

ORGELKONZERT NR.6

B-dur (op.4, Nr.6)

Konzert Nr.6, B-dur

(op.4, Nr.6)

Harfe oder Cembalo oder Orgel, Streicher, zwei Flöten und Continuo

Andante allegro (♩=88)

Violino I con sordini
e Flauto I

Violino II con sordini
e Flauto II

Viola all' 8^{va}, Violoncello
e Contrabasso pizzicati,
Cembalo

Harpa
[o Organo, Cembalo]

Andante allegro

Violino I con sordini
e Flauto I

Violino II con sordini
e Flauto II

Viola all' 8^{va}, Violoncello
e Contrabasso pizzicati,
Cembalo

Harpa
[o Organo, Cembalo]

Andante allegro

Solo

10

13

1 2 3 4 5 2 2 *p* *mf*

16

p *mf* 2 4 1 4 4 4

19

f *p* *f* 4 3 5 1 1 3 1 5 1 3 4 1

22

f $\flat$

22

2 4 5 3 3 1 2 4 2 4 *piuf*

25

Viol. con Flauti

f 6 7 $\flat$ 6 6 6 6 6 4 5 3 *tr*

25

2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 *tr*

Solo 29

f *p* *f* *p* *mf*

2 3 2

2 4

33

p

3 2 3 1 4 3 3 3 3

2 4 2 4 2 4

37

mf *f* *p*

1 2 4 1 3 2 1 4 1 3 2 1 5 4

2 1 4 1 2 4 5 2 1 2 2

40

Viol. con Flauti

Viol. con Flauti

mf *mf*

6 7 # 6 6 5 #

40

f

1 2 # 5 3 2 4 5 4 3 1 3 5

44

4 2 4 5 2 4 2 3 3 4 2 1 4

5 1

47

p *mf* *p* *mf*

50

p *mf*

53

p *mf*

56

Tutti

56

f

59

f

59

f

63

7 6 6 6 6 6

63 1 2 4 3 3 2

3 1 5 2 3 3 2

Larghetto (♩ = ca 72)

Violino I
Flauto I

Violino II
Flauto II

Viola all' 8^{va}
e Bassi
Cembalo

Viol. con sord.
mf

Viol. con sord.
mf

con sord. e coll' arco
mf

Larghetto

Harpa
[o Organo, Cembalo]

mf

7 3 7 3 7 #

4 2 4 3

2 1

6

7 6 #

6 45 3 5 4

2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2 1 2

p

2 1

13 *tr*

1 3 1 3 1 2 1 3

1 1 2 5 4

20

3 3 1 2 1 3

26 *f*

Viol. senza Fl.

mf

Viol. senza Fl.

mf

7

26 *f*

1 2 1 1 2 1 2

32

6 5 4 3

32 *p*

3 3 5 4

4 1 3 2

39

Viol.e Fl.

p

Viol.e Fl.

p

39

mf

4 1 3 2

2 1 1 2

4 1 3 2

2 1 4 2

45

tr

mf

tr

mf

6 #

#

mf

45

tr

f

2 1 4

51

7

51

p

mf

2 1

2

3

Allegro moderato (♩ = 126-144)

Viol. con sord.

Violino I
Flauto I

Violino II
Flauto II

Viola all' 8^{va}
e Bassi
e Cembalo

poco f
Viol. con sord.
poco f
con sord. e coll' arco

poco f

Allegro moderato

Harpa
[o Organo, Cembalo]

poco f

1 4 1

2

6

6

3 4 2 1 4 2

7

6

14

21

21

51

51

58

58

65

Tutti

f

Tutti

f

più f

65

PREFACE

John Walsh's publication of six organ concertos as Handel's *Opera Quarta* in 1738 brought together works which had been written for the composer's oratorio seasons in 1735 and 1736. Charles Burney correctly associated Handel's invention of the organ concerto with Lenten performances of *Esther* and *Deborah*, although he was wrong about the dates:

"And in 1732, *Esther* was performed at the Haymarket, Ten Nights. In March, 1733, *Deborah* was first given to the public; and in April *Esther* was again exhibited at the same theatre. It was during these early performances of Oratorios that HANDEL first gratified the public by the performance of CONCERTOS ON THE ORGAN, a species of Music wholly of his own invention, in which he usually introduced an extempore fugue, a diapason-piece, or an adagio, manifesting not only the wonderful fertility and readiness of his invention, but the most perfect accuracy and neatness of execution."¹

It was in 1735 that the London newspapers announced the first organ concertos: on 5 March *Esther* was given, with "two new Concerto's on the Organ"; on 26 March *Deborah* was performed "With a new Concerto on the Organ; Also the First Concerto in the Oratorio of Esther"; at the repetition of *Deborah* on 31 March all three concertos were heard; and on 1 April, at the London premiere of *Athalia* there was "a new Concerto on the Organ; Also the first Concerto in the Oratorio of *Esther*, and the last in *Deborah*."² These four concertos are HWV 290, 291, 292 and 293. References in Mary Pendarves' letter of 15 March 1735 ("... his playing on the organ in *Esther*, where he performs a part in two concertos, that are the finest things I ever heard in my life"), and in *The Old Whig* for 20 March 1735 ("He has lately reviv'd his fine Oratorio of *Esther*, in which he has introduced two Concerto's on the Organ that are inimitable"), and the anonymous poem "On Mr. Handel's performance on the Organ, and his Opera of *Alcina*" (in *The Grubstreet Journal* for 8 May 1735) are the first references to Handel's performance of organ concertos.³ The

paper-characteristics of the autographs of HWV 290, 291 and 292 (GB Lbl *King's MS 317*), and of the composition-score of HWV 293, confirm that these works were composed early in 1735; HWV 289 and 294 (GB Lbl R.M.20.g.12) were written for the first performance of *Alexander's Feast* in February 1736.

PERFORMING PRACTICE

1. Handel as an organist, and the role of improvisation

Sir John Hawkins recounts Handel's skill when performing on the organ:

"As to his performances on the organ, the powers of speech are so limited, that it is almost a vain attempt to describe it otherwise than by its effects. A fine and delicate touch, a volant finger, and a ready delivery of passages the most difficult, are the praise of inferior artists: they were not noticed in Handel, whose excellencies were of a far superior kind; and his amazing command of the instrument, the fullness of his harmony, the grandeur and dignity of his style, the copiousness of his imagination, and the fertility of his invention were qualities that absorbed every inferior attainment. When he gave a concerto, his method in general was to introduce it with a voluntary movement on the diapasons, which stole on the ear in a slow and solemn progression; the harmony close wrought, and as full as could be expressed; the passages concatenated with stupendous art, the whole at the same time being perfectly intelligible, and carrying the appearance of great simplicity. This kind of prelude was succeeded by the concerto itself, which he executed with a degree of spirit and firmness that no one ever pretended to equal."⁴

Likewise Burney's report: "It was in the summer of 1733, that he went to the university of Oxford, on the occasion of a public act ... at this solemnity he had the Oratorio of *Athalia* performed in the public theatre, where he opened the organ in such a manner as astonished every hearer. The late Mr. Michael Christian Festing, and Dr. Arne, who were present, both assured me, that neither themselves, nor anyone else of

1 Charles Burney, *Sketch of the Life of Handel*, in *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster Abbey ... in Commemoration of Handel*, London 1785, R/1964, p. 23.

2 Quotations from the London Newspapers may be found in *Händel-Handbuch*, vol. 4, Kassel etc. and Leipzig 1985, pp. 250–252.

3 See entries under the relevant dates in *Händel-Handbuch*, vol. 4.

4 John Hawkins, *A General History of the Science and Practice of Music*, London 1776, 1853 edition (R/1963), p. 912.

their acquaintance, had ever before heard such extempore, or such premeditated playing, on that or on any other instrument.”⁵

These accounts show that Handel’s playing on the organ during the intervals of his oratorio performances began as improvisations, and even when he played fully written-out concertos with orchestra he started with an improvisation. The later concertos, particularly those which were published after his death as Op. 7, have many indications for improvised movements (especially slow movements) and for the solo passages before the last ritornello in fast movements to be extended by improvisation. While the concertos of Op. 4 were all complete as originally composed, Handel added *ad libitum* markings over many of the shorter slow movements and over the final solo in ritornello movements, which means that he varied his performances by improvisation. So the modern performer has two ways of playing these concertos: either as written, or with improvisations in the places Handel indicated. Fortunately, unlike many instances in Op. 7, improvisation is not essential, and an authentic Handelian version of each of the Op. 4 concertos exists as it stands in the manuscripts; the one exception is bars 10–13 of the first movement of HWV 289, but even here Handel gives a treble melody outline for the improvisation.

The marking *ad libitum* was as much a direction for the orchestral players as for the organ soloist: it told them that they could not follow exactly the indicated number of bars rest, because either the tempo would be varied (as in the case of the first movement of HWV 289), or the solo performer would be likely to alter the length of the solo excursion. Handel could then vary his performance without changes being made to the parts.

2. The organs

The exact specification of the chamber organ that Handel used in his oratorio performances in 1735 and 1736 has not come down to us; but his use of the typical English chamber organ of the period is confirmed not only by Hawkins’ reference to him playing a “voluntary on the diapasons”, but also by Handel’s letter to his friend Charles Jennens in 1749, recommending

a one-manual organ with the following disposition: Open diapason [8’], Stopt diapason [8’], Principal [4’], Flute [4’], Twelfth [$2\frac{2}{3}$ ’], Fifteenth [2’], and Tierce [$1\frac{3}{5}$ ’].⁶ Only once in Op. 4 does Händel specify the registration: in the second movement of HWV 292, against pianissimo strings, he asks that the Open and Stopt diapasons and Flute be drawn. Apart from the addition of the flute, this is the standard “diapasons” registration used universally in Britain in the eighteenth century, also known as “soft organ”. It implies that in most of the movements where the organ must balance the full orchestra playing *forte* (including oboes and bassoons), “loud organ” must be used. On a chamber organ this would have been with all the stops. Lacking a mixture, Handel preferred that the mutations (Twelfth and Tierce) be full-compass stops, as he specifies in the letter to Jennens, not the half-compass Cornet often found on British church organs of the period. This allows Handel the freedom to let the left hand be carried above *c*’ with no change in tone colour above and below.

With the two basic sounds of soft and loud organ in mind, it is not difficult to decide what registration Handel would have used in most of the movements of Op. 4. In the fourth movement of HWV 289, the soft continuo-only accompaniment to the organ melody, which is echoed by violin I *piano*, suggests that the movement begins with soft organ, adding more stops for the second variation, with loud organ appearing for the third variation. Soft organ may also be called for in the opening movement of HWV 293, and this too is the likely choice for the movements of HWV 291 where the organ acts as continuo.

All other movements seem to be for loud organ, though the short interlude-like third movements of HWV 290 and 292 are a special case, and may call for some stop-combination other than the standard ones for “soft organ” and “loud organ”. Was there sufficient time between this movement and the next to change registration? If an assistant pulled out the remaining stops, or if some mechanical device (known as a machine stop) would bring the other stops into play, this may have been possible. Such a change in volume also seems to be necessary in the solo part of the second movement of HWV 289, a contrast which could also be obtained on a two-manual organ, which Handel was using for his concertos at least by the time he wrote the one in B-flat, Op. 7 no. 1 (HWV 306) in 1740.

⁵ Burney, *Sketch of the Life of Handel*, p. 23. What is possibly Handel’s earliest organ concerto movement in his London years, the one which was published as the finale of the concerto grosso Op. 3 no. 6 (HWV 317) in 1734, exists in a copy which can be dated to 1733 (GB Lbl R.M.18 c. 6, ff. 5–8), so the piece could have been played in Oxford.

⁶ *Händel-Handbuch*, vol. 4, p. 431.

In any case, the registration influences the way in which inner parts might be added. Diapason music was full and rich in harmonic texture (as Hawkins' comments show), but the pungent sound of loud organ with the prominent tierce, as it was in British organ building of the period, allows little room for harmonic additions, especially in the faster movements, where the two-part texture seems complete in itself; so the supplying of additional inner parts, as has been done by earlier editors, is misconceived.

THE TEXT

The primary sources for the text of this edition are the autographs for HWV 290, 291, 292, 294, the first movement of HWV 289, and bars 9–34 of the fourth movement of HWV 293; for the remainder, of which the autographs have not survived, the text is based on a collation of the MS copies, and occasionally the Walsh edition, whose title-page in the keyboard part has the claim "These Six Concertos were Publish'd by Mr. Walsh from my own copy Corrected by my Self, and to Him only I have given my Right therein. George Frideric Handel." The figures in the bass of the organ part are found in the autographs, or derive from a consensus of the MS copies where there is no autograph. In the orchestral basso continuo there are very few figures in the manuscript sources; the remaining figuring comes from the violoncello and basso parts of the Walsh edition, corrected editorially where it is obviously wrong.

Ornaments are printed in roman type if they appear in the primary sources: those shown as editorial are found in one or more of the secondary sources.

CONCERTO IN F MAJOR, OP. 4/5

HWV 293

HWV 293 is an adaptation of the recorder sonata Op. 1 no. 11 (HWV 369) composed about 1726. Handel did not bother to write out a complete autograph: his amanuensis J. C. Smith senior prepared a score (of which only the last two leaves survive, GB Cfm MU MS 264, pp. 25–27) into which he wrote the solo part and bass of the recorder sonata as the treble and bass of the organ part; Handel then filled in the instrumental parts. As part of the copying process, Smith reproduced in his organ part the very detailed bass figuring which Handel had written in the fair-copy autograph of the sonata (GB Cfm MU MS 261, pp. 7–11). Handel supplied an inner part in some passages in the first movement; most of the remaining figuring may have been ignored in performance on the organ, although it is found in all the sources. In the third movement, figuring in the Walsh basso part is present only in bars 1–5.

HWV 293 may have been the "new Concerto on the Organ" advertised for the performance of *Deborah* on 26 March 1735.

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