



THE UNIVERSITY OF
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Symposium: George Frideric Handel

The Glory of the Baroque

21 September 2009, Case Study Room, University Club, The University of Western Australia



George Frideric Handel - *The Glory of the Baroque*



21 September, 9.00am–5.00pm

Case Study Room, University Club

The University of Western Australia

Convenor: Professor Sandra Bowdler, Honorary Senior Research Fellow, Music and Archaeology, UWA

In September 2009, the School of Music at the University of Western Australia will be presenting Festival Baroque, Australia's first Baroque Music festival, intended to be the first in an ongoing program. In association with the Festival, the Institute of Advanced Studies at the University of Western Australia is hosting a symposium of scholarly presentations aimed at all lovers of baroque music.

2009 is the 250th anniversary of the death of George Frideric Handel, and the festival and the symposium will both be celebrating his work. Born in Halle in Germany in 1685, Handel travelled around Germany and Italy before arriving in London in 1710, where he resided until his death. Handel's life thus spanned the period of the high baroque, his contemporaries including Scarlatti, JS Bach, Telemann and Vivaldi. His influence in his own time and subsequently can hardly be overestimated, while his own work reflects the musical currents of his day.

This symposium will introduce music lovers to the origins of Baroque music, and then concentrate on the life and works of GF Handel. His role in developing the Italian opera in England, in creating the English Oratorio, and generally contributing to the musical and theatrical life of his times and the development of western music will be explored by scholars of international standing. The symposium will include a number of papers by Handel specialists from across disciplines.



Program

8.30am	Coffee and Registration
9.00am	Welcome and Introduction - Sandra Bowdler
9.15am	Baroque – what's in a name? - David Tunley
10.00am	Managing Patronage in 18th Century Europe - Ruth Smith
10.45am	Morning Tea
11.15am	Singers and their Composer Handel: hidden voices in Handel's vocal music - Berta Joncus
12.00 noon	The Temple of Fame - Remembering, Revisiting and Rediscovering Handel - Graham Pont
12.45pm	Lunch
2.00pm	In his Master's Steps: John Christopher Smith and the Adaptation of the Handelian Oratorio - Margaret Seares
2.45pm	The Earliest Recording of Handel - Neal Peres da Costa
3.00pm	Afternoon Tea
4.00pm	Writing Handel's Biography - Donald Burrows
4.45pm	Concluding remarks
5.00pm	Close
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6.00pm	Recital and Supper (by ticket only)
6.00pm	Recital (Eileen Joyce Studio, School of Music, The University of Western Australia) A recital presenting unfamiliar and recently discovered works which throw new light on Handel's relationships with contemporary Italian composers. The recital will be followed by a light supper

Presentations

Writing Handel's Biography

Donald Burrows, The Open University, Milton Keynes, UK

In order to keep a balance in my work on the life and music of George Frideric Handel, I try to devote approximately equal attention to words (books and articles) and to music (music editions, performances). It so happens that I have undertaken the task of writing substantial biographies of Handel several times, including the 'Master Musicians' volume, the entry in the *New Dictionary of National Biography*, and a large section 'Handel' in *The Cambridge Encyclopedia*. I am currently preparing a new edition of the 'Master Musicians' volume, and new shorter biography for the 'Extraordinary Lives' series from the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Each biographical project has its own characteristic emphases. In this paper I will review the areas in which the picture of Handel has changed since the first edition of my 'Master Musicians' book in 1994, through new discoveries and new perspectives, and also take a broader view of 250 years of Handel biographies.

The Earliest Recording of Handel

Neal Peres da Costa, Sydney Conservatorium of Music

In 1903, the French pianist Raoul Pugno (1852-1914) became the first pianist of international stature to record for the gramophone. During the two sessions of recording that were made through the early-recording process in which sound vibrations were captured by a horn and embedded into wax via the motions of a stylus, Pugno recorded some of his favourite concert repertoire. The time limitations imposed by the recording process itself – a maximum of about 4.5 minutes was possible, means that Pugno was restricted to shorter works including music by Chopin, Mendelssohn, Liszt and others. It is significant that included in his recording repertoire is Scarlatti's Sonata in A Major, L.495 and the Gavotte and Variations from Handel's Suite No. 14 (originally for the harpsichord). This probably represents one of the first recordings of Handel, if not the first.

Early recordings are indispensable tools for the study of performing practices. Made at a time when no editing was possible, the recording captures a snapshot of the recording artist. Pugno was a well-known and respected teacher and published an important pedagogical work to help his students. Thus, it is possible to compare what he said about performance and what he actually did in reality. While this paper will focus on Pugno's performance of Handel, it will also look at some philosophical issues associated with the study of performing practice as well as the early-recording process.

Singers and their Composer Handel: hidden voices in Handel's vocal music

Berta Joncus, St Anne's College and St Hilda's College, Oxford

One of the most powerful mediators of Handel's music during his lifetime was the star singer. This presentation considers how Handel contributed to the star production of two principal English singers, Kitty Clive and John Beard. In contrast to a *prime donna* or *uomo*, the English star singer's persona was highly defined in the public sphere through a variety of media; to satisfy audience expectations for an English principal singer, Handel had not only to tailor his music to their technical strengths, but also to compose roles that fit their dramatic line and perceived character.

Before Handel came to compose for her, Kitty Clive was already London's top soprano and comedienne. Clive's most frequent singing partner was the tenor John Beard who, after singing secondary roles in Handel's productions until 1737, was taken up by Drury Lane, where he was cast as Clive's counterpart. Central to the personae of both Clive and Beard were a nationalist zeal and a link to the Patriot cause that opposed Prime Minister Robert Walpole. Beard's manliness was also key to his representations. In 1743 Clive and Beard joined Handel's oratorio company at Covent Garden. This oratorio season was vital to Handel, whose waning fortunes in 1740 had made him retreat to Dublin. For his comeback in London he premiered the oratorio *Samson*, whose musical forms and Patriot politics perfectly fit those of its two lead singers. *Samson* was a triumph, and during the same season Handel mounted *The Messiah* for the first time in London, writing a short section for Clive to sing a cameo as another of her celebrated representations, that of a shepherdess. Due to a bitter fight with Covent Garden manager John Rich, Clive never returned to his theatre to sing with Handel. Beard, however, continued to lead Handel's oratorios, notably in *Semele* as Jupiter, whose virility forms the central motif of this work. These examples show how a star singer's voice and distinctive stage presence have come to be embedded within Handel's music.

The Temple of Fame - Remembering, Revisiting and Rediscovering Handel

Graham Pont, University of New South Wales

The Temple of Fame is a theoretical model for explaining the nature of the Handelian legacy and exploring its historic role and continuing significance in global culture and society, including that of Australia.

Following the architectural analogy, the corpus of Handel's works and the continuous tradition of their performance over 250 years are viewed as a vast edifice: like many great buildings, the Handelian shrine is subject to natural weathering and decay, accidental damage, repair, reconstruction, extension, adaptation, excavation, restoration and redecoration, as well as becoming the subject of historical research, archaeological study and various other forms of analysis – structural, moral, mathematical, pedagogical, symbolic and so on.

The Temple of Fame is the place where Handel is remembered and his works displayed and regularly revisited, both by the general public in the 'nave' and by the 'priests' or official custodians (musicians, musicologists, archivists, historians, critics etc) working in the more sacred or reserved spaces of the Temple. Their labours contribute to the presentation and preservation of the Temple – but also to much incidental damage, arbitrary modification and drastic reconstruction, often historically accurate but sometimes fundamentally mistaken.

During the last half century or so, the Handelian Temple of Fame has undergone major renovation resulting in the fine restoration of many much-loved monuments, the rediscovery of half-forgotten and even some lost masterpieces, a thorough – though still incomplete - survey of the edifice, the removal of accumulated dust and rubbish and a general redecoration in more or less appropriate 'heritage colours'. The paper ends with a brief evaluation of these changes, both positive and negative, and a prognosis of future developments in the Temple.

In his Master's Steps: John Christopher Smith and the adaptation of the Handelian oratorio

Margaret Seares, The University of Western Australia

In 1760, the year after Handel's death, John Christopher Smith's oratorio *Paradise Lost*, with libretto by Benjamin Stillingfleet, was produced at Covent Garden. Smith had been Handel's musical assistant and friend, and succeeded Handel both as the organist at the Foundling Hospital and as director, with John Stanley, of the Lenten oratorio performances at Covent Garden and then Drury Lane. He also inherited Handel's manuscripts and conducting scores on the death of his own father, John Christopher Smith the elder.

This paper will look at the manner in which a composer, steeped in the experience of the Handelian oratorio, adopted the genre to the Miltonian epic. In so doing it will look at the reception history of *Paradise Lost* with a view to determining how successful Smith was in adapting the Handelian idiom to the ever-changing musical tastes of London audiences in the mid-18th century.

Managing Patronage in 18th Century Europe

Ruth Smith, Cambridge University

In two recent books the cultural historian Tim Blanning contrasts Handel's career with those of his two equally famous successors, Haydn and Mozart, who, though of a later generation, were much more bound to the *ancien régime* style of patronage, whereas Handel was the first 'modern', freelance, independent music artist. This talk explores that contrast. Despite near-total lack of testimony from Handel himself, we can track the ambitions behind his early career moves, which took him from a small East German town a tenth the size of London to the most open society in Europe and with an income from the crown. But in Britain he had at least three audiences to please: the king; the king's son and the group round him opposed to the king; and his own circle of encouragers and appreciators – to say nothing of the bulk of the population. At the same time as writing to attract a paying public from conflicting interest groups, he never ceased to experiment in music. In 1759 he died a rich celebrity. How did he do it, and what manoeuvres did it entail?

Baroque – what's in a name?

David Tunley, The University of Western Australia

Professor Tunley's presentation will clarify the meaning and implications of the term 'baroque music' for modern audiences.

Biographies

Sandra Bowdler is Honorary Senior Research Fellow in Musicology at The University of Western Australia. She was appointed Professor of Archaeology at UWA in 1983, and continued in that position until her retirement in 2007. During that period she carried out a project of archaeological research in the Shark Bay region of WA involving Aboriginal sites dating from 30,000 years ago to the historical period. She also broadened her archaeological horizons to include Southeast Asia, and in recent times has been working with colleague Dr Jane Balme on the origins of gender with particular emphasis on the evidence from the European Palaeolithic (Stone Age). Over her career she has published over a hundred scholarly papers and books.

Music has long been a particular interest in Sandra Bowdler's life, particularly baroque music and particularly opera. Since 1996, she has been writing music reviews, and some articles, which have appeared largely on the internet sites *Andante* (www.andante.com, still there but basically defunct) and *The Opera Critic* (www.theopercritic.com), and also in *Amadeus*, the Italian music magazine and *Opera*, the English magazine. She has also become interested in archaeological evidence for the origins of music (an interest shared with Dr Nicholas Bannan).

Donald Burrows is Professor of Music at The Open University, Milton Keynes (UK), a Vice-President of the Händelgesellschaft, and Chairman of The Handel Institute; he is currently director of the 'Handel Documents' research project based at The Open University. In 2000 he was awarded the Handel Prize of the City of Halle-an-der-Saale. His books include the 'Master Musicians' biography of the composer, and most recently *Handel and the English Chapel Royal*, which has been recognised as the first full-scale study of Handel's English church music. His published editions of Handel's music include the oratorios *Messiah*, *Samson and Belshazzar*, the operas *Imeneo and Ariodante*, the complete violin sonatas and the *Suite for two Harpsichords* (including a re-composed Harpsichord II part, for which the original is lost). In addition to directing many performances of Handel's music in Britain, he has conducted the oratorio *Theodora* at the Halle Händelfestspiele and a programme of Handel's Chapel Royal Music at the 2004 American Handel Festival in Albuquerque.

Berta Joncus is Lecturer in Music at St Anne's College and St Hilda's College, Oxford. She specializes in the music and practices of the Georgian London stage, European popular music before 1750 and eighteenth-century vocal music. In January 2008 she co-convened with Jeremy Barlow the first interdisciplinary conference on the eighteenth-century London stage, focusing on theatre manager John Rich, and is co-editor of the conference proceedings (University of Delaware Press; see www.johnrich2008.com). She is the designer of the electronic resource, *Ballad Operas and the London Stage Song Industry, 1728-1760: An Electronic Catalogue* (www.odl.ox.ac.uk/balladoperas/), and was co-investigator for this project. Her monograph *Kitty Clive, Goddess of Mirth: Creating a Star through Song (1728–1765)* is to be published next year by Boydell & Brewer.

Neal Peres Da Costa is Senior Lecturer and Chair of Early Music at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music (University of Sydney), where he teaches early keyboards, directs the Conservatorium Early Music Ensemble and lectures in the area of historical performance and musicology. As a performing scholar, Neal specialises in performance on historical keyboards. He co-founded the British-based ensemble Florilegium with which he toured extensively and made many award winning recordings. He performs and records regularly with distinguished soloists and ensembles including the Australian Chamber Orchestra, the Australian Brandenburg Orchestra, Sinfonia Australis, Orchestra of the Antipodes, Pinchgut Opera and other organizations both national and international. Most recently, Neal was awarded the Fine Arts ARIA for Best Classical Album 2008 for Bach's Sonatas for violin and obbligato keyboard with Richard Tognetti and Daniel Yeadon on the ABC Classics label. He is currently revising his Ph.D. as a performing-practice monograph on Romantic piano playing for publication by Oxford University Press.

Graham Pont is a philosopher specializing in aesthetics of music and architecture. For 30 years he taught in the General Education programme at the University of New South Wales, where he introduced Australia's first undergraduate course on the Philosophy of Music (1974–88). Since 1958 he has been studying non-uniformities ('inconsistencies') in the notation and interpretation of Baroque music, especially that of Handel.

Margaret Seares, AO, PhD (UWA); MA (UWA), FAICD retired from the position of Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor at The University of Western Australia at the end of 2008 and now works as a consultant. She has held a range of national and State positions on leading cultural bodies including the Australia Council for the Arts, as Chair, Opera Australia, and the West Australian Symphony Orchestra, and on the Australian Research Council. She holds a PhD from UWA in Music, her field of specialty being the keyboard music of Johann Mattheson. She has also worked on the music of Lully and Rameau, and of Handel and John Christopher Smith, having co-authored a monograph entitled *Paradise Lost in Short* with Dr Kay Stevenson of Essex University, dealing with Smith's oratorio based upon John Milton's epic.

Ruth Smith writes and lectures on Handel's oratorios and operas. She has a BA and PhD in English from Cambridge University. For her book *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge University Press, 1995, paperback 2005) she received the 1996 British Academy Crawshay Prize. Her most recent articles were on Handel's evocation of Old Testament instruments in Saul, and on the psychological realism of Handel's *Il trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*. At the 2007 American Handel Society Conference she was a panellist in the discussion of anti-Judaism in Messiah reported in the *New York Times*. In 2009 she is an invited speaker at conferences in Kentucky, Belfast, Halle, Perth and London. Her day job (since 1983) is as a careers adviser at Cambridge University Careers Service.

David Tunley is Emeritus Professor and Senior Honorary Research Fellow in the School of Music at The University of Western Australia. He enjoys an international reputation, in particular through his research into baroque music and the interaction between French and Italian versions of the style. Three of his books are in this field as well as 17 volumes of music from the repertoire; in addition, he has contributed over 30 articles on baroque music and composers to the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, chapters in *The New Oxford History of Music* and most recently in *European Music 1520-1640*.



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