographers' avoidance of discussing the composer's bachelor status constitutes evidence of a cover-up, points out that Handel's contemporaries would hardly have sidestepped gossip about a taste for sodomy on the part of such an important cultural figure. Hunter sensibly implies 'a fear of commitment as the result of the demands of his profession' to be as good a reason as any for him to avoid wedlock (300).

How useful a research tool is *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia*? Each of the entries comes with its own apparatus of relevant source references and suggestions for further reading. The complete works are listed, with details of orchestration; there is a chronology, a family tree and a Handel iconography stretching from Georg Platzer's early miniature, its subject more recognizable from the predominant eyebrows than from any other feature of his thin face, to Louis François Roubiliac's Westminster Abbey monument, last and grandest of his four striking tributes to the master. David Vickers contributes a list of such commercial recordings as 'reliably convey an idea of what Handel's original composition contains' (760) and follows this with an overview of fifty modern performers who have left their mark on the way we nowadays hear the composer's music. Among these is Christopher Hogwood, whose effervescent Introduction to this magnificent compendium hails it as 'the perfect Baedeker' to a Handelian territory once almost without maps, but now being intensively explored (xvi).

JONATHAN KEATES

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DANUTA MIRKA
METRIC MANIPULATIONS IN HAYDN AND MOZART: CHAMBER MUSIC FOR STRINGS, 1787–1791
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The *Philosophical Lexicon*, an online collection of mock philosophical terms, most of which are puns based on the names of philosophers, contains the following entry:

> **bennettiction**, n. Praise for a philosopher for solving a problem that was not invented until several hundred years after his death. 'His study of Kant concludes with a bennettiction of Kant for solving the problem of a private language.' (Daniel Dennett and Asbjørn Steglich-Petersen, eds, *The Philosophical Lexicon* (2008 edition) <www.philosophicallexicon.com> (14 February 2011))

The Bennett in question here is Jonathan F. Bennett, who has often found earlier philosophers (well, mostly Kant) ingeniously solving various problems of modern philosophy; in consequence, his colleagues honoured him with this entry in the *Lexicon*. In *Metric Manipulations in Haydn and Mozart* Danuta Mirka gives similar benettictions to Johann Philipp Kirnberger, Joseph Riepel and Heinrich Christoph Koch, not only because they were sensitive to many of the same problems of rhythmic perception and cognition studied by twentieth- and twenty-first-century music psychologists, but also because they came up with quite similar solutions. Together with her thorough exegesis of the eighteenth-century German literature on *Rhythmus, Takt, Taktordnung, Metrum* and *Rhythmopoeia*, Mirka considers nearly all of the current music-theoretic literature concerning rhythm and metre, as well as much recent work in rhythmic perception and cognition. Along the way she clarifies terminology (both historical and modern), critiques analyses (both historical and modern) and offers polite but firm correctives to her fellow music theorists (both historical and modern, including the author of this review; at least I am in good company). Likewise, in her many analytical examples Mirka illustrates how eighteenth-century musical rhetoric and musical decorum are grounded by rhythms that are placed 'just so', with 'just so' measured by the musical metre. Mirka's analyses show just how rich and complex our metrical experience of this music is, or can be.

But wait: there is more. For Mirka also develops her own theory of metre and metric perception, drawing on both eighteenth- and twentieth-century sources. From Ray Jackendoff ('Musical Parsing and Musical Affect', *Music Perception* 9/2 (1991), 199–230) she takes a 'parallel multiple analysis model' for our perceptual