

THE *H*ANDEL INSTITUTE

NEWSLETTER

Research into the music of Handel and his contemporaries and 'the advancement of related musical scholarship' are among the most important of the Handel Institute's objectives. One of the ways in which the HI seeks to encourage and nurture research is by offering grants, especially (but not exclusively) to postgraduate students and scholars in the early stages of their career. In this issue of the *Newsletter*

two recipients of HI awards, Alison DeSimone and Natassa Varka, write about their travels and findings. Donald Burrows contributes a helpful handlist of the manuscript librettos of Handel oratorios in the Larpent collection (California), and Warren Kirkendale reports on the continuing Ruspoli patronage of Handel.

Colin Timms

HANDEL, RUSPOLI AND URSULA KIRKENDALE IN THE VATICAN

A unique event for a music historian took place on 12 February 2018 in a large, elegant hall on the very edge of St Peter's Square, Rome. His Excellency Prince Sforza Ruspoli, now ninety years of age, generously issued invitations to the launch of the updated, posthumous Italian version of all of Ursula Kirkendale's research on Handel in Rome (1968–2007), the book entitled *Georg Friedrich Händel, Francesco Maria Ruspoli e Roma*, edited by Warren Kirkendale and translated by Giorgio Monari (Lucca: Libreria Italiana Musicale [LIM], 2017). When Ruspoli invites to such events, cardinals, princes, ambassadors and a large number of professors appear, and there is coverage by the international media. This was the case in 1985 for the unveiling of the Kirkendales' commemorative marble inscription in the Bonelli palace, where Handel lived with Francesco Maria Ruspoli, in 2008 for the presentations of their books *Music and Meaning* and *Antonio Caldara* in the Ruspoli palace at Cerveteri, and for the splendid Latin Requiem for Ursula at Santa Maria in Trastevere in 2013, which was celebrated by Prince Sforza, a cardinal, and an archbishop, the emeritus and current directors of the Biblioteca Vaticana and the Archivio Segreto Vaticano. All these events were accompanied by excellent performances of music composed by Handel in Rome.

In February a record number of fourteen sponsors resulted in an unusually large audience from the German embassies to Rome and to the Holy See, from the Hungarian Embassy and Academy, the Austrian Forum of Culture, the Istituto Storico Germanico, the Accademia dell'Arcadia, the Accademia Filarmonica in Bologna, the Pontificio Istituto di Musica Sacra, the Società Italiana di Musicologia, the Accademia di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and above all from the Biblioteca Vaticana and the Archivio Segreto Vaticano, to

which the Kirkendales are immensely indebted for the wealth of sources and literature put at their disposal since 1957. The documents upon which Ursula's biographical research on Handel and Caldara is based can be considered among the most precious for the history of the arts to have been discovered in the Vatican.

Johann Herzog spoke interestingly of Ursula's book on Handel from its genesis to its completion, while Warren discussed two spectacular discoveries that were made by his wife, with the help of Greek and Latin authors, astonishingly

after her speech had become impaired by an ictus in 1971. These discoveries are the solutions to two of the greatest enigmas in the histories of music and fine art – the enigma of J. S. Bach's *Musical Offering* and that of Giorgione's *Tempesta*. The presentation papers will be published in the *Miscellanea Ruspoli*, an occasional series of 'Studi sulla musica dell'età barocca', edited by Giorgio Monari and published since 2011 in Lucca by LIM.

The climax of the event was a performance of three cantatas composed for Ruspoli by Handel in Rome – *Ninfe e pastori* (HWV 139b), *Sento là che ristretto* (HWV 161b) and *Stanco di più soffrire* (HWV 167a). With accompaniment provided by Deniel Perer (harpsichord) and Giordano Antonelli (cello), the cantatas were sung by the magnificent Hungarian contralto Dalma Krajnyák, who in October 2017 had won the 'Canto' section of the ninth annual international Concorso Francesco Maria Ruspoli for musicians and musicologists concerned with Italian baroque music – a gratifying tribute to Ursula's research and to contemporary Ruspoli patronage of musical performers and scholars.

Warren Kirkendale

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