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## **Brio: Journal of IAML(UK & Irl)**

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## EDITORIAL

*Martin Holmes*

Only time will tell whether allowing my arm to be twisted into becoming Editor of *Brio* was a good idea; I think I must have been under the misapprehension that it had something to do with the wooden railway sets my children used to play with! So, conscious of the distinction of my illustrious predecessors in this role, I feel not a little trepidation in presenting this, my first issue, and I must record my particular thanks to Katharine Hogg for her patient and thorough guidance during the hand-over period. I am taking over the reins at a time of rapid change in the world of academic and professional journals, with electronic editions becoming ever more ubiquitous and the requirements of Open Access starting to take effect. IAML (UK & Irl) cannot afford to ignore these developments and how we respond to them will be a topic for serious thought and discussion in the months ahead, in the context of the wider remit of communications within the branch.

We are also living through a period of great change in the profession when economic and other pressures on music libraries in all sectors have never been greater. As IAML members will be all too painfully aware, there have been far too many depressing stories of the effects of cuts in library services across the country, particularly in the public sector, and music libraries are, of course, a prime target. The sad saga of the Yorkshire Music Library and the shocking treatment of its staff is a cause of great concern for us all. However, not all is doom and gloom; the branch's Annual Study Weekend in Manchester in April demonstrated that there is still plenty to celebrate in the world of music libraries. I was able to attend only for one day but this enabled me to pay my first visit to the Henry Watson Music Library in its newly refurbished premises. It is to be hoped that the investment which has been made in Manchester's libraries can shine as an example to other local authorities in demonstrating the value of a vibrant music library service within the community. All too often though, the success stories are purely the result of dedicated and enterprising colleagues working miracles with ever-decreasing resources, many of whom were honoured in this year's round of Excellence and Personal Achievement awards.

Turning back to *Brio*, as one who has worked his entire career in the academic library sector, I hope you will forgive a certain bias in my first issue towards articles on more historical topics. I hope to be able to redress the balance in future editions and would encourage contributions covering a wider range of subject matter which reflects the breadth of interests and activities within all sectors of our profession.

In this issue Barry Sterndale-Bennett pays tribute to his great-great-grandfather, marking the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Sir William Sterndale Bennett, a key figure in the musical world of mid-Victorian England and a greatly under-valued composer. Bennett was 'Composer of the Week' in the week of his birthday and a number of events have been planned for the bicentenary year, including exhibitions at the Bodleian Library and the Royal Academy of Music.

Next, Robert Bruce, a former colleague of mine at the Bodleian, investigates the life and work of an even more forgotten musician, T.W. Bourne. His pioneering work in Handel scholarship and his role in fostering a more 'authentic' approach to Handel performance, at a time when Mozart's orchestration was the norm for *Messiah*, is now barely recognised. For our final article, we go north of the border where the indefatigable Karen McAulay has written up her recent talk on the First Edinburgh Musical Festival which she gave to mark the bicentenary of the Festival last year. It was a far cry from the modern Edinburgh Festival but Karen paints a fascinating picture of Scotland's first foray into the burgeoning circuit of provincial music festivals which developed in the wake of the Handel celebrations in London as a means of raising money for good causes and providing another event for the calendar of high society.

Book reviews cover topics as diverse as Sir Charles Mackerras, music theatre and the pianist Hubert Harry. Katharine Hogg also reports on developments at the Handel House Museum, recently re-launched as 'Handel & Hendrix in London' so I hope that *Brio* readers will find plenty of interest in these pages.

My thanks go to Loukia Drosopoulou for her efficient handling of the reviews, to Rebecca Nye for taking on the role of *Brio* Advertising and Subscriptions Manager and to Sue Clayton for continuing to mastermind its distribution. For future issues, I am open to suggestions for articles, books for review and exhibitions to report on and would encourage readers to contact me with ideas and (preferably) offers of material.

## THE BICENTENARY OF WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT

*Barry Sterndale-Bennett*

2016 marks the bicentenary of the birth of the composer William Sterndale Bennett which provides an opportunity to reflect on someone who, at the time of his death in 1875, was regarded by many as the head of English music. Yet like several other artists of that period, he soon became relegated to the footnotes of musical history. The great educational reformer Sir Henry Hadow wrote in 1931 that Bennett held “an honourable place on the mid-slopes: he found English music a barren land, he enriched its soil [and] developed its cultivation”,<sup>1</sup> but it then took another forty years before the musicologist Nicholas Temperley and composer Geoffrey Bush set about reassessing the work of that period, only to find that under the cobwebs lay a clearer understanding of the foundations that have contributed to the vibrant musical landscape we enjoy today and tend to take for granted.

Much has been written about an English Musical Renaissance, naming such luminaries as Elgar, Delius and Holst. Coincidentally, all three died in 1934 and each of their obituaries claimed them to be the rightful successor to Purcell. However, Bennett played an early and significant role in helping to bridge that yawning gap, for example, by nurturing a Bach revival originally initiated by figures such as Samuel Wesley, and generously encouraging the work of some of his contemporaries and students. The trouble was that credit is so often given to the reaper rather than the sower. Despite some critics suggesting that Bennett was an unfulfilled beacon of hope or perhaps a rather tragic figure, Grove’s Dictionary has ranked him as “the most distinguished English composer of the Romantic school”.<sup>2</sup>

Over the years, several recordings have appeared in a specialist market, with more being planned. They include five of the six piano concertos, two of the extant symphonies, four overtures, two of the four chamber works, two sets of six songs and several of the piano solos.

<sup>1</sup> William Henry Hadow, *English Music*. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1931, p. 137.

<sup>2</sup> Nicholas Temperley and Rosemary Williamson, ‘Bennett, Sir William Sterndale’, *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ed. Stanley Sadie. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Macmillan, 2001, 3:281-286.

## The Library

Fortunately, Bennett left a substantial library which he had built up since his advanced student days. His will divided his estate equally between his two sons Charles (1843-1923), James Robert (1847-1928) and daughter Elizabeth Donn (1848-1927). This included most of Bennett's own original published and unpublished manuscripts and papers. James Robert was a Cambridge mathematics scholar, the first director of music at Sherborne School and later headmaster of Derby School. Retiring early and having acquired his elder brother's portion, his meticulous, scholarly and sensitive approach made him ideally suited to the task of writing what was to become a highly acclaimed biography of his father.<sup>3</sup> Upon his death in 1928 the library passed to his son Robert (1880-1963), a longstanding director of music at Uppingham School, whose main interest in it was research into the English Bach revival.

The present writer inherited this part of the library in 1974 then proceeded to improve its presentation and environment and, for thirty-two years, welcomed several research graduates (learning a great deal in the process!). With the exception of a small amount of key reference material, he decided to deposit it in the Bodleian Library in 2006, who acknowledged it in their Newsletter of December 2006 as "probably the most important archive of a 19th century British musician still in private hands". At the same time several copies of printed scores and various artefacts were donated to the Royal Academy of Music to add to their collection. Material relating to Sterndale Bennett is also held at the British Library, the Royal College of Music and several other music libraries in the UK and abroad.<sup>4</sup>

Bennett wrote 130 works, all of which are contextualised in a descriptive thematic catalogue by Rosemary Williamson, complete with background details, dates of composition and first performances, dedicatees, the location of original manuscripts and first editions, plus references to material lost partly as a result of war damage.<sup>5</sup>

Among the highlights of the collection are three original diaries written during his extended visits to Leipzig between 1836 and 1842. Of particular historical interest is an 1830 Berlin edition of Bach's *St Matthew Passion* upon which Bennett based his first English performance in 1854; a leather

<sup>3</sup> The principal source for this article is: J.R. Sterndale Bennett, *The Life of William Sterndale Bennett* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1907, hereafter cited as *Life*.

<sup>4</sup> The author gratefully acknowledges the considerable help and kindness of many librarians but, in particular, the advice given over many years by: Peter Ward Jones and his successor Martin Holmes, Curator of Music at the Bodleian Library; Kathryn Adamson, Librarian at the RAM; Janet Snowman, Curator of Art and Iconography at the RAM; and Dr Peter Horton, Deputy Librarian (Reference & Research) at the RCM.

<sup>5</sup> Rosemary Williamson, *William Sterndale Bennett: a Descriptive Thematic Catalogue*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996. [Note: the symbol **WO** denotes works without opus numbers. In view of the deposit made at the Bodleian Library in 2006, the location reference **LO** should, in almost all cases, now read **Ob**.] For modern computer engraved instrumental parts for the piano concertos and some of the overtures, see <http://www.scoresreformed.co.uk/>.



bound presentation copy from the Bach Society dated 1858 and a copy of the first English edition made by Bennett and published by Novello in 1862. There is a bound presentation copy of the first edition of Schumann's *Etudes symphoniques*, op. 13 inscribed by the composer to Bennett as the dedicatee. Bennett's activities as an editor of other composers' music are represented by selected works of Bach, Beethoven, Handel and Mendelssohn.

There are approximately one thousand letters, including correspondence with his family, his publishers (notably Lamborn Cock and Augeners in the UK, Kistner and Breitkopf & Härtel in Germany), his librettists, the (now Royal) Philharmonic Society, the Royal Academy of Music, the organisers of the Great Exhibition of 1851 and the International Exhibition of 1862. There are letters concerning the founding of the Bach Society in 1849 and a letter from Schumann imploring Bennett to produce the first English performance of his *Paradise and the Peri*, op. 50, which duly took place shortly before the composer's death in 1856. There are letters concerning Bennett's involvement with the opening of the Leeds Town Hall in 1858 and the Birmingham Triennial Festival of 1867 and, most importantly, a series of thirty-three letters from Mendelssohn to Bennett, which remind us of their warm personal friendship and professional collaboration, ending with one from his widow Cécile.

When Bennett's library was distributed at his death in 1875, owing to the difficulty of fairly apportioning several high value antiquarian scores and items associated with Bennett's famous contemporaries, it was decided to sell these at auction. His daughter Elizabeth, who had married Professor Thomas Case, sometime President of Corpus Christi College, Oxford, decided to purchase some of these items to add to their inheritance, mainly comprising the autograph manuscripts of some unpublished works.<sup>6</sup>

### Origins and students days

Bennett was born at 7 Howard Street in Sheffield<sup>7</sup> on 13th April 1816 where his father was organist of the parish church (now the Cathedral).<sup>8</sup> Orphaned at the age of three he was taken into the care of his musical paternal grandfather in Cambridge and at the age of seven was accepted as a chorister into the Chapel Choir of King's College. Three years later he won a scholarship to enter the newly formed Royal Academy of Music to study the violin under Pietro Spagnoletti (and later under Antonio Ouvry), piano under the young

<sup>6</sup> This material remains in private hands and is currently inaccessible.

<sup>7</sup> This site was demolished in the 1970s to make way for redevelopment of the city centre and a plaque repositioned on the wall of the nearby Novotel.

<sup>8</sup> William T Fremantle, *Sterndale Bennett and Sheffield: Comprising an Account of the Bennett Family*. Sheffield: Pawson and Brailsford, 1919. Part 1: Derbyshire, Cambridge and Sheffield; part 2: Sir William Sterndale Bennett and associations with his native city.

William Henry Holmes and composition, first with the Principal William Crotch, but later and more effectively with his successor Cipriani Potter, who had personally known Beethoven and had been taught by Mozart's student Thomas Attwood. From this, Bennett gained a thorough grounding in the music of Bach, Scarlatti and Clementi but, above all, it was Mozart who was to be his true mentor (not Mendelssohn, as is often assumed, nor indeed was he a pupil of his). As a student he also sang occasionally in the choir of St Paul's Cathedral and was appointed organist for a year at St Anne's Chapel-of-Ease in the parish of Wandsworth.

Among his student compositions were a symphony in G minor, WO31; the overture *Parisina*, op. 3, based on Byron's poem; a string quartet in G, WO17 and most notably his first Piano Concerto in D minor, op. 1 which is characterised by energetic tutti's contrasted with lyrical melodies, economic scoring and a technically brilliant solo piano part. Writing in the *Harmonicon* on 30th March 1833, the critic William Ayrton observed "it would have conferred honour on any master". Such was its success that the Academy had the work published at its own expense and Bennett was twice summoned to perform it in the presence of King William IV and Queen Adelaide at Windsor Castle. It was on hearing this work that Mendelssohn invited Bennett to Germany, "not as my pupil but as my friend", an offer which he did not actually take up for another three years when he set out for Leipzig via the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf to attend the première of Mendelssohn's oratorio *St Paul*. Before departing, he produced his second Piano Concerto in E flat major, op. 4, which was noted for its effervescent finale whilst anticipating Sullivan at his wittiest. Mendelssohn, in a letter to his friend the composer Thomas Attwood, wrote "I think Bennett is the most promising young musician I know, not only in your country but here, and I am convinced if he does not become a very great musician, it is not God's will, but his own".<sup>9</sup>

### **The Leipzig connection as a pianist and composer**

His arrival in Leipzig in 1836 was to be the first of three extended sponsored visits in the succeeding six years. Warmly welcomed by Mendelssohn into his musical circle he soon became friends with Robert Schumann, the pianist and later critic James William Davison, the publisher Julius Kistner, the violinist Ferdinand David and the diplomat and translator Carl Klingemann. For his debut at the Leipzig Gewandhaus, he chose to be soloist in his third Piano Concerto in C minor, op. 9, conducted by Mendelssohn<sup>10</sup>. The performance

<sup>9</sup> Letter, Felix Mendelssohn to Thomas Attwood, dated 28th May 1836. Sterndale Bennett deposit, Bodleian Library, University of Oxford.

<sup>10</sup> Ernest Walker referred to the concerto's "earnestness and structural finish". Ernest Walker, *A History of Music in England*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1952, p. 311.

was to astound the highly critical Leipzig audience and his conducting of his overture *The Naiades*, op. 15 was met with equal delight.

Throughout this period, he wrote a spontaneous, intimate, often very amusing and self-deprecating set of diaries. With some disarming candour, he described his many musical activities and somewhat Bohemian social lifestyle as well as journeys across Europe, partly in steam trains which had only been in existence as a public service for about twenty years.<sup>11</sup>

Bennett's time in Leipzig was unquestionably his most prolific as a composer. Schumann wrote "were there many artists like Sterndale Bennett, all fears for the future progress of our art would be silenced". Of his piano concertos, the fourth in F minor, op. 19 is probably his masterpiece. This and the *Caprice*, op. 22 were of great significance and acknowledged as being among the finest embodiments of the classical spirit between Beethoven and Brahms. Some fine solo piano pieces fall into this period, notably the graceful *Three Musical Sketches*, op. 10 and a first piano sonata, op. 13, dedicated to Mendelssohn, which is grandly proportioned, conveying an ardent and unchecked romantic longing. The *Three Romances*, op. 14, with their tapered sentimentalism, caused Schumann to observe a great step forward, with some deep and strange harmonic combinations and a bold, broad structure. The *Suite de Pieces*, op. 24 is possibly his finest work for the solo piano, displaying juxtapositions of restraint and emotional freedom. Then there are some shorter and more placid pieces composed with the student in mind.

He played his *Diversions*, op. 17 at soirées as a duet with Mendelssohn. Schumann, whose works were considered very modern in those days, dedicated his *Etudes symphoniques*, op. 13 to Bennett who reciprocated with his *Fantasia in A*, op. 16, a most demanding work which Geoffrey Bush observed as being "as perfectly controlled in form as it is passionate in feeling . . . crowned by splendid outbursts of sustained lyricism".<sup>12</sup> The success of his String Quartet in G, WO17 and Sextet, op. 8, both written whilst still a student, led Bennett to write a Chamber Trio, op. 26 which remains popular to this day and contains an unusual second movement with violin and cello playing pizzicato against the percussive sounds of the piano.

At their best, his more successful works are characterised by youthful vitality, a strong sense of style, timing and economy, first rate craftsmanship and structural finish, an individual gift of melody and an accurate and pure sense of tone-colours. Like Chopin, he was a pianist's musician with mastery of the instrument's natural potential. But above all he was inwardly poetic by

<sup>11</sup> Bettina Muehlenbeck (ed.), *Von fremden Ländern und Menschen* [Of foreign lands and people: William Sterndale Bennett's travel Diaries: Excursions into musico-cultural relations of the 19th century.] Wehrhahn-Verlag, (forthcoming)

<sup>12</sup> Geoffrey Bush, 'Sterndale Bennett: the solo piano works', *Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association*, 91:1, 85-97.

nature, a miniaturist with watercolours rather than a conceiver of a grandiose canvas, choosing to adhere to the style of what became known as the London Pianoforte School, founded by Muzio Clementi, to embrace works written for the London market.<sup>13</sup>

### **A portfolio career**

On his return to England in 1842 at the age of twenty six, he found himself struggling with the transition from his natural spontaneous artistic expression and relative financial freedom in Germany to a prevailing atmosphere of xenophobia among the musical elite – once described by John Betjeman as a “stagnant swamp” – which provided little room for his indigenous talent. With an almost suicidal urge towards self-criticism, leading eventually to procrastination, late submissions to his publishers and a loss of nerve, it is perhaps no surprise that his fecundity as a composer began to fade. Fortunately he recognised his shortcomings so began to divert his energies into what today would be described as a portfolio career, a decision that was not to prove in vain despite overwork and the demands of high profile administrative duties that were to be placed upon him.<sup>14</sup> As will be seen here, he did return to composition later in life but, with a few exceptions, his offerings tended to be regarded as old fashioned and lacked the freshness of his youthful output. In 1844 he married Mary Anne Wood (1824-1862) at All Saints’ Church, Southampton. She was a former Academy student and daughter of a Royal Navy Commander who had taken Napoleon to exile in Elbe.

In addition to his teaching commitments, he set about organising a series of Classical Chamber Concerts between 1843 and 1855 to explore chamber music with piano and serious piano solos, originally at his home then at the Hanover Square Rooms. Not only did he perform works of the great masters and occasionally his own but he introduced such important artists as Jenny Lind, Joseph Joachim and Clara Schumann to the London stage.<sup>15</sup> He also performed with the Beethoven Quartet Society at the Crosby Hall Literary and Scientific Institution, the Willis Rooms and for the Society of British Musicians.

<sup>13</sup> See: Nicholas Temperley, ‘Schumann and Sterndale Bennett’, *19th century Music* 12:3 (Spring 1989), 207-220 [DOI: 10.2307/746502]; Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The London Pianoforte School, 1766-1860: Clementi, Dussek, Cogan, Cramer, Field, Pinto, Sterndale Bennett and other masters of the Pianoforte School* (New York: Garland, 1984-1987). [Vol. 17 is devoted to Bennett]; Aaron C. Keebaugh, ‘Sterndale Bennett’s piano music’, *Musical Times* 149:1904 (Autumn 2008), 61-68 [DOI: 10.2307/25434555].

<sup>14</sup> Peter Horton, *An Obsession with Perfection: William Sterndale Bennett and Composer’s Block*. (Paper presented at a workshop on the composer at the Royal College of Music in October 2008.)

<sup>15</sup> Rohan Stewart MacDonal, ‘The Recital in England: Sir William Sterndale Bennett’s Classical Chamber Concerts, 1843-1856’, *Ad Parnassum: a Journal of Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century Instrumental Music* 13:25 (April 2015), 115-176.



*Fig. 1. William Sterndale Bennett, aged about 35. ©Barry Sterndale Bennett.*



In 1851 Bennett was appointed a Metropolitan Local Commissioner and musical Juror for the Great Exhibition. The opening ceremony commenced with a fanfare and the National Anthem conducted by Sir George Smart, followed by Handel's *Hallelujah* chorus, conducted by Sir Henry Bishop, and music played on organs manufactured by such great names as Willis, Walker, Hill, Du Croquet and Schulze "under the superintendence of Mr W. Sterndale Bennett". It is well known that the Exhibition itself was a great national and financial success but, while it helped to stimulate the sale of these musical instruments, it did little for musical enterprise other than remind us that, even if we could not match the Germans for composing oratorios, we stood second to none with our cathedral composers and organists. However, at the end of the extravaganza, the musicians involved thought their labours had been somewhat wasted, as evidenced by the 'superior' committee of non-musical men who declined to accept the recommendations of the Jurors (among whom was Berlioz) to give certain prestigious awards, which led to some acrimonious exchanges in the press. This was compounded by the Commissioners neglecting to engage a conductor for the closing ceremony resulting in a volunteer filling that role at the last minute.

After the rebuilding of the Crystal Place at Sydenham in 1854, music was to play a very significant role thanks largely to the foresight of its musical director August Manns who set about promoting works by young British and lesser known foreign composers as well as satisfying the public demand for large scale choral pieces, notably by Handel. In the case of Bennett, between 1857 and 1888, fifty-nine concerts included one of his compositions, the most popular being his overtures, the third and fourth piano concertos (with the famous Arabella Goddard as soloist), and his two large scale choral works.<sup>16</sup>

For the opening of the International Exhibition of 1862 Bennett was asked to write an Ode, op. 40. This proved to be an emotionally difficult task as it coincided with the terminal illness of his wife and his commission to compose the overture *Paradise and the Peri*, op. 42, based on the poem by Thomas Moore, for the 50th anniversary of the Philharmonic Society. Despite these pressures, a contemporary critic suggested the overture was "one of the most original and imaginative works from his pen".<sup>17</sup>

<sup>16</sup> *The May-Queen*, op. 39; *The Woman of Samaria*, op. 44.

<sup>17</sup> J.W. Davison, writing in *The Musical World*, 40:29 (19 July 1862), 455.

### The Philharmonic Society

The Philharmonic Society was an organisation with which Bennett was associated for most of his working life. It provided a forum for him to show off his skills as a solo pianist and occasionally to introduce some of his own works. On 11th May 1835, at the age of 19, he made his debut there as soloist in his second piano concerto in E flat major, op. 4, to critical acclaim as both pianist and composer. On becoming a director in 1841 at the age of twenty five, he was able to persuade both Mendelssohn and Spohr to appear, thus attracting full houses and much needed income.

In 1854 Michael Costa, whose relationship with Bennett was very prickly, resigned the conductorship. His successor, an unhappy Wagner, lasted for only one year after which Bennett took the helm as principal conductor, despite not being the players' first choice. His effective handling of them in the first season ensured his position for the succeeding eleven years and consolidated his reputation as a leading conductor in England, even though he had already turned down a similar post at the Gewandhaus in Leipzig, which would have been an unprecedented honour for a foreigner. However, it must be said that some regarded him as an uninspiring conductor (not uncommon among composers) whilst others valued what they saw as the more important virtues of impeccable musicianship and good judgement. As Joseph Dando, the Philharmonic's leader commented: "My ideal would be reached, if they could be combined, Costa beating the time, and Bennett telling him how to do it".<sup>18</sup> In the background he had to contend with turbulent internal politics and poor management but he finally emerged, having sustained its fortunes and reputation against formidable rivalry and studied hostility. For his efforts Bennett was among the first group to be awarded the Society's prestigious gold medal in 1871.<sup>19</sup>

On 2nd January 1851 Schumann wrote to Bennett asking him to produce the first English performance of his cantata *The Paradise and the Peri*, op. 50, founded on a tale from Thomas Moore's *Lalla-Rookh* on which Bennett would base an overture of his own a decade later. The performance duly took place five years later on the 23rd June 1856 at the Hanover Square Rooms, only a month before Schumann's death. An amusing contemporary account describes the Queen and Prince Albert attending<sup>20</sup>. It went on to record that the rooms were far too small and everything got very hot. The crowded platform included a chorus of eighty, with Clara Schumann, the composer's wife, singing in the altos. The immediate proximity of royalty caused a certain

<sup>18</sup> *Life*, p. 288.

<sup>19</sup> Cyril Ehrlich, *First Philharmonic: a History of the Royal Philharmonic Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995; *Musical Knights*, written and narrated by John Betjeman, BBC Radio 3 transmission (23rd April 1975).

<sup>20</sup> Recorded in *Life*, p. 454.

restriction of ease of performance because the conductor had to face his forces awkwardly at half turn. There was no means of ventilation in the rooms other than to open the large sash windows, a process which was resented by certain sections of the audience. The following day the critics commended Bennett for doing his best with a work they described as a piece of clever dullness.

### **The Bach revival**

Bennett's interest in Bach's music can be traced back to his friendship with Mendelssohn who had revived the *St Matthew Passion* in 1829. It is a measure of Bennett's good standing in Germany that he was able to obtain a copy of some of the unpublished vocal parts from Berlin and, in 1849, he founded the Bach Society with a view to introducing the work to the English public at a time when Bach's vocal music was largely unknown in England.

Recognising the challenge that lay ahead with the German text and in deference to the Prince Consort, Bennett entrusted the translation into English to Helen Johnson, an eighteen year old student of his at Queen's College, London. It soon became clear that the Society's choir found the work very difficult so students from the nearby Royal Academy of Music and choristers from St Paul's Cathedral (which included the thirteen year old John Stainer) were drafted in to help. The ground-breaking performance of the *St Matthew Passion*, albeit in an abridged version, duly took place at the Hanover Square Rooms in London on the 6th April 1854, conducted by Bennett. This was followed by another performance seven months later and one in 1858, the cost of which Bennett personally underwrote, despite his very limited financial resources. In 1862, Novello published the first English edition, edited by Bennett, which then set in train a long and distinguished history of performances of this monumental work.<sup>21</sup> Bennett went on to produce *Classical Practice*, a series editions of works by several 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century keyboard masters and, in 1863, in collaboration with Otto Goldschmidt, husband of the singer Jenny Lind, he co-edited *The Chorale Book for England*, based on translations from the German by Catherine Winkworth.

<sup>21</sup> Basil Keen, *The Bach Choir: The First Hundred Years*. Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008, pp. 5-9; Basil Keen, 'Lost in Translation', *Choir & Organ*, 12:2 (March-April 2004), 12-15; Proceedings of the Bach Society, 1849-1854: notes in the hand of James Robert Sterndale Bennett. Royal College of Music, MS4992, Ref GB1240; R. Sterndale Bennett, 'Three abridged versions of Bach's St Matthew Passion', *Music & Letters*, 37:4 (October 1956) 336-339.



**GROSSE PASSIONS-MUSIK.**  
(ACCORDING TO THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW.)  
COMPOSED BY  
**John Sebastian Bach.**  
THE ENGLISH TRANSLATION & ADAPTATION BY  
**MISS H. F. H. JOHNSTON.**  
THE WHOLE EDITED & REVISED  
BY  
**WILLIAM STERNDALE BENNETT.**  
PROFESSOR OF MUSIC IN THE UNIVERSITY OF CAMBRIDGE.  
ENT. STA. HALL.      COPYRIGHT EDITION.      PRICE 31/6.  
LONDON.  
LAMBORN COCK, HUTCHINGS & CO  
(late LEADER & COCK.)  
62 & 63, New Bond Street, corner of Brook Street.  
THE CHORUS PARTS ARE PUBLISHED SINGLY. PRICE 5/ EACH.

Fig. 2. The first English edition of J.S. Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, edited by Sterndale Bennett. (Bodleian Library, Sterndale Bennett deposit)  
© Barry Sterndale-Bennett

### Later compositions and editing

Bennett returned to composition in later years despite his other challenging commitments. Of the works not mentioned elsewhere, a sixth piano concerto in A minor, WO48, first conceived in Germany and originally entitled *Concert-Stück*, was performed at the Philharmonic Society in 1843 conducted by Sir Henry Bishop with Bennett as soloist. The critics wrote that it was a joyous work with a finale displaying untameable spirits and untiring energy greatly relished by the orchestra, but went on to observe that the orchestra was under-rehearsed. Although broadly classical and more compressed in style, Bennett later made several alterations ending with a last known performance five years later.<sup>22</sup>

Bennett wrote best for his own instrument, the piano, and cannot be regarded as a major symphonist. However he wrote seven symphonies as a student, four of which survive but only one, in G minor WO31, has been recorded. Much later in life in 1864, and in rather sombre and reflective mood, he wrote an eighth in the same key, published as op. 43. Revised in 1867 it has retained its popularity and been recorded twice in recent years. A brief return to chamber music in 1852 produced his *Sonata Duo* for cello and piano, op. 32, premièred by and dedicated to the famous Alfredo Piatti. This is a work of large-scale design with an indebtedness to Mendelssohn, whose untimely death in 1847 deeply affected Bennett, prompting him to write: "I have lost the dearest and kindest friend I ever had in my life".<sup>23</sup>

Many people think of Bennett as a church musician but in reality he had no particular aptitude for choral music, most of which was composed upon request. Having been appointed conductor of the first Leeds Music Festival to commemorate the Queen's opening of the Leeds Town Hall in 1858, he premièred his light-hearted pastorale *The May Queen*, op. 39. This work proved to be influential in the subsequent writing of secular cantatas and became popular in its day. Indeed, it anticipates some of the stylistic features of his pupil Arthur Sullivan. The overture, written several years earlier and originally entitled *Marie du Bois*, WO46 (an amusing allusion to his wife's maiden name), sets the scene for some delicate, refined and melodiously expressive sections. However the work tends to lack artistic vitality or any truly distinguishing features that today's audiences would expect and is hampered by the silliest of librettos by Henry F. Chorley. It seems strange that Bennett should choose this text from someone who was one of his most outspoken critics. Meanwhile, a sacred cantata *The Woman of Samaria*, op. 44, written for the Birmingham Triennial Music Festival of 1867, was also rightly popular in its day, despite having similar shortcomings and being a questionable

<sup>22</sup> Rosemary Williamson, 'William Sterndale Bennett's Lost Piano Concerto Found', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 109:1 (1994) 115-129.

<sup>23</sup> *Life*, p. 180.

choice of subject. That said, both works are worthy of a revival by a truly first rate choir and orchestra under an inspiring conductor.

Fig. 3. The opening of *The May-Queen* (autograph manuscript – Bodleian Library, Sterndale Bennett deposit) ©Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford

Of the anthems, *God is a Spirit* from *The Woman of Samaria*, op. 44, *Remember now thy Creator*, op. 30 (and as WO54), *Great is our Lord*, WO59, *The fool hath said in his heart*, WO61, *O that I knew where I might find Him*, WO58 and *In Thee O Lord do I put my trust*, WO84 are all embedded in church and cathedral repertoires, albeit only occasionally performed. On the other hand, the two secular part songs *Sweet Stream*, WO78 and *Come Live with me*, WO47, with its delicate and happy 9/8 time, are often performed.

Two sets of six songs, op. 23 (1842) and op. 35 (1856), both published in English and German simultaneously and using translations partly by

Mendelssohn's friend Klingemann, show Bennett trying to raise the standard of contemporary popular songs which he thought were often poorly constructed, devoid of artistic merit and of performance. Unashamedly not intended as a vehicle for virtuoso vocal display, these polished and sensitive art songs with their easy style are regarded as a model for the English Lied for which he chose his poets carefully, notably Robert Burns, Barry Cornwall and John Clare.<sup>24</sup>

Then, right at the end of his life, an unexpected gem appeared as a second piano sonata, op. 46, programmatic music entitled *The Maid of Orleans*, inspired by Schiller's play, which was quickly taken into the repertoire of several leading pianists.

### **Contribution to musical education**

Bennett had a strong desire to help improve musical education and a particular interest in helping female students whom he regarded as being socially marginalised. Apart from being a professor at the Royal Academy of Music, where he had started teaching from the age of twenty two, in 1848 he became a founding director and first professor of harmony at Queen's College in Harley Street, London for whom he wrote his *Preludes and Lessons*, op. 33, covering all the major and minor keys. This work became widely used by teachers well into the 20th century.<sup>25</sup>

The following year he took on a similar role at Bedford College (now part of Royal Holloway, University of London), but it did not stop there. In 1872, through public subscription, he inaugurated an annual student scholarship in his name at the Academy alongside a prize specifically for female students. Both continue to be awarded to this day regardless of gender. Some notable early winners include York Bowen, Betty Humby (later Beecham), Harriet Cohen and Joseph Holbrooke.

Following the death of Thomas Attwood Walmisley in 1856, Bennett was elected, by an overwhelming majority, to succeed him as Professor of Music at Cambridge University and, in the same year, was awarded a doctorate, partly on submission of his impressive anthem for double choir *Lord, who shall dwell in Thy tabernacle*, WO57. In 1862 he composed an ode, op. 41 for the installation of the Duke of Devonshire as Chancellor and, in 1869, an anthem *Now my God, let, I beseech Thee*, WO72, to mark the consecration of the new chapel in St John's College, after which he was elected a Life Fellow of that college. Although originally an unpaid appointment, the professorship proved to be no sinecure as he set about raising standards by insisting that candidates for a doctorate first pass the bachelor's degree in

<sup>24</sup> Brian Blyth Daubney (ed.), *Aspects of British Song* (BMS Publications, 1992); Nicholas Temperley, 'Sterndale Bennett and the Lied: 1', *Musical Times*, 116:1593 (November 1975) 958-961.

<sup>25</sup> Malcolm Billings, *Queen's College, London*. London: James and James, 2000.

music and undergo a viva voce. In 1867, he received an honorary MA and three years later was the first musician to receive an honorary DCL from Oxford.

Between 1858 and 1871 he gave public lectures at Cambridge University, the London Institute and in Sheffield, making some astute comments on several composers and the state of music in England at that time.<sup>26</sup>

His association with his alma mater is etched in the annals of the Royal Academy of Music. As with the Philharmonic, his greatest contribution came at a time when the institution was in a perilous state. Criticised for low standards and financial problems, the directors approached Michael Costa to revive its fortunes. Unable to afford him, they then turned to Otto Goldschmidt who declined but strongly recommended Bennett. After an eight year absence from the Academy, he somewhat reluctantly accepted.

This hesitation was perhaps understandable given that, as a character, Bennett was retiring and sensitive by nature, and fastidiously avoided the centre stage or being associated with anything he judged to be remotely pretentious or ostentatious, regardless of the consequences. He showed genuine, gentle kindness and a fatherly concern for the welfare of his students who, in turn, were impressed with his phenomenal memory. He was relaxed talking to anyone but was most at ease within small intimate groups. He had a strong sense of humour and tended towards liberal politics.<sup>27</sup> However, all this belied a steely determination in times of adversity.

Bennett's appointment as Principal of the Academy in 1866 (the 150th anniversary of which also falls in 2016) could not have come at a worse time, with its government grant withdrawn and the directors voting to close the institution. It also coincided with a threat by Sir Henry Cole, a leading figure in the organisation of the Great Exhibition of 1851, who sought to take advantage of the Academy's plight by recommending it be subsumed into a new educational and cultural enterprise on land in the South Kensington area, purchased out of profits from the Exhibition, thus threatening the Academy's independence. Bennett, by now acting as both Principal and temporary Chairman, would have none of it. He successfully resisted, motivated his professorial colleagues to join him in receiving no remuneration for several weeks, then successfully helped to persuade the new Prime Minister, William Gladstone, to reinstate the grant, thus effectively saving the Academy from extinction. By 1870, the Academy had become solvent again, student numbers began to rise and today that institution holds a most enviable position in the world.

<sup>26</sup> Nicholas Temperley, *Lectures on Musical Life: William Sterndale Bennett*. Woodbridge: Ashgate, 2006.

<sup>27</sup> *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, which also lists portraits and memorial plaques.



Bennett was knighted in 1871. His many students there and elsewhere included Sir Arthur Sullivan, Sir Hubert Parry, Francis Edward Bache, Sir William Cusins (who later became Master of the Queen's Music), Arthur O'Leary, Tobias Matthay (who founded his own pianoforte school), Joseph Parry, William Rockstro, Alice Mary Smith, Charles Steggall, Bettina Walker and Thomas Wingham.

Following a short illness, most probably from a stroke brought on by overwork, he died in office on 1<sup>st</sup> February 1875 at his home 66 St John's Wood, London (since demolished). He was just short of his fifty-ninth birthday and was laid to rest in the North Choir Aisle of Westminster Abbey in close proximity to the graves of Purcell, Handel and Croft. Several of his descendants chose to pursue careers in the world of music and the theatre.<sup>28</sup>

### **Abstract**

This article provides an account of the life and work of the composer William Sterndale Bennett whose music was championed by Mendelssohn and Schumann yet is now sadly neglected. Most of Bennett's best music was written before he was twenty five years old, encouraged by three extended stays in Leipzig between 1838 and 1842, but a loss of confidence, coupled with a heavy burden of teaching, conducting and administrative responsibilities, later led to a diminishing of his creative powers. Bennett nevertheless came to occupy a position at the head of the musical establishment and his bicentenary provides an opportunity to reassess his position in English musical history.

*Barry Sterndale-Bennett is the great-great-grandson of the composer William Sterndale Bennett. Barry pursued a career in corporate business, management consultancy and higher education but is a keen choral singer.*

<sup>28</sup> Bennett always treated the name Sterndale as a second given name rather than part of his surname hence indexing under B. After his death his son and biographer added Sterndale to his surname by deed and all his descendants have adopted the double-barrelled surname, either with or without a hyphen. Recent music books have tended to index the composer under S.

## THOMAS WILLIAM BOURNE: A HANDEL 'PIONEER' REASSESSED

*Robert J. Bruce*

In 1948, the Bodleian Library in Oxford received a substantial collection of printed music and manuscripts bequeathed by Thomas William Bourne (1862-1948). Bourne's abiding interest was with Handel and this is reflected in the collection that he formed. Since 1948 much has been achieved in reinstating Handel's stature and a good deal of new work has been done in Handel performance practice, bibliography, and with his life and times. This progress is reason enough to re-visit Bourne's collection in the Bodleian and to re-assess his contribution to Handel scholarship.

It was on 24 October 1947, that Thomas Bourne wrote to the Bodleian to offer his collection: "This seems an ideal transaction. The composer [Handel] had serious thoughts of leaving all his MSS. to the Bodleian, so could not object to some of them finding their way there; you write most kindly of the satisfaction felt by you all at the Library at having them there; and I can assure of a satisfaction at least equal to yours felt by myself in knowing that they are so worthily, so safely and so usefully placed in your care."<sup>1</sup>

On 5 March 1948 Bourne set out his bequest in his will. The following text was probably formulated with the help of the University:

"To the Chancellor, Masters and Scholars of the University of Oxford for the Bodleian Library: (a) My complete set of the Instrumental Works of Handel in the parts in the original edition and my portrait of Handel by Hogarth. (b) My old instrumental musical scores and parts. (c) My Manuscript of Organ part to Handel's Messiah written by me in 1899 (kept in a leather dispatch case). (d) Six volumes of Works by other contemporary composers used by Handel in the course of composing other works of his own. (e) My set of the German Handel Society's Edition of Handel's Works (ninety seven volumes) on condition that the books may be available on loan to the Heather Professor of Music, the Choragus and to Doctor Thomas H. W. Armstrong during his lifetime subject to such restrictions as the Librarian may at any time think fit to impose."

<sup>1</sup> Bodleian Library. Papers of the Friends of the Bodleian Library.

Just six days later Thomas Bourne died and the collection was received in the early summer.

On its arrival at the Bodleian, each item of the bequest was date stamped, catalogued and classified. Briefly, the collection comprises 50 early printed editions of Handel's instrumental music, 97 other contemporary printed works, eight Handel oratorio librettos, 16 manuscripts and the oil portrait sketch. The Library's classification of printed music caused the collection to be scattered into the mix of music on the shelves as well as in the card catalogue. This meant that from the reader's point of view, the collection could not be viewed as a whole. Had the collection been received today it would have been kept together as a named collection, familiar to Bodleian practice, with the shelfmark incorporating the benefactor's name, i.e. Mus. Bourne and MS. Mus. Bourne. A new revised catalogue has now been set out in this form by the present author which is available in the Library. This enables the detailed content of the collection to be listed together for the first time since it came to the Bodleian.<sup>2</sup>

## **Background**

T.W. Bourne's forebears lived in Lincolnshire. His father William (1820-1911), according to the 1851 census, was living in Partney, Lincolnshire where he farmed 50 acres of land, employing 15 farm workers. On 25 September 1860 William Bourne married Catherine Hancock in Stoke Newington, Hackney. The couple left the farm in Lincolnshire and by 1861 had moved to Birkenhead. Bournes had long been well-known in the Liverpool area as industrialists in the salt industry. William may have been related since he went to Birkenhead to work as a drysalter, colourman and commercial agent. It was here that Thomas William was born on 15 June 1862. His sister Katherine Hannah was born the following year. Thomas William attended Shrewsbury School from Lent Term 1875 where he rowed for the school, and it was where his interest in Handel was formed. By 1881 the family had left Birkenhead and were living in Shrewsbury where once again William changed his career from drysalter to land agent and surveyor.

## **Oxford**

T.W. Bourne went up to New College, Oxford in October 1882 to read Classical Moderations. In his second year, in October 1884, the Oxford University Musical Union (O.U.M.U.) was inaugurated and he became an original committee member, taking an interest in building up its library of scores. On Tuesday 24 February 1885, Bourne, being aware of the significance of the year, arranged a Musical Union concert in the Holywell Music Room to

<sup>2</sup> In 2015, the Bodleian received an additional collection of Bourne's miscellaneous papers which had been held by Sir Thomas Armstrong.





Fig. 1. T.W. Bourne. ©Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

celebrate the two-hundredth anniversary of the of the births of Handel and Bach, with performances of four works by J.S. Bach and four by G.F. Handel.

During his time at Oxford, Bourne was recruited into the 1<sup>st</sup> Oxfordshire (Oxford University) Rifle Volunteer Corps and, on 31 October 1885, was promoted from Lieutenant to Captain.<sup>3</sup>

He left the University with a B.A. degree in 1886, and, bearing in mind his own suggestion to the committee, presented the O.U.M.U. library with works by Corelli and Handel. Away from Oxford, he continued to support the society: “[In] the seventh year of the Club’s existence (1890-91) . . . Two gifts of importance were made to the society in the course of the year, a bust of Handel, from the statue of that composer in Westminster Abbey<sup>4</sup>, by Mr. T.W. Bourne, New College, and a two manual Organ with pedals by the Rev. Doc. Mee, Merton College. The appearance of the Club-room [i.e. The Holywell Music Room] was greatly improved by both gifts.”<sup>5</sup> On 6 December 1905, a concert promoted by the O.U.M.U. included three of Bourne’s organ compositions played by C.E. Winn.

### Librarian

In January 1888 the Trustees of the British Museum approved an extra post to which Thomas Bourne was recommended and appointed as a junior librarian to help with the work of cataloguing. He served until 1890 when he resigned for some reason unknown.

One of Bourne’s close friends from the 1930s was Sir Thomas Armstrong (1898-1994), Organist of Christ Church, Oxford from 1933 to 1955 and Principal of the Royal Academy of Music from 1955 to 1968. In 1992, Sir Thomas wrote a singular biographical article promoting Bourne’s work on Handel.<sup>6</sup> He takes up the story of Bourne’s time at the British Museum:

“In 1889 [sic] he was given a post in the Library of the British Museum, where he could have done valuable work at a time when it was much needed. But trouble arose, and in the following year he resigned, in circumstances of controversy. Among his papers,

<sup>3</sup> *London Gazette*, 4981 (30 Oct. 1885).

<sup>4</sup> A life mask of Handel in plaster by Roubiliac which was probably taken in 1737-38, more likely, for a study for the Vauxhall Gardens statue. The mask was apparently owned by W.H. Cummings (1831-1915), who bequeathed it to T.W. Bourne. The present whereabouts of this mask is not known. See *Newsletter of the American Handel Society*, 7:3 (Dec. 1992) 1 <<http://www.americanhandelsociety.org/documents/Winter1992.pdf>> [Accessed 1 May 2016]

<sup>5</sup> *Ten years of University Music in Oxford, being a brief record of the proceedings of the Oxford University Musical Union during the years 1884-1894*. Oxford: W.R. Bowden, 1894, p. 7.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Armstrong, ‘T.W. Bourne (1862-1948) – a forgotten pioneer’, *The Handel Institute Newsletter*, 3:1 (Spring 1992).

carefully preserved in a vellum envelope, is a document signed by some of his colleagues, including some famous names, expressing confidence in Bourne. 'Nothing that has recently happened,' they say, 'has in any way diminished either our good-will towards you or our esteem ... we felt that in a very difficult position you have acted with dignity and self-respect.' The experience left its mark, and Bourne from that moment decided to work as an independent, amateur, but highly fastidious musical scholar, which his personal circumstances enabled him to do."

In September of the year of his appointment, Thomas Bourne married Marguerite Rebecca Josephine Massé (born 4 June 1863) at St. John's, Hampstead when both were aged 21. A daughter, Catherine Harriet, their only child, was born on 3 November 1889. In the census return of 1891 we find Bourne living at 59 Belsize Road, Hampstead with his wife and child. Here he describes himself, perhaps with some bitterness, as "a junior assistant librarian retired".

### **Handel pioneer**

Sir Thomas Armstrong claimed that Bourne was an important contributor to Handel's re-instatement in the late nineteenth century. Bourne informed Armstrong that:

"it was at [Shrewsbury] school that his love of music was first fully stimulated. He went into the chapel one morning and the organ was being played: the music was unknown to him, but he soon realised that he was being carried away by it, that what he was hearing was everything that music should be; only later did he discover that it was a concerto of Handel. From that moment Bourne set himself to the study of the art, its theory and practice, at the keyboard and with more than one stringed instrument, especially the double-bass, on which he became a first-rate performer."

By 1894, Bourne's parents had moved from Shrewsbury to London to "Haughmond" Woodside Grange Road, North Finchley. Sir Thomas describes life there thus: "Bourne's family must have been a fairly well-to-do one, with some social pretensions. They owned a comfortable property, in those days almost a country property, in North Finchley, and carried a coat-of-arms, which appeared on silver and china and survived to be used by Bourne himself as a book plate." The Bourne coat-of-arms was a replica of that carried by medieval members of the family. [Fig. 2]



*Fig. 2. A bookplate from Bourne's library showing the family coat-of-arms.  
© Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.*



T.W. Bourne deduced that performances of Handel's music had become misunderstood and this could be arrested and progressed by modern research methods. He aligned himself closely with the work of Friedrich Chrysander (1820-1901) who, in Germany, was doing pioneering work on Handel together with the literary historian Georg Gottfried Gervinus. Their aim was to publish authentic editions of all of Handel's works. Printing began on the new Handel-Gesellschaft in Leipzig in 1858. Bourne obtained the complete set in 105 volumes, which he had bound in black, and these form part of the Bodleian bequest. Armstrong says that Bourne's "reputation as a scholar reached a point where he was approached by Friedrich Chrysander with a view to possible collaboration – a proposal which, I believe, came to nothing." Certainly by 1888, when Bourne was employed at the British Museum, he was in correspondence with Chrysander.

In 1891, Novello, Ewer & Co. published a book of the music for the *Crystal Palace Triennial Handel Festival 1891. The Selection to be performed on Wednesday, June 24, 1891*. On pages 40-47 a 'new' work of Handel's was included. This was a *Gloria Patri* (for double chorus), which was edited anonymously in vocal score from the "Colonna" manuscript full score, then owned by William Hayman Cummings (1831-1915)<sup>7</sup>. In the same year, Novello printed the *Gloria Patri* separately as no. 765 in the series *Novello's Octavo Choruses*, again with no mention of an editor. Handel's autograph full score of the *Gloria Patri* was at the premises of the bookseller Thomas Kerslake of Bristol in 1860 when it was destroyed by fire, leaving the "Colonna" manuscript as the only known copy. Bourne correctly deduced that the *Gloria Patri* was, in fact, the original closing movement to Handel's *Nisi Dominus*. On 27 January 1896, he wrote to Cummings:

"I have lately been making a score (from the instrumental parts and vocal score) of Handel's "Gloria Patri" of which you possess the Colonna copy . . . it has been quite an undertaking making the Full Score of the "Gloria," and I want to get it as right as I can. I had the pleasure of assisting a private performance of it a week ago. It was done, at my suggestion, as last movement to the "Nisi Dominus" of Handel, (to which work I firmly believe it originally belonged,) and made a most effective finish . . . Clearly Handel used larger paper for the final double chorus than he had required for the rest of the work . . . As they were on different sized paper they became separated – and, as it seems, have only just met again".

<sup>7</sup> The "Colonna" manuscript appears to be lost, having left W.H. Cummings' library for the Nanki Music Library in Tokyo. Fortunately, before its disappearance, a published edition appeared: *Gloria Patri. Full score, edited from the unique manuscript copy in the possession of Marquis Tokugawa of Kishu, with an introduction and notes by Shoichi Tsuji*. Tokyo: Nanki Music Library, 1928. (Bodleian Library copy, Mus. 301 b. 18).

Bourne published his argument in the *Monthly Musical Record*,<sup>8</sup> ending his article: “I may add that rather more than a year ago I corresponded with Mr. Cummings on the subject, and that, though he kindly furnished me with some useful information with regard to the ‘Gloria’, he expressed no opinion as to the worth of my suggestion that it formed part of ‘Nisi Dominus’.” Evidently Cummings refused to see that his manuscript of the *Gloria Patri* was related to the Psalm. Even by 1904, in Cummings short biography on Handel, he writes: “Whilst in Rome Handel composed much music, including a magnificent Gloria Patri for double orchestra and double chorus,” adding, as a footnote: “First performed at the Crystal Palace Handel Festival in 1891, from my unique manuscript – W.H.C.”<sup>9</sup> Following his article, Bourne produced a completed edition of Handel’s *Nisi Dominus* [HWV 238] for *Novello’s Original Octavo Edition*, in vocal score, with original Latin and English words and a perceptive preface. It was published in 1898 with a set of accompanying engraved string parts.

Additionally, Bourne was the first to solve the problem of the text of the eight bar Adagio movement in Handel’s Concerto Grosso in G major, Op. 3, no. 3, HWV 314. He explained his findings in an article in *Musical News*<sup>10</sup>: “In preparing for performance at the request of the Gresham Professor of Music, [Sir Frederick Bridge (1844-1924)] four of Handel’s ‘Concerti Grossi’ (or ‘Hautboy Concertos’), my attention was attracted for the hundredth time to the Adagio in the Third Concerto of this opus, fortunately with the result that I have been able to clear up the difficulty which has hitherto existed with regard to it. The position was as follows:- The autograph of these Concertos is lost; the first of the existing authorities is, therefore, the original edition of the parts published by Walsh during Handel’s lifetime. But in this edition, as well as in a second edition issued by Walsh, the Adagio in the Third Concerto is in a state of chaos.” Bourne goes on to say that neither previous editors, namely Arnold and Chrysander, were able to emend the corrupted text of the oboe part which was “simply a case of dishonest work on the part of the engraver . . . Neither Arnold nor Chrysander seem to have been aware that the movement occurs in Handel’s Te Deum in B flat major [HWV 281], as well as in his Te Deum in A, [HWV 283], as the orchestral prelude to the choral setting of the words ‘We believe that thou shalt come to be our judge.’ . . . In the B flat Te Deum it is scored, as in the Concerto, for hautboy solo and strings . . . However, the matter is cleared up at last, and anyone who wishes for the hautboy part to the Adagio of the third ‘Concerto Grosso’ will find it in the Te Deum in B flat”.

<sup>8</sup> T.W. Bourne, ‘Handel’s Double “Gloria Patri”’, *Monthly Musical Record* (27 June, 1897), 125-127.

<sup>9</sup> William H. Cummings, *Handel*. London: George Bell & Sons, 1904, p. 9.

<sup>10</sup> T.W. Bourne, ‘A Handelian Problem solved’, *Musical News*, 20 (16 Feb., 1901), 157.

Bourne overlaid the corrected Hautboy line in his copy of Chrysander, vol. 21, p. 31. In the Preface to this volume, dated 1 August 1865, Chrysander writes: "The originals are not preserved . . . This is especially to be lamented in the case of the short Adagio p. 31, to which we have appended the correction attempted, though not with perfect success, by Arnold . . . Any larger and more radical emendations may be left to those who have to adapt the Concerto for performance."<sup>11</sup>

Sir Thomas Armstrong continues: "[Bourne] composed, made many excellent editions, arranged music for his own orchestra, directed many concerts among semi-amateur groups, and prepared music examples for Sir Frederick Bridge's Gresham Lectures. From what one knows of Bridge's methods of work it would not be surprising to find that Bourne also wrote the lectures." This refers to Bourne's collaboration with Bridge on a performance of Handel's *Messiah* in 1899.

It was in 1898 that Bridge, with Bourne's assistance, began to plan a performance of *Messiah* in a version more in line with Handel's conception. Bridge and Bourne were aware that Friedrich Chrysander had already been performing the work in Germany, with similarly progressive ideas, and Chrysander had got to hear of Bridge's plan. Chrysander's son-in-law, Charles Volkert, was in London and transmitted Chrysander's suspicion of this rival enterprise to Bridge and Bourne, to which Bourne replied:

"Chrysander was quite wrong, I am glad to say, in thinking that we wished to imitate his performances without consulting him . . . for Sir F. Bridge's idea is not to bring out a version in competition with Chrysander's nor even to imitate his arrangement or distribution of the orchestra . . . I believe that Sir F. Bridge feels that the more cutting out of Mozart's accompaniments is not too safe a proceeding, owing to the conservative tastes of the average English audience; and that his performance next winter will be more of a feeler than anything else; as, of course, with a work so familiar as 'The Messiah' progress must be made by slow degrees, lest by offending the audience they should be driven elsewhere for their music: and the avoidance of this risk Sir F. Bridge owes to the Albert Hall Choral Society. This you will see, does not leave him a perfectly free agent in the matter."<sup>12</sup>

For a working text of *Messiah*, Bourne obtained Novello's 1850 facsimile edition of the full score, originally printed and sold by Preston, around 1807. It has some modifications and new plates, and a mock Walsh title page. On

<sup>11</sup> *The works of G.F. Handel. Pt. XXI. Concertos*. Leipzig: German Handel Society, 1865.

<sup>12</sup> Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. lett. e. 45, fol. 11-13v.

the reverse of this Bourne has written in red ink “North Finchley 22 April 1896. I have, during the last three weeks, carefully compared this score with the original parts to the Messiah left by Handel to the Foundling Hospital, and have noted in it the orchestration so far as these parts shew it. It is to be noticed that, though the accounts of expenses incurred at performances given at the Foundling Hospital under the direction of Smith shew that two Horns were employed, the Foundling Hospital set of parts contain no parts for the Horns: nor is there any mention of these instruments in the original M.S., the Dublin M.S., or in this contemporary Score. It has been suggested that the Horns played with the trumpets – and this is probable. The notes which I made when comparing this Score with the Dublin M.S. will be found in black ink: those which refer to the Foundling Hospital parts in red ink. T.W. Bourne.”<sup>13</sup>

On the reverse of the Index page Bourne has written in blue ink: “In this score I have copied from the original Conducting Score, known as the Dublin M.S., of the Messiah, all Handel’s directions for performance. The Dublin M.S. is for the most part in the handwriting of Chr. Smith, Handel’s copyist, but some nos. are in Handel’s own writing as noted in the following pages. The directions for performance are in the Dublin M.S. throughout written by Handel himself – partly in pencil and partly in ink. Sir F.A. Gore Ouseley lent me the Dublin M.S. for the purpose of making these notes. T.W. Bourne.”<sup>14</sup> The volume, with its many inserted instructions in red and black ink and in pencil, was used by Sir Frederick Bridge for the performance. It seems that the instrumental parts made at the same time no longer exist.

Inserted on a separate leaf in the volume are nine autographs: “Signatures of the Principal Performers, &c. at the Performance of The Messiah at the Albert Hall, when Handel’s accompaniments were restored: 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 1899. Madam Albani, soprano, Emily Himing, contralto, Lloyd Chandos, tenor, Watkin Mills, bass, Arthur W. Paque, Leader of the orchestra, Frederick Bridge, Conductor, John Hedley, Secretary, H. L. Balfour, Organist, T.W. Bourne, Editor &c.” [Fig. 3]

<sup>13</sup> Bodleian Library, Mus. 52 b. 23

<sup>14</sup> The “Dublin MS.” is now in the Bodleian Library, MS. Tenbury 346-347.



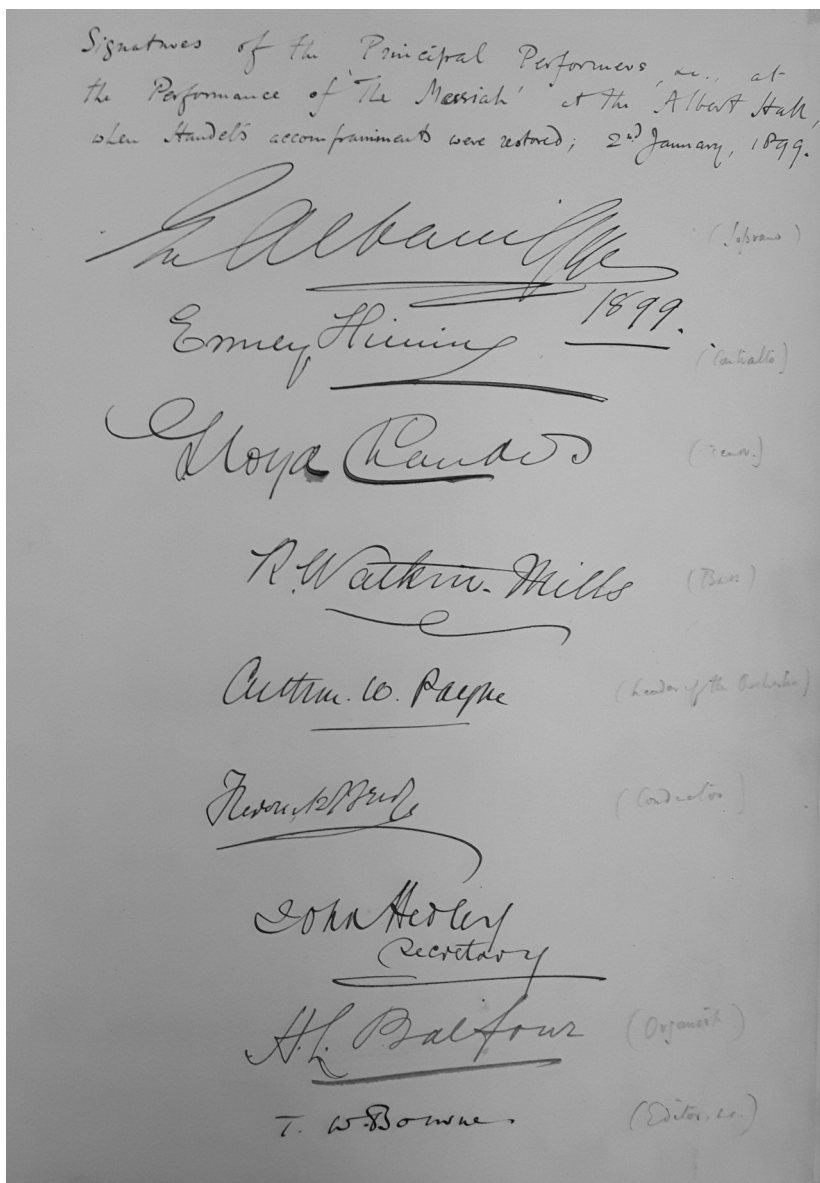


Fig. 3. A leaf from Bourne's copy of *Messiah*, containing the autographs of the soloists in the Royal Albert Hall performance on 2 January 1899 (Bodleian Library, Mus. 52 b.23).

©Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.

The performance of Emily Himing, the wife of John Kirkley Campbell, assistant secretary to the High Commissioner for New Zealand, was reported in New Zealand: “Owing to the indisposition of Miss Clara Butt, Sir Frederick Bridge, Conductor of the Royal Choral Society, telegraphed urgently to Madame Himing asking her to undertake the whole of the contralto solo parts in the annual performance of Handel’s “Messiah” which was to be given in the Albert Hall, with Albani as the principal soprano. Madame Himing consented, and sang the trying music so admirably as to win enthusiastic recognition from the enormous audience, and some specially gratifying compliments from Albani herself, who literally embraced her at the conclusion of the performance, and spoke of her part in it in terms of the highest praise.”<sup>15</sup>

Bourne’s manuscript organ score<sup>16</sup>, which served as the continuo part, contains instructions to the printer, but this organ part, together with a proposed complete edition was never published. Armstrong comments: “Bourne did, however, consider with Novello’s the possibility of a printed edition, and went some way with the writing of a keyboard continuo part, which was never completed.” This probably refers to the Bourne/Borland organ part which remains in manuscript. Terence Best notes “sometime after the turn of the century Novello’s published a set of orchestral parts carrying the legend ‘Original Edition, edited by T.W.Bourne’. The plates of these were corrected and used for Watkins Shaw’s edition of 1958 . . . [Shaw] became convinced that Bourne’s orchestral parts were based on those in the Foundling Hospital, since they contained many of the textural errors of that source.”<sup>17</sup>

Fol. 102 of the organ part contains a document drafted in Bourne’s hand which reveals that Bourne edited the organ part jointly with John E. Borland (1866-1937). Bourne successfully buys Borland out for £10 to allow him sole editorship of the future project which at the time was evidently still envisaged:

“2 December, 1899. I hereby acknowledge the receipt of Ten Pounds (£10.0.0) paid to me by T.W. Bourne, of Haughmond, North Finchely, London, in consideration of all work already done by me to the Organ Part jointly written by him and myself for, and used at, the performance of Handel’s “Messiah” which took place at the Albert Hall on the 2<sup>nd</sup> of January last; and in consideration of my relinquishing in favour of the said T.W. Bourne the whole

<sup>15</sup> *New Zealand Herald*, 56:10274 (17 February 1899), 5.

<sup>16</sup> Bodleian Library, MS. Mus. b. 19.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Armstrong, ‘T.W. Bourne (1862-1948) – a forgotten pioneer’, *The Handel Institute Newsletter*, 3:1 (Spring 1992).

of my part-ownership of the said Organ Part to "The Messiah" and all my claims whatsoever with respect to it: but the above transaction is made subject to the condition mentioned in my letter of the 19<sup>th</sup> November last to the said T.W. Bourne, namely that if and when the said Organ part to "The Messiah" shall be published, he shall state in the Preface to it that I undertook the Organ Part in the first instance for Sir J.F. Bridge, and that, after the said T.W. Bourne and Sir J.F. Bridge met and arranged to carry out the restoration of "The Messiah", I had a share in the writing of the said Organ Part. Signed John E. Borland."

Bourne also took the opportunity to study the orchestral parts of *Messiah* recently discovered in the Foundling Hospital. There remains some controversy about how the parcel of Handel's original 28 parts came to light in 1894. After the discovery Bourne was allowed, perhaps unofficially, to take the wind parts away for study and copying. In a letter of 5 December 1898 the organist at the Foundling, Henry Davan Wetton, wrote in some panic to Bourne:

"My dear Bourne, The secretary of the Foundling has requested me to ask you to return the copies you have made of our wind parts at once . . . give me a call here tomorrow morning and bring me the parts as it will make things very awkward for me if they are not forth coming! In great haste. Yours sincerely, H. Davan Wetton."<sup>18</sup>

The single performance of *Messiah* took place in the Royal Albert Hall on Monday 2 January 1899.

In the anonymous programme booklet printed for the performance, which curiously omits to list the soloists, it may well have been Bourne who supplied the three-page 'Memorandum on the performance of this Work'.<sup>19</sup> The text explains the supremacy of the Dublin manuscript over the fashionable Mozart score with its additional accompaniments:

"Whatever excuse there may have been at one time for the use of Mozart's or any other additions to the score, has now been finally removed by the discovery in 1894 of the parts to The Messiah which Handel left by his will to the Foundling Hospital . . . For this performance, the first attempt of any importance in this

<sup>18</sup> Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. lett. e. 45, fol. 55v-56r

<sup>19</sup> British Library, e.1399.b, v. 3.

country to restore Handel's orchestration in *The Messiah*, a new edition of the String parts, based entirely on original authorities, has been prepared by Mr. T.W. Bourne, whose special study of the music of the last century, and of *The Messiah* in particular, has enabled him to undertake this work with some hope of success."

Not only was there a partial return to Handel's orchestration, but attention was also given to Handel's performance instructions: "Handel's bowing and marks of expression have, where they varied from those already in use, been restored, to the great benefit of the effect in performance."

Sir Thomas Armstrong comments: "Bridge's Albert Hall performance of *Messiah* [on 2 January 1899], for which Bourne had prepared the material, was received, by all accounts, with interest and approval, but no widespread enthusiasm."

It was unfortunate that Bourne became ill at Christmas 1898 and was unable to attend the performance, into which he had put so much effort. Bridge sent him a telegram after the performance: "Much disappointed you ill perfect success people surprised."<sup>20</sup>

Sir Thomas Armstrong was keen to use Bourne's researches in his own performances of *Messiah*. In May 1935, the Oxford Musical Festival was created to commemorate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of G.F. Handel and J.S. Bach, fifty years after Bourne himself had commemorated the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the composers as a student in Holywell Music Room. On 9 May, a performance of *Messiah* by the Oxford Bach Choir and Oxford Orchestral Society was conducted in the Sheldonian Theatre by Sir Thomas who wrote in the programme booklet:

"A return to more scrupulous methods was made by various conductors in the [eighteen] nineties. Sir Frederick Bridge and Mr. T.W. Bourne edited the original accompaniments for use in the Albert Hall performances: and a careful summary of the best of the additional accompaniments was made by Prout. In today's performance T.W. Bourne's string parts will be used, together with the wind parts found in 1894 by Dr. [Henry] Davan Wetton in the organ loft of the Foundling Hospital."

Sir Thomas Armstrong was always a champion of Bourne's pioneering work on *Messiah*. Following a BBC broadcast, on 28 March 1943, by the BBC orchestra and chorus, he wrote in a letter to the *The Times*:

<sup>20</sup> Bodleian Library, MS. Eng. lett. e. 45, fol. 82.

“Sir – At a moment when attention has again been called to the original version of Handel’s *Messiah* by a broadcast performance over which Mr. Julian Herbage had clearly taken great trouble, it is right to remember with gratitude the pioneer work done some 50 years by the late Sir Frederick Bridge and Mr. T.W. Bourne, who were among the first, if not actually the first, to perform the oratorio with Handel’s orchestration. It was at a time when professional opinion was set dead in the other direction, a time of “augmented orchestras” and “revised harmonies,” that Mr. Bourne prepared his more scholarly version, which has been behind many of the performances that have done much in recent years, and under various conductors, to secure acceptance of Handel’s original accompaniments. It must be a satisfaction to Mr. Bourne in his Norfolk retreat to find after so many years that his views are gaining wide acceptance, and to know that his work, in the meantime, has done much to further good performance of Handel’s music. I am, Sir, yours faithfully, Thomas Armstrong. 118, Woodstock Road, Oxford”.<sup>21</sup>

### **Life in Norfolk**

By 1925 T.W. Bourne, his wife and daughter were living in The Red House, a large dwelling in Blakeney, Norfolk. It was at The Red House, according to Sir Thomas Armstrong, that:

“he lived the life of a leisured and fastidious scholar with many interests as well as music. He was a keen sailor, and at one time well-known as a wild-fowler on the sea marshes. He was an excellent clock maker, and owned a collection of fine clocks which he kept in mint condition. It was almost an obsession with him that they should all strike exactly together: if one clock fell out of unanymity Bourne would be restless until it was brought back into line.<sup>22</sup> But music, and especially Handel, was his real life. He played and composed; he established and directed a small chamber orchestra for which he wrote and arranged a lot of music; he played his 18<sup>th</sup>-century bass-viol for other conductors; it is hardly too much to say that he created a Baroque revival in that Norfolk community long before the movement became generally fashionable.”

<sup>21</sup> ‘Handel’s *Messiah*’, *The Times* (2 April 1943), 5.

<sup>22</sup> Seven of Bourne’s clocks are mentioned in: F.J. Britten, *Old Clocks and Watches & their makers*. 5th ed. London: E. and F.N. Spon, 1922, and some are illustrated.

After his wife's death on 23 February 1945, and with the added sorrow, later that year, of the death of his daughter on 16 September<sup>23</sup>, Bourne left the Red House, Blakeney and moved a short distance to a smaller house, The Fairstead, Cley-next-the-sea. Here, as Sir Thomas explains, "he chose to live in obscurity, seeking no publicity, and no reward other than that of satisfaction in doing the work that he enjoyed . . . Bourne was a man of strong principles and some prejudices, freed by financial independence from any need to compromise."

Thomas Bourne died aged 85 on 11 March 1948 at The Fairstead, five months after completing his bequest to the Bodleian and six days after signing his will. He was cremated at Norwich Crematorium on 15 March.

### **Abstract**

This article examines the life and achievements of T.W. Bourne, at one time on the staff of the British Museum Library, whose passion for the music of Handel led him to devote much of his life to Handel scholarship at a time when performances of his music were far removed from what the composer would have expected to hear. Robert Bruce examines some of Bourne's Handelian discoveries and his efforts to reintroduce Handel's original scoring for *Messiah* to audiences brought up on Mozart's orchestration.

*Robert J. Bruce is a former staff member of the Music section of the Bodleian Library who has recently completed a detailed study of T.W. Bourne's collection of early Handel editions which was bequeathed to the Library in 1948.*

<sup>23</sup> Bourne's daughter, Catherine Harriet Howard, became the widow of Commander Frederick Charles Howard.

## THE FIRST EDINBURGH MUSICAL FESTIVAL: ‘SERIOUS AND MAGNIFICENT ENTERTAINMENT’, OR ‘A COMBINATION OF HARMONIOUS AND DISCORDANT NOTES’?<sup>1</sup>

Karen E. McAulay

On the first morning of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival, sunshine was blazing into a packed Parliament Hall, and the sense of excitement was almost tangible. Prudently, the stewards had been instructed to let in only a dozen people at a time. The crowd of people queuing to get into the venue was so overwhelming that ladies hung back, hesitating to go in for fear that they might be injured in the crush, or their dresses might get damaged. These concerts were a prestigious occurrence in Edinburgh’s social calendar, and appearances were all-important. Indeed, the ladies’ beautiful outfits were directly mentioned in the *Caledonian Mercury*, and mentioned again in the report written after the event by 25-year old George Farquhar Graham, one of the festival committee secretaries.<sup>2</sup>

Anticipating the start of the performance, everyone was struck by the ‘large and beautiful orchestra’, and the ‘well-dressed persons’ in the gallery. In Graham’s own words,

‘the novelty of the occasion, the spaciousness of the place, whose high walls, and massive sober ornaments were illuminated by the bright beams of the morning sun, together with the expectation of the serious and magnificent entertainment . . . [produced] . . . a state of mental elevation and delight, rarely to be experienced.’

Parliament Hall was an excellent venue for an event as significant as the First Edinburgh Musical Festival. The *Caledonian Mercury* noted that it had been ‘fitted up’ for the occasion, and the organ, imported from no less than Covent Garden for the occasion, would certainly have been a focal point.

<sup>1</sup> This paper is based on a bicentennial talk given at Edinburgh Central Library on 30 October 2015.

<sup>2</sup> George Farquhar Graham, *Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival, held between the 30th October and 5th November, 1815*. Edinburgh: printed by James Ballantyne and Co. for William Blackwood . . . , 1816, available online via the National Library of Scotland’s Digital Gallery <<http://deriv.nls.uk/dcn23/9024/90248546.23.pdf>> [accessed 12 January]. I am also most grateful to Edinburgh historian Eleanor Harris for sharing her transcriptions from the *Caledonian Mercury* newspaper with me. Nationwide holdings can be sourced via <<http://suncat.ac.uk/search>> [accessed 12 January 2016]



AN  
ACCOUNT  
OF THE  
FIRST EDINBURGH  
MUSICAL FESTIVAL,  
HELD BETWEEN  
*The 30th October and 5th November, 1815.*  
TO WHICH IS ADDED  
AN ESSAY,  
CONTAINING SOME  
GENERAL OBSERVATIONS ON MUSIC.  

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BY  
GEORGE FARQUHAR GRAHAM, Esq.  

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EDINBURGH:  
*Printed by James Ballantyne and Co.*  
FOR WILLIAM BLACKWOOD, EDINBURGH; AND BALDWIN  
CRADOCK AND JOY, PATERNOSTER-ROW,  
LONDON.  

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1816.

Fig. 1. Title page of G.F. Graham's account of the First Edinburgh Festival (Bodleian Library, 17402 f.50) © Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford.



The installation of such a huge instrument would have been a complicated and time-consuming task, but no expense was spared in preparing the venue for the musical feast that was about to unfold. On 31<sup>st</sup> August, the *Caledonian Mercury* had reported that, ‘The large organ, which is used at the annual oratorios, in London during Lent, is every day expected to arrive at Leith for the occasion.’ Shipping it up the east coast by sea would have been quicker and smoother than any form of land transportation. There would then have been about eight weeks in which to assemble it in the Parliament Hall.

Walter Scott’s friend James Skene made two paintings of the organ in pride of place in Parliament Hall; they not only survive, but are held by Edinburgh City Library. The paintings were actually done during the second, 1819 Festival, but the view would doubtless have looked very similar at the first, and indeed at the third one which took place in 1824.<sup>3</sup>

Not all the concerts were to take place in the Parliament Hall, though. Whilst sacred concerts were held in Parliament Hall in the mornings, a local theatre known at the time as Corri’s Rooms (after the proprietor, Natale Corri) had also been adapted for the evening performances. The Corri family all combined music and commerce one way or another: Natale ran a music shop as well the theatre; his older brother Domenico Corri had publishing interests in London as well as Edinburgh, but had also played for Edinburgh Musical Society for nearly 20 years at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century; and Domenico’s sons were also in the trade, one in Edinburgh and the other in London. Natale’s reputation would have benefited by association with such a prestigious festival.

Whilst Edinburgh’s First Musical Festival was a high point in Edinburgh’s cultural history, it comes quite late in the history of music festivals in general. There were various factors that gave rise to the birth of the music festival as a phenomenon in Britain, and the very earliest forerunners were probably the celebrations that took place on St Cecilia’s Day – the patron saint of music.

During the eighteenth century, the overwhelming enthusiasm for Georg Frederic Handel’s music – particularly his oratorios – gave rise to whole concerts and festivals devoted largely or entirely to the performance of his works. This began in Handel’s lifetime. In addition to other fund-raising oratorio performances, Handel used his most famous work, *Messiah*, to raise funds for London’s Foundling Hospital. When he died in 1759, he left the score and a set of parts to the hospital so that they could continue to give performances of it as a way of raising much-needed funds.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Both can also be viewed on the Scran website <<http://scran.ac.uk/>> [accessed 11 January 2016]

<sup>4</sup> The Gerald Coke Handel Collection at the Foundling Museum in London is an excellent source of information about Handel’s charitable work <<http://foundlingmuseum.org.uk/about/gerald-coke-handel-collection/>> [accessed 11 Jan 2016]

Gradually, a wave of music-festival mania spread around the country, and any provincial town worth its salt began to realise the income-raising potential of a series of concerts over several days, performing music by Handel – and others – to raise funds for local hospitals, asylums and other charitable enterprises. The Three Choirs festival in Gloucester, Worcester and Hereford already had its beginnings in the early eighteenth century, so they are seen as part of the early history of the movement, but gradually more and more festivals took place. Besides the Three Choirs, not to mention Bath, Bristol and Salisbury in the south, there were notable festivals in Oxford, Cambridge and Norwich; Coventry, Birmingham and York; Leeds, Liverpool, Sheffield and Manchester.

A pattern began to develop, of roughly three oratorio concerts in the mornings, at which either whole or a selection of excerpts of oratorios and other sacred works would be performed – and three more miscellaneous, secular concerts in the evenings. Where a cathedral or abbey church might be used for the sacred concerts, other suitable venues might be used for the evening events.

The most famous Handel-related events were, of course, the musical performances in Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon Theatre to commemorate Handel's 'Centenary' in 1784.<sup>5</sup> There were six concerts in total, to raise money for The Fund for the Support of Decayed Musicians and their Families. The grand sum of £12,837 was raised, and after the bills had been paid, £6,000 was paid to the Decayed Musicians fund and £1,000 to Westminster Hospital. The event served as inspiration for subsequent music festivals in the provinces, and doubtless influenced the organisers of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival.

A lengthy report had been written by Dr Charles Burney, one of the most eminent music historians of the day, who had already authored his *General History of Music* in 1776.<sup>6</sup> Burney's report contains much analytical detail, and a close analysis of Handel's *Messiah*, which was performed on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> May, 1784, along with a picture of the performance in Westminster Abbey.<sup>7</sup> The youthful George Farquhar Graham had good reason to be grateful for Burney's work, for he was able to quote extensively from it at various points in his own report of the 1815 Edinburgh Festival – and Burney's

<sup>5</sup> Although Handel's dates are commonly given as 1685-1750, the 1784 centenary was calculated using the old calendar; the adjustment of calendar dates in 1752 under the provisions of the Calendar Act explains the apparent discrepancy.

<sup>6</sup> Charles Burney, *A general history of music: from the earliest ages to the present period. To which is prefixed, A dissertation on the music of the ancients*. London: printed for the author: and sold by T. Becket; J. Robson; and G. Robinson, 1776.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Burney, *An account of the musical performances in Westminster-Abbey, and the Pantheon: May 26th, 27th, 29th; and June the 3d, and 5th, 1784: In commemoration of Handel*. London: printed for the benefit of the musical fund, and sold by T. Payne and Son, 1784.

commentary on *Messiah* was quoted in full in an appendix to the Edinburgh report, with due acknowledgment.

Other factors also had a bearing on the decision to have a music festival. In the eighteenth century, the Edinburgh Musical Society had provided for the entertainment of well-to-do music lovers; its waning by the end of the century left a gap that was clearly ripe to be filled. The *Caledonian Mercury* declared that Scottish ears were ‘naturally correct’, but that they were now ready for the genuine harmony to be found in sacred oratorios, and would undoubtedly be delighted by a chorus and orchestra twice the size of anything they had yet experienced.

Young George Farquhar Graham expressed the opinion that up until now there had been far too much dependence on simple Scottish tunes, and that it was time to move beyond this narrow obsession, to learn to appreciate a wider range of music. Listening to classical music, in the form of ‘solid and elegant compositions’, was not only a delightfully enjoyable way to spend one’s time, but could also be sublimely uplifting. And, he added, to those only familiar with tuneless screeching in church, well-performed sacred music would contribute enormously to their devotional experience.

Whatever discussions had been taking place mooted the idea of a music festival, an Italian soprano called Angelica Catalani may inadvertently have given Edinburgh the nudge it needed to start organising one. Catalani was an operatic superstar who had travelled Europe widely, spent some time singing in London’s King’s Theatre between 1806-14, and was a very big name on the festival circuit. In May 1814, she announced in the *Caledonian Mercury* that she proposed to visit Edinburgh in November with a ‘Complete Company of the best London performers, both vocal and instrumental, Solo-concerto players as well as Oratorio choristers; and thus to produce festivals on the same grand and liberal plan with those lately given in Liverpool . . . and to allot one entire FIFTH part of the total receipts for the benefit of such Public Charities as shall be thought best. . . .’ She named the august titled and highly-placed individuals whom she considered might form an organising committee.

In fact, Madame Catalani was not only a famous singer but also a concert impresario. It would appear that on this occasion, her selection of august individuals didn’t bite; and although Edinburgh had its First Musical Festival the following year, Catalani was not part of it!

Instead, 30<sup>th</sup> November 1814 saw a ‘Meeting of Noblemen and Gentlemen, called by Circular Letters, and held in the Council-Chamber’, with the Right Honourable the Lord Provost in the Chair. Graham’s *Account* narrates how those present noted the remarkable success of other festivals in raising money for needy charities, and resolved to attempt something similar in Edinburgh. Whilst the Westminster Handel celebrations had consisted of five concert

days extending over one-and-a-half weeks, the 1815 Edinburgh festival was to take place over five consecutive days; the performance of Handel's *Messiah* would still occur on the third, middle day. It was decided to have a total of six performances, three in the mornings, of oratorios or sacred selections, and three evening concerts of miscellaneous pieces.

The Nobility of Scotland were requested to patronise the festival, and office-bearers were selected – a President, six Vice-Presidents, 30 Extraordinary and 25 Ordinary Directors (they did the work); a Treasurer, and last but not least, two Secretaries. The Duke of Buccleuch and Queensberry was asked to be President. Key Edinburgh personages appeared in the list of Extraordinary Directors, starting with the Lord Provost, Lord President, Lord Justice Clerk, Lord Chief Baron, The Lord Advocate and the Solicitor General. Other names in both lists of directors stand out as having been influential in their day, but are perhaps known only to historians now. All, that is, but one: Walter Scott was the last-named Extraordinary Director.

Of the two secretaries appointed to administer the Festival, the younger man, George Farquhar Graham, had initially attended Edinburgh University to study law, but apparently ceased his studies for health reasons. This didn't hold him back: he subsequently made a European tour, travelling in France and Italy, and seems also to have studied with Beethoven whilst abroad. Graham composed an oratorio, now seemingly lost, especially for performance at the First Edinburgh Musical Festival. After writing all 213 pages of his *Account of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival*, he was to make his living writing about music, theorizing about music pedagogy; studying, transcribing and arranging Scottish music. He was a rising star in music scholarship, although born in an era when the study of music was not yet a university discipline. In fact, the young man who was so disparaging about his countrymen's obsession with Scottish tunes, was in his middle age to be the editor and arranger of the nineteenth century's best-selling and longest-lasting song collections, the *Songs of Scotland*, in three fat volumes, complete with substantial and erudite annotations.<sup>8</sup> Not only was there was money to be made from these songs, but Graham became one of the nation's experts in them, engaging in earnest discussions and arguments with some of the greatest names in the field.

His co-secretary, just a little older, was George Hogarth, also a music critic and journalist. He was later to publish a substantial *Musical History, Biography and Criticism*, in 1835. A friend of Walter Scott, he is now known primarily as the father-in-law of Charles Dickens. His name barely crops up in Graham's Festival report, so his role in arranging the Festival is rather vague.

<sup>8</sup> George Farquhar Graham, *The Songs of Scotland*, 3 vols, Edinburgh: John Muir Wood, 1848-9.

## **Planning the Festival**

The usual practice in provincial music festivals was to engage top performers as soloists and orchestral leaders – often but not necessarily from London – but also to use local musicians, whether a local organist, or theatre or music society instrumentalists. A ‘music society’ was rather different from those of today. Professional musicians were paid to play in concerts by the music society, whose members were wealthy music lovers from the upper echelons of society and landed gentry. Only occasionally would dilettante society members join in and play with the paid musicians.

The music festival circuit was a profitable one, and some top-flight musicians made a nice living travelling round the country to play at a succession of festivals. Although money was being raised to aid charitable ventures, the musicians still had to be paid, and there were certainly opportunities for enterprising musicians to capitalise. Madame Catalani was not the only impresario when it came to providing first-rate musicians for regional music festivals. John Ashley, an associate conductor at the Handel Commemorations, saw a chance to jump on the bandwagon, and along with four of his sons, travelled to many towns, also acting as a fixer to arrange, if not the entire orchestra, then certainly the imported professionals. John himself had died by the time of the First Edinburgh festival, but one of his sons conducted at it, two more played viola and cello, and the fourth, who actually died in 1815, had been the singing teacher of Mrs Salmon, one of the two female vocalists at the Edinburgh festival.

To demonstrate the complex criss-crossing of the country by musicians, we can note that besides her appearance in Edinburgh, Mrs Salmon can also be traced singing in Derby, Birmingham and York. Meanwhile, Mr Braham, one of the male soloists, sang in Bath in 1809 – he was a pupil of the music director there, a famous castrato called Venanzio Rauzzini. After Edinburgh in 1815, Braham appeared in Birmingham in 1817; Edinburgh again in 1819 and York in 1823. When he wasn’t on tour, he performed in London at the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane. In fact, he had started out as a boy soprano at Covent Garden, and sang in Europe as a young man.

As well as the vocal soloists, the sectional leaders were also often imported by fixers like the Ashleys. These musicians would not only lead the orchestra, but also play solo numbers. Edinburgh was privileged to enjoy the double-bass playing of Dragonetti, a decidedly eccentric but gifted Italian player who rose from humble origins to become a renowned virtuoso. A bachelor who collected dolls as a hobby, he regularly appeared in festivals alongside his very good friend, the cellist and steady family man, Robert Lindley.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Steady, maybe, but Lindley was something of a show-off: there is a story that at one festival – not Edinburgh – Lindley was supporting the continuo for an oratorio aria by Handel, when he provided a lengthy cadenza – including the tune, ‘Over the hills and far away’, in one of the instrumental ‘symphonies’ between vocal sections. This caused him so much amusement and snuff-taking that he could barely settle himself to continue playing thereafter. One wonders how much he unsettled the singer whom he was accompanying!

There was also a Liverpoolian solo flautist called Charles Nicholson, whose claim to fame was that he had invented an improved flute with a much superior tone. So influential was he that a contemporary author on the flute actually dedicated his book to Nicholson. He, too, was in the orchestra for the First Edinburgh Musical Festival.<sup>10</sup>

The local musicians' reputations may have been a little more regional, but they included one of the Corri family at the pianoforte, and Graham's younger friend Finlay Dun. Aged only twenty at the time of the Festival, Dun had started out playing violin for his dance-master father, and eventually became another scholarly expert and Scottish song arranger, most notably for Lady Carolina Nairne; he was also to collaborate first with Graham to publish *A Collection of Celtic Melodies*, and then with John Thomson, first Edinburgh Reid Professor of music, to publish *The Vocal Melodies of Scotland*. Niel Gow's fourth son, Nathaniel, making his name as a dance violinist, music publisher and seller, was also in the violin section, as was James Dewar – a less well-known figure today, but actually one of the founders of the Edinburgh Professional Society of Musicians. James was deputy leader at the Theatre Royal, and his father Daniel had played in Niel Gow's band. The European Schetkys, composer Johann Georg Christoph and his son, were listed as cellist and bassist respectively.

Some indication of the size of the orchestra can be given by the numbers of players in each string section – ten and twelve respectively as first and second violinists, then six viola players, six cellists and five double bassists. Meanwhile, the chorus consisted of twelve sopranos, including Master Harris (presumably a son of Mrs Harris) – and four York boys. (It was not unusual to include boy choristers.) The eleven altos were all male. There were an enviable sixteen tenors, and fifteen basses.

Graham's report tells us that,

‘The sudden burst of the organ, followed by the swell and gradual union of the other instruments in tuning, struck forcibly upon the ears and hearts of all present. All was breathless attention – a momentary pause took place in the orchestra, and the Overture to Esther commenced.’

It's a grand and stately piece, although nowadays we would perhaps expect something a bit more flamboyant to open such a prestigious festival.<sup>11</sup> It was

<sup>10</sup> I have to date been unable to establish whether he might have been a distant ancestor of the renowned Newcastle-born flautist, David Nicholson, who taught at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland until his death a few years ago.

<sup>11</sup> The piece exists in a recent recording conducted by Glasgow Professor John Butt with the Dunedin Consort: Linn Records - Handel: Esther, First reconstructable version (Cannons), 1720  
<<http://www.linnrecords.com/recording-handel—esther—cannons-version-1720-.aspx>> [accessed 11 Jan 2016]



followed by nine excerpts from various Handel oratorios before the interval, and part of Haydn's Creation in the second half. This was new music with a vengeance – Haydn had paid two visits to England in 1790 and 1797, to great acclaim, and he had only died in 1808. A Haydn symphony also opened the second half of the evening concert that day.

About a third of the entire festival programme was by Handel. To put this in some kind of context, it is as though a modern music festival placed a heavy emphasis on Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, Bartók or Stravinsky – they were born as many years ago, as Handel was before 1815. Graham did make the observation that audiences should be introduced to modern music, and not be allowed to become fixed upon the music of the past, so maybe he himself sensed that there was too much emphasis on Handel's music, given that it was now 65 years since his death.

About a tenth of the programmed items were by Mozart, with several coming from his opera, *La Clemenza di Tito* – again, Mozart was comparatively modern, since he died at the age of just 36 in 1791. Four substantial items were by Haydn; and the audience was also treated to Beethoven's 'Grand Symphony' – no. 1, in C major (though Graham called it the second) - and a chorus from *Christ on the Mount of Olives*, which had only been premièred twelve years earlier in 1803. Beethoven was a modern phenomenon: born in 1770, he was only 45 at the time of the First Edinburgh Festival, and still had another 13 years ahead of him.

The very first festival performance of oratorio excerpts was on the morning of Tuesday 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1815. The next concert was a secular miscellany in Corri's Rooms on the evening of the Wednesday 1<sup>st</sup> November, followed by a sacred concert – Handel's *Messiah* - in Parliament Hall on the morning of Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup>. Both concerts were packed out, with ladies fainting from fear and pressure from the crush. Burney had likened the Hallelujah Chorus to Dante's depiction of Paradise, saying that it represented the highest triumph of Handel himself.

Such was the demand for tickets, that an extra morning performance was hastily arranged for the Friday, largely featuring music that had already been performed. Those who had been unable to obtain tickets earlier now had a chance to attend after all. This made for a busy day for the poor musicians, who still had another evening concert to get through in Corri's Rooms.

By Saturday lunchtime, it was all over, after a final sacred concert back in Parliament Hall. Again, there was a preponderance of music by Handel, although there was also Mozart, Boyce, Pergolesi, and Beethoven.

Taking the programme as a whole, audience expectations were clearly very different from ours. A concert largely devoted to excerpts from Handel's oratorios would not have great appeal for modern audiences. Indeed, we'd expect to hear an entire oratorio, rather than select excerpts from a number of them!

The same can be said for the evening miscellanies. Excerpts from Mozart's and other operas – arias, duets and trios - interspersed with instrumental solos, duos, trios and secular songs, made for quite a lively variety, even if all but the most famous composers' names are now completely unknown to us today. The programming was more like that of a Classic FM radio broadcast than the entire pieces in concerts of today.

The soloists would undoubtedly have performed the same repertoire in other music festivals on their circuit, and some items were actually the compositions of the soloists who performed them. So, for example, bassist Dragonetti played in a Corelli trio, and played another Corelli piece with violinist Yaniewicz – these were regular parts of their repertoire – not to mention Yaniewicz playing his own violin concerto, Lindley his own cello concerto, and Holmes his bassoon concerto. George Farquhar Graham wrote an oratorio for the occasion; it was probably never published, and seems to have vanished without trace. The singer John Braham included several of his own compositions, but also sang one of his old teacher Rauzzini's songs in his own touring repertoire. Much of this music does still survive in print, even if it's now very rare and generally buried in libraries' special collections. Finding recordings of these rarities proved virtually impossible, and sourcing the printed music more than a little difficult.<sup>12</sup>

Was the Festival a success? Graham's report is a fairly consistent combination of musical analysis and biographical details of the foremost composers, alternating with lavish praise of the soloists. As already mentioned, he drew some of the analysis from Burney's earlier commentary, with due attribution whenever he did so.

According to Graham, Mr Braham's singing was regularly 'brilliant' and 'sublime'. Madame Marconi drew tears with her 'exquisitely pathetic' song in the first morning performance, and displayed 'her usual excellence' the following evening. Haydn's (abbreviated) *Creation* displayed 'mysterious sublimity' – as, for example, in 'the idea of the sublime and awful stillness and solitude which reigned over the forests', not to mention impressions of grandeur and 'sublimity which shakes the frame, and makes the very soul tremble'. Mrs Salmon and Mr Braham gave a 'perfect' rendition of a beautiful aria from Mozart's *Clemenza* at one of the evening concerts, and Mrs Salmon displayed 'her usual very pleasing style' on the Friday morning. One might infer that the soloists consistently performed to a high standard, giving satisfaction to those present, and justifying the high expectations that everyone had of them, not to mention the high cost of the tickets.

<sup>12</sup> For my Edinburgh talk, I was able to find the tune of Braham's, 'Said a smile to a tear', used as the theme for a set of piano variations by Ferdinand Ries. I also sourced Callcott's very lengthy dramatic song, 'Angel of Life', which begins with a recitative, moves into a fast and furious opening, and has a melodious triple-time ending. George Farquhar Graham said he was not going to report on items 'familiar to the public, or which possess only secondary merit'. It is telling that he passed no comment on either of these pieces!

However, after the Wednesday evening concert in Corri's Rooms, a 'plain uninspired man' wrote to the *Caledonian Mercury* to redress the balance to the 'raptures and extacies' that had filled the paper's columns. He enjoyed the sight of the audience in their finery, disliked the sound of the band tuning up, found the first piece 'a combination of harmonious and discordant notes', and couldn't always make out the words – and to make things worse, the programmes with the song-texts hadn't been handed out in time for the start of the concert. When this poor man yawned, so did everyone around him. He enjoyed a Scots song, a horn duet, and a ballad sung by Mr Braham, and said that there was probably only one connoisseur there for every 99 ordinary listeners like himself.

The subscription for a set of six tickets was advertised in the *Caledonian Mercury* as three guineas – a lot of money in those days – whilst single tickets were fifteen shillings each. Fifteen shillings (75p) would be worth at least £50 today, so this was undoubtedly a festival for the wealthy and leisured classes. It raised just under £6,000 in tickets, and after paying all fees and other expenses, such as procuring and installing the organ, improving the Parliament Hall and adapting Corri's Rooms, £1,500 was distributed between seventeen charities. Edinburgh's First Musical Festival had managed to give away a quarter of the proceeds, rather than the fifth that Madame Catalani would have given; on the other hand, who knows what her income and expenditure would have been?

Within a couple of months, a new choral society had been founded in Edinburgh: the Institution for the Encouragement of Sacred Music, directed by Mr Mather, the Festival organist. He originated from Sheffield, but had moved to Edinburgh by 1810 and was the organist of the Episcopalian Charlotte Chapel.

Edinburgh had another Musical Festival in 1819, and Glasgow had one in 1821. Edinburgh returned the favour in 1824, and then another nineteen years passed before there was another in 1843, which ran at a loss. This was the last Edinburgh Musical Festival, until the Edinburgh Festival as we know it began in 1947.

The First Musical Festival of 1815 certainly made its mark at the time, though, and John Crosse's subsequent report of the York Musical Festival of 1823 made extensive reference to it.<sup>13</sup> More recently, John Cranmer's PhD thesis about Edinburgh musical life devoted a few pages to the 1815 festival, and Fiona Palmer's biography of the double bassist Domenico Dragonetti

<sup>13</sup> John Crosse, *An Account of the Grand Musical Festival, Held in September, 1823 in the Cathedral Church of York: For the Benefit of the York County Hospital, and the General Infirmeries at Leeds, Hull, and Sheffield: to which is Prefixed, a Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Musical Festivals in Great Britain; with Biographical and Historical Notes*. York: John Wolstenholme, 1825.

similarly included his Edinburgh appearances.<sup>14</sup> But in most modern commentaries on 19<sup>th</sup> century British music making, it receives only the briefest references; and unfortunately Pippa Drummond's recent book on provincial music festivals from 1784-1914 only covers England, thereby missing out the Edinburgh festivals altogether.<sup>15</sup>

Nonetheless, the bicentenary of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival was something worth commemorating. Thanks are due to historian Eleanor Harris for alerting me to the date and sharing her *Caledonian Mercury* notes with me, not to mention Edinburgh City music librarians, Bronwen Brown and Anne Morrison, who curated an exhibition in the music library and invited me to give an illustrated talk, and Almut Boehme for her complementary exhibition in the National Library of Scotland. It's fair to say that the occasion was commemorated in style.

### **Abstract**

This article is based on a talk given in Edinburgh Central Library on 30 October 2015 to mark the bicentenary of the First Edinburgh Musical Festival. The author examines contemporary accounts of the Festival and discusses the music performed, the artists who performed it and the social and economic aspects of the Festival, placing it in the context of the increasing popularity of provincial music festivals which spread across Great Britain in the wake of the Handel festivals of the late eighteenth century.

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<sup>14</sup> John Leonard Cranmer, *Concert Life and the Music Trade in Edinburgh c. 1780-c.1830*, doctoral thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1991, and online: <<https://www.era.lib.ed.ac.uk/handle/1842/7380>>; and Fiona Palmer, *Domenico Dragonetti in England (1795-1846): the Career of a Double Bass Virtuoso*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Pippa Drummond, *The Provincial Music Festival in England, 1784-1914*. Farnham: Ashgate, 2011.

## EXHIBITION REVIEW

### Handel & Hendrix in London

*Katharine Hogg*

The Handel House Museum in Brook Street, London has recently expanded and extended – creating an extra floor on the top of the building as well as new space on the side – and has been relaunched as ‘Handel & Hendrix in London’, with exhibition space devoted to Jimi Hendrix, who lived briefly in the flat at the top of the building during the 1960s. The museum’s website (<http://handelhendrix.org/>) states what the visitor can expect:

**Handel House** occupies two floors of 25 Brook Street, the building in which the composer George Frideric Handel lived from 1723 until his death in 1759. The four restored historic rooms include his bedroom, and the dining room in which he rehearsed his musicians and singers and often gave informal recitals for friends and neighbours. Additional rooms in the adjoining house are used for temporary exhibitions which focus on aspects of Handel’s life, professional career and associates.

**Hendrix Flat** occupies the upper floor of 23 Brook Street, in which Jimi Hendrix lived from July 1968 to March 1969. The main room of the flat where he lived, entertained friends, rehearsed and wrote new music, and gave numerous press and media interviews has been restored. A permanent exhibition introduces Hendrix’s place in the musical and social world of 1960s London, his influences and his legacy.

The visitor now enters by the original front door on Brook Street, which has only recently been available to the museum (the front of the building is still occupied by a retail outlet but will eventually be incorporated into the museum) and ascends the original staircase to the Handel rooms. These are furnished with eighteenth-century furniture and decorated in the appropriate style; there a sense of the age of the building with sloping floors and creaking floorboards, and the domestic rooms are now used as intimate performance space for recitals. A new studio on the side of the building provides a slightly larger performance space for an audience of around thirty, although this feels cosy when the room is full. It will be used for school groups and tours, as well as seminars, talks and recitals, and is well equipped with modern technology which cannot be accommodated in the period rooms. The current

exhibition, *A year in the life of Handel: 1723*, celebrates aspects of Handel's London in the year when he moved into this house, with panels setting the scene of the social history of the period, and extensive quotes from contemporary newspapers detailing events of the year. A few exhibits complement the text panels, but this display was very sparse compared with previous changing exhibitions.

Visitors can now ascend to the upper floor of the original building at no.23, to the Hendrix flat. Introductory text and images outline the musician's life and work, with many vivid images conjuring the atmosphere of the time. The bedroom interior has been recreated faithfully from a photograph of the time, and in a further room the exhibition explores the music which influenced Hendrix, using his collection of LP records as evidence. Original covers line the wall, and an imaginative installation recreates the feel of the period with 'record sleeves' of the Hendrix collection which can be browsed as if in a record shop. Interestingly Hendrix did own Handel recordings!

The Handel/Hendrix mix is a curious and challenging combination beneath one roof, and one had the impression that visitors had come chiefly for one or other aspect but not both. The Hendrix flat and experience has clearly been the main focus of the museum recently, as reflected by the quality of the exhibition and the uncharacteristically disappointing exhibits in the Handel gallery. The music of Hendrix greets the visitor approaching the upper floor, but in the Handel rooms there is no background music which makes them seem rather dry by contrast, although there are headphones through which to listen to individual pieces in the exhibition. I visited with a friend who had no more than general knowledge of either Handel or Hendrix, and her impression was that the Hendrix aspect was well presented, but she came away with no sense that she had experienced Handel and his music. It will be interesting to see how the museum's extensive programme of live music and events develops with the two strands in parallel, and not, one hopes, in competition. Space in the Hendrix flat is limited and visitors are advised to book in advance. The museum has extended its opening hours to seven days a week, and entry prices allow the option of visiting just the Handel House, or the combined Handel/Hendrix experience.

Katharine Hogg



## BOOK REVIEWS

*Edited by Loukia Drosopoulou*

*Charles Mackerras*, edited by Nigel Simeone and John Tyrrell. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015. 320 p. ISBN: 9781843839668. Hardback. £25.00.

Sir Charles Mackerras was, without doubt, one of the most influential and highly regarded musicians of the second half of the twentieth century, whose work carried on into the first decade of the twenty-first. Although not a biography, this impressive volume outlines Mackerras's life; the first chapter by Nigel Simeone 'An Immense Stylist Evolves: 1947–87', covers important events and dates, illustrated by contemporary documentation within the narrative – family letters, Mackerras's own writings, letters from friends and musical colleagues (including Britten), together with articles from the music press. This provides the framework for most of what follows and gives a fascinating range of differing perspectives on Mackerras and his world.

Mackerras's life was a passionate affair. Articulating this passion and enthusiasm through his grasp of the conductor's art, where he achieved a high level of rapport with his fellow performers, especially with singers, and then communicating the resulting performance to his audiences, was perhaps his supreme achievement.

Not really wanting to be labelled as a 'specialist' as such, Mackerras did in fact become very well known for his special 'interests' – areas in which he developed particular expertise and authority – and he will probably be best remembered for them by the music-loving public. Czech music, especially that of Dvořák and Janáček, is the most obvious interest area and of course his early conducting studies in post-war Czechoslovakia gave him a unique insight into the world of Czech music and culture – as a non-Czech. Opera was another major thread running through his life and career and was something that he really loved deeply, being truly 'a man of the theatre.' From this was distilled a particular passion for the operas of Handel and Mozart, the latter in particular encouraging him to explore earlier performance practice in almost forensic detail – sometimes to the annoyance of critics and audiences! Then there was Gilbert and Sullivan, Schubert, Beethoven – the list just goes on . . . In all of these interest areas, Mackerras has made important contributions to the literature as well as having a lasting influence on

subsequent performers, performance style and practice – not least in printed editions of scores and in his vast legacy of recordings.

However, before chapter 1 there is a very useful chronology, enabling the reader to pick out some of the key dates and events in Mackerras's life. For instance, 1947 was a year jam-packed with life-changing events: March – arrives in Britain from Australia: May – joins the Sadler's Wells Orchestra as 2<sup>nd</sup> oboe: August – marries the orchestra's clarinetist, Judy Wilkins and gains a British Council scholarship to study conducting in Prague: September – travels to Czechoslovakia with his new wife having been advised to travel alone: October – hears his first Janáček opera, *Kátà Kabanová*. What a year that must have been! Other years to flag-up were 1948 when he made his Sadler's Wells conducting debut with *Die Fledermaus*; 1951 when he created the Ballet, *Pineapple Poll* from the music of Sullivan; 1958 when he premiered Britten's *Noye's Fludde* at Aldeborough; 1959 with the recording of Handel's *Fireworks Music* using the vast number of instruments used in the first performance; 1978 when he was awarded the Janáček Medal by the Czech Government – the list continues, getting busier with further major appointments, important premieres, awards, landmark recordings and exploration into research and writing.

The volume commences with the eulogy spoken by one of Mackerras's most esteemed colleagues, Dame Janet Baker, at his funeral at St. Paul's, Covent Garden, on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2010. This is the first of the many tributes from former musical colleagues. The conductor, David Lloyd Jones, who first worked with Mackerras as his assistant conductor in the 1950s, recounts his work in the opera house – his empathy for singers, his detailed knowledge of the repertoire, his wide linguistic abilities and his growing awareness of historical performance style, especially his interest in vocal decoration with the use of the *appoggiatura* being a particular fascination.

It is probable that Charles Mackerras will be best remembered for his efforts in the furthering of our knowledge and understanding of the music of Leoš Janáček and in Chapter 3 the co-editor and renowned Janáček authority, John Tyrrell, maps Mackerras's journey with this once little-regarded composer. Mackerras first encountered the operatic Janáček during his study period in Prague in the late 1940s, first hearing the music in often rewritten and re-scored versions – practices that attempted to address Janacek's supposed shortcomings in technique and scoring. During this early period in Czechoslovakia, Mackerras managed to catch performances of most of the Janáček operas resulting in him becoming almost unique as a non-Czech with this knowledge and experience of this operatic canon. He was then able to become an important apostle for this composer – promoting the music in production and performance, giving the British premieres of *Kátà Kabanová* (1951), and *The Makropulos Affair* (1964) with revivals of most of the operas

over the following years. He later directed Janáček productions in Vienna, Paris, New York and San Francisco and was invited to perform the works in Czechoslovakia, becoming instrumental in the revival of the composer's original orchestrations. Another key element on Mackerras's Janáček journey was the series of opera recordings with Czech singers and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, which became a landmark recording series for Decca.

Emanating from Mackerras's work in performance was his work as an arranger and editor. His curiosity led him to investigate musical source materials – manuscripts and early editions – in libraries and archives in an endless quest to get as close as possible to the composer's original intentions. This quest for the musical truth is as relevant for the works of Janáček as it was for Handel and Mozart. It is no surprise therefore to find Janáček's publisher, Universal Edition, asking Mackerras to become involved in the project to produce critical editions of *Kátà Kabanová*, *Jenůfa*, *Šárka* and *Vixen*, drawing on his vast knowledge of these works in performance.

Patrick Summers, fellow operatic conductor, contributes an important chapter crammed with insights and fascinating detail of Mackerras as a working musician. We learn of his deep and wide-ranging musical interests, his love of singing and vocal music, his uncanny awareness of tempo and the minutiae of musical detail in a score, including difficult page turns! Summers gives a personal and often moving tribute as well as a rounded portrait of his friend as a working musician.

Chapter 6 commences the chronicle of Mackerras's work in the opera house – narrative interspersed with shorter personal contributions from performers and administrators who worked with him, including John Stein, Anne Evans, Antonio Pappano, Simon Keenlyside and Nicholas Hytner, counterpointing a fairly dense listing of opera productions at WNO, ENO, etc. Together with review excerpts and Mackerras's own letters and notes, this mix retains the interest through a considerable quantity of detail.

Chapters 9-11 concentrate on Mackerras's work in the Czech lands. Jiří Zahrádka recounts Mackerras's conducting career from his initial studies with Václav Talich in the 1940s to the final performances with the Czech Philharmonic in the Prague Rudolfinum in December 2008. The chapter title, 'The Last Great Czech Conductor' seems entirely appropriate. Zahrádka also contributes a shorter, more personal chapter covering his own work and friendship with Mackerras. Chapters 11 and 12 deal with another of Mackerras's musical interest – that of musical reconstruction. Aleš Březina recounts work on 'A Better Version of (Martinů's) Greek Passion,' while David Mackie outlines Mackerras's input into the reconstruction of Sullivan's almost 'lost' cello concerto. Mackerras had conducted a 'last' performance in 1953 before the only score and parts set perished in the devastating Chappell's fire in 1964.

The final three chapters cover Mackerras's relationship with three great orchestras – The Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, the Scottish Chamber Orchestra and the Philharmonia. With a fine mix of personal tribute and insight from the likes of Chi-Chi Nwanoku (OAE Principal double-bass) and Alfred Brendel, these chapters detail Mackerras's work with these great orchestras – again with the format of narrative, review and Mackerras's own writings. Nigel Simeone's coda to the main part of the volume neatly sums up the later period of Mackerras's life and career with its issues of failing physical health and the sad deaths of his daughter and grand-daughter. The last page features a poignant image of Mackerras's calendar for July 2010 with his unfulfilled engagements for the BBC Proms season. However, by this point we are only around two thirds of our way through the volume and have a real feast of essential and fascinating material ahead!

Appendix 1, 'Mackerras in Performance' gives selective listings of his concert and operatic performances from the latter part of his career, listed by company and orchestra. Additionally, his 'Janáček' and 'Performances in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic' are listed separately. These listings really cover an astonishing amount of repertoire. An added extra is the listing of recordings chosen by Mackerras on his three appearances on the BBC's 'Desert Island Discs.' The final substantial but by no means last or least section of the volume, is the discography by Malcolm Walker, compiled originally for the Nancy Phelan biography of 1987 but updated to cover a recording career of 58 years from the era of the 78 in June 1951 to his final Supraphon Dvořák CD of September 2009.

Mackerras's own writings (mainly articles and interviews) together with works by others form a short bibliography. The final section is a listing of editions and arrangements by or in collaboration with Mackerras, starting with the famous *Pineapple Poll* Ballet and finishing with the four Janáček Universal Edition operas, covering on the way Mozart, Handel, Dvořák, Puccini, Sullivan, Sibelius, Wolf-Ferrari, Ireland and Isaac Nathan – 'Father of Australian Music' and Mackerras's great-great-great grandfather. The index is of course, first class.

Nigel Simeone and John Tyrrell have produced an outstanding volume and to whom the many admirers of Charles Mackerras and music lovers in general will be indebted. Few modern maestros have had the range, repertoire, impact or influence of Mackerras and after reading this splendid volume, I was left rather saddened that I had not able to attend more Mackerras performances – but we can cherish his wonderful legacy of recordings.

Michael Hall, *Music Theatre in Britain, 1960-1975*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015. 325 p. ISBN: 9781783270125. Hardback. £60.00.

Like most genres, music theatre is a difficult one to pin down: it's not quite opera, nor musical theatre in the Broadway sense. It doesn't have to include singing at all, and often brings into the mix elements of dance, mime, spoken word and instrumental gesture. Michael Hall, in this book about music theatre in Britain in the 'long 1960s', sensibly allows the form to be defined by the works he chooses to represent it. As well as a tendency to be 'stripped back' in terms of resources required, he says, these aim to present other art forms on an equal footing with music (opera being seen as giving music too much prominence), and they all "set out to be surprising, to include moments of humour even when the topic is serious, and to convey a spirit of adventure".

The book is split into two parts, and the first sets the scene. Here we are shown some of the antecedents, from Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* through to early twentieth-century examples by, among others, Stravinsky (*A Soldier's Tale*), Brecht/Weill (*Mahogony Songspiel*) and – a particularly important influence for a number of the British composers discussed later – Schoenberg (*Pierrot Lunaire*). Of the immediate precedents from continental Europe and the USA, the approaches of Stockhausen, Berio, Ligeti, Kagel, Cage and others all, in their way, reflect a general reaction against the forced formality and inwardness perceived in the established course of 'modernist' music at that time.

Taking the optimistic promise of this influence, and imbuing it often with a sense of ritual, and in some cases a slightly anarchic 'homemade-ness', seems to be the contribution of the British composers examined in the second and main part of the book. A chapter is devoted to each of the three 'Manchester School' composers (Alexander Goehr, Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle), who produced what are now the best known examples of the genre, and helped propagate it by encouraging others (at the Wardour Castle and Dartington Summer Schools), and forming their own ensembles. Alongside this, events more towards the fringes of contemporary music making at the time – courses and inclusive group events connected with Focus Opera and Morley College in London and York University – are usefully prominent given their lack of attention in other discussions.

What makes reviewing this book difficult is that the author – former BBC producer Michael Hall – died before his work had been through the editing process. Perhaps as the result of this, the second part of the text (Robert Adlington helped to tweak the first) is noticeably repetitive and awkward in tone. Details in chapter 4, dealing with ensembles and performing groups, are covered again at length in later chapters, for example; and the tone shifts jarringly from the analytical ("it is a symmetric mode that begins and ends on F and contains within itself three smaller symmetries"), to the admirably

frank but unnecessary (“I did not attend the performances...”), to the somewhat gauche (“Maxwell Davies tells me...”). There is also one badly miscalculated moment describing violas and viola players (“butt of a great many orchestral jokes . . . considered to be failed violinists . . . always appear to be depressed”).

All of this might have been ironed out with editing, but I felt a sense of missed opportunity here that goes beyond those idiosyncrasies. I think what I hoped for was set up in the Preface, which made clear that the book wasn’t intended as an academic treatise, but was based on the memories of someone who had experienced these works and events first hand. If this was the case it wasn’t entirely apparent, and I missed a more vivid and direct conversational style – something that would capture the optimism and excitement of the time. It is perhaps telling that it is the few anecdotes dropped in that left a lasting impression.

Hall’s discussions of individual works are generally fairly literal (but often lengthy) accounts of their events/stage action, reliant on quotes from scores or texts. These are reminiscent of written synopses of convoluted operatic plots: very difficult to follow (especially the case for Birtwistle’s later work, *Io Passion* - given a seven page plot summary, with six characters whose names consist of a gender and a number). Most seriously, they don’t always convey the vitality of the works (the descriptions of Bruce Cole’s *Epic for a Charlady* and Richard Orton’s *Mug Grunt* are two exceptions), or give any sense of how successfully intentions were realised (some scenarios sounded particularly unpromising).

Sometimes, mainly in the chapters on Maxwell Davies, Birtwistle and Goehr, further commentary is added, but this is more often curtailed, with conclusions arriving abruptly and not fully developed – in the case of well-known and often-discussed works such as Maxwell Davies’s *Eight Songs for a Mad King*, they are also redundant. These problems are reflected at a higher level of argument too, with the importance of a broader social and economic context to these pieces being frequently hinted at, but not always explored (the international oil crisis of 1973 is evoked as a reason for the tailing off of new music theatre works, but without any attempt to explain how they are connected). The relationship of music theatre to opera is the elephant in the room: some (Birtwistle and Maxwell Davies) were working on full-on operatic works at the same time and seemed to see these smaller works as related, while others (Cardew, Gilbert, Newson) saw theirs as a reaction against it. Again, this is flagged up, but not developed; rather it is left to the reader to infer and read between the lines.

The relentless procession of work synopses and frequent repetition makes for a slightly gruelling cover-to-cover read, but there is some useful and interesting information here for dipping into – particularly about the works and



composers not documented in previous studies. If I would probably turn to others for a general overview and a more succinct examination of the genre in context (Robert Adlington's chapter in 'The Cambridge Companion to Twentieth-Century Opera', for example), or for commentary on the works by Maxwell Davies and Birtwistle (not least Hall's own earlier studies), this book does offer an important reminder of the full range of inventive, colourful, provocative and often perplexing music theatre works created at the time.

*Christopher Scobie*

*Hubert Harry - Pianist: Fragmente eines Lebens, Fragments of a life*, edited by Rudolf Bossard, Heidi Harry and Roger Taylor. Lucerne: Pro Libro, 2013. 274 p. ISBN: 9783905927313. Hardcover. £35.99.

*Brio* readers with long memories might recall that in issue 41.1 there appeared an article by Roger Taylor entitled *From the Hebrides to the Harrys: a discovery of Hubert Harry*.<sup>1</sup> In it Roger described the epiphanic moment when, holidaying in Scotland, he first encountered a recording by the pianist Hubert Harry on his car radio: "... and after just a few bars I pull over to what sounds like wonderful piano playing". Further research led him, not just to more recordings by Harry, but contact with the pianist and his wife Heidi in Switzerland, where Harry had spent most of his professional career.

Nearly a decade after his *Brio* article, and three years after Harry's death in 2010, Roger fittingly appears as a contributor to this substantial book, edited by Harry's widow. He contributes a chapter on Harry's childhood and early years. Born in Dalton in Furness in 1927, Harry was the child of musical parents and showed exceptional talent at an early age. He went on to study piano at Manchester's Matthey School of Music, the institution founded by Walter Carroll for the training of music teachers and which was to become the Northern School of Music. Here his teacher was Hilda Collens, the School's Principal, and he later received tuition from Clifford Curzon in his capacity as a visiting tutor. Curzon was instrumental in arranging for Harry to continue his studies, after war service, in Lucerne, the city which was to become his home and where he lived with his Swiss wife Heidi, pursuing an active concert career in the post-war years.

Roger's is a substantial and meticulously researched biographical section in a book which mixes similar biographical detail with personal reminiscences from those who knew Harry. His widow Heidi, for example, takes up the

<sup>1</sup> Roger Taylor, 'From the Hebrides to the Harrys: a discovery of Hubert Harry', *Brio* 41:1 (Spring/Summer 2004), 12-25.

biographical thread where Roger's leaves off and offers a discussion of his years in Switzerland but, understandably, this account, much shorter than Roger's, is already moving in the direction of a personal memoir. Other chapters are more explicitly thematic, dealing with such topics as Harry as piano teacher, his relationship with Steinway or discussing his concert tours and recordings. It has to be admitted that this tends towards creating a certain lack of balance, not least between the objective and the subjective.

There is, however, one feature of the book where a lack of balance becomes seriously problematic. No doubt to appeal to a wider readership, it contains chapters in both English and German. This might not have proved an obstacle to English readers without knowledge of German, had an editorial decision been taken to produce a book that was wholly bilingual. For some reason, this was not the case. As a result, some chapters are in English, some in German, and some in both. Roger's chapter, for example, appears in both languages, but a reading of the two chapters *Der Klavierpädagoge* and *Piano teacher* reveals them to be two distinct pieces of writing by separate authors. More frustratingly, Rudolf Bossard's substantial chapter *Der Konzertpianist* is in German only; the book comes with a separately printed and sizeable abstract, but it remains just that, an abstract and consequently lacks much of the detail of the chapter proper. Chapters devoted to a discography of Harry's recordings and his activities as a composer are in German only.

It is a pity that this linguistic inconsistency might well deter English readers from investigating further what remains a very handsome and copiously illustrated book. Nevertheless, it is good to see Roger Taylor's unwavering enthusiasm for Harry's pianism bear such fruit, and his contribution alone occupies an important niche in the as yet under-explored musical life of Manchester and the North West in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Geoff Thomason

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