

HANDEL

Famous Organ Concertos

Johann Aratore

Handel Festival Chamber Orchestra

John Tinge



George Frideric Handel (1685 – 1759)

Organ Concertos

Concerto in F No. 13 “The Cuckoo and the Nightingale”

Larghetto

Allegro

Organ ad libitum

Larghetto

Allegro

Concerto in B Flat No. 2, Opus 4 No. 2

A tempo ordinario e staccato

Allegro

Adagio e staccato

Allegro, ma non presto

Concerto in F No. 4, Opus 4 No. 4

Allegro

Andante

Adagio • Allegro

Concerto in F No. 5, Opus 4 No. 5

Larghetto

Allegro

Alla Siciliana

Presto

Concerto in B Flat No. 7, Opus 7 No. 1

Andante

Andante

Largo e piano

Bourree: Allegro

There is an element of paradox about Handel's career. Born in Halle in 1685, the son of a distinguished and elderly barber-surgeon, he gave up other studies in order to become a musician, working first in Hamburg at the opera, as composer and harpsichordist. From there he moved to the source of all opera, Italy, where he made a name for himself as a composer and a performer. A meeting in Venice with Baron Kielmansegg led him to Hanover as Kapellmeister, and from there, almost immediately, to London, where he was invited to provide music for the newly established Italian opera. It was primarily as a composer of Italian opera that Handel made his early reputation in England.

Xenophobia has always run strong in England, and while ready, in the interests of Protestantism, to accept a German king as successor to Queen Anne, the public was less whole-hearted in its support of foreign opera. Common sense found some objection to the form, supported by the strong literary and dramatic traditions of the country. It seemed that *The Beggar's Opera*, a political parody of grand opera, in the satirical vein of Henry Fielding's *Jonathan Wild*, appealed to a much wider public, than any foreign entertainment ever could.

Handel was deeply concerned in the business of Italian opera, and when rivalry of an opposing company and fickle popular taste suggested the need for change, he turned instead to a form of music that seemed admirably suited to London audiences. English oratorio provided what was essentially an operatic entertainment, at least as far as the music was concerned. It had the advantage, however, of being in English, and the further attraction of an appeal, through its choice of subjects, to Protestant proclivities.

Although Handel's oratorios were to fascinate generation after generation of English choral singers and exercise an effect so overwhelming as to paralyse English musical creativity, in their own time they suffered variable fortunes at the box-office. There were critics who found something unsuitable in the mixture of sacred and secular, and audiences came and went as fashions changed from season to season. In the end, though, it was the creation of this new and peculiarly English artistic and religious compromise that ensured Handel's lasting fame.

The organ concertos were designed to fill intervals in the oratorio performances, works in which the composer could display his virtuosity, which he generally did by introducing each concerto with an improvised voluntary. Handel continued to play organ concertos even after he had lost his sight, either trusting his memory for older concertos or improvising the solo parts of new concertos, while the players of the orchestra supplied the skeleton frame-work of ritornelli between solo passages.

The first set of organ concertos was published in 1738 by Walsh as Opus 4. It consists of six concertos first performed in 1735 and 1736. The Concerto in B Flat, Opus 4 No. 2, was played for the first time on 5th March, 1735, with the oratorio Esther and three weeks later the Concerto in F, Opus 4 No. 5 was played in the intervals of performances of Deborah. The first of these concertos opens with a brief introduction followed by a lively Allegro. A third movement serves as little more than a brief, improvisatory prelude to the cheerful final Allegro. The fourth concerto of Opus 4 was first performed in 1735 with Handel's Athalia, a version of the tragedy by Racine. This work had had its first performance at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford, to the dismay of more conservative members of the academic establishment, one of whom referred in his diary to "Handel and (his lousy crew) a great number of foreign fiddlers", while another objected that the theatre was "prostituted to a Company of squeeking, bawling, out-landish Singsters". The oratorio was revised for London in 1735, the occasion of the present concerto. The work opens with an Allegro, the orchestra offering a brief introduction before the entry of the soloist and providing a skeletal framework for what follows. The organ introduces the second movement, which is followed by a short Adagio linking it with the final Allegro. The next concerto in the collection of 1738, the Concerto in F, Opus 4 No. 5 has a Larghetto opening movement, followed by a brief Allegro, in which the orchestra offers the sketchiest of frameworks for the solo organ. A pastoral Siciliana follows, leading to a final gigue, with the parts shared as in the second movement.

A further set of six organ concertos was published by Walsh in 1761, two years after Handel's death. The first of the set, the Concerto in B Flat, was first performed in February, 1740, with L'Allegro, adapted from Milton by Charles Jennens, who provided the text for Messiah. It opens with a more extended first movement, in which organ and orchestra are more closely integrated. The organ introduces the second movement, alternating with the orchestra, and the gentle third movement is followed by a final brisk Bourree. This concerto is the only one to demand an organ with pedals, and presumably such an instrument was available at Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, where L'Allegro was performed.

The Concerto in F, generally known as "The Cuckoo and the Nightingale", was published in 1740. It was first performed with the oratorio Israel in Egypt in 1739, and may seem singularly inappropriate as an accompaniment to such a weighty subject. The concerto opens with the usual slow introduction, followed by a movement in which the cuckoo is all too apparent, the nightingale entering later in the proceedings. There is a pastoral third movement, introduced by an organ improvisation, and followed by a vigorous final Allegro.



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ADD Analoges Tonbandgerät bei der Aufnahme; digitales Tonbandgerät bei Schnitt und/oder Abmischung und bei der Überspielung.

AAD Analoges Tonbandgerät bei der Aufnahme und bei Schnitt und/oder Abmischung; digitales Tonbandgerät bei der Überspielung.

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ADD Utilisation d'un magnétophone analogique pendant les séances d'enregistrement, utilisation d'un magnétophone numérique pendant le mixage et/ou le montage et la gravure.

AAD Utilisation d'un magnétophone analogique pendant les séances d'enregistrement et le mixage et/ou le montage, utilisation d'un magnétophone numérique pendant la gravure.

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Questa tecnica di registrazione è identificata sul retro della confezione da un codice di tre lettere:

DDD Si riferisce all'uso del registratore digitale durante le sedute di registrazione, mixing e/o editing, e masterizzazione.

ADD Sta ad indicare l'uso del registratore analogico durante le sedute di registrazione, e del registratore digitale per il successivo mixing e/o editing e per la masterizzazione.

AAD Riguarda l'uso del registratore analogico durante le sedute di registrazione e per il successivo mixing e/o editing, e del registratore digitale per la masterizzazione.

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HANDEL**Famous Organ Concertos****Johann Aratore, Organ****Handel Festival Chamber Orchestra****John Tinge, Conductor****Concerto in F No. 13****"The Cuckoo & The Nightingale"**

- | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------|
| [1] | Larghetto | (2:10) |
| [2] | Allegro | (3:16) |
| [3] | Larghetto | (2:52) |
| [4] | Allegro | (3:00) |

Concerto in B Flat No. 2, Op. 4 No. 2

- | | | |
|-----|--|--------|
| [5] | A tempo ordinario e staccato | (1:00) |
| [6] | Allegro | (4:08) |
| [7] | Adagio e staccato ·
Allegro ma non presto | (4:08) |

Concerto in F No. 4, Op. 4 No. 4

- | | | |
|------|------------------|--------|
| [8] | Allegro | (3:25) |
| [9] | Andante | (6:15) |
| [10] | Adagio · Allegro | (4:38) |

Concerto in F No. 5, Op. 4 No. 5

- | | | |
|------|----------------|--------|
| [11] | Larghetto | (1:59) |
| [12] | Allegro | (2:30) |
| [13] | Alla Siciliana | (1:43) |
| [14] | Presto | (2:39) |

Concerto in B Flat No. 7, Op. 7 No. 1

- | | | |
|------|------------------|--------|
| [15] | Andante | (4:26) |
| [16] | Andante | (5:32) |
| [17] | Largo e piano | (3:07) |
| [18] | Bourree: Allegro | (2:29) |

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(Upper Bavaria). Photo courtesy of
Germany National Tourist Office (DZT).



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"The Cuckoo & The Nightingale"**

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|----------|-----------|--------|
| 1 | Larghetto | (2:10) |
| 2 | Allegro | (3:16) |
| 3 | Larghetto | (2:52) |
| 4 | Allegro | (3:00) |

Concerto in B Flat No. 2, Op. 4 No. 2

- | | | |
|----------|------------------------------|--------|
| 5 | A tempo ordinario e staccato | (1:00) |
| 6 | Allegro | (4:08) |
| 7 | Adagio e staccato | |
| | Allegro ma non presto | (4:08) |

Concerto in F No. 4, Op. 4 No. 4

- | | | |
|-----------|------------------|--------|
| 8 | Allegro | (3:25) |
| 9 | Andante | (6:15) |
| 10 | Adagio · Allegro | (4:38) |

Concerto in F No. 5, Op. 4 No. 5

- | | | |
|-----------|----------------|--------|
| 11 | Larghetto | (1:59) |
| 12 | Allegro | (2:30) |
| 13 | Alla Siciliana | (1:43) |
| 14 | Presto | (2:39) |

Concerto in B Flat No. 7, Op. 7 No. 1

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|-----------|------------------|--------|
| 15 | Andante | (4:26) |
| 16 | Andante | (5:32) |
| 17 | Largo e piano | (3:07) |
| 18 | Bourree: Allegro | (2:29) |

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Germany



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