

NEWSLETTER

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American Handel Society

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KEISER'S OCTAVIA AT BOSTON EARLY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2025

Kenneth Nott



*Emőke Baráth as Octavia in the BEMF production of Keiser's Octavia.
Photo by Kathy Wittman.*

In 1702 seventeen-year-old Handel was at a career crossroads. Having outgrown the limited opportunities of his hometown Halle, he carefully considered his next professional move. Given his newfound love of opera, Italy seemed the most logical, long-term destination. But, as John Mainwaring memorably put it, Handel needed a “longer purse” to make that journey possible. The Prussian court in Berlin was one obvious, closer option, but Handel chose Hamburg, a free city (thus no court) with a thriving musical and operatic culture that attracted young, ambitious musicians like himself.

The dominant musical figure in Hamburg was Reinhard Keiser (1674–1739), probably one of the best-known and least-known figures in the history of Baroque Opera. He is well known because, for a little over two years, young Handel played in his Hamburg opera orchestra and composed his first operas for the company. Keiser also employed Johann Mattheson and was friends with Telemann. Yet, try to find a modern recording of even one complete Keiser opera and you will come up empty handed (see below for a remedy). Until a few years ago, one also had to go to Handel sources for Keiser's scores: either a supplementary Händel-Gesellschaft volume edited by Friederich Chrysander or more recently published

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REPORT FROM HALLE 2025

Graydon Beeks

The Handel Festival in Halle took place from June 6–15, 2025, which marked a return to its earlier format of a single week bookended by two weekends. This year's festival was planned by Bernd Feuchtnier, Interim Director of the Festival and the Handel House since 2023, who died unexpectedly in February. In his brief time in Halle, he earned respect for his leadership and made many friends; he will be much missed. The festival was supervised by the new permanent Director, Florian Amort, who began his duties on April 1. Amort, though relatively young, brings with him extensive relevant experience and a fund of ideas and enthusiasm, which should serve him well.

The theme of the festival was “A Fresh Wind: The Young Handel in Italy” and the first concert, on Thursday, June 5, consisted of *Il convito d'Alessandro*, a shortened version of *Alexander's Feast* sung to an Italian translation. It was first performed in Florence in April 1768 under the sponsorship of George Clavering, 3rd Earl Cowper, who over the next four years arranged for the first Italian performances of *Messiah*, *Acis and Galatea*, and *Judas Maccabaeus*. This evening's performance was a qualified success. The Handel Festival Orchestra played very well under the direction of its music director, Attilio Cremonesi, although I thought that several movements were just a bit too fast for the venue. The MDR-Rundfunkchor sang with confidence but from where I was sitting its diction was not clear, which may have been a result of the difficult acoustics of the Dom. Soprano Silvia Porcellini sang sweetly but her voice too often lacked a core, while the singing of tenor Luigi Morassi was unrelievedly loud.

After the concert, the Handel Prize of the City of Halle was presented to the Handel Festival Orchestra in honor of its contribution to the Handel Festival and to the understanding and enjoyment of Handel's music. In his Laudatio, Axel Köhler reviewed the founding of orchestra in 1993 as an early instrument ensemble within the Staatskapelle Halle, the modern instrument concert and opera orchestra, and stressed

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facsimiles edited by John Roberts. Fortunately, through the efforts of Hansjörg Drauschke of the Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg, new critical editions of Keiser's *Desiderius*, *Nebucadnezzar*, and *Almira* have now been published (see review by John Roberts in *Eighteenth-Century Music*, March 2020).

Enter Boston Early Music Festival (BEMF) and their biennial Centerpiece Opera for 2025: Keiser's *Octavia*. The opera was well chosen. It features Emperor Nero and Ancient Rome's most famous dysfunctional family—a familiar cast of characters appearing in numerous operatic adaptations. But what makes Keiser's setting intriguing is that it followed quickly on the heels of young Handel's own version of a similar story. 1705 in Hamburg began with a successful performance of Handel's *Almira* (BEMF 2013) followed by *Nero*; both operas being mounted during Keiser's absence from the city. The score for Handel's *Nero* is lost, but it appears that it was not a success. Keiser returned later that year and immediately staged *Octavia* in an elaborate, “pull out all the stops” production that might have been saying to the young upstart, “This is how it's done!” AHS Board member John Roberts gave a pre-concert lecture before one of the *Octavia* performances (which I was unable to attend). A colleague who heard the lecture told me about Roberts's suggestion that *Octavia*'s librettist, Barthold Feind, may have planted a not so subtly worded message to Handel in an aria sung (appropriately enough) by Davus, the opera's “fool.” Feind's aria text (with translation by Stephen Stubbs in the BEMF 2025 program book) is as follows:

Will man gerne Kronen tragen,
Thut man wohl,
Es dem Käyser anzulegen.
Das geht ein,
Dieweil allein
Nur rein Käyser krönen soll.

If one would like to wear a crown,
One would do well,
To tell the Emperor.
That is true,
Because only
An Emperor can bestow a crown.

The German word for emperor (Käyser) is a homophone for the older composer's last name (Keiser), and if this aria was directed at Handel, he likely got the message. About a year later, he apparently had saved up enough “purse” to make the trip to Italy. Never one to forget a slight, his very successful *Agrippina* composed for Venice in 1709 (featuring the same dysfunctional Roman family) was filled with multiple borrowings from Keiser's operas, including *Octavia*. Maybe the young upstart was saying, “This is how it's done!”

Feind's adaptation of the story of Nero and Octavia is a blend of historical fact, mythology, and the supernatural, all creatively reimaged. The chronically unfaithful Nero has his eye on Ormæna, wife of Tiridates, King of Armenia. Nero commands his wife Octavia to commit suicide, but she is prevented from doing so by the rebellious Piso, who is in love with her. The philosopher Seneca advises Octavia to disguise herself as her own ghost, forcing Nero to repent of his misdeeds. Nero repents, the plot to overthrow him is quelled, and all ends triumphantly thanks to virtuous Octavia. Despite what sounds like an unpromising, even silly storyline, Keiser's beautiful and at times intensely expressive setting, combined

with a superlative, committed performance by BEMF cast, directors, and orchestra, produced an impressive and often riveting result.

What I first noticed about *Octavia* is that it doesn't sound like a (typical) Baroque opera. The male leads (with the exception of Tiridates) are basses or tenors, so the treble-dominated vocal sound of *opera seria* is absent, or at least significantly altered. Nero is a strong, powerful bass, very different from the more refined, androgynous sound of a castrato *primo uomo*. The orchestral palette is similarly different: there are horns (used for the first time in an opera) but no trumpets. As with the French, there is heavy reliance on double reeds: oboes frequently double violins, and bassoons (as many as five) are given prominence. These timbres must have made an impression on young Handel. He similarly introduced horns to London, frequently called on oboes to double violins, and gave bassoons several memorable moments: “Scherza infida” in *Ariodante* and “To thee, thou glorious son of worth” in *Theodora*, to name but two examples. The BEMF orchestra boasts many members who are specialists in their field, including percussionist Michelle Humphreys who wrote an important dissertation on “Performance practice for percussion in French Baroque opera” (2008). You'll search Chrysander's score in vain for notated timpani/percussion parts in *Octavia*, yet early in act 1, the character Piso explicitly asks, “Should we let the timpani sound?” and, lo and behold, we heard timpani. There were other percussion moments that effectively underscored the mood of a number of the opera's scenes. Overall, the orchestra was superb. Credit must be given to Paul O'Dette and Stephen Stubbs (musical directors) and Robert Mealy (orchestra director). In their hands, the BEMF orchestra has become one of the finest period-instrument ensembles in the world.

Not only does *Octavia* not sound like a typical Baroque opera, but the drama also doesn't unfold in the usual *opera seria* manner. There is not the expected parade of *secco* recitative-*da capo* aria-exit sequence. The scene structure is more varied, with arias (some in German, some in Italian) not always serving as the culmination of a given scene, and there are very few “exit” arias. This reminded me more of French or late-seventeenth-century Italian opera. Which is not to say that there aren't important, effective arias. Octavia's “Die Eifersuch bläset im Herten” (Jealousy blows into the heart) in act 2 is a showstopper, replete with horns and timpani hammering repeated-note, *stile concitato* figures to depict the struggle playing out in her heart. Emöke Baráth brought down the house with a masterful rendition of this aria, performed as a final number before the intermission (more on this below).

Most outstanding of many wonderful moments is the act 3 monologue for Nero followed by Octavia's ghostly apparition. The impact begins with Feind's text, sometimes echoing Shakespeare (“Nero ist nicht Nero mehr!”—Nero is no longer Nero!), other times even Christ on the cross (“Mich dürst”—I'm thirsty). When Nero sees the spirit of Octavia, he blurts out like doubting Thomas, “laß schauen deine Wunden” (Let me see your wounds!). Keiser's intensely chromatic harmonies for this striking *accompagnato* perfectly underscore the agony and torment of the scene. Clearly Handel paid attention and operatic moments like this help explain why Hamburg would become in a few decades the center of the proto-Romantic *Empfindsamkeit* movement.

Douglas Ray Williams in the role of Nero manifested a tremendous range of singing and acting, from arrogant,

FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK

spoiled imperial brat, to tormented soul searching, and finally a redeemed, clement sovereign. Emöke Baráth (soprano) as virtuous Octavia demonstrated an equally wide range of emotions. These included the aforementioned “Die Eifersuch bläset im Herten” (Jealousy blows into the heart), the poignant “Treu geliebter, gute Nacht” (Most faithfully beloved, good night!), and a gripping suicide scene—featuring an accompagnato text with another biblical reference: “Hinweg, hinweg, du Dornen schwangre Krone” (Away, away! You crown of thorns!). The countertenor Michael Skarke skillfully navigated the tricky high tenor role of Tiridates which calls for castrato-like falsetto as well as a fuller tenor voice. The entire cast was exceptional, without a single weak performance. In addition to the singers mentioned, others deserving recognition are Amanda Forsythe (Ormöena), Sherezade Panthaki (Clelia), Aaron Sheehan (Piso), Hannah De Priest (Livia), Christian Immler (Seneca), Richard Pittsinger (Fabius), Jason McStoots (Lepidus), and Marc Molomot (Davus).

Opera, even Baroque opera, is the quintessential *Gesamtkunstwerk* or total artwork, requiring the collaboration and cooperation of multiple art forms. The BEMF *Octavia* both looked and sounded wonderful. Boston's Emerson Cutler Majestic Theatre is no Drottningholm, but with skill and a little theater magic, it came close to looking like it. Everything worked seamlessly together: scenery, costumes, dancing, gestures, instruments, and voices. Exceptionally talented individuals worked together to achieve a beautiful, collective result: Gilbert Blin (stage director), Marie-Nathalie Lacoursière (dance director), Hubert Hazebroucq (choreographer), Anna Kjellsdotter (costume designer), Alexander McCargar (set designer), and Kelly Martin (lighting designer). The printed program book featured essays that demonstrated a thoughtful, well-researched, and coherent vision that guided all aspects of the production.

My only complaint, and apologies for sounding a bit churlish, is that *Octavia* was performed with only one intermission, dividing the three-act opera into two “parts”: act 1 through the first part of act 2, intermission, and the remainder of act 2 followed by act 3. I fully understand the practical nature of this compromise. Contemporary audiences have their limits, and another intermission would have meant a longer running time and less of Keiser's music. Still, it would have been good to have been able to experience the arc of each act as originally written. But there is a technological remedy! BEMF has announced *ENCORE! Virtual Festival*, which for a subscription fee, *Octavia* and other 2025 Festival items will be made available for viewing September 5–28, 2025. So, it will be possible (with libretto/score in hand) to pause the performance at the end of acts 1 and 2 to simulate the original structure.

I have often wondered what kind of opera composer Handel would have become, had he not gone to Hamburg first. BEMF *Octavia* helped me see what the young Saxon had learned during his brief stay: the role of powerful, harmonically adventurous accompanied recitatives, an appreciation for a wide range of orchestral colors, and even the courage (imagination?) to depart from the Italian *secco* recitative—*da capo* aria—exit formula. At the same time, my understanding of and appreciation for Keiser as an opera composer, apart from his influence on Handel, was greatly enhanced by this production. Charles Rosen once famously said that historical performance should be a performance, “not an archaeological dig.” The BEMF Centerpiece Opera more than satisfied that maxim. To quote an old Roman saying, it both delighted and instructed!

As summer 2025 moves toward its end, American Handel Society members have much of interest to look forward to. I would like to highlight three events here. First will be the return of the next series of *Encounters with Eighteenth Century Music—A Virtual Forum*, co-sponsored by the AHS with our sister societies devoted to 18th-century music. The first of these online events will take place on Wednesday, September 10, 2025, from 4:30–6:00 p.m. EDT and will deal with the topic “The Challenges of Critical Editions.” The second will take place on Monday, October 27th from 4:00–5:30 p.m. EDT and will consider the topic “Material Girls: Music and Capitalism in the Age of Revolutions.” More information can be found on the Encounters website (<https://encounters.secm.org>) and reminders will be sent to the AHS email list.

Second, the *Fourteenth Handel Institute Conference* will take place November 21–23, 2025, in London. This conference will now be held every other year, rather than every third year. Further details will be forthcoming on the Handel Institute website (<https://handelinstitute.org/conference/2025>). Concerts in the London Handel Festival Autumn Series are scheduled on either side of the Conference. The first is the London Handel Players 25th Anniversary Concert on Wednesday, November 19, 2025, and the second is a performance of *Messiah* on Thursday, December 4, 2025. Both performances are at 7:00 p.m. in St. George's, Hanover Square. Advance sales have already begun, but tickets may still be available. And to provide an additional temptation to visit London in November, the *41st Annual Conference on Music in 18th-Century Britain* will take place in the Foundling Museum on Friday, November 25, 2025.

Third, the application deadline for the next cycle of J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowships will be March 1, 2026, and the full announcement is printed elsewhere in this issue of the *Newsletter*. The Knapp Fellowship is offered by the AHS in alternate years to support scholarly projects related to Handel and his world, and preference is given to proposals from graduate students, scholars in the early stages of their careers, and independent scholars with no source of institutional support. This is an important effort in outreach by the Society, and I urge all members to identify potential recipients and encourage them to apply.

Finally, as always, I would like to remind any members who have not paid their membership dues for 2025—or any potential new members—that it is still possible to do so either online through the AHS website or by submitting the completed membership form found elsewhere in the *Newsletter*. Please remember that dues and gifts to the Society are the primary sources of support for the Knapp Fellowship, the *Newsletter*, the AHS website, and most other ongoing activities of the Society.

— Graydon Beeks

how unusual this structure remains. He also stressed the contribution made by former music director Howard Arman to the development of the ensemble.

On Friday, June 6, the premiere of a new production of *Agrippina* took place in the Opera House. The staging by Walter Sutcliffe set the opera in a modern-day Las Vegas Casino and conveyed the basic story without a great deal of unnecessary sex and violence. I found the treatment of the characters superficial, which is perhaps slightly unfair. They are not, after all, fully developed figures, but they are not cartoon characters either and need to convey at least some emotional depth. Agrippina is an awful person, but she is genuinely ambitious for her son Nero to become Emperor; supplying him with cocaine seemed unwarranted. Ottone heroically saves the Emperor Claudio, and he seems to be sincerely in love with Poppea; his portrayal needs to present a certain *gravitas*. In many ways, the most successful characterization in this production was that of Poppea who, after trying too hard to be sexy in the first act, realizes that she can put her talents to better use manipulating her suitors for her own benefit.

Romilia Lichtenstein, who sang the title role, has had a distinguished career. The *prima donna* of the house since 1997, she has sung leading roles in new productions of Handel operas almost every year in addition to her wide-ranging standard repertoire. Her voice is not as fresh as it once was, but in the big dramatic moments she is still commanding, and her rapid passagework is still impressive. Unfortunately, as Agrippina her familiar repertoire of comic reactions was overindulged. Her onstage colleagues were all younger and less experienced, and their singing was variable. Bass Ki-Hyun Park had the right voice for Claudio and mostly avoided his tendency to over-sing. Soprano Vanessa Waldhart had the measure of Poppea's music, but countertenor Christopher Ainslie as Ottone failed to convey the emotional content of his. The singing and acting of countertenor Leandro Marziotte as Nero were both annoying, but then, Nero is an annoying figure. The Festival Orchestra again distinguished itself, and there was not an organ or percussion instrument in sight. Some of Laurence Cummings's tempi in the first act felt slow but the action and the music flowed better as the night went on.

Saturday morning began at 10 a.m. with the Festival Lecture in which Prof. Silke Leopold surveyed Handel's experiences in Italy. This was followed by the membership meeting of Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, at which I presented greetings on behalf of the AHS. That evening there was a concert performance of *Poro, re dell'Indie* in the Ulrichskirche given by the Polish ensemble {oh!} Orkiestra directed from the violin by Martyna Pastuszka. Max Emanuel Cencic as Poro and Hugo Hymas as Alessandro were excellent, while Lucile Richardot's singing as Erissena was impressive but curiously uncommitted. Audience favorite Julia Lezhneva as Cleofide blotted her copy book with indistinct diction and overlong, self-indulgent cadenzas. The orchestra played well, but there were too many added arias, some of which actually were performed in later performances of the opera, and invented instrumental descants, which were not.

Sunday, June 8, brought the first of two concerts featuring music by Italian composers that Handel had quarried in *Israel in Egypt*. Here we heard the Te Deum by Francesco Antonio Urlo preceded by an unrelated and unremarkable violin concerto by Francesco Maria Veracini, well played by Ying Zhang. The Te Deum was excessively sectional with each

section tending to outstay its welcome. The general impression was that Handel borrowed the best musical ideas and improved them. The Staatskapelle Halle playing on modern instruments at a sharp A=440 was incredibly loud and the Marktkirche acoustics are difficult at best. Orchestra ensemble was not helped by the over-enthusiastic conducting of Reinhard Goebel. The Te Deum did provide the opportunity to hear sixteen soloists drawn from the MDR-Rundfunkchor, and they acquitted themselves well.

On Monday, June 9, I attended the Ecumenical Festival Service in the Marktkirche at which Anna Scholl, the new Cantor, performed the Organ Concerto in G Minor, Op. 4, no. 1, divided between the prelude and postlude, assisted by a small string ensemble from Collegium musicum 1750. They were joined by soprano Olivia Miller in two cantatas by Antonio Vivaldi on the theme of God in Nature. A very clean player with a good sense of Handelian tempi and phrasing, Scholl bids fair to uphold the musical standards of the church.

Later that day, at the Goethe-Theater in Bad Lauchstädt, I heard the second performance of *Octavia*, composed by Reinhard Keiser for the Hamburg Opera in 1705. The young cast all sang well, with outstanding performances by the soprano Johanna Kaldewei as Octavia, baritone Tomáš Král as Nero, and countertenor Georg Bochow as Tiridates. The stage director Tilman Hecker adopted the premise that a young cast has assembled in a disused theater to rehearse Keiser's opera, thus obviating the need for sets and theatrical costumes. Fortunately, he also did without stressing backstage romances or yielding to other temptations to upstage the principal characters, allowing the complicated story to be told clearly. Keiser was a master of instrumental color, and Handel evidently paid attention to *Octavia*, borrowing not only general principles but also a good deal of music which reappeared in *Agrippina* and other works. The orchestra provided by the lauten compagney BERLIN under the direction of Wolfgang Katschner was limited by the size of pit but gave a good account of the music. The famous aria with five bassoons was cleverly staged with the singer and the bassoonists on stage. The opera was given largely uncut. This meant a long sit on hard benches, but it was worth it. One can imagine the impression the opera would make in a truly opulent production with a larger orchestra.

On Tuesday, June 10, I missed the second concert of Italian sources of musical borrowings in *Israel in Egypt*, featuring a setting of the Magnificat by Dionigi Erba and the serenata *Qual prodigio è ch'io miri* by Alessandro Stradella, which took place during the first afternoon of the Conference. That evening, however, I did hear the performance of Handel's complete oratorio, including the modified Funeral Anthem for Queen Caroline as the first part, given by Le Concert Spirituel under the direction of Hervé Niquet in the Marktkirche. This was not a success. One of my mentors stressed that the two key elements needed in a performance of Handel's vocal music were correct tempo and good diction. In this case, every movement was taken at such a clip that the soloists and the MDR-Rundfunkchor had no chance to execute the latter. Only the tenor soloist, Guy Cutting, successfully managed to convey the words. The orchestra coped with the speeds, but the undersized string section had no chance of balancing the winds, brass, and chorus. A missed opportunity.

This year's conference, which took place from Tuesday to Thursday, June 10–12, opened with the presentation of the International Handel Research Prize to Joe Lockwood in recognition of his doctoral dissertation on "The Performance

and Reception of Handel's Music in Revolutionary North America." Dr. Lockwood then presented a paper that discussed the significance of Handel's music—especially performances of *Zadok the Priest* and the "Hallelujah" chorus from *Messiah*—in pre-revolutionary Boston. The conference itself was centered on two Round Table discussions focusing on "Handel's Italian Texts and His Librettists" which took place on Wednesday morning. The participants discussed, among other topics, the difficulties of editing 18th-century Italian texts and the possibility of creating a digital edition of the librettos in an envisaged Digital Handel Portal.

Arrayed on either side of the Round Tables were papers on a wide range of topics, and among the speakers were a number of AHS members. John Roberts suggested that Barthold Brockes, himself, may have commissioned Handel to compose his setting of the *Brockes Passion*. Donald Burrows clarified details surrounding the building and dedication of the Foundling Hospital Chapel. Wendy Heller illustrated how the reviser of the libretto for *Admeto*, by retaining surprisingly long passages of recitative from Antonio Salvi's source libretto while allowing room for Handel's expansive arias, provided the opera with its unique character. I suggested that some of the keyboard fugues later included in the first set of harpsichord suites published in 1720 and the collection of Six Fugues or Voluntaries published in 1735 might have been the "overtures to be played before the first lesson" at Cannons referred to in a letter of September 1717.

As is always the case at these Festivals, there were more events than one person could attend. I missed the recital by Anna Bonitatibus in the Leopoldina, the staged version of the cantata *Clori, Tirsi e Fileno* at Bad Lauchstädt, the serenata *La Santissima Annunziata* of Alessandro Scarlatti, and the gala concert by the Three Countertenors, among others. I did manage to visit the splendid exhibition *Handel in Rome* curated

by Dr. Juliane Riepe, which will remain in place in the Händel-Haus until January 7, 2026.

Next year's Festival will take place from June 5–14, 2026, with the theme "Mannsbilder: Helden, Herrscher, Herzensbrecher" (Male Figures: Heroes, Rulers, Heartbreakers). Highlights will include a new production of *Rinaldo* at the Halle Opera directed by Walter Sutcliffe and another of *Giustino* at the Goethe-Theater in Bad Lauchstädt. There will be two opportunities to see *Ariodante*—once in a staged version with puppets by the Compagnia Marionettistica Carlo Colla e Figli of Milan and again in a concert performance with Magdalena Kožená in the title role—as well as performances of *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, and *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo*. Tickets should be available from November 2025.

CALL FOR PROPOSALS: BIENNIAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN BACH SOCIETY

October 1–4, 2026
"Celebrating Bach"

The 2026 American Bach Society (ABS) meeting will take place at Baldwin Wallace University (BW) in Berea, Ohio. BW is home to the first collegiate Bach Festival in the United States, the Riemenschneider Bach Institute (RBI), and *BACH: The Journal of the Riemenschneider Bach Institute*. In recognition of BW's long history of promoting Bach, the meeting will be centered around the idea of "celebrating Bach." The ABS invites individual paper proposals (30 minutes) that critically investigate the past, present, and future of the many ways in which we celebrate Bach. Papers on all aspects of Bach research are welcome; preference will be given to those related to the conference theme. Topics related to this theme could include but are not limited to:

- Bach festivals, societies, museums, competitions, or websites
- Visual celebrations of Bach (monuments, postage stamps, films, etc.)
- Bach anniversaries
- Private and public collections of Bach's works
- Publications, recording projects, or documentaries highlighting Bach
- Compositions inspired by Bach
- Bach celebrated in popular culture
- Bach as part of cultural or political celebrations
- The future of Bach celebrations and studies in a changing world

Please send your proposal as an abstract of up to 300 words emphasizing the results of research as a Word document [last name_first name.docx] to vicepresident@americanbachsociety.org by **January 15, 2026**. Please include your name, institutional affiliation or city of residence, and email address, and indicate any audio, visual, or other needs for the presentation. Applicants will be notified of the program committee's decision by March 1, 2026. Note that all papers will be given in-person; therefore, the American Bach Society will offer subsidies for travel for papers accepted from scholars without institutional support.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS: THE J. MERRILL KNAPP RESEARCH FELLOWSHIP 2026

The Board of Directors of The American Handel Society invites applications for the J. Merrill Knapp Research Fellowship to support scholarly projects related to Handel and his world. One or more fellowships may be awarded in a calendar year up to a total of \$2,000. Requests for funding may include, but not limited to, purchase of microfilms, travel for research, and production expenses for publications. This fellowship may be used on its own or to augment other grants or fellowships.

In awarding the Knapp Fellowship, preference will be given to graduate students, scholars in the early stages of their careers, and independent scholars with no source of institutional support. The deadline for applications is **March 1, 2026**. There is no application form. Each applicant should submit an outline of the project, a budget showing how and when the funds will be used, and a description of other funding for the same project applied for and/or received. In addition, applicants should have two letters of recommendation sent directly to the Knapp Fellowship Committee. Electronic submissions are preferred; letters of recommendation and the application can be emailed to **Dr. Ileri E. Chávez-Bárceñas** at ichavezb@bowdoin.edu.



Dr. Joe Lockwood (Newcastle University) was awarded the **2025 International Handel Research Prize** on June 10, 2025, for his dissertation, “The Performance and Reception of Handel’s Music in Revolutionary North America.” Congratulations!

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

Renew your membership for 2025 today! To renew online, go to <https://www.americanhandelsociety.org/join>, or renew by mail using the membership form on page 7 of this *Newsletter*. Go Green and opt to receive the *Newsletter* via email.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Encounters with Eighteenth-Century Music

“The Challenges of Critical Editions”

Wednesday, September 10, 2025

4:30–6:00 p.m. EDT

“Material Girls: Music and Capitalism in the Age of Revolutions”

Monday, October 27, 2025

4:00–5:30 p.m. EDT

<https://encounters.secm.org>

*Registration is free but required

Fourteenth Handel Institute Conference

November 21–23, 2025

Bridewell Hall

14 Bride Lane, Fleet Street

London, EC4Y 8EQ

<https://handelinstitute.org/conference/2025>

Halle Handel Festival 2026

June 5–14, 2026

“Male Figures: Heroes, Rulers, Heartbreakers”

<https://haendelhaus.de/hfs/startseite>

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I agree to have the following listed in the Directory of AHS Members (check as appropriate): ☐ Address ☐ Phone ☐ Email

Donors and members of Rinaldo, Cleopatra, Theodora, and Messiah Circles — I consent to publishing my name on the AHS newsletter and website:

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Anonymous

I would like my copy of the Newsletter delivered: ☐ electronically ☐ by mail

Class of Membership — Circle applicable cell(s) (for current calendar year, unless otherwise specified)	\$	£	€
Regular	40	30	35
Joint (one set of publications)	50	38	44
Student or Retired	20	15	18
Rinaldo Circle	75	55	66
Cleopatra Circle	125	95	110
Theodora Circle	250	190	220
Messiah Circle (Lifetime membership)	500	400	450
Subscriber (Institutions Only)	48	36	42
Donation – Travel Grant, Serwer Lecture, Knapp Fellowship, Traver Concert, ongoing activities (please specify intent)			
Friends of the Handel Institute, London*			
Regular	30	20	-
Student	15	10	-
Membership in the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft*			
Regular	45	-	40
Student*	20	-	15
Dual Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Göttinger-Händel-Gesellschaft*†			
Regular	75	-	65
Regular (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	115	-	95
Student	27	-	21
Student (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	56	-	46
Dual Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Händel-Gesellschaft Karlsruhe*			
Regular	63	-	55
Student*	23	-	17.5
Triple Membership – Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft / Göttinger-Händel-Gesellschaft / Händel-Gesellschaft Karlsruhe			
Regular	93	-	80
Regular (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	125	-	105
Student	30	-	24
Student (with <i>Göttinger Händel Beiträge</i>)	60	-	48.5
TOTAL REMITTANCE			

* This organization does not have a reduced rate for retirees.

† This organization has additional categories of Regular Membership that require a higher membership fee but provide additional benefits (see its website). Arrangements for these other categories may be made directly with Mrs. Pomeroy Kelly (see below).

Those paying in dollars should make their checks payable to AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY and mail them to Marjorie Pomeroy Kelly, Treasurer, AMERICAN HANDEL SOCIETY, 49 Christopher Hollow Road, Sandwich, MA 02563. Those wishing to pay in Euros should remit to Stephan Blaut, Treasurer, Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, Gr. Nikolaistrasse 5, 06108 Halle (Saale), Federal Republic of Germany, and indicate that the payment is for the account of the AHS. Friends of the Handel Institute, London may also pay their AHS dues in sterling by making their checks payable to THE HANDEL INSTITUTE and mailing them to Ms. Sylvia Levi, Hon. Treasurer, The Handel Institute, 254A Kew Road, Richmond TW9 3EG, United Kingdom, with the appropriate annotation. Please do not send checks in Euros or sterling directly to the AHS as we are no longer able to process them.

Online payment options are available at <https://www.americanhandelsociety.org/join/>

Payments in dollars for GFH or HI memberships must be received before May 15.

American Handel Society

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