Handel and the Violin

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In the vast compositional output of George Frideric Handel, the violin figures prominently as a solo instrument in concertos, suites and sonatas, in complex obbligatos for operatic arias, and in accompaniments for cantatas. Handel had an intimate practical and theoretical knowledge of the instrument, having been exposed to numerous schools of playing from an early age; he knew well the limits to which its technical capabilities could be pushed. Having commenced his formal musical studies in Halle under the guidance of Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, who taught him keyboard and composition, he began to study violin from the age of twelve.  

Zachow introduced him to a wide variety of national styles and to works by notable composers. Such a well-rounded musical education would stand Handel in good stead for the early stages of his professional career, which would begin as a violinist in the Hamburg opera. Later, his understanding of the instrument would broaden considerably as he travelled to Rome, the home of one of Europe’s great schools of violin-playing.

His skill on the violin, however, was swiftly overshadowed by his command of the keyboard: ‘And it must not be forgot,’ wrote his first biographer, John Mainwaring, ‘that, though he was well acquainted with the nature and management of the violin; yet his chief practice, and greatest mastery was on the organ and harpsichord.’ From his days in Halle and Hamburg, throughout his Italian period and his career in England, the harpsichord and the organ were the instruments at which Handel most regularly conceived and brought forth his compositional inspiration, at which he tried and tested works by others, and from which he rehearsed and directed small- and large-scale works. By the time of his death, his last will and testament bequeathed a large harpsichord and a house-organ to his friends, but made no mention of any bowed string instruments.

In 1776, Sir John Hawkins stated that although Handel ‘had never been a master of the violin, and had discontinued the practice of it from the time he took to the harpsichord at Hamburg; yet, whenever he had a mind to try the effect of any of his compositions for that instrument, his manner of touching it was such as the ablest masters would have been glad to imitate.’ Handel seems to have retained considerable skill and interest in the violin, even though quite early in his life he had stopped playing it regularly. This short essay aims to revisit Handel’s somewhat limited career as a violinist, and his professional and personal contact with some of the greatest exponents of the instrument in the eighteenth century, among whom figure luminaries such as Arcangelo Corelli, Pietro Castucci, John Clegg, Francesco Geminiani, and Matthew Dubourg. It also considers aspects of the performance practice of Handel’s string music from the early to the late eighteenth century, with particular reference to evaluations by Dr Charles Burney and Sir John Hawkins. Handel may not have been a violinist-composer in the same league as a Corelli or a Geminiani, but his small- and large-scale compositions would nevertheless have a lasting impact on the world of string performance.

Handel the Violinist

Handel was a prodigious performer in his youth, before he ventured outside the German-speaking lands. However, the only time he was employed specifically to play the violin was for a brief period as second ripieno violinist in the Hamburg opera. This position was a natural entry-point to the music profession for a young man; it also gave Handel an insight into orchestral practices and the functioning of theatres. From this relatively humble post he soon displayed his precocity in composition: his colleague Johann Mattheson reported in Grundlage einer Ehren-Pforte (Hamburg, 1740), as quoted by Burney, that ‘at
first he only played a ripieno violin in the opera orchestra, and behaved as if he could not count five; being naturally inclined to dry humour. At this time he composed extreme long Airs and Cantatas without end; of which, though the harmony was excellent, yet true taste was wanting; which, however, he very soon acquired by his attendance at the opera.5

Handel had taken second fiddle in the literal sense, but soon did so in the figurative, as he was eager to demonstrate in the opera pit his continuo skills on the harpsichord. His enthusiasm became the catalyst for the famous duel fought with Mattheson on 5 December 1704 when he refused to give up his place to his rival. Such an incident proffered the opportunity for the biographer Mainwaring to offer an evaluation of Handel’s skill on the violin: ‘On what reasons HANDEL grounded his claim to the first harpsichord [in the Hamburg opera] I do not understand: he had played a violin in the orchestra, he had a good command on this instrument, and was known to have a better [command] on the other.’6 Burney reports, on the other hand, that Mattheson and Handel ‘had frequent amicable contests and trials of skill with each other; in which it appearing that they excelled on different instruments, HANDEL on the organ, and Mattheson on the harpsichord, they mutually agreed not to invade each other’s province, and faithfully observed this compact for five or six years.’7

Handel would have no reason to invade Mattheson’s ‘province’ following his move south to Rome in 1706. Once in the Eternal City, he was surrounded by some of the greatest champions of the Italian violin school: Arcangelo Corelli and his disciples, who were a great influence on the young composer. Christopher Hogwood notes that at this early stage of Handel’s career, his ‘writing for the violin (in the accompanied cantatas and La Resurrezione for example) ... shows the influence of Corelli’s playing and is, interestingly, more extrovert than anything in Corelli’s own published violin sonatas. Although the most crucial development in Handel’s composing during his time in Italy was primarily a refining and softening of his vocal style, his experiments with string sonorities, particularly their use for dramatic ends, were also seminal.8 In Rome, Handel had a large pool of skilled violinists on which he could rely, and he focused his energies on composition and the demonstration of his considerable virtuosity on the keyboard. The latter led to another duel, this time, thankfully, with only the weaponry of the keyboard; the competition was orchestrated by the wealthy patron Cardinal Ottoboni for one of his frequent musical gatherings, in which Handel and Domenico Scarlatti each flaunted their skills on both harpsichord and organ.9 Once again the palm went to Handel for his organ-playing.

While exhibiting his fine skills on the organ with solo passages in works such as Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno HWV 46a (May 1707) and his Salve Regina HWV 241 (June 1707),10 Handel also benefited from his exposure to the technical and compositional advances made on the violin by Corelli. This influence is detectable in Handel’s demanding writing for strings in his Italian cantatas, Psalm settings, and oratorios.11 Handel evidently wanted to show these Italian musicians what a German composer could do, working within Italian genres and pushing their boundaries.12 From his early Roman period survives a rather anomalous work: the ‘Sonata a 5’ in B flat major HWV 288 (c1707), scored for solo violin, two oboes, strings and basso continuo, which Donald Burrows describes as ‘the one indisputable example of a concerto from Handel’s Italian years.’13 This was presumably intended for performance by Corelli; passages of pure brilliance in the final movement are no doubt designed to display the technical capacities of the soloist.14

While in Rome, Handel demonstrated the cosmopolitan nature of his musical training; in the original version of Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno HWV 46a, he flummoxed the Italians through his employment of French overture style:15

There was ... something in his manner so very different from what the Italians had been used to, that those who were seldom or never at a loss in performing any other Music, were frequently puzzled how to execute his. CORELLI himself complained of the difficulty he found in playing his Overtures. Indeed there was in the whole cast of these compositions, but especially in the opening of them, such a degree of fire and force, as never could consort with the mild graces, and placid elegancies of a genius so totally dissimilar. Several fruitless attempts HANDEL had one day made to instruct him in the manner of executing these spirited passages. Piqued at the tameness with which he still played them, he snatched[ed] the instrument out of his hand; and, to convince him how little he understood them, played the passages himself. But CORELLI, who was a person of great modesty and meekness, wanted no convincing of this sort; for he ingenuously declared that he did
not understand them; i.e. knew not how to execute them properly, and give them the strength and expression they required. When Handel appeared impatient, Ma, caro Sassone (said he) questa Musica è nel stylo Francesce, di ch’io non m’intendo [But my dear Saxon, this music is in the French style, which I do not understand].

Handel, then aged twenty, evidently possessed considerable skills in violin performance—certainly enough to dare to demonstrate a passage in front of the venerated and venerable Corelli (aged fifty-three). Mainwaring qualifies in a footnote that ‘The Overture for IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO was that which occasioned CORELLI the greatest difficulty. At his desire therefore he [Handel] made a symphony in the room of it, more in the Italian style.’ The revised Italian-style ‘Sonata del Overture’ of IL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO, which begins directly with the fast fugal section, retains many elements of virtuosity, as the two concertino violins squeak up to an a\(^3\) in bars 39-40.\(^{17}\)

Hogwood states that an Overture in B flat, HWV 336, published in the 11th Collection of Overtures in 1758, is probably the French-style original, as it ‘uses the same fugal theme as the sinfonia we know today’ (this sinfonia being the Italian-style piece that was ‘made … in the room’, according to Mainwaring); it begins with a ‘standard French-style opening [which] makes it plausibly the very piece to which Corelli objected.’\(^{18}\) This opening, however, contains only two tirades in the first violin part, and it is unlikely that these, along with the ubiquitous dotted rhythms, were the only reasons for Corelli’s objections. Rather, it seems more likely that the intricacies of French overture style or ornamentation, or the interpretative differences of the two musicians—in particular the ‘strength and expression’ to which Mainwaring refers in the opening sections of Overtures—were the catalyst for the conflict. Corelli was a strict master of his orchestra; reportedly, in a conversation of 1756, Handel recalled how Corelli would fine a player a crown for adding an ornament.\(^{19}\) A young German musician challenging the authority and skill of this famous violinist in front of his own orchestra must have been an unusual occurrence, and the incident with Corelli and the French-style overture would become the stuff of legend. As his career went on, Handel would continue to have complex relationships with his principal violinists.

Handel’s London Violinists

Following his move to London, Handel came into contact with a new circle of violinists, many of whom had studied with Corelli in Rome. Some of these violinists would play in his opera orchestras and in chamber performances with him. The brothers Pietro and Prospero Castrucci, for instance, met Handel in 1715 through the patronage of Lord Burlington, who brought them to England.\(^{20}\) Pietro subsequently led Handel’s opera orchestra for over twenty years; his name (along with that of his brother) appears in several of Handel’s autograph scores. A talented composer in his own right, he was, according to Burney, ‘long thought insane; but though his compositions were too mad for his own age, they are too sober for the present [1789].’\(^{21}\)

After Pietro Castrucci had led Handel’s orchestra for more than two decades, he was put out to pasture by Handel and replaced with a younger violinist by means of a cunning scheme, as Hawkins relates:\(^{22}\)

Handel had a mind to place a young man, named John Clegg, a scholar of Dubourg, at the head of his orchestra; Castrucci being in very necessitous circumstances, and not in the least conscious of any failure in his hand, was unwilling to quit his post; upon which Handel, in order to convince him of his inability to fill it, composed a concerto, in which the second concertino was so contrived, as to require an equal degree of execution with the first; this he gave to Clegg, who in the performance of it gave such proofs of his superiority, as reduced Castrucci to the necessity of yielding the palm to his rival. … Clegg succeeded to the favour of Handel, and under his patronage enjoyed the applause of the town.

The piece which was responsible for this professional duel has been identified as the Concerto in C major, HWV 318, which was performed between Acts I and II in Alexander’s Feast.\(^{23}\) The young Irishman Clegg, a child prodigy and a student of Giovanni Bononcini (composition) and Matthew Dubourg (violin), had made his London début at the age of nine and later enjoyed a considerable reputation as a soloist and orchestral player during the 1730s and 1740s.\(^{24}\) However, Burney disputed the claim of Hawkins; he wrote that it was Michael Festing, rather than Clegg, who displaced Castrucci in the opera orchestra in 1737, mentioning in passing that Castrucci was the violinist caricatured in a famous engraving by William Hogarth, The Enraged Musician (1741).\(^{25}\) Burney goes on to say that ‘Cas-
trucci had such an antipathy to the very name of Festing, that in his most lucid intervals, he instantly lost his temper, if not his reason, on hearing it pronounced. A gentleman, now living, used in *polissonerie,* [sic] to address him in conversation, by the name of his rival: “Mr. Festing—I beg your pardon; Mr. Castrucci, I mean,” which put him in as great a rage as Hogarth’s street musician’s on May-day.26 Rivalries were fierce among some of the leading London violinists of the day, and emotions clearly ran high.

The most renowned violinist to come from Italy to England during the course of the eighteenth century was Francesco Geminiani, a fine player, pedagogue (he was the teacher of many leading violinists, including Festing), and theorist. On the occasion of his first appearance at court in 1716, Geminiani ‘intimated … a wish that he might be accompanied on the harpsichord by Mr. Handel … [and] acquitted himself in a manner worthy of the expectations that had been formed of him.’27 After this recital, however, there appears not to have been much contact between Handel and Geminiani, even though many of Geminiani’s students played in Handel’s orchestra. Neither did they appear to have had much influence on each other in terms of their compositional practice; Enrico Careri remarks that ‘there is remarkably little evidence of a direct influence of Geminiani on Handel … what the two men have in common, rather, is a common Corellian heritage modified by an awareness of progressive (Vivaldian) trends in the concerto genre.’28

One of Geminiani’s students who had considerable contact with Handel—leading Handel’s orchestra and playing solos in oratorio performances—was Matthew Dubourg.29 In Handel historiography, Dubourg is famous for having played solos on the violin at many of Handel’s oratorio performances, and leading the orchestra. Handel also left him a bequest of £100 in his will.30 Dubourg and Handel were clearly close; it is likely that if Dubourg had not moved to Dublin, he would have been Castrucci’s successor as the leader of Handel’s orchestra.31 In comparing Dubourg to his peers and rivals, Hawkins remarks that ‘Dubourg’s performance on the violin was very bold and rapid; greatly different from that of Geminiani, which was tender and pathetic; and these qualities it seems he was able to communicate, for Clegg his disciple possessed them in as great perfection as himself.’32 Dubourg also appears to have been a consummate improviser, as Burney relates:33

One night, while Handel was in Dublin, Dubourg having a solo part in a song, and a close to make, *ad libitum,* he wandered about in different keys a great while, and seemed indeed a little bewildered, and uncertain of his original key … but, at length, coming to the shake, which was to terminate this long close, *Handel,* to the great delight of the audience, and augmentation of applause, cried out loud enough to be heard in the most remote parts of the theatre: ‘You are welcome home, Mr. Dubourg!’

Violin interludes in operas and oratorios provided an avenue through which rising stars could test their mettle before an appreciative and knowledgeable audience, which included influential patrons. Handel’s were the most famous of any oratorio performances in England, and the most renowned violinists vied with one another for the privilege of performing solos between the acts—a phenomenon that begs further attention in research into the history of oratorio performances in eighteenth-century England. Violin solos in oratorios, played before a large audience, could act as advertisements, especially for foreign violinists wishing to make an impression or build a career in England. Their public concerts of chamber music were often well attended after such a début.34 Alongside Dubourg, other violinists who performed solos in Handel’s oratorios include Francesco Maria Veracini and Pieter Helendaal, both of whom played between acts of *Acis and Galatea* in 1741 and 1754 respectively.35 These types of performances clearly helped to enhance their public reputation as soloists and composers.

Dr Burney, the Posthumous Handel, and Performance Practice

It was during Handel’s English period that his professional experience in violin-playing, coupled with his close contact with some of the leading exponents of the instrument based in England and Ireland, gave rise to his composition of some of the most celebrated solo and orchestral repertoire of the time. This included sonatas, trio sonatas, and *concerti grossi,* not to mention a considerable number of overtures and instrumental music for his operas, oratorios, and other vocal pieces. Yet it was not until after Handel’s death, and particularly during the 1770s and 1780s, that critical evaluations of his work began to be made, many by leading writers who were of an age to remember Handel in his prime
as well as in old age, such as Burney and Hawkins.

Fairly little of Handel’s work has been taken into consideration when examining the development of prominent compositional styles for the violin during the eighteenth century. This lacuna is given some perspective by Charles Burney, who explains why he judged Handel’s writing for the violin to be relatively undiomatic for the instrument. In his account of a performance of the Concerto grosso Op. 6 No. 11, HWV 329, at the Handel commemoration of 1784, Burney noted that ‘indeed the last Allegro, which is airy and fanciful, has Solo parts that seem more likely to have presented themselves to the author at a harpsichord, than with a violin in his hand.’ Handel’s fast passages for the violin sometimes contain awkward leaps across registers, and clusters of triadic semiquaver figurations, which suggest inspiration emanating from a virtuoso on the keyboard, rather than a violinist-composer who has in mind the technical capacities of the instrument (focusing on logical string crossings and practical figurations for the four fingers of the left hand). These are characteristics of his writing for violin that some professional performers comment on today.

The composition of vocal music was undoubtedly seen as Handel’s major strength in his own times, but in orchestral and chamber repertoire he was considered to be overshadowed by the likes of Corelli and Geminiani. Hawkins commented that ‘in the composition of music merely instrumental it seems that Handel regarded nothing more than the general effect. … His concertos for violins are in general want in that which is the chief excellence of instrumental music in many parts, harmony and fine modulation: in these respects they will stand no comparison with the concertos of Corelli, Geminiani, and Martini [Sammartini].’ However, Burney’s view was that the consensus of opinion on Handel’s works for violins (i.e. instruments of the violin family) needed to be revised. He thought that more careful analysis of Handel’s compositional style, which went beyond the idiomatic and technical writing favoured by his contemporaries, revealed how it pushed the violin and orchestra to new heights of expression. According to Burney, it is the summa tota or total effect of Handel’s orchestral works that provide the greatest impact for the listener, rather than the technical requirements of individual parts.

It was the fashion, during his life-time, to regard his compositions for violins, as much inferior to those of Corelli and Geminiani; but I think very unjustly. If those two great masters knew the finger-board and genius of their own instrument better than Handel, it must be allowed, per contra, that he had infinitely more fire and invention than either of them. …

These three admirable authors, who have so long delighted English ears, have certainly a distinct character and style of composition, wholly dissimilar from each other: they would all, doubtless, have been greatly sublimed by the performance of such a band as that lately assembled [for the 1784 commemoration]; but Handel in a superior degree: as the bold designs, masses of harmony, contrast, and constant resources of invention, with which his works abound, require a more powerful agency to develop and display them, than the mild strains of Corelli, or the wilder effusions of Geminiani.

Handel sports with a band, and turns it to innumerable unexpected accounts, of which neither Corelli nor Geminiani had ever the least want or conception. He certainly acquired, by writing so long for voices and an opera band, more experience and knowledge of effects than either of these admirable violinists: so that supposing their genius to be equal, these circumstances must turn the scale in his favour. Indeed, Handel was always aspiring at numbers in his scores and in his Orchestra; and nothing can express his grand conceptions, but an omnipotent band: the generality of his productions in the hands of a few performers, is like the club of Alcides, or the bow of Ulysses, in the hands of a dwarf.

Burney evidently considered Handel to have endowed the violin with vocal and dramatic qualities in his instrumental works through ‘writing so long for voices and an opera band’, and considered monumental performances the most appropriate avenues for their interpretation. Corelli appears not to have composed for the voice, and while Geminiani circulated parodies of songs, only two known vocal works of his, a short cantata for soprano and an aria for soprano and strings, are known to have survived. Burney refers to ‘grand conceptions’ in the scaling of a band for the ideal performance of Handel’s orchestral works; the strings for ‘omnipotent band’ employed for the 1784 Handel commemoration in Westminster Abbey numbered 48 first violins, 47 second violins, 26 tenors (violas), 21 violoncellos and 15 double basses.
this massive ensemble followed *colla parte* practice, with the enormous wind section employed for this event doubling the strings in the *concerti grossi*. In comparing these numbers to the size of a typical opera orchestra in 1720s London, which had a maximum of eight violins in each section, Burney’s classical analogy seems appropriate.

Burney’s account of the 1784 commemoration is also seminal in identifying some of the major changes in performance practice and aesthetics which took place in the relatively short space of time between the end of Handel’s working life and the event itself. The constructional changes in the violin which took place gradually over the course of the eighteenth century, and particularly during its second half, such as the angling back of the neck by several degrees and the lengthening of the fingerboard, the thickening of the internal resonating bass-bar, and the move from heavy equal-tension stringing to a graduated tension across the four strings (with highest tension on the E string), resulted in a profound interpretative shift in the performance of early eighteenth-century repertoire. This was the period in which interest in ‘ancient music’ was widespread, involving revivals of music composed only several decades earlier as well as older works, and during which the celebration of recently-deceased composers such as Handel became a national industry, in performance and publication. The rival music histories of Hawkins and Burney both extolled the virtues of Handel; Hawkins went so far as to assert that ‘modern’ music had gone the wrong way after the death of Handel, and concluded his history at the death of the violinist-composer Geminiani. Burney extolled Handel, but, being less stylistically conservative than his rival Hawkins, saw Handel’s work as a stepping-stone in the evolution of music. It was Burney, furthermore, who was chosen to write the official account of the commemoration of Handel’s centenary.

The monumentalisation of Handel that this event embodied also coincided with a proposal to publish the first complete edition of Handel’s compositions. In his description of the performances of certain concertos, Burney provided early fuel for arguments concerning stylistic change that were taken up by advocates of the historically informed performance movement in the second half of the twentieth century. The Solo parts of this movement [*Andante*, in the ‘Xith GRAND CONCERTO’] from Opus 6] were thought more brilliant, than easy and natural to the bow and fingerboard, forty-years ago. … The whole Concerto was played in a very chaste and superior manner, by Mr. Cramer; and it is but justice to this great performer to say, that with a hand which defies every possible difficulty, he plays the productions of old masters with a reverential purity and simplicity, that reflect equal honour upon his judgment, good taste, and understanding. Thus a violinist playing works written no more than a few generations previously, using equipment with only slight modifications but employing technical aspects which had changed drastically, already played in accordance with new interpretative standards, and no longer drove his instrument to the very extent of its expressive capabilities, pushing it to its physical limits; he apparently became rather more ‘reverential’ in his performance of old music.

Burney’s account of the performance points out a certain aesthetic simplicity, which had already crept into the interpretation of older repertoire; the ‘chaste and superior manner’ adopted for certain works (which may formerly have been regarded as the most virtuosic pieces of the day) may refer to their performance without ornamentation, a notion that was supported by Burney’s reference to the ‘reverential purity and simplicity’ with which they were played. Paradoxically, the formation, through antiquarianism, of a non-ecclesiastical canon of ‘ancient’ music in the late eighteenth century, led to a certain dampening of the freshness of compositional and technical innovations. Pietro Castrucci’s music, which was considered too ‘mad’ for his own days but too ‘sober’ by the time that Burney was compiling his *General History*, is another apposite example of how the simultaneous accumulation of musical works and the accretion of public familiarity with them may have contributed to a style of performance that was perhaps more austere and restrained than it had been in the past.

**Conclusion**

The music of Handel has been standard fare for professional violinists from the early eighteenth century to the present. However, Handel stands out as a prominent eighteenth-century composer who wrote relatively few solo sonatas for the violin and no fully-fledged solo concerto. Why, then, should his relationship with this instrument be revisited? Evidently, his greatest contribution to the evolution of the instrument (in pushing its technical capacities to greater limits through composition and performance) was his patronage of leading violinists of his time, his swift
production of orchestral and chamber repertoire that provided a vehicle for virtuosic performance by these luminaries, and his role in propelling the development of the profession of concert violinist by offering opportunities for solo performances within his own large-scale works. Violinists also brought their own repertoire to play within Handel's performances. We should remember that the performance of solo instrumental interludes in oratorios during the eighteenth century is a part of early modern performance history that has been largely overlooked; it is an aspect of historical performance practice that could be applied more often in concert halls today.

As orchestral concerti and works for solo violin with continuo approached greater heights of sophistication in the first half of the eighteenth century, Handel's role as composer, publisher, and performer/director of this type of repertoire was seminal and innovative. Never confining himself to just one aspect of the music industry of the times, he was heavily involved in both sacred and secular music-making; he was also an erudite man of letters whose connection with pan-European musical developments and the most renowned performers and scholars of the day bore abundant fruits in his compositions.

If the keyboard remained his constant musical companion and fount of inspiration, and the voice an important tool of expression and drama, then it was the violin which surrounded and complemented these fundamental bases of his genius.

I would like to thank Peter Holman for his helpful comments on a draft of this essay.


3. The original will and codicils are kept at the The National Archives, and come from Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (Wills and Letters of Administration), PROB 1/14. Their description reads as follows: ‘Will of George Frederic Handel 1 June 1750. Includes four codicils, dated 6 August 1756, 22 March 1757, 4 August 1757 and 11 April 1759, and two affidavits, one by William Brinck and Edward Cavendish, dated 23 April 1759 and one by John Duburck, dated 24 April 1759.’


9. Mainwaring reports that ‘the issue of the trial on the harpsichord hath been differently reported. It has been said that some gave the preference to SCARLATTI. However, when they came to the Organ there was not the least pretence for doubting to which of them it belonged. SCARLATTI himself declared the superiority of his antagonist, and owned ingenuously, that till he had heard him upon this instrument, he had no conception of its powers. So greatly was he struck with his peculiar method of playing, that he followed him all over Italy, and was never so happy as when he was with him.’ Mainwaring, *Memoirs*, 60. See also Burrows, *Handel*, 44–5.


11. The ‘Gloria patri’ of Handel’s *Dixit dominus* HWV 232, for instance, opens for the first violins on an e-flat and several times takes them one tone higher, to an F. The raging of Lucifer in *La Resurrezzione* occasions the use of extremely rapid scalic passages in demi-semiquavers, to registral extremes.

12. Peter Holman, personal communication, 1 February 2013.


14. Ibid.


Dubourg accepted the post of Master and Composer of State Music in Ireland, which had been previously turned down by Geminiani.


Peter Holman, personal communication, 1 February 2013.


A passage typifying this is found in bars 44–50 of the second movement (Allegro) of the Sonata in D major for violin and continuo, HWV 371.


One is ‘a short cantata for soprano, Nella stagione appunto, probably composed in Rome or Naples before he left for London.’ Enrico Careri, ‘Geminiani, Francesco’, *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, ix, 643. The other (not mentioned by Careri) is the aria ‘Primo Cesare ottomano’ for soprano and strings, in John Stafford Smith’s *Musica Antiqua* (London: Preston, 1812), ii, 208–11. Thanks to Peter Holman for pointing out the latter work. Melodies by Geminiani were also arranged as songs (Holman, personal communication, 1 February 2013).


The centenary of 1784 was based on a miscalculation of the year of Handel's birth. Mainwaring mentioned Handel's birthdate as '24th February 1684' on the first page of his 1760 biography; the Handel monument in Westminster Abbey, made by Roubiliac in 1761, still bears the birthdate February XIII. MDCLXXXIV. In England until 1751, the new year was considered to begin on 25 March (Lady Day—the Feast of the Annunciation—exactly nine months before Christmas).

An advertisement (dated 22 June 1783) within Burney’s *Account* called for subscribers to invest in a work of ‘Eighty Folio volumes, containing one with another, near One Hundred and Fifty Pages each.’ Burney, *An Account*, 47. For more on the history of Handel’s music in collected editions, see Annette Landgraf, ‘Editing Handel: Collected Editions Past and Present, and Current Approaches’, *EMP*, 26 (2010), 4–8.


Peter Holman, personal communication, 1 February 2013.