

Chapter 14: The London of Handel and Hogarth

Anthology Repertory:

- No. 23: George Frideric Handel, *Rinaldo*, HWV7a: Act I, scenes 6, 7, and 9 (1711)
- No 24: Handel, *Saul*, HWV 53: Act I, scene 3 (1738/9)

Repertory Discussed:

- Ex. 14.1, Handel, “*Utrecht*” *Te Deum*, HWV 278 (1713)
- Ex. 14.3 Handel, *Saul*, Act 3, scene 1

General

- Chapter 14 focuses on music in London in the eighteenth century, the impact of Handel and Handel’s music, and notions of English musical culture apparent in the engravings of William Hogarth. Topics include:
 - Economics of music in eighteenth-century London
 - Handel’s position politically, socially, and musical within this dynamic musical culture.
 - The introduction of Italian opera and the development of an English style, identified with Handel

Commerce and Politics in Eighteenth-Century London

- Handel arrives in London at age of 25 and takes advantage of the unparalleled economic opportunities for composers.
- Demonstrates his skill in grappling with complex political situation at the end of the War of Spanish Succession.
- Composition of “*Utrecht*” *Te Deum* and *Jubilate* commemorating the Peace of Utrecht, while politically risky, established a quintessentially English choral music style that he would use through his career, particularly later in the oratorios.

Italian Music in London

- Even before the arrival of Handel, London had a passionate, if sometimes ambivalent relationship with Italian music.
 - Popularity of Corelli (Chapter 11), Francesco Geminiani
 - Pietro Castrucci (1679-1752), example of Italian performer who succeeded in London, ultimately dying in poverty.
- Italian vs. English opera prior to Handel’s arrival
 - Thomas Clayton, *Arsione* (1705) and Giovanni Bononcini’s *Camilla* at Drury Lane
- Split between English and Italian theaters: John Vanbrugh, designer of Queen’s Theatre, gets monopoly for Italian opera in 1707, with English entertainments going to Drury Lane.

- Handel's *Rinaldo*, first Italian opera written for the English stage.
 - Poetry by Aaron Hill with impresario J.D. Heidegger, who would later be Handel's business partner.
 - Story based on episodes from Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata* (see Lully's *Armide*, Chapter 7).
 - Musical material borrowed from some of Handel's earlier compositions (Chapter 11).
 - Tremendous success both musically and theatrically.
- Dramatic pacing and the da capo aria
 - Stylized form of musico-dramatic organization: an initial A section (the setting of the first section of poetic text) followed by a contrasting B section (second section of poet text). The A section (da capo) is repeated, usually ornamented.
 - Exemplified by the aria "Cara sposa": the A section expresses Rinaldo's internal grief at the loss of his beloved, the B section his determination to take action to gain her back, and then a return to the expression of grief.
 - Note Handel's withholding of continuo in the opening of the aria and use of chromaticism to express sorrow.
- Challenges of Italian opera in London, despite success of *Rinaldo*.
 - Disbanding of first company in 1717 (competition and mismanagement)
 - Royal Academy of Music, established by Handel in 1720, runs for eight seasons until 1728.
 - Begins Second Academy with Heidegger in 1729, ultimately fails in attempt to compete with Opera of the Nobility, a competing company patronized by Prince of Wales.
 - Rise of the *prima donna* and culture of star singers, which caused public feuds (sometimes publicity stunts), competition, and high salaries that were a financial strain.
 - Rise in popularity of Ballad operas, such as *The Beggar's Opera*, which provided an alternative form of entertainment. See Hogarth's satires of English appetites for theater.
 - Handel withdraws from Italian opera in 1741, though it continues to have a strong foothold in London with composers such as Johann Adolf Hasse and J.C. Bach.
- Handel and the English Oratorio
 - Sacred music dramas without staging or costumes.
 - *Esther* (1732)
 - Draws on style used for English ceremonial music (particularly music written for the coronation)
 - Topics drawn typically from Old Testament, with the Israelites as symbol of the British nation.
 - *Saul*, HWV 53 premieres at King's Theater in 1739

- One of four librettos written by Charles Jennens, author of *Messiah*
 - Note representation of Saul's madness
- With the Handel finds a musical voice that transcends political divisions in London.