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entitled AN EXAMINATION OF TWO DRAMATIC WORKS OF HANDEL, THE ORATORIO *SAUL* AND THE MUSICAL DRAMA *HERCULES*

be accepted as fulfilling this part of the requirements for the degree of DOCTOR OF MUSICAL ARTS IN VOICE

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AN EXAMINATION OF TWO DRAMATIC WORKS OF HANDEL, THE ORATORIO *SAUL* AND THE MUSICAL DRAMA *HERCULES*

A thesis submitted to the

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is ironic that some of the most stunning compositions of George Frideric Handel are his least-known and receive scant attention in comparison to the perennial favorites. Some very thoughtful Handel scholars believe that the works under discussion in this thesis represent high points in all of Baroque musical drama, dwarfing many of the better-known operas and oratorios of the period in musical construction and dramatic quality. Initially the oratorio Saul and the musical drama Hercules were chosen because both works feature the bass-baritone voice. Upon further examination, it was discovered that the dramas are related by a common theme of jealousy, and that the music therein justifies more attention than has been given in the past. Thus, it is the purpose of this study to review Saul and Hercules against the background of the development of the genres to which they belong, discovering the merits of each composition.

Handel was a cosmopolitan composer, and the extent of his travels and residences was consequential in his achievement of a fusion of styles. In that regard, introductory material is given to highlight some influences and people who fit into the over-all picture of Baroque drama. For example, Handel's oratorios mark the second and supreme peak in the history of that genre. The first summit was achieved by the Italian, Carissimi, whose special treatment of the chorus affiliates him with Handel in the oratorio. Opera played a major role in Handel's life, leading him away from home to the great operatic centers of Europe. Therefore, some of those who shaped the development of opera are also discussed. A biographical sketch relating the

circumstances that led to Handel's residence in England, and, ultimately, to his composition there of Saul in 1738 and Hercules in 1745, is presented, providing a basis for the discussion which follows.

A comprehension of the dramas of Handel must involve some familiarity with the texts and the individual moods they express. To that end, the librettos and librettists of Saul and Hercules receive substantial exposure in chapters three and four of this study. Both being rich with action and sharing common themes, the biblical and mythological sources of the two dramas represent philosophical beliefs of seemingly opposite poles. Yet this study discovers important common ground in the two philosophies that made it possible for England to accept the diversity, recognizing an essential thread of unity between the two works.

Acknowledgement is due several who have graciously lent expertise and moral support in the preparation of this study. The unfailing guidance of Dr. Phillip Crabtree, Professor of Musicology at the College-Conservtory of Music of the University of Cincinnati, has always been made available throughout this writer's days as a doctoral student. As an advisor for the thesis, Dr. Crabtree has been helpful and conscientious.

The assistance of Dr. Karin Pendle has been particularly valuable in light of the tremendous enlightenment that she possesses on the subject of the study. Dr. Pendle's own research into the oratorio Saul has been extensive, and her experience in preparing a Handel seminar at the College-Conservatory of Music has been shared unselfishly.

The steady encouragement of Dieterle Professor Andrew White can

not go unnoticed. Himself an oratorio enthusiast, his love for students and teaching has been a sustaining beacon.

Ultimately, much credit belongs to my wife Anne and to my family for helping each step of the way.

CHAPTER I

MUSICAL DRAMA IN THE BAROQUE

Opera and Oratorio from the Beginnings through George Frideric Handel

In the Baroque era the rise of musical drama in the realms of both the secular and religious arts brought about the wedding of many diverse artistic and philosophical elements. Although the historical impact of this union was not immediate, most then agreed that it was indicative of a significant new course for the musical arts. In retrospect it appears that, in the years around 1600, society was making known its desire for an entertainment that would appeal equally to sight, hearing, and the entire scope of human emotion. This desire was seated in the age-old attempts of man to make some graphic representation of his own perception of himself. For some, these attempts seemed to be useless diversions, as has always been the case. Others were simply left out because of the social and economic status one had to have to experience the benefits of such an art. Thus it is not surprising that early musical drama was an exclusive event for a minority constituency.

In historical perspective, performing musicians have viewed the genesis of early music drama as something important, the amazing consummation of disciplines which were previously kept separate. For the singer, instrumentalist, dancer, and visual artist, this fusion of ideas brought new opportunities for expression. For the literati, there were mixed reactions. Any student of opera history is aware of

the outpourings of philosophers and scholars who disdained the very birth of such a form which they considered banal, contrived, or completely unnecessary.[1] But opera has persevered, and no one can deny the universal appeal that the use of drama with music, dance, and visual arts has achieved.

As early as 1581, the ostensible revival of the essence of ancient Greek music provided an intriguing goal for the artistic elite who, being without prototypes, set forth the ideal of an intimate association of music and drama. Monody became the vehicle through which that association was achieved. Manfred Bukofzer, in his Music in the Barouque Era, cites Vincenzo Galilei as one of the primary figures involved in the genesis of monody.

> The first manifesto of monodic style is contained in Dialogo della musica antica e della moderna (1581) by Vincenzo Galilei, the father of the astronomer Galileo. The emphatic praise of Greek music and the equally emphatic condemnation of counterpoint herald the change with regard to music and word. In his first experiments with monody, Galilei set two strikingly expressive texts, the lament of Ugolino from the Divine Comedy and a passage from the lamentations of Jeremiah.[2]

The sons of Italy remained the dominant protgaonists in the story of the Greek revival. It can be accurately stated that, for several

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[1]Critical discussions about opera are abundant and often very controversial. Among many historical sources, Strunk cites some prominent examples: Oliver Strunk, ed., Source Readings in Music History (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc.,1950), p. 473 ff., p. 511 ff., p. 619 ff., p. 657 ff. Other sources include: Ulrich Weisstein, ed., The Essence of Opera (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc.,1964); Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1941); and H. Sutherland Edwards, History of the Opera, 2 vols. (New York: Da Capo Press, 1977).

[2]Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: Norton and Co., Inc., 1947), p. 26.

generations, Italy remained the hub around which revolved lines of development of music suitable for drama. However, one of the most fascinating and towering figures of the entire movement, the German George Frideric Handel, was born in Halle, Saxony (near Leipzig), and was destined to become the dramatic composer-laureate in England. Like Galilei and other early Italian opera composers, Handel, who studied in Italy, set expressive texts, both secular and biblical, in a style adapted to the conventions of established Italian ideals.

The primary themes of Handel's oratorio Saul and his musical drama Hercules demonstrate how Handel responded to those ideals of early Italian opera and how he either embraced or altered them in his biblical dramas to suit England's fascination with both opera and the Judeo-Christian heritage. Handel's two works under discussion here contain a wealth of examples of the expected conventions. They must not, however, be thought of as the most typical of Handel's dramatic works. The unique features which set them apart will be discussed later. At this point, it is important to look at the characteristics of Baroque drama as it evolved into the form that Handel knew.

We know that Handel was drawn to dramatic music as a medium through which he felt he could best use his creative talents. In fact, Handel's first venture away from the security of home and church was to the opera center of Hamburg in 1703. Handel thirsted for the exposure to Hamburg's rich opera tradition. He could also meet many composers there who would help him to develop his dramatic powers. There were persons living whose influence on Handel during those formative years was direct. This paper will refer to the impact of ones such as

Reinhard Keiser, Alessandro Scarlatti, Johann Mattheson, and Agostino Steffani. However, the list of composers from the beginnings of opera until Handel's birth bears names of those who, because of the models which they provided, deserve to be mentioned.

From the outset, the early Florentines who elaborated on Galilei's idea must be cited for the establishment of procedures which lingered into Handel's time. Giulio Caccini, Jacopo Peri, and Emilio de Cavalieri are among those who first enunciated the new Baroque ideals in their works. In the operas titled Euridice by Peri and Caccini and the late madrigals of the Mantuan Monteverdi, the concept of recitative over thorough bass accompaniment was well on its way. The idea of treating the text with regard to the natural accents of speech was also integral to their art.[1]

Cavalieri's own Rappresentazione di anima e di corpo (1600), a work commonly and controversially known as the "first oratorio," stands as one of the most significant early models of the religious types of musical drama. The use of extensive vocal ensembles and clear-cut divisions of recitatives and arias in this work, which introduced monody to Rome, heightens the possibility that Cavalieri was an early influence over those who shaped the oratorio as Handel conceived it. Roman composer Stefano Landi's Sant' Alessio, some thirty years after Cavalieri's Rappresentazione, can be considered in the same regard.

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[1] Ibid., p. 33. Unlike the monodists, Monteverdi approached his stylistic crisis through the madrigal. Like the Camerata, he championed the idea of the dominance of the words over the harmony. As early as Monteverdi's third book of madrigals, examples of recitative abound. After book five (1605), the use of continuo is firmly established.

Perhaps one of the earliest dramatists to actually outline many of the principles that Handel would eventually assume was Monteverdi's pupil Pier Francesco Bruni, who took the name Cavalli.[1] Cavalli (1602-1676), probably the most important of the Venetian opera composers represents a link to the direct contact that Handel had with opera when he moved from Hamburg to Venice in 1709. Along with great regional artistic centers such as Rome, Bologna, Brescia, Ferrara, and Naples, Venice occupied a special place of honor in the musical life of Italy. Handel's love of Italian opera was nurtured even more in Venice. More will be said about Handel's journey there later in the study. Paul Henry Lang asserts that many of the qualities and techniques ascribed to Neapolitan opera were actually developed in Venice and other Italian cities. Lang states further that we should beware of using the term "Neapolitan opera" without qualification.[2] Thus we cannot overlook the role that Cavalli and the Venetians played in the development of Handel's operatic style.

The operatic conventions that Cavalli established are indicative of the early period of Venetian style (1640-1660) that Handel was to witness a generation later. It was in the operas of the Venetians that the solo aria grew in proportion to the whole of the opera. The formal separation of aria styles, which was not complete in the works of Cavalli, gradually became a common feature that enhanced the roles of the principal characters. Of the most frequently used aria forms, ABB

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[1]Donald Jay Grout, A Short History of Opera, 2nd ed. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), p. 85.

[2]Paul Henry Lang, George Frideric Handel (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1977), p. 94.

and strophic forms were common. The familiar da capo aria attached to a strongly dramatic recitative was hinted at by Cavalli and then came to fruition in the works of Pallavicino and the later Venetians. One unique device that Cavalli employed was sometimes used by Handel in his operas, that is, the infusion of arioso passages in the course of a recitative. The arioso, a short, organically developed melodic phrase, provided contrast between ordinary dialogue and dramatic or lyrical points[1]. Later in this study, we will also see how Cavalli's sensitive treatment of the basso ostinato lament affected Handel's version of the same type of aria.

The material for a large share of Cavalli's operas was drawn from the realm of gods and heroes. His later works, which turn to the historical episodes of Rome and Greece command our attention in view of the subjects that Handel also chose. Cavalli was instrumental in taking opera to France, and some French influence became evident in his own style of opera before it was generally felt by the Venetians. Handel was to follow suit in several cases.

There are specific problems in adapting Cavalli's operas for twentieth-century audiences, however. Consequently, the forty-some odd operas of Cavilli include only a few examples that have survived the changing attitudes of the times. Ormindo and Calisto are widely performed, Giasone (1649) is also popular, Serse (1654) will be remembered as the model for Handel's opera of the same title and Ercole amante (Hercules in Love 1660) was composed for the celebration of the wedding of Louis

[1]Eric Bloom, ed., Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 1959 ed., s.v. "Cavalli, Francesco," by Egon Wellesz.

XIV and was performed in Paris.

We find in the singular figure of Giacomo Carissimi (1605-1674) a vital predecessor of Handel in the oratorio genre. Most important, Carissimi introduced some oratorios in which the chorus is at the center of the action. The music of Carissimi left an indelible impression upon Handel from the standpoint of structural function. Handel was also known to borrow from Carissimi when it would suit his purposes.[1] Virtually all of Carissimi's oratorios are Latin and nearly all are from the Old Testament. One Italian volgare oratorio, Daniele, exists.[2] Paul Henry Lang suggests the reason for the widespread use of Old Testament subjects in Italy during Carissimi's time:

> In Italy, there was one reason for turning to the Old Testament: a provision in the liturgy. In the Catholic liturgy during Lent all weekday Lessons in the Mass are taken from the Old Testament in place of the usual Epistles. Since during Lent opera was forbidden and oratorio substituted as a subterfuge, decorum was even better observed--or camouflaged--by hewing to the subjects of the liturgy special to the season. No one was deceived and no one was indignant. At practically all other times they preferred the New Testament, the lives of the saints, or allegorical subjects.[3]

The people in Carissimi's works were usually strong Old Testament characters like Jonah, Solomon, or Belshazzar, but often the mood and emotion received more attention than the character. Carissimi's oratorios were considered to be quite operatic in nature, but they con-

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[1]Winton Dean, Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 336. For instance, the last chorus of Carissimi's Jephte is used by Handel in "Hear, Jacob's God," a chorus in his oratorio Samson.

[2]Howard E. Smither, A History of the Oratorio, vol. 1: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 223. The exact number of Carissimi's oratorios is a matter of controversy.

[3]Lang, Handel, p. 82.

tained chorsus full of dramatic vigor and psychological significance. Carissimi set forth a declamatory style for his choruses that was primarily chordal and depended upon inventive rhythms for energy. One does not find the balance of harmony and counterpoint that is found in the later works of Handel. Likewise one will not find Handelian grandeur in Carissimi. Carissimi's oratorios were usually short and plain with expressive recitatives and ariosos and dramatic choruses. Jephte was his masterpiece.

There were practically no Italians after Carissimi who conceived the oratorio as he did. Carissimi's student Alessandro Scarlatti was to be a strong influence on Handel later, as was Stradella, but these men's oratorios, although significant and a part of the mainstream, were operas in all but name and did not allow the chorus the dynamic role that Carissimi assigned to the oratorio. What then is the distinction between the terms opera and oratorio? The Harvard Dictionary of Music identifies the chief distinguishing characteristic as being the quality of the libretto, the oratorio having a more contemplative and less dramatic libretto than that of opera. Other features defining the oratorio are the absence of quick dialogue (question and answer in rapid succession), and the occasional use of a narrator (testo or historicus) who introduces the characters and connects their parts.[1] The practice of using a narrator gradually died out after Carissimi.

Whenever the use of scenery, costumes, or action is applied as the qualifying factor in the designation of the two terms, there has been confusion. The earliest oratorios were performed with combinations

[1] Harvard Dictionary of Music, 2nd ed., s.v. "Oratorio."

of those three elements. Despite their possession of almost every quality of opera, they still remain oratorios due to the libretto and other factors stated above. Similarly, there are works that Handel was careful to call "music drama" which have, through the years, been given the designation oratorio. Such is the case of Hercules. In the case of Handel, a basic difference between opera and oratorio is usually centered around the role of the chorus, that of the operas being less dynamic than those of the oratorios. Exceptions include the operas Ariodante and Alcina.[1] Ultimately, the quality of the libretto is the determining factor.

History has not thus far treated the operas of Handel with the enthusiasm that his oratorios have received. At one time, Handel's contemporaries looked upon his operas with favor. Handel effected a fusion of styles in opera derived from the work of his contemporarios: Keiser in Germany, Rameau in France, and Scarlatti in Italy. He presented the result of that fusion during his first visit to London in 1711 with the successful Rinaldo. From Handel's later visit until his naturalization as an English citizen in 1727, he adhered to the conventional plots and aria styles of opera seria. England's growing indifference to that style was graphically marked by the popularity of John Gay's The Begger's Opera (1728) in London. Handel continued to compose operas sporadically until 1741. From the period of his early operas until the time of Gluck and Mozart, evidence of the rise in popularity of comic opera and "reformed" serious types was felt more and more. For England, there was already a virtual cessation of national style in opera as

[1]Grout, Short History of Opera, p. 160.

early as 1700. With Handel's interests centering more and more on the oratorio, the continuing story of England's dependence upon continental sources for opera was assured, for the most part, until the time of Benjamin Britten. Almost all other figures in her operatic history have been minor or, like Gilbert and Sullivan, devoted to operettas.

In the 1920's, a Handel Renaissance of sorts was initiated by Oscar Fritz Hange, and a number of operas are today intermittently revived to display the voice of some prima donna. Ulrich Weisstein presents his own theory as to thy these works fail to grip modern audiences:

> . . .the librettos are static--they are little more than gems of arias and ensembles loosely strung together. Handel's awkward position with regard to his audience and his soloists is reflected in a letter, which the Modenese representative at the English court, Giuseppe Riva, dispatched to the famous historian Ludovico Antonio Muratori, who had asked him whether he could get a commission for a young friend to write a libretto for the Haymarket Theatre.[1]

The letter is found in Otto Deutsch's documentary biography of Handel and states that essentially, opera in England was ruined by the poor quality of the librettos. Riva declares that ". . .adapting a number of old librettos for the use of composers who write operas for the English state, making still worse what was bad before," was the general practice of the day.[2] Handel's chief opera librettists, Nicola Haym and Paolo Rolli, usually chose those conventional subjects. In fact, the two most often rewrote or adapted existing Italian librettos. They chose subjects from history, mythology, or romantic legends, portraying characters in a heroic vein.

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[1]Ulrich Weisstein, ed., Essence of Opera, p. 63.

[2]Otto Eric Deutsch, Handel: A Documentory Biography (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1954), p. 186.

The types of librettos that Riva referred to in his letter are ones that we find increasingly difficult to accept today. Nevertheless, those librettos were a dominant force in practically all of Western Europe with the exception of France at the beginning of the eighteenth century. We have grown to identify the operas of such as operas of moods or affects.[1] The series of moods introduced in these operas were contrived with little regard to unity of plot and a corresponding neglect of realism or details of dramatic development. Another term that has been coined for this dramatic type is "aria opera"--that is to say, an opera based on groups of arias separated by passages of recitative. Considerable musical interest was focused on the aria earlier in a variety of forms and later with almost exclusive dominance of the three or five-part da capo scheme.

Stylistically, Handel belonged to an early contingency of Venetian-Neapolitan opera seria composers that included Steffani, Legrenzi, and Scarlatti. Composers of this group admitted few ensembles in opera, with the exception of some duets. The orchestra participated as a nearly equal partner with the voice, utilizing a contrapuntal bass sometimes interwoven with the vocal line or with one or more strands of instrumental melody. The old type of French overture, first outlined by the Venetians and given definitive shape by Lully, was adopted in its essen-

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[1] Claude V. Palisca, Baroque Music (Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1968), pp. 3-5. Palisca defines affections as the passions of the body and soul which can be stimulated externally (with music) to alter the "spirits." The Passions of the Soul (1649), a treatise by Rene Descartes, is cited as the most comprehensive study of affections up to its time. Others who had studied the phenomenon include Aristotle (in his Rhetoric) and Johann Mattheson.

tial form.[1] Sinfonies, marches, and the like were used very sparingly to introduce acts and scenes or to accompany action.

Among the most notable and enduring of the operas of Handel are: Rinaldo (1711), Radamisto (1720), Ottone (1723), Tamerlano (1724), Guilio Cesare (1724), Rodelinda (1725), and Orlando (1733).

With numerous stereotyped conventions, Handel's operas were, in a sense, very predictable. Hugo Leichtentritt has given his answer to the dilemma of the modern rejection of Handelian operas:

> . . . . a complete understanding of the operas of Handel lies in an examination of the moods expressed by the arias. The plot is a secondary consideration. When this approach to analysis is taken, the Handel operas assume artistic validity, displaying a wealth of musical structure whose restrictions exist to assure freedom in essential matters.[2]

In that sense, perhaps we, as did Riva, have mistakenly judged these dramas from the standpoint of their librettos and conventions, rather than their overall worth.

In the final analysis, we are not poorer for Handel's having turned from opera to the oratorio as the outlet for his inspiration. Handel's defection to the latter was not self-induced. Winton Dean has said why:

> He had turned his back on oratorio more than once. There was no evidence of enthusiasm on Handel's part until oratorio became a money-maker, and it seems that he would have dropped it even then but for the disasters that met his first love, opera.[3]

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[1] Grout, Short History of Opera, pp. 182, 183.

[2] Hugo Leichtentritt, Händel (Berlin: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1925), p. 592.

[3] Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 35

Ultimately however, we must regard the genius which Handel brought to the oratorio as evidence of the same high inspiration with which he composed operas.

The development of oratorio tended to parallel that of opera from the mid-seventeeth century to the late Baroque. Seventeenth-century England was by no means as strong in dramatic traditions as was the Continent at that point. Scared dramatic music had grown little beyond brief dialogues. Early dialogues used continuo accompaniment with exchanges among characters and a concluding chorus. John Hilton (1599-1657) has left us with two examples: The Dialogue of King Solomon and the Two Harlots and The Dialogue of Job, God, Satan, Job's Wife and the Messengers. Later dialogues were composed by people of relative obscurity such as John Wilson, Robert Ramsey, Nicholas Lanier and Benjamin Lamb. There is but one example by Henry Purcell (In Guilty Night, a dialogue involving the roles of Saul, Witch of Endor, and Samuel).[1] It is believed that, to some degree, the English oratorio owes its existence to the dialogues and the dramatic verse anthem.

Handel, at any rate, found English audiences unfamiliar with the oratorio when he arrived in London in 1710. The English oratorio was thus practically his own creation. Once the genre was established, Handel's contemporaries' efforts in the field were overshadowed completely. A few who are remembered are William Defesch, William Hogarth, Maurice Greene, Thomas Arne, and John Stanley. Herbert Weinstock speaks

[1] I. Spink, "English Seventeenth-Century Dialogues," Music and Letters, XXXVIII (April, 1957): 155.

of those composers as having been "so sensible of their own want of resources, that the utmost that they attempted seems to have been an humble and timid imitation of Handel's style of composition."[1]

There was much that Handel had to learn about the English language to be able to find the maximum expressive quality that he sought for the oratorios. It was through the non-dramatic vocal works that Handel acquired this facility, along with the experience of choral composition on a wider scope than the had previously set for himself. It is a well-known fact that Handel later borrowed from these works to enrich his oratorios.

While he was in England, Handel began to study the choral style of Purcell with a great degree of interest. We find in Handel's Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate of 1713, for instance, a marked dependence on the structure and style that Purcell used in his 1694 Te Deum and Jubilate for St. Cecilia's Day. More than once, Handel composed choral odes that reflect Purcell's welcome and birthday odes.[2] It was with Handel's Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate that England accepted him as the successor of Purcell in the area of state ceremonial occasions. Purcell's own Te Deum was regarded with some awe, and it was no little event when Handel's Utrecht composition appeared regularly with Purcell's at state gatherings in St. Paul's Cathedral. Three decades later,

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[1]Herbert Weinstock, Handel (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1946), p. 185.

[2]Howard E. Smither, A History of the Oratorio, vol. 2: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1977), p. 182.

Handel's famous Dettingen Te Deum replaced them both.[1] Purcell's influence was to extend from the imprint of his unique ariosos to the English church-bell ringings that Handel employed with the Carillon in Saul It is fitting that Purcell's legacy as the giant of English composition found some continuity in Handel.

The Chandos Anthems that Handel composed from 1717 until 1720 give us an early glimpse of a choral style that appeared frequently in the later oratorios. These twelve settings of English Psalm texts were composed for James Brydes, Earl of Carnarvon, later the Duke of Chandos, to whom Charles Cudworth has alluded as "that resplendent character" that used his post as Paymaster-General to the Queen "to syphon off a good deal of public money into his own coffers."[2] "Have Mercy Upon Me", the third anthem of the group, has choruses which particularly foreshadow the extent of some of the oratorio choruses in contrapuntal technique and in expression of affections of lamentation and joy. Uncharacteristic, however, is the restriction of the anthem to three voices. The fourth anthem, "O Sing Unto the Lord a New Song," employs a shock tactic that became a staple in the oratorios: a deeply spiritual, legato passage to the text, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" suddenly bursts forth with majesty to the text, "Let the whole world stand in awe." Later anthems of the Chandos group also give a foretaste of the majesty that made Handel so famous as a choral composer.

The choral settings in the four Coronation Anthems of 1727 also

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[1] Lang, Handel, p. 192.

[2] Charles Cudworth, Handel (Hamden, Connecticut: Shoe String Press Inc., 1972), p. 18.

anticipate the massive sonorities that Handel would know so well how to use in his oratorios later. These works were composed as a part of the coronation service for George II. The ceremonial quality of the pieces is overwhelming despite the simple design of counterpoint and rhythm. "Zadok the Priest," the first of the anthems, begins with a simple undulating string introduction that swells progressively into a vertible explosion when the chorus enters. "The King Shall Rejoice" is quite similar, but more elaborate and polyphonic. The gentle third anthem, "My Heart is Inditing," utilizes a dancelike Purcellian idiom to provide the necessary contrast for the crowning of the queen. The fourth anthem, "Let Thy Hand Be Strengthened," changes the mood to that of proclamation and is considered to be the least important of the four. The relationship of these works to the oratorios is amplified by the newspaper announcement of the 1732 performance of Esther, Handel's first English oratorio:

> There will be no Action on the Stage, but the House will be fitted up in a decent Manner, for the Audience. The Musick to be disposed after the Manner of the Coronation Service.[1]

Handel's identification with the ceremonial style of the coronation was a big drawing card when it came to warming the public to his oratorios.

Ironically, the main librettist of Handel's first English pastoral, Acis and Galatea (which remains an important predecessor of the oratorios), was John Gay, the composer of The Begger's Opera. In Acis and in the approximately one hundred solo cantatas, we can observe an extraordinary cosmopolitan Handel. It was the fusion of Venetian, Roman,

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[1]Lang, Handel, p. 222.

Neapolitan, and Bolognese styles in these works that indicated that Handel was crystallizing his own compositional signature. Acis is also a fine mixture of German songs and the Purcell masque. Winton Dean defined the nature of the work:

> Acis and Galatea is so perfect in style that we might take it for the climax of a long tradition, instead of a first essay in a new form and an unfamiliar language. As such it is a sufficient miracle; but it appears as a solitary peak only because its forebears have never been investigated. It is a vital link in the chain between the Purcellian masque and the mature Handelian oratorio. Like the Birthday Ode and Utrecht Te Deum, it was closely modelled--and it could hardly have been otherwise--on English works familiar in the second decade of the eighteenth century but long since forgotten.[1]

In summary, there are numerous developments leading to the Handel oratorio which can not be confined to one genre or country. The stage was being set from the first emergence of Baroque principles. The Italian opera, German Passion, French classical theatre, and English masque all found their way into the consciousness of Handel. Despite the very comprehensive surveys that poeple like Winton Dean and Paul Henry Lang have completed, the total answer as to the causes and effects in the development of the English oratorio has not yet been formulated. Admittedly, there are many other composers whose work Handel examined and assimilated in one way or another. Some of these will be mentioned in chapter two.

The next chapter will present a compact organized view of the life of Handel and of his musical output. During the course of Handel's life, he met numerous musicians, patrons, nobility, and literary figures.

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[1]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 153.

Each had his part in fashioning the course of European musical drama during Handel's time. It is remarkable that Handel reflected something of all of these in his music. We of the twentieth century regard Handel as an eclectic in that sense. But eighteenth-century England found in Handel a national figure of great power, and she did it with an enthusiasm that has not since been duplicated, save perhaps for the fairly recent veneration of Ralph Vaughan Williams and Benjamin Britten As we shall see, it was through supplementing England's traditions that Handel's reputation rose to great heights.

CHAPTER II

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

A Biographical Outline of His Life and Works

The story of the Handel biographers is fraught with attempts to place some kind of national stamp on his genius. Some amount of objectivity is therefore required in discerning the truth in all cases. The work of Paul Henry Lang (especially in his George Frideric Handel) has been monumental in this regard. Lang attempts to put the large biography of Friedrich Chrysander in perspective:

> Handel has been imprisoned by the Germans in a ponderous biography begun by Chrysander and finished by Serauky, from which we have not been able wholly to deliver him.[1]

We have also tried to deliver Handel from those who have seen in his operatic heroes the personification of all that is German and, likewise, from the naive statements made by chauvinists of other countries.

The long list of biographers includes Otto Deutsch, James S. Hall, Percy Young, A. Craig Bell, Charles Cudworth, and a host of others who have presented partial biographies or studies. Studies including those by Abraham, Blume, Dean, Larson, Leichtentritt, Eisenschmidt, and Taylor have all contributed to the wealth of information about Handel. Here, we will confine ourselves to the bare essentials concerning Handel's whereabouts, the people he was working with at given times, the works from specific periods, and the circumstances surrounding the two works about which we are concerned in this study.

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[1] Lang, Handel, p. 679.

The first Handel biography, compiled by John Mainwaring in 1760, was the first life of a composer ever published.[1] In Mainwaring's memoirs the date of Handel's birth is established as February 23, 1685 (four weeks before the birth of Johann Sebastian Bach) at Halle, a city in the circle of Upper-Saxony. According to Mainwaring, Handel's father, an eminent physician, was above sixty years when his son was born to his second wife. Handel's father died when his son was eleven. In the early memoirs, we read about the engagement of Zachau, the organist at Halle Cathedral (Marienkirche), as the teacher of Handel. Apparently, Zachau taught Handel harmony by showing him the different styles embodied in a large collection of Italian as well as German music. During the early years, the names of two friends of Handel's stand out: Mattheson and Telemann. While Handel maintained his studies with Zachau as a young man, he and Mattheson ventured into neighboring cities to hear music and to play the organ or clavecin at various places. In August of 1703, the pair went to Lübeck to visit Buxtehude concerning a position as his successor. Neither wanted the post when each learned that the conditions for the employment included marriage to Buxtehude's daughter.

The Mattheson-Handel relationship lasted through Handel's brief tenure as a law student at Halle University and into the years at Hamburg that began in 1703. Their association was occasionally a stormy one,

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[1] John Mainwaring, Memiors of the Life of the late G.F. Handel: To which is added a catalogue of his Works and Observations upon them (London: 1760). This work is cited in Deutsch, Handel, p. 1. A translation of the book into German was made by Johann Mattheson in 1761. New editions followed.

as the celebrated story of their duel attests.[1] Mattheson nevertheless became the second biographer of Handel, and according to some, more reliable than Mainwaring.

We have stated that Handel's move to Hamburg was motivated largely by the climate for opera there. Handel enjoyed playing second violin in Reinhard Keiser's opera orchestra and was eventually appointed maestro al cembalo. The atmosphere at Hamburg was liberal and conducive to Handel's first attempt at opera. But Handel, having completed four operas at Hamburg under the shadow of Keiser, left in 1706 for Florence, Italy. At the palace of Ferdinando de' Medici, Handel composed a number of Italian cantatas in order, as Scott Goddard proposes, to acquaint himself thoroughly with methods of his Italian contemporaries, Leo, Alessandro Scarlatti, and others.[2]

A. Craig Bell regards the Italian period of Handel (1706-1710) as an "assimilative" one in which his works can be divided under five headings: secular cantata, church music, oratorio, opera, and vocal chamber music.[3] In Florence, it is quite probable that Alessandro Scarlatti became a part of that assimilation, directly or indirectly, especially in Handel's concept of opera. By January 14, 1707, Handel was in Rome performing as organist and composing many vocal and instrumental pieces. One of the last Roman pieces was Dixit Dominus, one of about six Latin sacred choral works. Lang sees the often-neglected Latin pieces as important to Handel's eventual choral style in the

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[1] Deutsch, Handel, pp. 12, 13.

[2] Blom, Grove's Dictionary, 5th ed., s. v. "Handel, George Frideric," by Scott Goddard, p. 38.

[3] A. Craig Bell, Handel: Before England (Yorkshire, England: The Scholar Press, Limited, 1975), p. 16.

oratorio:

> All these works are usually mentioned in passing, yet they are of crucial importance to Handel's future career. They are not youthful essays; they show that Handel had become aware of certain stabilizing virtues in choral music, virtues he adapted to his own creed as a composer and never forswore. In this connection Dixit Dominus is the diploma of Handel's Italian studies. There are remarkable things in the Italian oratorio-serenatas and in Agrippina (his triumphant Italian opera), and of course the cantatas include genuine masterpieces, but Dixit Dominus has power and grandeur, the qualities we associate with the English oratorios. The choral drama is here in this astonishing piece, for Handel already knows how to lead his choral forces to cumulative heights. He did not forget the Latin church music composed in Rome; we shall meet with portions of it decades later, they admirably in the great historical choral dramas and the ceremonial anthems.[1]

Handel returned to Florence in July of 1707, and by the end of the year he went to Venice where it is assumed that he met Domenico Scarlatti. In later travels back to Rome, Handel met Corelli, Alessandro Scarlatti, and other compusers whose influence was consequential. In June of 1708, Handel was in Naples where he stayed for nearly a year. Other journeys to Rome and Venice occurred before Handel left Italy on January 16, 1710, to take up the appointment of Kapellmeister to the Elector Georg of Hanover, a post just vacated by Steffani. It was from that place that Handel was to launch his visits to London. We do not know for sure who financed all of the European travels of Handel, but we can look upon his mobility as a sign that his talent was respected in many circles.

The following summary contains Handel's major vocal output in the perios before the London visits.[2]

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[1] Lang, Handel, pp. 74,75.

[2] Also numerous cantatas and chamber music for various combinations of voices and instruments; several German and French songs. Sources for Handel works include Händel-Gesellschaft, Royal Music Library, Fitzwilliam Museum, and various public and private collections. Following is from Grove's Dictionary, p. 39.

OPERAS

Almira	1705	Hamburg
Nero	1705	Hamburg
Florinda and Daphne	1708	Hamburg
Rodrigo	c. 1707 or 1708	Florence
Agrippina	1709	Venice

ORATORIOS

Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno	1708	Rome
La Resurrezione	1708	Rome

PASSION

St. John Passion	1704	Hamburg

CHURCH MUSIC

Laudate pueri	1703	Hamburg
Dixit Dominus	1707	Rome
Laudate pueri	1707	Rome
Nisi Dominus	1707	Rome
Gloria Patri	1707	Rome
Salve Regina	1707	Rome
Silente venti, motet	c. 1707-12	Rome (London)

Handel arrived in London at a time when Italian opera was a fresh, strong influence. There were no really outstanding English composers in the field (Purcell had been dead for fifteen years) and Handel's Rinaldo was readily composed and accepted. The first visit was marked by Handel's having himself locked in St. Paul's Cathedral with fourteen-year-old Maurice Greene to play the organ by the hour. Handel's trip lasted six months, after which he returned to Hanover via Dusseldorf. The second Hanover period yielded chamber duets, German songs, harpsichord music, and oboe concertos.

In the spring of 1712, Handel returned to London for what developed into more than just a visit. A new opera, Il pastor fido, was completed just a few weeks after his arrival. It was also during this visit that

the Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate were produced on a commission by the queen for the celebrations of the peace of Utrecht. In 1714, the queen of England died and was succeeded by Handel's German parton, the Elector of Hanover, who became George I. Consequently, Handel remained in England permanently, save for periodic visits back to the Continent. It was on such a visit in the company of the King in 1716 that Handel composed his Brockes Passion in Germany. Upon his return to London after that trip, Handel succeeded Pepusch as chapel master to the Duke of Chandos. We have assessed the value of Handel's Chandos Anthems (1719) and the pastorale Acis and Galatea (1720), which appeared prior to his first English oratorio, Esther (1720).

At the same time of his appointment at Chandos, Handel was busy as co-director of the new opera venture. The royal Academy of Music. Handel's activities in this service took him to the continent where he contracted Italian singers to perform in England. Handel became more and more involved in opera until, during the first opera season in 1720, he gave up his Chandos position to devote the next twenty-one years to opera. The opera years were characterized by developing jealousies and financial troubles which were finally compounded by the successful performance of John Gay's Beggar's Opera of 1728. The failure of the Academy and critical attacks followed. We have said that Handel continued to compose operas until 1741. In fact, about forty operas and sixteen stage works and pasticcios were composed in London from the time of Rinaldo until Handel died on Holy Saturday, April 14, 1759. Of the stage works, there were English pastorals, odes, and music drama, all

of which were very similar to the operas in character. The following are among the few that have achieved a modest degree of familiarity, if only for their titles or their arias:

OPERAS

Rinaldo	1711	Tolomeo	1728
Il pastor fido	1712	Ezio	1732
Teseo	1713	Orlando	1733
Radamisto	1720	Arianna	1734
Floridante	1721	Ariodante	1735
Ottone	1723	Alcina	1735
Flavio	1723	Atalanta	1736
Guilio Cesare	1724	Berenice	1737
Tamerlano	1724	Serse	1738
Rodelinda	1725	Jupiter in Argos	1739
Alessandro	1726	Imeneo	1740
Admeto	1727	Deidamia	1741

PASTICCIOS, ODES, DRAMAS

Acis and Galatea	1714	Oreste	1734
Esther	1720	Didone	1737
Ormisda	1730	Semele	1743
Venceslao	1731	Hercules	1745
Lucio Papirio	1732	Alexander's Feast	1746
Catone	1732	Ode for St. Cecilia's Day	1747
The Alchemist	1732	Lucio Vero	1747
Semiramide	1733		

We have cited the appearance of Handel's first English oratorio, Esther, in 1720. The earliest version of Esther was probably composed in 1718 and revised in 1732, spawning two more oratorios, Deborah and Athalia. There are almost twenty Handel oratorios from Esther until Handel's death. The majority of these works received their first performance at the King's Theater or at Covent Garden Theater in London. The oratorio Saul was first given at the King's Theater on January 16, 1739. Saul stands as one of the earliest oratorios of Handel to effect the real fusion of disparate elements that appeared in the most successful works of that genre. Herbert Weinstock regards

Saul and Israel in Egypt as "two of Handel's greatest works," an opinion that is shared by many who know the psychologial strength of the works.[1] Lang likens Saul to Greek tragedy and strengthens the image of that work as one of far more import than that of a merely biblical story:

> Saul is pure tragedy, without a tract of religious philosophy; its entire conception is visual and theatrical; it is a music drama. considering the spectacular aspects of this score, the festivities, the ghost scene, the funeral cortege, and two attempted murders, and so forth, one might say that there is a good deal of "grand opera" in it . . . .Saul is full of action, far more so than any opera of the period, or, in fact, than any for some time to come; compared to it most of Gluck is statuesque. Saul is Greek tragedy . . . .Handel only removed mask and cothurnus (high thick-soled boot worn in Greek tragic drama) to give us the men behind them.[2]

The librettist of Saul could not for a long time be named with absolute certainty. Lang, Dean, Smither, and most Handel scholars now credit Charles Jennens, the librettist of Messiah and Belshazzar, as the author. Jennens was apparently a persistent admirer of Handel as his consistent subscriptions to Handel's operas attest. But there is evidence that Handel's early contact with Jennens was tentative, as was Handel's first approach to the composition of Saul. Deutsch records early letters of offers of a libretto by Jennens that were politely evaded by Handel.[3] Smither cites the economic pressure that Handel faced because of the cancellation of the 1738-1739 opera season as a factor in Handel's reluctancy in composing Saul:

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[1]Weinstock, Handel, p. 222.

[2]Lang, Handel, p. 303.

[3]Deutsch, Handel, p. 394.

> . . .plans for the season had to be canceled for lack of sufficient subscribers. Three days prior to the cancellation, on 23 July, realizing that he must now change his course, Handel began the composition of Saul. An interruption during its composition reveals the composer's resistence to change; he had not yet decided to abandon Italian opera entirely, for he stopped working on Saul. . . and began a new opera.[1]

When Handel returned to the task, however, he finished the last parts of the score within seven days (September 20-27). Three days later, Handel plunged into the duty of composing Israel in Egypt.

Prior to the first performance of Saul, there was some bustle over the extensions to the orchestra that Handel would use in Saul. Winton Dean recounts a letter from Jennens to his cousin Lord Guernsey on that subject:

> Mr. Handel's head is more full of maggots than ever. I found yesterday in his a room a very queer instrument which he calls the carillon (Anglice, a bell) and says some call it a Tubalcain, I suppose because it is both in the make and tone like a set of Hammers striking upon anvils. 'Tis played upon with keys like a Harpsichord and with this Cyclopean instrument he designs to make poor Saul stark mad.[2]

Handel also had in mind using a keyboard contrivance which allowed the player to perform both the organ and hapsichord from a single console, that of the harpsichord.[3] In addition to these innovations, two large kettle-drums that were used for an artillery train were brought down from the Tower. These kettle-drums, which sounded an octave lower than ordinary ones, were utilized in other Handel oratorios. Finally, three trombones joined the forces, which were already quite large, to form an impressive array of singers and instrumentalists.

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[1] Smither, History of Oratorio. vol. 2, p. 214.

[2] Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 275.

[3] Ibid., p. 109.

Saul met with only moderate success to begin with. There were six performances during the 1739 season with a mediocre cast. The day after the first one, the following brief review was printed in the London Daily Post:

> Last Night the King, his Royal Highness the Duke, and their Royal Highnesses the Princesses, were at the Oratorio in the Hay-market; it met with general Applause by a numerous and splendid Audience.[1]

Reports from later revivals during Handel's lifetime indicate that Saul became progressively more popular. A better cast and revision of some texts could account for the public's growing warmth. Scattered performances were mounted later in the eighteenth century, and in Germany and England during the nineteenth century. Recent performances have benefited from judicious omissions of certain arias. Lang points out that inordinately long Baroque works to not suffer from such a pruning. Johannes Brahms, a great admirer of Handel, and in particular of Saul, conducted the oratorio in 1873 with his own cuts.[2] This practice helps to avoid excessive retardation in the pace of the drama.

Handel began the musical drama Hercules on the nineteenth of July, 1744. Scarcely one month later, he had completed the score. Handel chose to present Hercules for the first ime in a subscription series along with Belshazzar at the King's Theater. Sixteen of the orginally planned twenty-four performances were given the winter after the composition of the work.[3] Belshazzar and Hercules were grouped together by Handel and billed as "two new Performances," not oratorios, which

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[1]Deutsch, Handel, p. 473.

[2]Lang, Handel, p. 309

[3]Deutsch, Handel, p. 597.

received revivals during Handel's time. Unfortunately, Hercules has suffered an unhappy fate of misunderstanding and sheer bad luck. The numerous revisions that Handel made because of public reactions and singers' whims have been rendered even more confusing arbitrary decisions that historians like Chrysander, who designated Hercules an oratorio, have made in printing the score.[1] The designation of Hercules by Lang as "the highest peak of late baroque music drams," and by Streatfeild, Leichentritt, Young, and other Handel scholars, as a work of high artistry apparently belies the work's seeming ineptitude.

The Reverend Thomas Broughton, the librettist of Hercules, was, like Jennens, a subscriber to Handel opera series. Broughton, a scholarly individual, edited Dryden, translated Voltaire, and wrote several philosophical books.[2] His contact with Handel is sketchily recorded, but we can be sure from his work that Handel had engaged a collaborator who could provide an effective stimulus for his imagination.

Both Saul and Hercules were cast by Handel as studies in jealousy and human impotence. Dramas of considerable power and intensity, the two works met with varying degrees of success during Handel's lifetime. Handel, perceiving the situation, was forced to cancel the remainder of Hercules' initial subscription series after the failure of the first concert. In Lang's words, "with characteristic honesty he (Handel) offered to 'pay back the Subscription Money'" in an announcement in the Daily Advertiser:

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[1]Winton Dean attempts to unravel some of this confusion in Handel's Oratorios and Masques, pp. 429, 431.

[2]Ibid., p. 414.

> As I perceived, that joining good Sense and significant Words to Musick, was the best Method of recommending this to an English audience; I have directed my Studies that way, and endeavour'd to shew, that the English Language, which is so expressive of the sublimest Sentiments is the best adapted of any to the full and solemn Kind of Musick.[1]

Handel remained a respected public figure, and when he died in 1759, great public recognition was given him in connection with his burial in Westminster Abbey. The following oratorios, composed in England, were left as his monument:[2]

Esther	1732	Belshazzar	1745
Deborah	1733	Occasional Oratorio	1746
Athalia	1733	Judas Maccabaeus	1747
Il trionfo del tempo e della verita (The Triumph of Time and Truth)	1737	Joshua	1748
		Alexander Balus	1748
		Susanna	1749
		Solomon	1749
Saul	1739	Theodora	1750
Israel in Egypt	1739	Jephtha	1752
Messiah	1742	The Triumph of Time and Truth (based partly Il trionfo del tempo e del disinganno and Il trionfo del tempo e della verita)	1757
Samson	1743		
Joseph and His Brethren	1744		

[1] Lang, Handel, p. 429.

[2] The dates given are those of first performances.

CHAPTER III

SAUL

The Libretto and the Music

Saul takes its plot from a background of events written in the First Book of Samuel. The biblical story is complicated, and the relationships therein are sometimes difficult to comprehend. The confusion is augmented by the fact that the story is based on three or more unreconciled sources. Jewish tradition ascribes authorship to the Prophet Samuel: "Samuel wrote the book which bears his name and the book of Judges and Ruth" (Baba Bathra, 14b).[1] That assumption is contradicted by the record of Samuel's own death in I Samuel 21:1. Liberals and conservatives in the field of religion continue to debate over whether the book comes from the Pentateuch or is the result of an amalgamation of several sources. Handel scholars have therefore been fairly united in their amazement that Charles Jennens was able to put together a consistent account.

We meet the person Saul for the first time in I Samuel 9. In chapter eight, the people had just requested Samuel to appoint them a king. Samuel, upon hearing the voice of the Lord, accepts the task and chapter nine begins with a heroic description of Saul:

> Now there was a man of Benjamin whose name was Kish the son of Abiel, the son of Zeror, the son of Becorath, the son of Aphiah,

[1] Merrill C. Tenney, ed., The Zondervan Pictorial Bible Dictionary (Grant Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1967), "Samuel, Books of," by Carl E. De Vries, p. 750.

> the son of a Benjamite, a mighty man of valor. And he had a son whose name was Saul, a choice and handsome man, and there was not a more handsome person than he among the sons of Israel; from his shoulders and up he was taller than any of the people.[1]

Saul and Samuel met for the first time when Saul was searching for some lost asses belonging to his father. Before the end of that episode, Samuel had secretly anointed Saul king of Israel. Saul was the first king of Israel, a choice confirmed despite his bashfulness, in the company of an assembly of Israel convened by Samuel. Thus we have a figure who earned his livelihood as a dirt farmer, but had the physical attributes that would be expected of a Greek god, embodied in the king of a lowly nation. The combination of Saul's manly image and his defense of the nation of Israel against conquering armies provides a historical backdrop for the poignant tragedy in Jennens's libretto. In Handel's drama, the nobel figure Saul succumbs to impulses of pride, fear, and envy, ultimately driving himself to destruction.

The military force that Saul resisted early in his reign, and which eventually created the conditions for the rivalry of David as heroic defender if Israel, was typified by the invaders known as the Philistines. We of the twentieth century recognize the word "Palestine," which is the derivative of the Old Testament term, "Philistine."[2] Our own nation has become painfully aware of the brutal rivalry between the Palestinians and the people of Israel. Apparently, the situation was very similar in the era that is being discussed. The book of

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[1] I Sam. 9:1-2 (New American Standard Version).

[2] Tenney, Zondervan Dictionary, "Philistines," by John B. Graybill, p. 651.

Judges mentions the Philistines as major contenders against the Hebrews for the possession of Palestine. The story of Samson and Delilah is a well-known epic of the tactics that the Philistines reportedly used to accomplish their objectives. Samuel was able to defend against the Philistine armies, but Saul's reign was to end in defeat by the Philistines, who appeared to have overrun most of Palestine west of the Jordan.[2] It was this event that brings the tragedy of Saul and his sons into the forefrone in the libretto of Saul.

David the beloved, is described as Israel's greatest king in I Sam. 16 through I Kings. The religious world has come to recognize David as the gentle poet of the Psalms and the brave young lad who slew the Philistine giant Goliath. As a heroic celebrity, David has to rank with Moses as one of the most commanding figures in the Old Testament. Born in 1040 B.C., David was a shepherd boy living on the outskierts of Bethlehem. The biblical account tells of the development of attributes of strength, courage, and good looks during David's early years of tending sheep for his father. When Saul began to falter as king of Israel, the young David was sought out by Samuel and secretly anointed as Israel's next king. The scriptures hasten to emphasize the ensuing conflict at that point:

> . . . Now he [David] was ruddy, with beautiful eyes and a handsome appearance. And the Lord said, "Arise, anoint him; for this is he." Then Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the

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[1]Judges 3:31 (NASV)

[2]I Sam. 13:5; 14:1-52; 17:1-58; 31:1-13 (NASV).

> midst of his brothers; and the Spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. . .Now the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul, and an evil spirit from the Lord terrorized him.[1]

Saul, his mind then tormented, sent for David to appear at the court to play the harp (probably the nevel, a large, lyre-like instrument made of berosh and almug wood[2]) to sooth and comfort him.

Still in his teens, David gained the friendship of Jonathan, Saul's son, after the famous encounter with the Philistine, Goliath. It is at this juncture that Handel's drama beings. The account of David's meeting with Jonathan highlights the bond of their relationship and Saul's growing jealousy over David's triumph in the killing of Goliath:

> Now Saul told Jonathan his son and all his servants to put David to death. But Jonathan, Saul's son, greatly delighted in David. So Jonathan told David, saying, "Saul my father is seeking to put you to death. Now therefore be on guard in the morning, and stay in a secret place and hide yourself. . ." Then Jonathan spoke well of David to Saul his father, and said to him, "Do not let the king sin against his servant David, since he has not sinned against you, and since his deeds have been very beneficial to you. For he took his life in his hand and struck the Philistine, and the Lord brought about a great deliverance for all Israel; you saw it and rejoiced. Why then will you sin against innocent blood, by putting David to death without a cause?" And Saul listened to the voice of Jonathan and Saul vowed, "As the Lord lives, he shall not be put to death."[3]

The saga of Saul's jealousy is continued in the Bible. In all, there were four outright attempts by Saul to take David's life, which only increased the latter's popularity among the women of Israel. The resulting torrent of revenge caught David in a complicated triangle of

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[1]I Sam. 16:12-14 (NASV).

[2]Curt Sachs, The History of Musical Instruments (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1940), pp. 115-117.

[3]I Sam. 19:1-6 (NASV).

passions. Ultimately, the blood of the Philistines, Saul's armies, and many Judeans was tragically spent. David was himself forced into an underground existence, playing the devil's advocate to the Philistines and being protected by his fellow Judeans. Saul responded with murderous reprisals, in one instance, through the annihilation of an entire city.[1]

The fate of Saul was gruesome. He and his sons died in battle on Mr. Gilboa in 1010 B.C. The Philistines decapitated Saul, taking his remains to Bethshan. Saul's armor was placed in the temple of Ashtaroth,[2] his head in the temple of Dagon,[3] and his body on the city wall. The men of Jubesh-Gilead, remembering a former diaplsy of concern for them by Saul, recovered his body and the bodies of his sons, gave them honorable burial at Jabesh, and fasted in mourning. David's magnanimous elegy followed his hearing of the tragedy. It is known as "the song of the bow" and is found in the book of Jashar (well-known book of Hebrew poetry) and II Samuel:

> "Your beauty, O Israel, is slain on your high places! How have the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, Proclaim it not in the streets of Ashkelon; Lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised exult. O mountains of Gilboa, Let not dew or rain be on you, nor fields of offerings; For there the shield of the mighty was defiled, The shield of Saul, not anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, The bow of Jonathan did not turn back, And the sword of Saul did not return empty. Saul and Jonathan, beloved and pleasant in their life, And in their death they were not parted; They were swifter than eagles, They

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[1] I Sam. 22:17-19 (NASV).

[2] I Sam. 31:10 (NASV).

[3] I Chron. 10:10 (NASV).

> were stronger than lions. O Daughters of Israel, weep over Saul, Who clothed you luxuriously in scarlet, Who put ornaments of gold on your apparel. How have the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! Jonathan is slain on your high places. I am distressed for you, my brother Jonathan; You have been very pleasant to me. Your love to me was more wonderful Than the love of women. How have the mighty fallen, And the weapons of war perished!"[1]

To complete our understanding of Jennens'slibretto, there are other characters who should be examined from a scriptural standpoint. Samuel, who does not appear in the oratorio as a living person, nevertheless appears as an apparition. This eery scene is the subject of I Samuel 28. With the setting of the stage for the battle at Gilboa, the scriptures tell of an episode involving Saul and a medium. Saul had prayed prayers in a futile attempt to get some positive sign concerning the ensuing conflict. Despite Saul's prior removal of mediums and spiritualists from the land, he then required that his servants engage the services of a medium. The servants told Saul of a woman at Endor. Disguising himself, Saul took two men with him and approached the woman's abode. Once Samuel was summoned, it became known that Saul would die soon, specifically for his failure to carry out a previous charge of the Lord to destroy an anti-Israeli group known as the Amalekites. The scriptural account of this supernatural scene brings to mind recent activity in the area of the occult.

> And the king said to her, "Do not be afraid, but what do you see?" And the woman said to Saul, "I see a divine being coming up out of the earth." And he said to her, "What is his form?" And she said, "An old man is coming up, and he is wrapped with a robe." And Saul knew that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground and did homage. Then Samuel said to Saul, "Why have you disturbed me by bring me up?" And Saul answered, "I am greatly distressed; for the Philistines are waging war against

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[1] II Sam. 1:19-27 (NASV).

> me, and God has departed from me and answers me no more, either through prophets or by dreams; therefore I have called you, that you may make known to me what I should do." And Samuel said, "Why then do you ask me, since the Lord has departed from you and become your adversary? And the Lord has done accordingly as He spoke through me; for the Lord has torn the kingdom out of your hand and given it to your neighbor, to David. As you did not obey the Lord and did not execute His fierce wrath on Amalek, so the Lord has done this thing to you this day. Moreover the Lord will also give over Israel along with you into the hands of the Philistines, therefore tomorrow you and your sons will be with me. Indeed the Lord will give over the army of Israel into the hands of the Philistines!" Then Saul immediately fell full length upon the ground and was very afraid because of the words of Samuel; also there was no strength in him, for he had eaten no food all day and all night.[1]

Two characters who intensified the jealousy of Saul were his daughters, Merab and Michal. According to the scriptures, in one of Saul's ploys to have David killed, Merab was promised to become David's wife if he would fight valiantly against the Philistines; then Saul gave Merab to another man. It was the younger Michal who really loved David, and for whom David killed two hundred Philistines. This feat came after Saul's deceitful offer to grant Michal's hand if David would give evidence of having killed one hundred Philistines. David and Michal were married, fueling Saul's anger tremendously.

It is the function of Abner, early in Handel's drama, to present David to Saul following the slaying of Goliath. Although Jennens's libretto minimizes the role of Abner, the Bible relates an interesting sidelight to the main drama. Abner and Saul were cousins. During the reign of Saul, Abner was commander-in-chief of his army. In several of Saul's pursuits after David, Abner was an accomplice. At Saul's death, Abner was involved in a dispute over Saul's successor in which

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[1] II Sam. 2:10-16 (NASV).

Abner and his men met David's servants and were defeated with great slaughter[1]. Abner was involved in several other violent episodes and finally met death by a vengeful murder. As before, David sincerely mourned the death of his former adversary.

Abiathar plays a cameo role in Handel's drama. In real life, he and eighty-four priests were slain by Saul at the town of Nob, just north of Jerusalem. Ironically, in Handel's drama, Abiathar sings a recitative of glad tidings after Saul's death (Part III, Number 88) which points to the reign of David as recompense for the evils of Saul. David was connected with the massacre at Nob. In flight from Saul, David stopped at Nob, asking for provisions for his young men and for a sword, all of which were granted. Doeg the Edomite (who plays a minor role as the mischievous messenger in Saul) witnessed the transaction and reported it to Saul. Again driven by jealousy, Saul committed the horrible act at Nob. In the Bible, Doeg actually carried out the killing, sparing no women, children, infants, or livestock in the entire town.

The incredibly horrible accounts of the story of Saul and David involve many different locations and characters that are seemingly unrelated. David's confused wanderings, Jonathan's anguish when he is ordered to kill David, temporary reconciliations followed by violent fractures of relationships, and Saul's own vicious ability to show outward favor while intending to kill; all make the story an imbroglio of human emotions. One cannot read the entire epic of I and II Samuel

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[1] I Sam. 22:9-19 (NASV).

without marvelling at the scope of terror and the sense of history that is contained therein. In this vein, one is also drawn to the inescapable comparison to the dramas of Verdi which display tragic violence and an interest in the occult.

Charles Jennens bypassed some of the historical intricacies of the story of Saul in order to create a meaningful, consistent account that would not lose the maximum impact of the tragedy involved. The impending doom of Saul, for instance, is not thrust before us from the beginning (the biblical account seems to assure Saul's downfall from the first time he met David). The conflict of Saul is made very human by Jennens and the self-destructive forces that drive him are seen as a progression of emotions instead of as predestined events. Some Englishmen's comments about the amateurish work of Jennens are probably inaccurate in this regard. Whatever his shortcomings as a poet, the drama did not suffer. Paul Henry Lang is clear about his opinion of Jennens's abilities as a dramatist:

> The Handelian literature, taking its cue from Dr. Johnson, tends to deprecate Jennens, but this is manifestly unjust. He was intelligent; he had a good eye for dramatic possibilities and for continuity, and he not only knew what lends itself to musical treatment and choral commentary but correctly estimated Handel's own particular capabilities. Although he neatly paraphrased the Bible, the delineation of characters was his own. Jennens's libretto made a genuinely dramatic piece out of the biblical story of Saul, with characters and motivations. Though not much of a poet, he was quite knowledgeable as a dramatist, and he must have been interested in music and possessed of some knowledge of it.[1]

Jennens placed the character Saul in the forefront. A negative character, Saul's conflicts are examined in such a way that moralizing comparisons to the virtues of Jonathan and David are minimal.

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[1] Lang, Handel, p. 302

The moral force of the piece is assigned to the chorus, which appears as monolithic pillars at important junctions in the entire structure. The opening chorus of the work, for instance, is immediately majestic with cries of "How excellent Thy Name, O Lord," which are set in homophonic blocks of solid sound. A reprise of the same chorus appears after the account of David's encounter with Goliath. A "Hallelujah" chorus immediately follows that. All-in-all, there is a healthy amount of excitement that the chorus is responsible for maintaining from the very beginning. Musical implications of the chorus will be discussed further when this chapter turns to examples of harmony and counterpoint. But the literary considerations here are noteworthy.

Goliath's defeat in full focus, the opening scene places the first complex of events before the audience at once, a technique described as in medias res by Lang.[1] The function of the characters versus the chorus is then significant, as Percy Young points out:

> Interest starts with the people of the plot, people delineated with the exactness of photogravure. But while we study the gnawing deceit of Saul, the pert independence of Merab (who puts ideas into her father's head by refusing to marry one 'of poor, plebian parents born'), the pretty romanticism of Michal, the somewhat evirated mutual affection of Jonathan and David, the witch of Endor and the prophetic apparition of Samuel, the chorus saves itself for more or less abstract commentary. It is true that the chorus is also participant in the drama, with what effect is manifest in the opening chorus, but its detachment from the immediate scene is adroitly controlled so that the strictures laid on Saul by his subjects and in his presence have no incongruity.[2]

The action shifts to the primary characters after initial commen-

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[1] Ibid., p. 304

[2] Percy M. Young, Handel (London: J.M. Dent and Sons Ltd., 1965), p. 158.

tary and orientation takes place. The musical medium is then secco recitative. Abner appears, Goliath's head in hand, to announce the arrival of the "brave, victorious youth," David. Saul asks whose son the young man is and gets the reply, "The son of Jesse, thy faithful servant, and a Bethlemite." In just seven measures of recitative, Saul then commands David to "return no more to Jesse," and to remain a defender of Israel, his reward being the hand of Saul's daughter in marriage.

Michal has already expressed her delight at the sight of David in a recitative and air, but within her utterances is an underlying sense that the designation of Merab as David's bride will somehow stand between her and her happiness. David reacts to the entire reception and Saul's praise with unpretentious simplicity, stating lyrically that, "ev'ry pious Israelite to God along pays tribute."

Lang has commented on the opening phase of the work, and points out the peak of dramatic pitch that follows that phase:

> The first scene, entitled "Epinicion, or Song of Triumph for the victory over Goliath and the Philistines," is one of the great ceremonial pieces, ending with a magnificent Hallelujah Chorus. As a piece of musical architecture, the Epinicion, a string of five numbers forming a self-contained scena, is a departure from older practices, showing that Handel was fully aware of the advantages of the oratorio over the opera seria. This is the victory ode of the ancients informing us of the situation as the drama opens. No time is wasted, the pieces are well-proportioned, the fine opening chorus, "How excellent Thy name, O Lord," returns and then is replaced and crowned by the great Hallelujah Chorus In the opening phase of the work the expressive recitatives and the great choral pieces over-shadow the arias, demonstrating both the essential sylistic feature of the new genre, the English oratorio, and Handel's emancipation from the canon of the seria, but when Saul appears with his great rage songs the personal drama begins at top dramatic pitch.[1]

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[1]Lang, Handel, pp. 304,305.

The opening phase before the appearance of Saul's first rage air is comprised of the first two scenes plus part of the third scene in act one. This remarkable complex has the unique ability to unify the elements of individual characters with the persona of the chorus. The arrangement of the libretto with the music in the opening scenes is such that we can look at the whole of the events from a distance, and then we are drawn into the middle of the action without disturbing the flow of events. The natural progression through the exultation over the victory, David's introduction, Jonathan's bond to David, Michal and Merab's dilemma, Saul's growing jealousy, and the surfacing of the conflict is smoothly achieved while still paying attention to mood tableaux and some lingering conventions. But the spirit of the structure was new at the time the drama was first presented.

Streatfeild's rather flowery account of the opening of scene three tries to capture in words the psychology of the new structure:

> First we hear the sounds of rejoicing in the distance, little more than a joyful marchlike movement accompanied by the ringing of a peal of bells. Then the maidens of Israel appear, leading the long procession. The music swells into a wonderful swaying rhythm as they dance forward singing a chorus of enchanting freshness and simplicity. The scene darkens for a moment while Saul passes along muttering envious curses only to brighten again as the whole body of people burst into triumphant chorus with blaring of trumpets and crashing of drums.[1]

Streatfeild is referring to the point in the libretto at which the women of Israel sing the chorus which first arouses Saul's jealousy:

> Welcome, welcome, mighty king!
> Welcome all who conquest bring!
> Welcome David, warlike boy,

[1] R. A. Streatfeild, Handel (New York: Da Capo Press, 1967), p. 276.

Author of our present joy!
Saul, who hast thy thousands slain,
Welcome to thy friends again!
David his ten thousands slew,
Ten thousand praises are his due.

The first sign of anger is then displayed by Saul in the first accompagnato recitative of the piece. The chorus repeats the offending phrase and the first song of Saul's rage follows.

In the length and arrangement of the first three scenes of Saul, there is a graphic design of unity that corresponds with important events in the libretto. A strong case for chiasmic design influence can be made in that regard:

SCENE ONE	SCENE TWO	SCENE THREE
1. Chorus	6. Recitative, Michal	22. Chorus
2. Soprano air	7. Air, Michal	23. Accompagnato, Saul
3. Trio	8. Recitative, Abner-Saul-David-Saul	24. Chorus
4. Chorus	9. Air, David	25. Accompagnato, Saul
5. Chorus	10. Recitative, Jonathan	26. Air, Saul
	11. Air, Merab	
	12. Recitative, Merab	
	13. Air, Jonathan	
	14. Recitative, High Priest	
	15. Air, High Priest	
	16. Recitative, Saul	
	17. Air, Merab	
	18. Air, Michal	
	19. Air, Michal	
	20. Symphony	
	21. Recitative, Michal	

The remainder of act one follows a pattern similar to the above on a smaller scale. Of the six scenes in act one, there are six chorus numbers. The act begins and ends with the chorus. After Saul's song of rage in scene three, the remainder of the act deals with the spirit of terror that the Lord sent upon Saul. David, who upon the

suggestion of Michal, had come to play his harp as a balm for Saul's malady, escapes when Saul throws his javelin in an attempt to nail David to the wall.[1] Jonathan is commanded by Saul to destroy David. In the final scene of the act, Jonathan laments the charge and resolved to defend David. The High Priest and the chorus sing songs to the Lord, asking for the preservation of David.

The second act is begun by a sweeping, imitative chorus which rebukes Envy with a powerful moral statement:

> Envy! eldest born of hell!
> Cease in human breast to dwell.
> Ever at all good repining,
> Still the happy undermining!
> God and Man by thee infested,
> Thou by God and Man detested!
> Most thyself thou dost torment,
> At once the crime and punishment.
> Hide thee in the blackest night:
> Virtue sickens at thy sight!
> Hence! eldest born of hell!
> Cease in human breast to swell.

The drama moves on in the second scene as Jonathan informs David of Saul's command and of his refusal to carry it out. Here, David is told of Saul's giving Merab to another man (Adriel). David accepts the news, drawing attention in a recitative and air to the fact that Michal possesses fairer qualities. At this point, David retires upon the entry of Saul. Jonathan then, in scene three, convinces Saul (supposedly) to swear that David will not be killed. In scene five, the episode of David's and Michal's love is then treated. A chorus ends the scene, commenting on the powers of love and virtue in the face of the fury and hate.

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[1] I Sam. 18:10, 11 (NASV).

Act two resumes in scene six with the renewed rage of Saul when he is confronted with the news that David has successfully killed two hundred Philistines (the actual number is not mentioned in Jennens's libretto). Again, Saul attempts to run David through with a javelin. David reports this scene to Michal, and a duet follows in which David assures Michal that God protects him while Michal urges that David flee. Scene seven introduces the mischievous messenger Doeg, who is sent by Saul in search of David. Michal tells Doeg that David is ill and is in bed. In a display of her own deception, Michal shows Doeg a bed which has been arranged to appear as if David is in it. Scene eight is exclusively the monologue of Merab, an admission that David is her brother and that his virtues are admirable. Scene nine is comprised of a symphony and of an accompagnato recitative in which Saul reaffirms his intention to take out his revenge on David. In scene ten, Saul asks Jonathan where David is. Jonathan answers that David is in Bethlehem for the annual rites of sacrifice at his father's house. Saul rages, commanding that Jonathan fetch David for his death. Upon questioning Saul about this Jonathan has to flee the javelin attack of his father. The chorus ends act two with the following observation:

> Oh fatal consequence
> Of rage by reason uncontroll'd!
> With ev'ry law he can dispense;
> No ties the furious monster hold:
> From crime to crime he blindly goes,
> Nor end, but with his own destruction knows.

Act three, in the words of Lang, "is tightly composed, tense, and pressing toward a climax" of tragic proportions.[1] The opening

[1] Lang, Handel, p. 306.

accompagnato recitative of Saul, who is disguised (to avoid recognition by those who know about his ban on witches and those who consult them), is a classic example of tragic soliloquy:

> Wretch that I am! of my own ruin author!
> Where are my old supports? The valiant youth,
> Whose very name was terror to my foes,
> My rage has drove away. Of God forsaken
> In vain I ask his counsel! he vouchsafes
> No answer to the sons of disobedience!
> Ev'n my own courage fails me! Can it be?
> Is Saul become a coward? I'll not believe it!
> If Heav'n denies thee aid--seek it from Hell!

Paul Henry Lang's impression of Saul's soliloquy includes a weighty comparison:

> Perhaps the only comparable scene in all operatic literature is Philip's soliloquy in Verdi's Don Carlo.[1]

Winton Dean recognizes that the soliloquy brings Saul down to a plane on the level of humanity in its most urgent form:

> Saul is no longer mad; he is in desperate straits, forsaken by God and man, and knows that he is himself the author of his ruin.[2]

Scene two produces the story of Saul's transaction with the Witch of Endor. The air with which the witch conjures up the spirit of Samuel is a masterful example of bone-chilling poetry:

> Infernal spirits, by whose pow'r
> Departed ghosts in living forms appear,
> Add horror to the midnight hour,
> And chill the boldest hearts with fear:
> To this stranger's wond'ring eyes
> Let the Prophet Samuel rise!

The apparition Samuel's pronouncement is final, and the scriptural fate of Saul and his sons is assured. A symphony portrays the battle on

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[1] Ibid.

[2] Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 278.

Mount Gilboa. Charles Jennens uses the Amalekite to inform David of the deaths:

> Upon mount Gilboa
> I met with Saul, just fall'n upon his spear;
> Swiftly the foe pursu'd; he cry'd to me,
> Beg'd me to finish his imperfect work
> And end a life of pain and ignominy.
> I knew he could not live, therefore slew him;
> Took from his head the crown, and from his arms
> The bracelets, and have brought them to my Lord.

The librettist's version of Saul's death, following the tone of the story in I and II Samuel, gives a Shakespearean hue to the tragedy. Saul's imperfect attempt at suicide came after his armor-bearer could not fulfill Saul's command to kill him. Saul witnessed the horrible deaths of his sons, his armor-bearer, and all his men, and then suffered a lingering death himself, one finished by the Amalekite. Upon finding out that the messenger, who completed Saul's death, is an Amalekite, David orders the immediate slaughter of the man. A funeral march for the departed freezes the tableau before the resumption of scene five. The fifth scene of the last act is a compilation of elegies, sung by the chorus, then a tenor, a soprano, David, the chorus again, and David in concert with the chorus. The last two numbers of the oratorio are a recitative sung by the high priest, Abiathar (whom Saul actually killed in the incident at Nob, according to the scriptures), and a final chorus, both of which call for rejoicing once again in the hope that David will restore for Israel what Saul by disobedience lost.

The libretto by Charles Jennens is rich with drama, whatever its poetic shortcomings may have been. An amateur, Jennens must especially be praised for his effort. The choice of the story of Saul and David was not unprecedented. Earlier settings of the story or events related

to the story attest to the great popularity that the story enjoyed. Winton Dean cites several who were interested in setting the story:

> Handel's friend, Aaron Hill began an abortive tragedy on the subject; another, a very long and ponderous affair written by a Deceas'd Person of Honour (identified with one Joseph Trapp), had been published in 1703. The oratorio David by Francesco Bartolomeo Conti, a Florentine theorbo virtuoso and composer appointed to the Vienna court in 1701, was compared in its own day with Handel's Saul.[1]

Dean goes on to mention Johann Christian Schieferdecker, whose Der Königliche Prophete David was performed at Lübeck in the early eighteenth century. Schieferdecker's work made no attempt at drama, but was performed as a church cantata in pietist manner. John Lockman's libretto, David's Lamentation over Saul and Jonathan is mentioned as being set by William Boyce and J.C. Smith. Lockman's libretto is a "bare bones" account of the Amalekite incident plus the elegy, and is devoid of any real drama.

Howard Smither devotes some discussion to earlier oratorios on the subject by Carissimi and Francesco Foggia. Another German influenced by Italian dramatic music, Kaspar Förster is mentioned as having set one of his longest dialogues, Dialogi Davids cum Philisteo, in the style of Carissimi's longest oratorios. Like Charpentier in France, Förster is said to have brought the Carissimi type of Latin oratorio to Germany.[2] Jennens himself acknowledged that he derived from Abraham Cowley's Davideis (written ca. 1640, published in 1656) the behavior of Merab.[2]

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[1]Ibid., pp. 275, 276.

[2]Smither, History of Oratorio, vol. 1, p. 60.

[3]Ibid., p. 217.

Smither speaks at length about Keiser's work, Der siegende David.[1] Keiser had the distinction of having written the earliest extant Protestant German work known to have been designated by the term oratorio (Der blutige und sterbende Jesus, 1704). Keiser had already explored the subject of Saul in Der sterbende Saul (1707). His Der siegende David (1729) takes its libretto almost entirely from the "David" oratorios of Johann Ulrich von König, set by Telemann. The Keiser oratorio uses almost all of the first five König "David" librettos. The König account comes from I Samuel 17-18, with frequent departures from the scriptures inserted. Keiser's drama begins with the threatening of the Israelites by the Philistines and Goliath. The description of the situation is carried out by Abner and a character not used in Handel's drama, David's brother Eliab. Keiser's version has David answering the challenge of Goliath because of Saul's promise of rewards of riches and marriage to Saul's daughter. A good deal of the drama is devoted to David's enounter with Goliath. Abner is given the gory role of describing the attack on Goliath along with the sawing off of Goliath's head. The praise of David by the Israelite women and Saul's growing jealousy is included. An interesting departure is the madness of Saul which is manifest in Saul's believing that Goliath was approaching him to do battle whenever David advances during his singing to Saul. The dramatic action closes with Saul's attempted murder of David with the javelin. The real contrast between the König and Jennens librettos is in the use of a number of Christian interpolations in the Keiser

[1] Ibid., pp. 138-154.

drama. These reflective pieces are sung by allegorical characters: a Believing Soul (Gläubige Seele), two God-loving Souls (Gottliebende Seelen), a Pious Soul (Andächtige Seele), and the chorus of the Christian Communion (Christleche Gemeine). The eleven numbers of these characters are comparable to pieces interpolated in the oratorio passions of the time. In addition, there is a long elaborate section called the soliloquio in the König-Telemann oratorio which is performed in the manner of a brief solo cantata in seven units: da capo aria, simple recitative, arioso with instruments, simple recitative, and da capo aria. With reflective choruses, the Keiser work bears some resemblance to Handel's drama, but the function of Keiser's choruses are also dramatic in several instances. The chorus assumes the identity of the Israelites and the Philistines with admirable definition between the two. Keiser used a majestic, antiphonal chorus to depict the welcoming praise of David and Saul by the women of Israel. A chorus of Christian communion is composed in the German tradition of the chorale, the tune being "Wie schön leuchtet der Morgenstern." Interestingly, the Keiser oratorio also uses the carillon.[1]

It is suggested that Charles Jennens was impressed by the Handel oratorio, Athalia (1733), and the very similar theme of the alienation of an Israeli leader from the people by a tragic human flaw. We are not sure that Jennens heard Athalia or that he studied the libretto, but it is not unreasonable to assume that Jennens did attend the 1735 revival of the work since, as we have said, his name appears often in records of Handel subscriptions. The history of Jennens's artistic

[1] Ibid., p. 225.

and literary interests is an active one. Lang describes the image that Jennens had:

> Charles Jennens was a wealthy man who converted him ample leisure into activities in harmony with his literary ambitions. Somewhat pompous and, like rich amateurs in general, feeling superior to most other literati, he was nevertheless a cultivated man, a fervid Shakespearean, and not unqcquainted with the classics. Jennens lived in such splendor that the nickname "Suliman the Magnificent" was bestowed on the Squire of Gopsall in Leicertershire. He maintained a round table and, as in the Burlington and Chandos residences, Handel could there meet very able litterateurs. Among these, Richard Bentley, nephew of the great Cambridge classical scholar of the same name, must have been an intellectually invigorating person. A lesser edition of that storehouse of knowledge that was his uncle, he also united classical erudition with Christian theology and archaeology, a combination that had an impact on Jennens's mental processes and hence also on Handel. The "Gopsall" Circle" and its influence on Handel has not yet been sufficiently explored.[1]

Percy Young emphasizes the dubious nature of Jennens's abilities, and yet pays Jennens substantial homage:

> Jennens would have been affronted had he known that his posthumous fame was to depend on his sporadic bouts of co-operation with Handel. He felt himself to be more important that has the judgement of posterity. But then he was rich, his wealth having been inherited from industrial (and industrious) ancestors who helped to lay the foundations of Brimingham commerce. The combination of wealth, leisure, and ostentation leads to dubious artistic integrity. Jennens therefore, chiefly distinguished himself by expressing opinions on literature which won the opprobrium of professional scholars. On the other hand he was concerned with three of the finest libretti with which Handel had to deal. Saul, Israel in Egypt, and Messiah.[2]

Julian Herbage proclaims that Jennens was "poetically inclined to bathos," but that as a dramatist, "Jennens was an ardent student of Shakespeare, of the tragedies especially and of Lear in particular."[3] The reviews of Charles Jennens go on and on, sometimes with hilarity, as in the

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[1]Lang, Handel, pp. 301, 302.

[2]Young, Oratorios of Handel, p. 90.

[3]Gerald Abraham, ed., Handel: A Symposium (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), "The Oratorios," by Julian Herbage, p. 88.

case of Robert Meyers:

> Of Handel's many librettists none surpassed Charles Jennens in the art of sinking in poetry. Born at Gopsall Hall in Leicestershire in 1700, this literary amateur was educated at Balliol College, Oxford. Upon succeeding to the family estate in 1747 he built thereon a Brobdingnagian mansion in which he resided in princely style, remarkable for the number of his servants, the splendour of his equipages, and the profusion of his table. It was Jennens's custom to surround himself with a retinue of sycophants who contrived to keep him ignorant of current opinion by extolling his literary talents and musical skill. From his town house in Great Ormond Street, Bloomsbury, he sometimes drove to his publisher's office in Red Lion Court (a distance of five minutes' walk) in a magnificent chariot drawn by four horses with plumes, attended by four lackeys who swept the pavement free of oyster shells before the Gopsall squire descended. It is strange that an age of decorum and conformity could produce such grotesque originals as Charles Jennens.[1]

Jennens's idiosyncracies also surface in letters that he wrote to various people concerning his work or performances in which he was connected in one way or another. We have cited Jennens's note to his cousin Lord Geurnsey with respect to Handel's "maggots," the unusual instruments used in Saul. That particular "maggot" was the Tubalcain (carillon). Jennens went on to complain about the second "maggot":

> His (Handel's) second maggot is an organ of 500 pounds price which . . . he has bespoke of one Moss [Morse] of Barnet. This organ, he says, is so contructed that as he sits at it he has a better command of his performers than he used to have, and he is highly delighted to think with what exactness his Oratorio [Saul] will be performed by the help of this organ; so that for the future instead of beating time at his oratorios, he is to sit at the organ all the time with his back to the Audience.[2]

Jennens argued often with Handel about the manner in which a libretto

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[1]Robert Manson Meyers, Handel, Dryden, and Milton (London: Bowes and Bowes in Covent Garden, 1956), p. 52.

[2]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 110.

was to be set or about any number of philosophical issues. The two had a sincere regard for each other though, and Handel often stayed at Gopsall in Leicestershire. The advantage of their collaboration under one roof may speak to the success that Handel had with Jennens. R. A. Streatfeild tells of Handel's stays at Gopsall and suggests that it may have indeed been at Jennens's country home that Handel was encouraged to compose oratorios:

> At Gopsall Handel had the advantage of tranquillity, comfort and congenial society, for Jennens was a bachelor like himself. It is perhaps worth noting that fifty years after Handel's death a tradition existed to the effect that some . . . of his oratorios were composed at Gopsall. A local parson contributed the following note to Nichols' Literary Anecdotes: "I know not whether you are aware that there is a probability, I think almost and immediate proof, that Handel's oratorios took their rise in this county."[1]

The parson goes on to say that Jennens's neighbor Dr. Bentley, nephew of the great Bentley, was also a periodic guest. Dr. Bentley is implied as having had a hand in the production of the libretto of Saul.

Ultimately, Jennens provided Handel with five notable texts: Saul; L'Allegro, Il Pensero ed Il Moderato; Messiah; Belshazzar; and Israel in Egypt. Jennens also published an edition of Shakespeare that sparked a violent controversy, in keeping with his image.

In October of 1727, in the midst of the troubles in the Royal Academy, there was a meeting regarding the forthcoming coronation of George II. Herbert Weinstock has described the scene which reveals something of Handel's understanding of English preferences:

> A lofty ecclesiastic (perhaps two lofty ecclesiastics, the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, hearing that the King has ordered

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[1] Streatfeild, Handel, pp. 150, 151.

> Handel to prepare anthems for the coronation, suggested to the composer that he would select from the Bible the texts to be set. And Handel is said to have replied, "I have read my Bible very well, and shall choose for myself." His choice fell upon I kings, i. 38-40; Psalm 89, 14-15; Psalm 21, 1, and Psalm 45, 1. On these texts he built a four-part anthem of magnificent proportions entirely suited to its place as the support and display of solemn and bejewled pageantry.[1]

During these years, Handel was turning more and more to the Bible for viable compositional sources. We have examined the reason for the reluctant move to the oratorio. Why did England enthusiastically embrace Handel then when she would not otherwise? One looks at a scholarly book like the Englishman Cecil Forsyth's Music and Nationalism and wonders how, in a work almost entirely devoted to national self-examination, George Frideric Handel is mentioned only briefly, and with some degree of scorn. Perhaps the answer lies within Forsyth's footnote on a national school of opera:

> There is no difficulty in gathering from our histories the causes of individual Operatic failures. Among such causes we find "the interference of a certain class of critics," "the unfortunate conditions of English Opera," and even "the size of the stage"; but all such reasons are merely "proximate," and help us very little when we come to study the question why the nation at large has not been able to develop a national school of Opera. See the very inconclusive reasoning on this point in Grove's Dictionary (1st ed. vol. iii. p. 291), where it is assumed that it was possible for Handel to found an English School by producing Italian and German works before an English audience, and that the school dies out partly because Arne and his contemporaries were not such great men as Handel, and partly because Storace, Dibdin, Hook, and Shield, showed an "almost total absence of dramatic power"! Elsewhere the English failure to build on Purcell's foundation is merely chronicled almost as if it were self-explanatory, or the trouble is put down to that well-known musical whipping-horse "Handel's powerful personality."[2]

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[1]Weinstock, Handel, p. 135. Weinstock says that the four anthems were originally considered to be one piece. "Zadok the Priest" did not fail to be a part of every coronation service through that of George VI.

[2]Cecil Forsyth, Music and Nationalism (London: Macmillan & Co., Limited, 1911), p. 6

Mr. Forsyth's attitude can be likened to a passage from Charles Dickens' Bleak House, which is quoted on the leaf preceding chapter one of his book:

> Mr. Chadband: "Can we fly, my friends? We cannot. Why can we not fly, my friends?" Mr. Snagsby ventures to observe in a cheerful and rather knowing tone, "No wings," but is immediately frowned down by Mrs. Snagsby.

With the Bible and the choral drama, Handel could fly. In England, the Bible evoked strong national emotion. The Englishman could relate with a sense of belonging to the search of the Israelites for a sense of identity and security. As Bukofzer stresses, England's choral tradition was ripe for Handel's interests:

> The Old Testament was the ideal source for the choral drama because it provided Handel with exactly what he needed: monumental characters in a monumental setting. Handel's grand manner, his broadly sweeping style, are peculiarly fitting for these massive choral dramas so that subject matter and musical style are in perfect harmony.[1]

The synthesis of Handel's broad style with heroic Old Testament characters also satisfied Handel's fascination with the beauty of Greek drama. Lang explains the unity of two such diversified sources rooted in opposite deity concepts:

> The Old Testament and Greek drama are considered mutually exclusive, two extremes--but are they? Both grew from mythological-religious sources, and the passions visited on their human figures were symbolized by deity. The liberty of the dramatis personae in both to make choices and decisions is more or less restricted by fate or divine commands. There is, indeed, a certain kinship between the two sources; for instance, in the profound difference that separates them, even in their external manifestations, from Christian spirituality. Greek drama was living mythology, the Old Testament living history, both originating from the imagination of the people.

---

[1] Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque, p. 36.

In order for Handel to accomplish a synthesis of compositional ideas, national tastes, and philosophical thought, there were changes in dramatic structure that took him away from some of the most common opera seria conventions. One of the most prominent structural differences was seen in the chorus appearances which stand as strategic pillars in the work. Four such appearances figure significantly in Saul: the victory celebrations at the beginning relate to the mourning scene with the crowning of David at the end, while the choral commentary on the envy of the second act is balanced by the one on the consequences of rage at the end of the same act. The following diagram emphasizes the importance of the chorus as well as other forms of ensemble in the structure:

SINFONIA

Act I

Scene 1	1 CHORUS (a), 2, 3 TRIO, 4 CHORUS (b), 5 CHORUS (a)
Scene 2	6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20 SINFONIA
Scene 3	22 CHORUS (c), 23, 35 CHORUS (c), 25, 26
Scene 4	27, 28, 29, 30
Scene 5	31, 32, 33 SINFONIA, 34, 35, 36, 37
Scene 6	38, 39, 40, 41 CHORUS

Act II

Scene 1	42 CHORUS
Scene 2	43, 44, 45, 46, 47
Scene 3	48, 49, 50, 51
Scene 4	52, 53, 54
Scene 5	55, 56 DUET, 57 CHORUS, 58 SINFONIA
Scene 6	59, 60 DUET
Scene 7	61, 62

Scene 8 63, 64

Scene 9 65, SINFONIA, 66

Scene 10 67, 68 CHORUS

Act III

Scene 1 69, 70

Scene 2 71, 72

Scene 3 73, 74 SINFONIA

Scene 4 75, 76, 77 DEAD MARCH

Scene 5 78 CHORUS, 79, 80, 81, 82 CHORUS, 83, 84 Solo and CHORUS 85, 86 CHORUS

The unlabeled numbers represent recitatives, airs, and accompagnato sections. Some of the recitatives involve quick dialogues between two or more people. In the first act, there are fifteen airs; in the second, eight; and in the third act, six. Several of the twenty-nine airs are short melodic pieces and, notably, the da capo air is rare. Handel originally wrote five in the da capo form, but later ended three of them after their first sections, and one after its second section. The practice of deleting airs is occasionally desirable.

The position of the sinfonias in Saul and the related tonal organization of the drama lead to interesting implications. As we have seen from the above chart, it appears that ensemble music in Saul was arranged structurally. The sinfonias themselves appear at important moments in the plot. The first sinfonia prepares the Epinicion scene, the two great choruses of praise and adulation; the act two sinfonias function as a curtain during a scene change; the third act utilizes the sinfonia to depict the battle in which Saul dies. Thus, whether for implying an event that is not seen, or for providing a point of punctuation at a change of scenes, the sinfonias are important for

dramatic reasons in Saul. The inescapable conclusion that Handel was thinking in terms of the stage (even though he never intended staging) is further strengthened by the fact that all of the sinfonias and the Dead March were composed in C major. For psychological reasons, the return to the key of C (major and minor) was used by Handel in the sinfonias and choruses to signal a change in mood or a significant point in the plot.

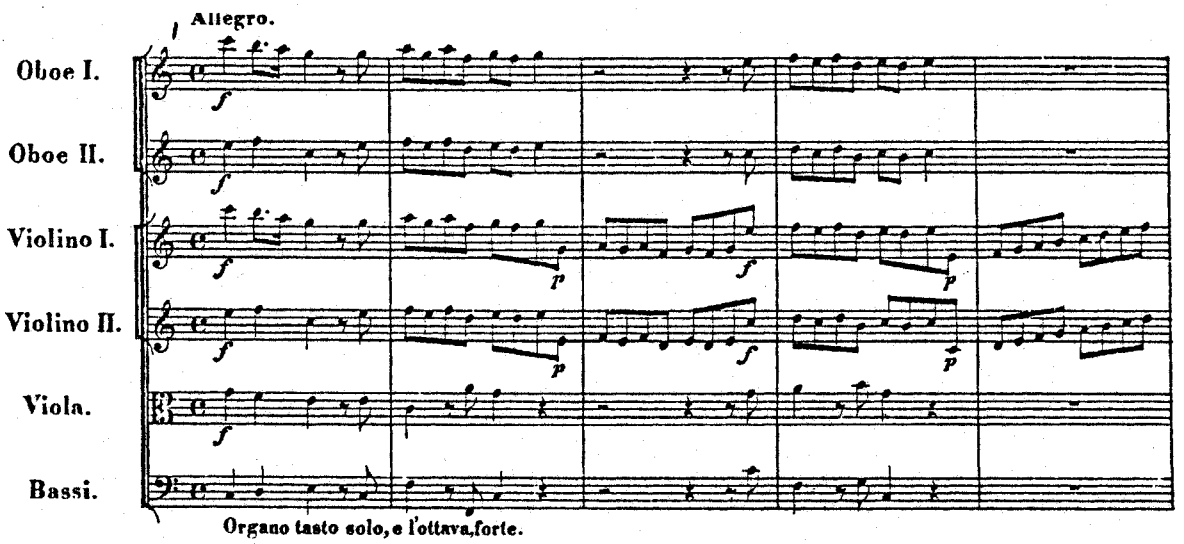
At this point in our study, we shall turn to the music of Saul, isolating several given examples of instrumental, choral, and solo numbers which come to grips with the uniqueness that Saul embodies. The most attention will be given here to choral numbers and to the recitatives and airs that delineate the male characters. Some very novel examples (for instance, the music of the Witch of Endor) will be discussed to show how Handel met the challenge of setting the exotic and the picturesque. To preface the examples, a list of the large orchestration is given:

Violins (often in three parts)	Three Trombones
Viola	Drums (Timpani from the Tower)
Cello	Harp
Bass	Theorbo
Two Flutes	Carillon
Two Oboes	Two Organs
Two Bassoons	Harpischord
Two Trumpets	Two Horns (in one air)

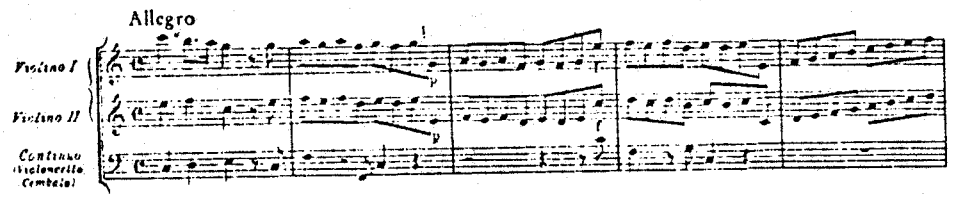
The opening sinfonia of Saul (Ex. 1) is based on two previous Handel works, a trio sonota and an overture from Il trionfo del tempo e della verita.[1] Handel's quote is unabashedly direct in both cases. The sinfonia example differs from the trio sonata (Ex. 2) only in necessary changes of voicing. As the opening of a series of movements marked Allegro, Larghetto, Allegro, and Andante larghetto, the sinfonia's beginning uses only two oboe, two violin, one viola, and concontinuo parts in a tripartite, concertato-style piece with imaginative use of solo and grouped voices against tutti sections. In texture and dynamics, there are chamber-like sections that are reminiscent of the Bach Brandenburg Concertos. The dotted figure (m. 1) appears elsewhere in the piece as ornamentation, especially at cadence points. Baroque practice would readily admit the use of trills with this figure. Antiphonal writing (as in the usual concerto style; m. 3), and particularly sequence (m. 4) help to give the movement a characteristically late-Baroque quality.

[1] Smither, History of Oratorio, vol. 1, p. 225.

Ex. 1 Opening movement to sinfonia in Saul

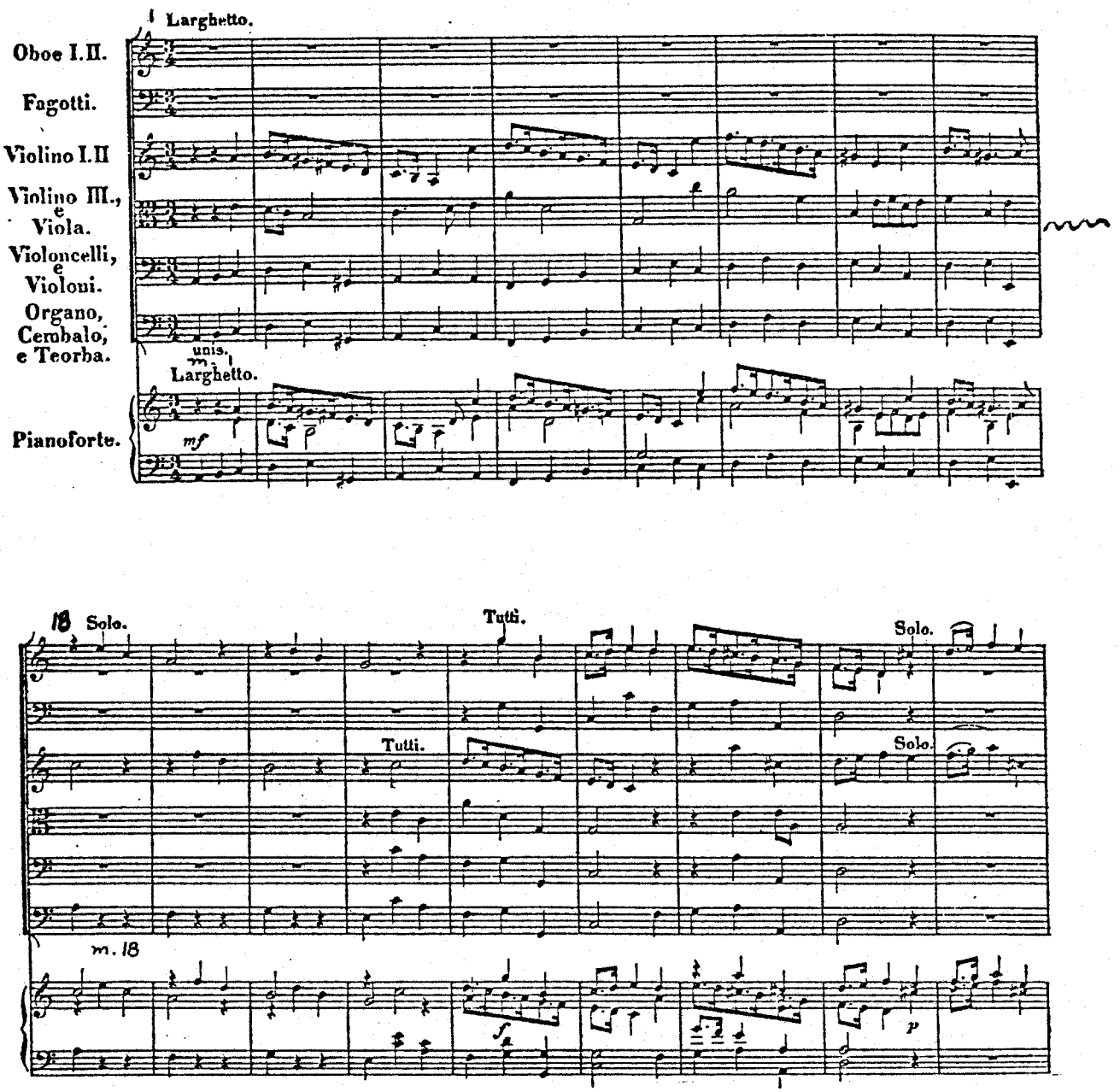


Ex. 2 Corresponding movement to Handel's trio sonata

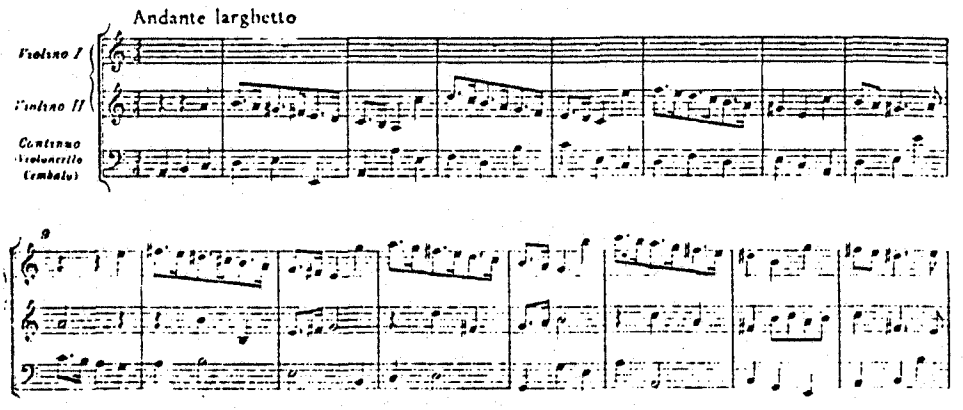


The larghetto second movement (Ex. 3) is in a contrasting three-beat meter with the addition of a third violin part, viola, and cello parts. The theorbo (a type of lute) is used with the continuo. Solo parts alternating between violin and oboes are treated imitatively (mm. 18-19), amid tutti sections (mm. 21-22), and together. Frequently, pairing of voices is evident (m. 26). Again, the resemblence to the trio sonata (Es. 4) is clear.

Ex. 3 Second movement of sinfonia in Saul

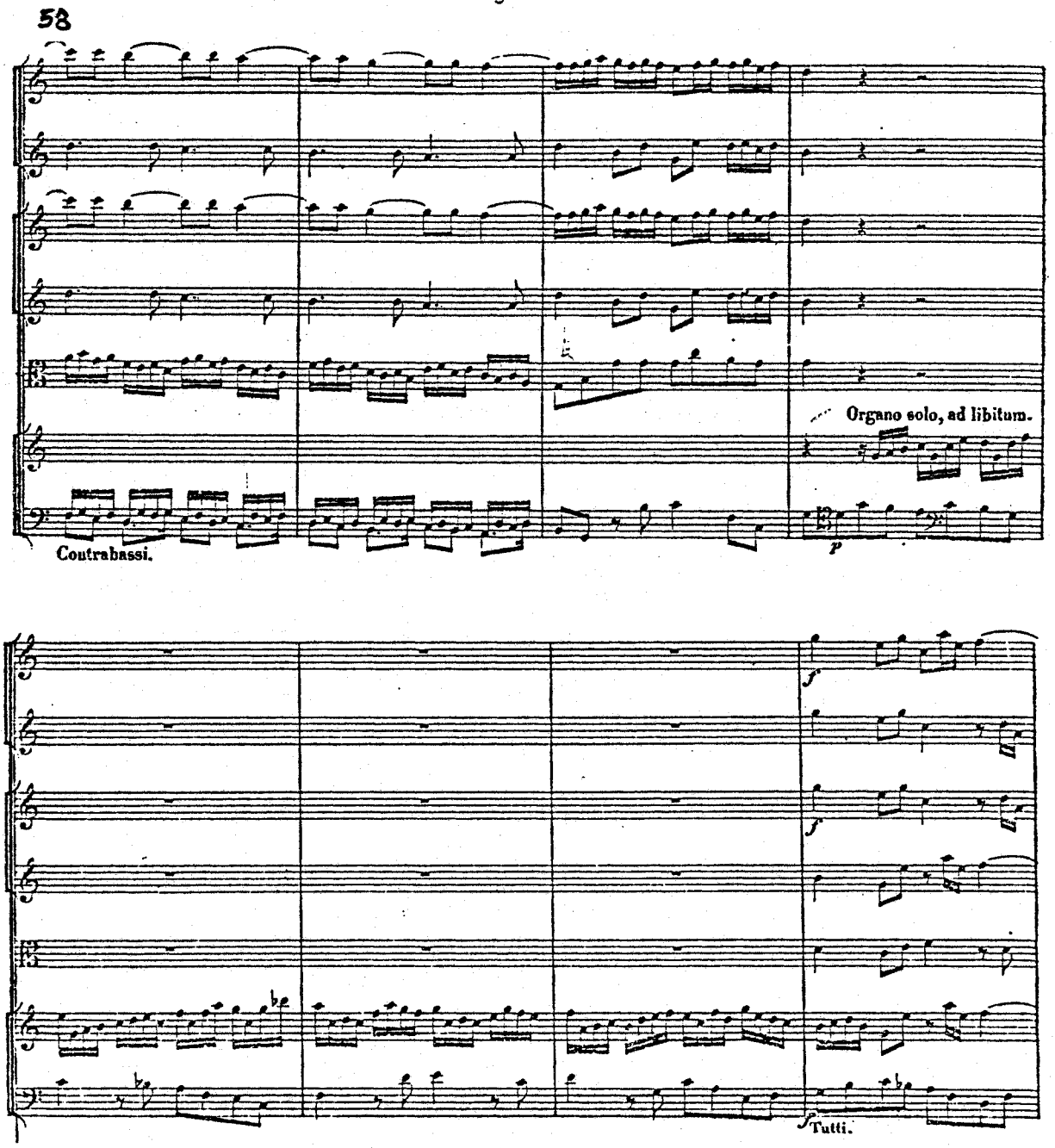


Ex. 4 Corresponding movement of Handel's trio sonata



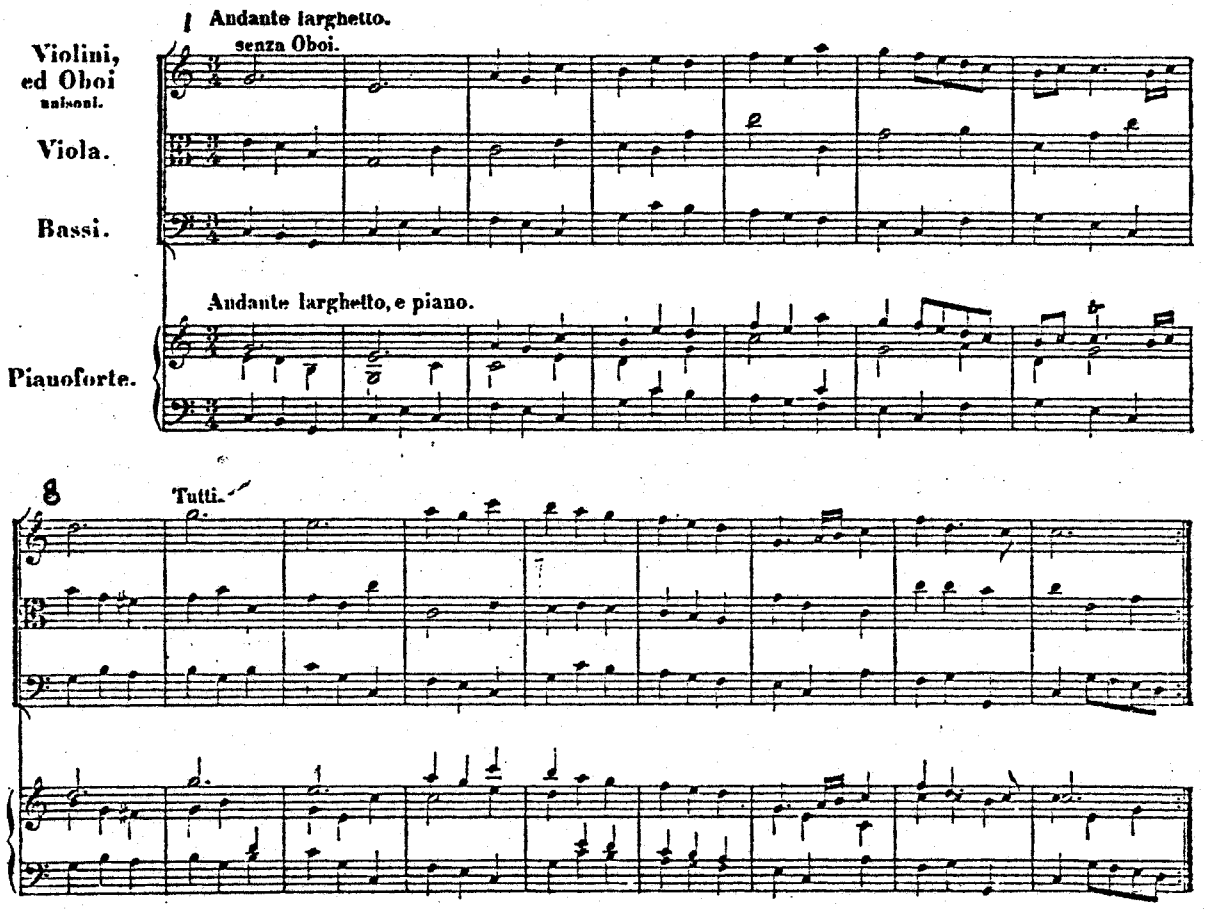
The third movement Allegro (Ex. 5) is a bubbling toccata piece for orchestra and organ. The movement bases its rhythmic interest on running sixteenth notes that the organ plays freely in solo sections (mm. 62-65). A motive appears as accompaniment, or in tutti sections, which is heard in several different keys throughout the movement. The four-note motive is in the upper three parts in the example (m. 66). Again, the alternation of solo and tutti sections lends the flavor of the concerto. The Baroque principle of "driving toward the cadence" is very much in evidence in this movement. A relentless energy is generated by the melodically-functioning bass line and the often-present sixteenth notes.

Ex. 5 Third movement Allegro



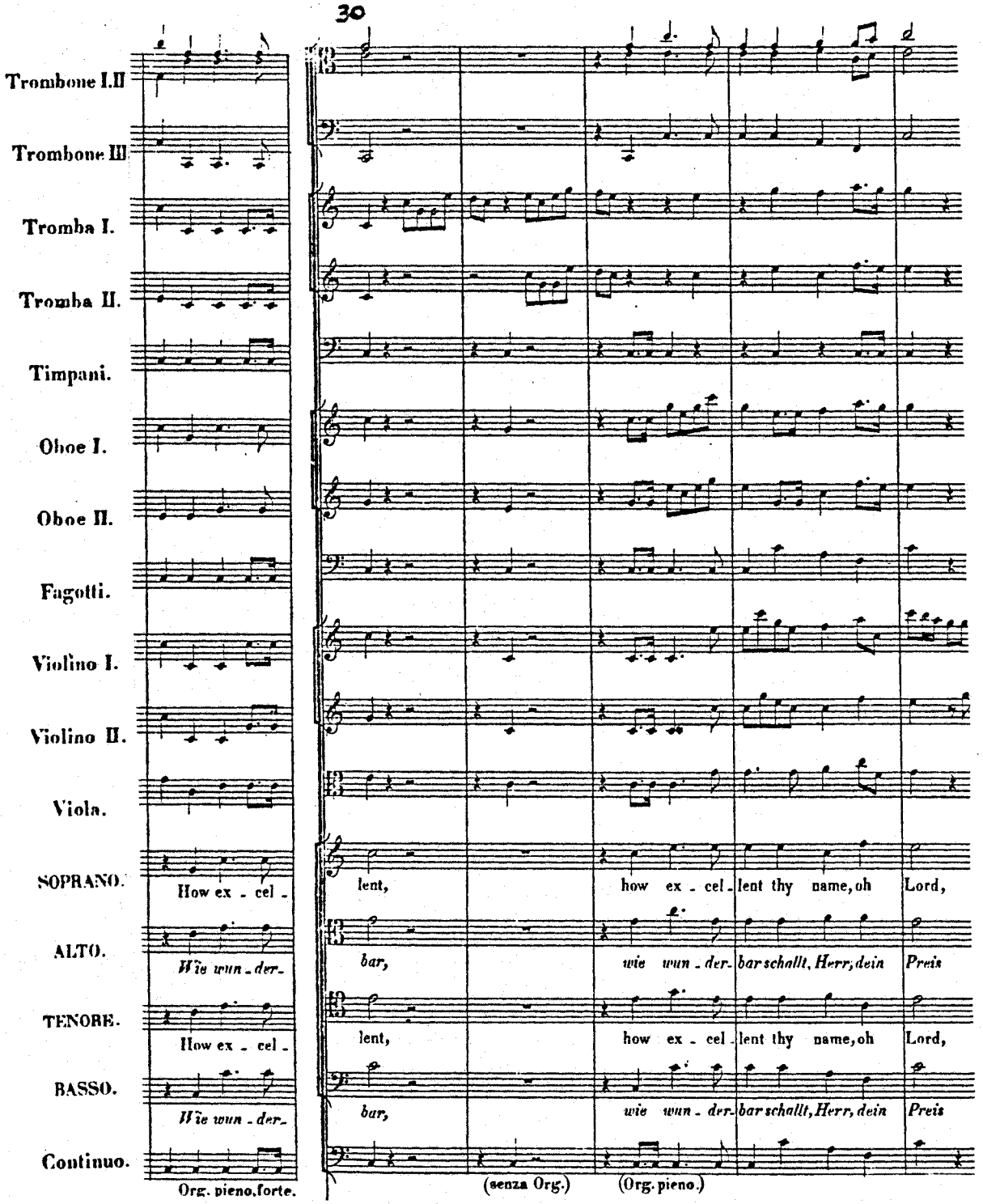
A minimum of instrumentation is used for the final movement (Ex. 6) of the sinfonia. A gentle, arch-shaped melody is played in unison, first by the violins (mm. 1-8), then by violins and oboes (mm. 9-16).

Ex. 6 Fourth movement of sinfonia in Saul



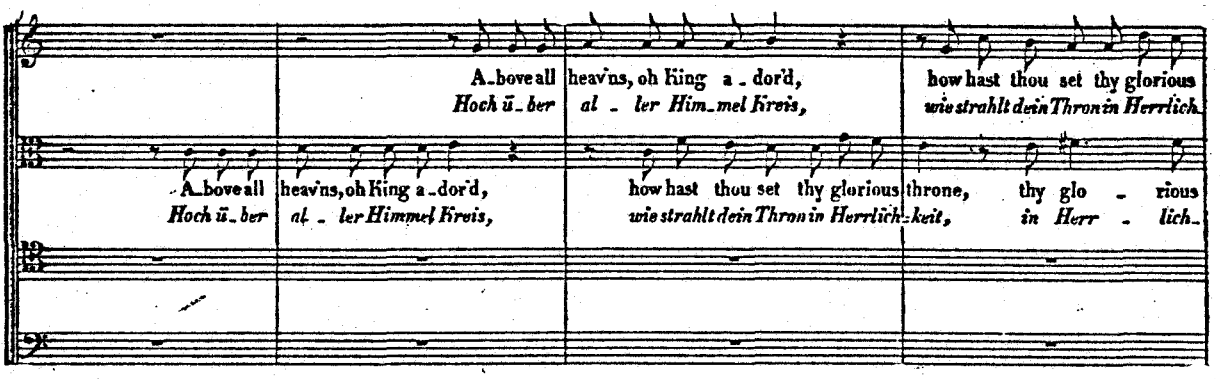
Performing forces are expanded considerably in "How excellent Thy name, O lord," the opening chorus. Three trombones, two trumpets, and timpani are added to the core of the orchestra to effect a bright, majestic complement to the proud chorus. After a twenty-eight bar introduction, the chorus enters in powerful homophonic chords (Ex. 7) that reconfirm the established C major tonality.

Ex. 7 Epinicion, or Song of Triumph



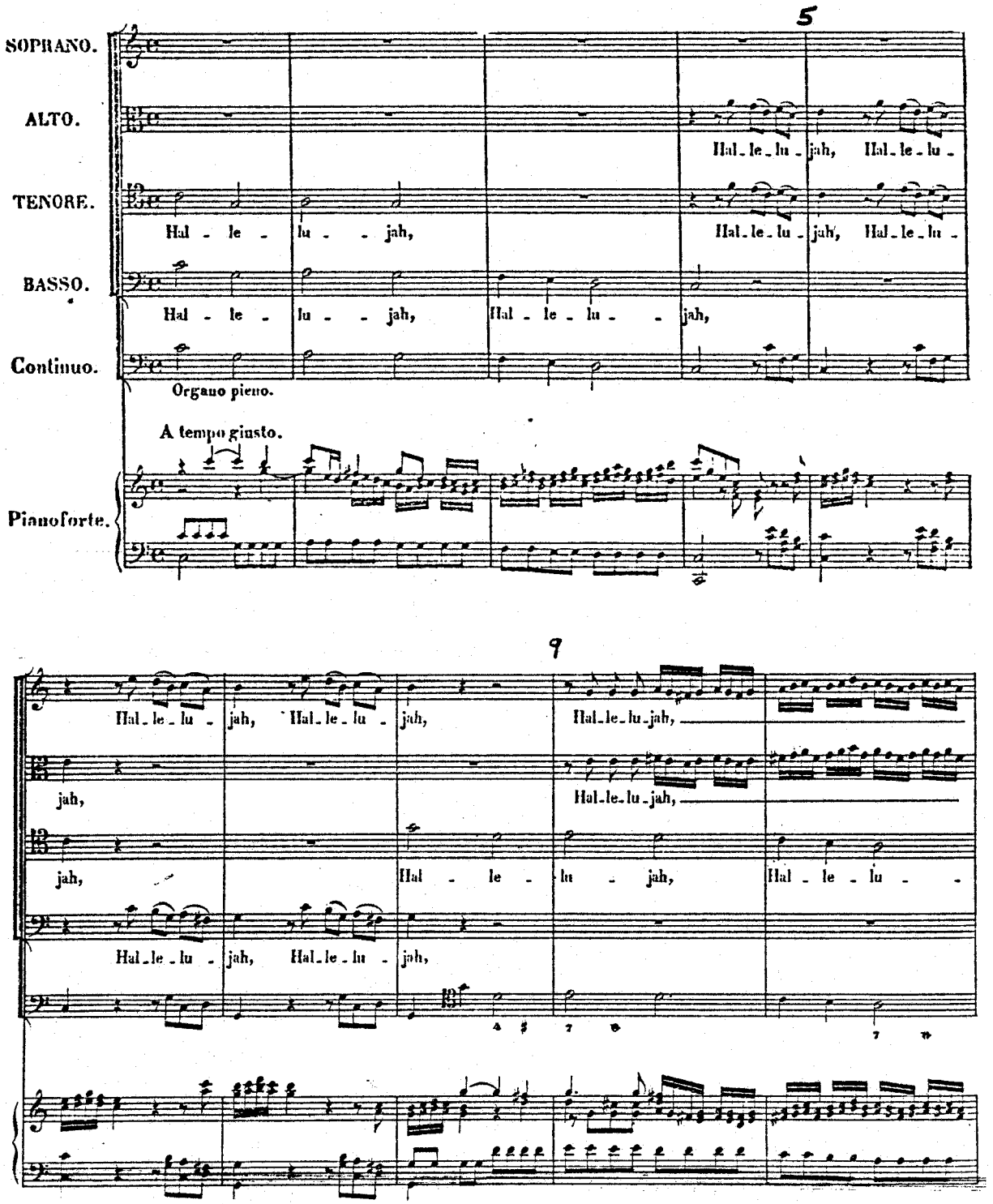
The chorus then breaks into fugal treatment (Ex. 8) after a section in the dominant key. The subject in the fugal section is introduced and repeated in each voice until all voices converge into the broad, final cadence.

Ex. 8 Beginning of fugal section of Epinicion



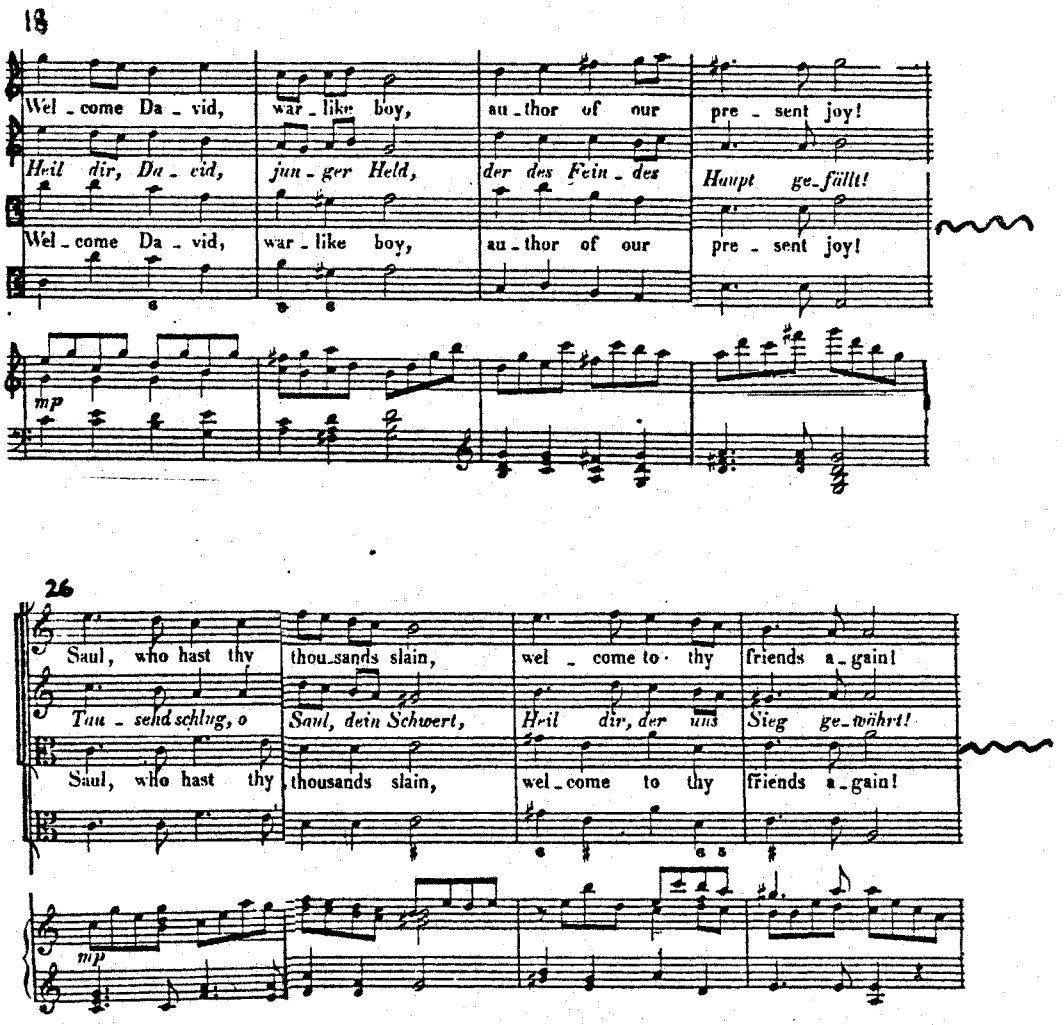
"How excellent Thy name, O Lord" returns and is supplemented by the great "Hallelujah" chorus (Ex. 9), which Handel had once banished to the end of the oratorio. Full use of organ and brass is made in this chorus. The familiar Handelian roulades in paired voices (mm. 9-10) and the majestic, adagio IV-I cadence at the end of the "Hallelujahs" make us think of the more famous setting in Messiah. The setting in Saul in much shorter, however.

Ex. 9 "Hallelujah" chorus

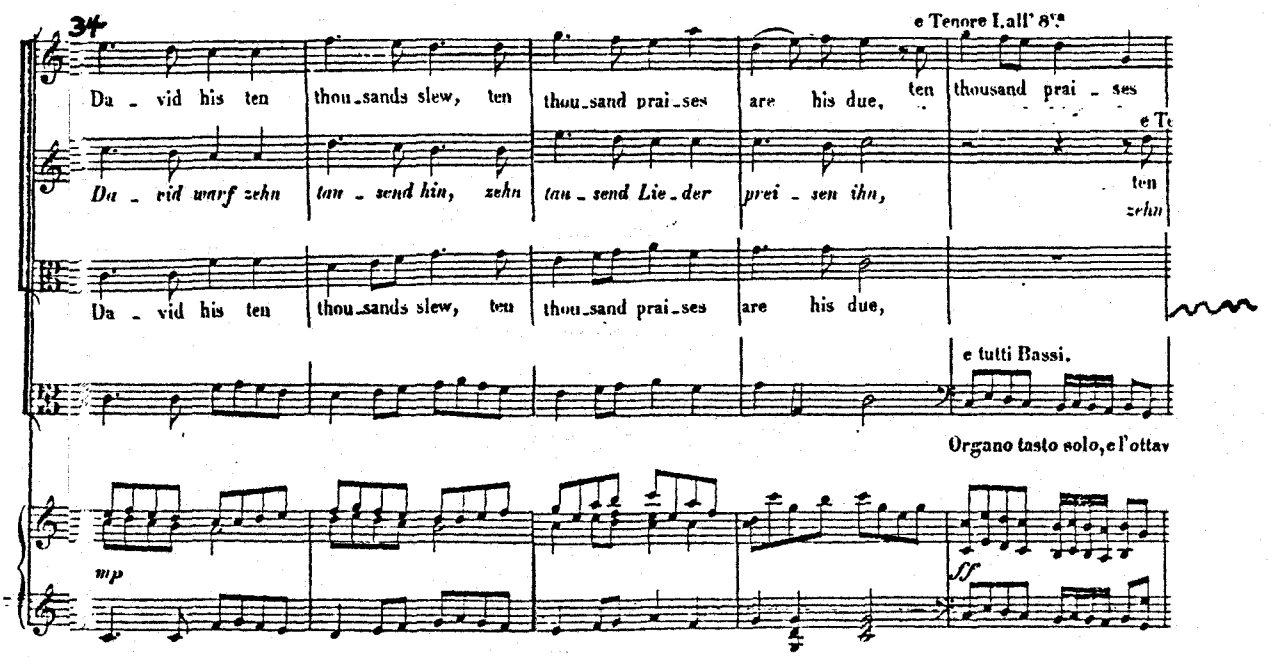


In "Welcome, welcome mighty king!" (Ex. 10), the people of Israel make the first reference to Saul as a leader of less stature than David (mm. 26-29, 34-37). The aural picture of the converging crowd is implicit, the mood again being that of the majestic ceremonial piece (see p. 35 for Streatfeild's description). The chorus is limited to soprano I, II, and alto voices until the paired imitation (mm. 37-40) of "ten thousand praises are his due," when two tenor parts and a bass part are added.

Ex. 10 "Welcome, welcome" chorus

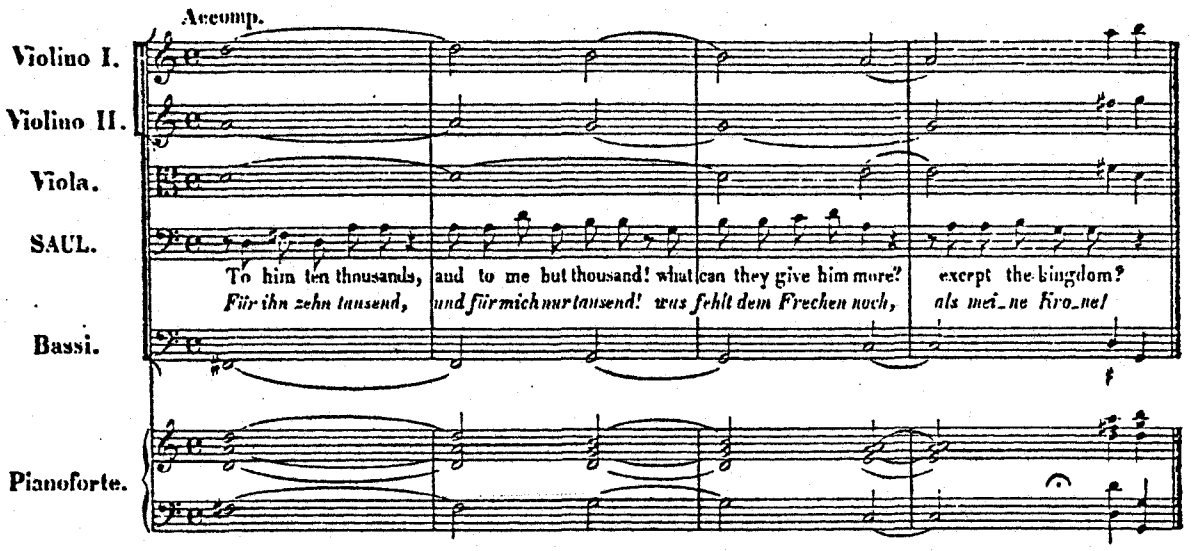


(Ex. 10 continued)



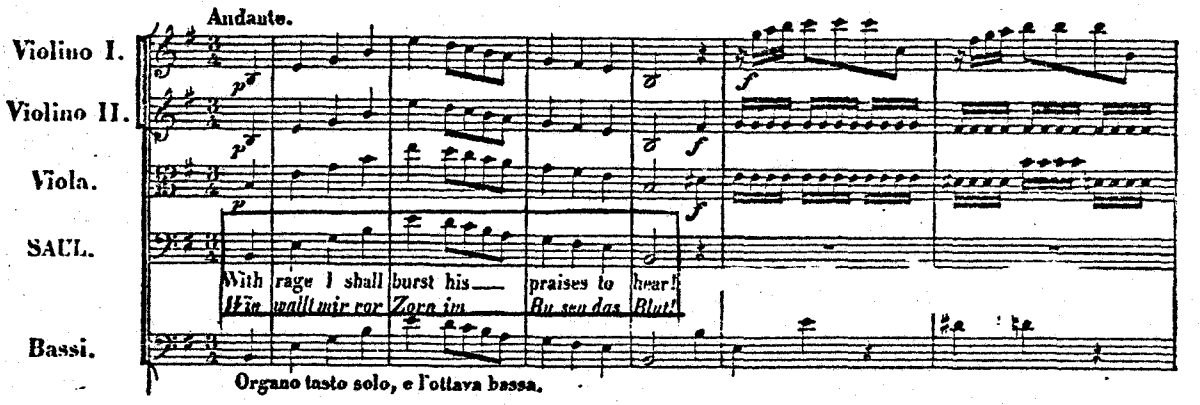
The main character Saul appears, after a reprise of "Welcome, welcome," in a brief accompagnato recitative which interrupts the action, diverting our attention away from the crowd and to the developing inner conflict of Saul. With fewer recitatives than the operas of the time (and many of those accompagnato), Saul is relatively compact. The following accompagnato recitative (Ex. 11) is representative of a technique that is not unlike that which Bach used in the St. Matthew Passion to highlight the character of Christ.

Ex. 11 Saul's accompagnato recitative



The air which Saul sings after his accompagnato recitative uses a technique that was becoming popular among composers such as Bach, Scarlatti, and Hasse. The term that has been coined for the technique is motto. The motto aria is an aria in which an initial motive (mm. 1-4) appears twice successively. It is possible that Handel learned about the motto aria during his visits to Hamburg and Venice. The above composers used the technique to depict passion, crises, and violent dramatic moments. The following example (Ex. 12) expresses the eruptive inner thoughts of Saul. We have come to know it as his "rage" air.

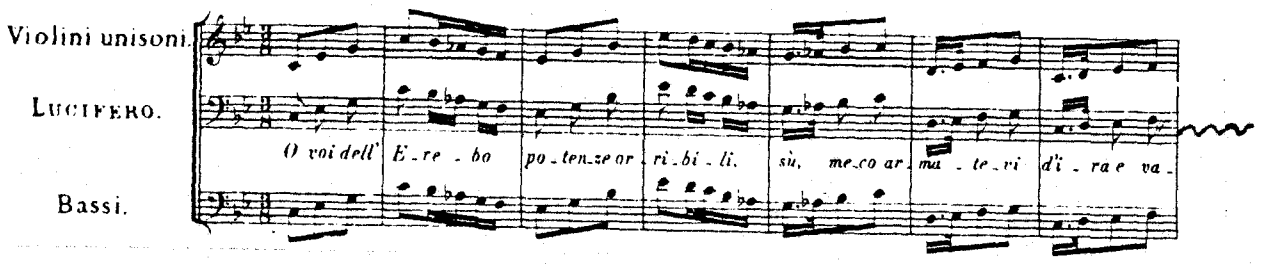
Ex. 12 Saul's rage air



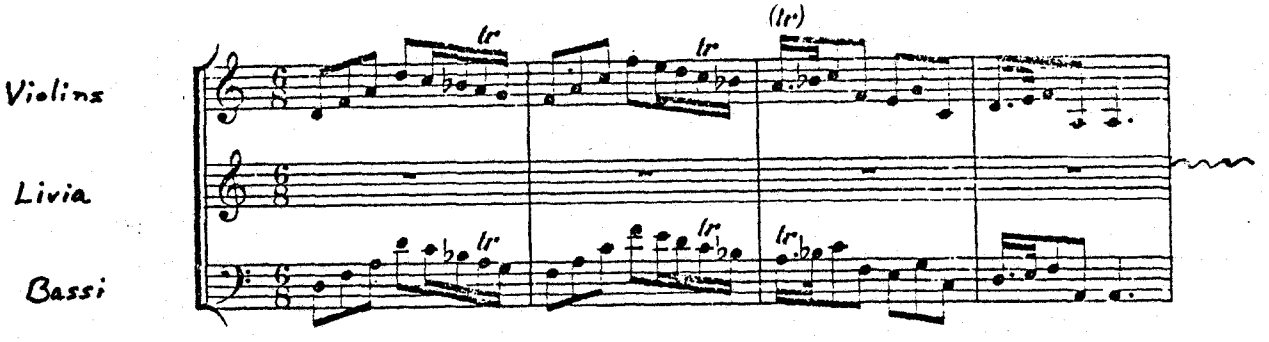
The practice of borrowing from other composers is well-documented with regard to Handel.[1] We are sure that Handel is directly indebted to Muffat, Carissimi, Urio, Keiser, and others (not to mention himself) for models that became the basis or outline of other pieces. The previously-discussed rage air of Saul is related to the aria "O voi dell' Erebo" (Ex. 13a), which is sung by the character Lucifer in Handel's La Resurrezione of 1708. In turn, it is certain that Handel patterned the Resurrezione aria after an aria sung by the character Livia in Keiser's Octavia of 1705 (Ex. 13b).

[1] Sedley Taylor, The Indebtedness of Handel to Works by other Composers (New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971). Taylor devotes his book to documentary examples of borrowing by Handel.

Ex. 13a Bass aria from La Resurrezione



Ex. 13b Bass aria from Keiser's Octavia

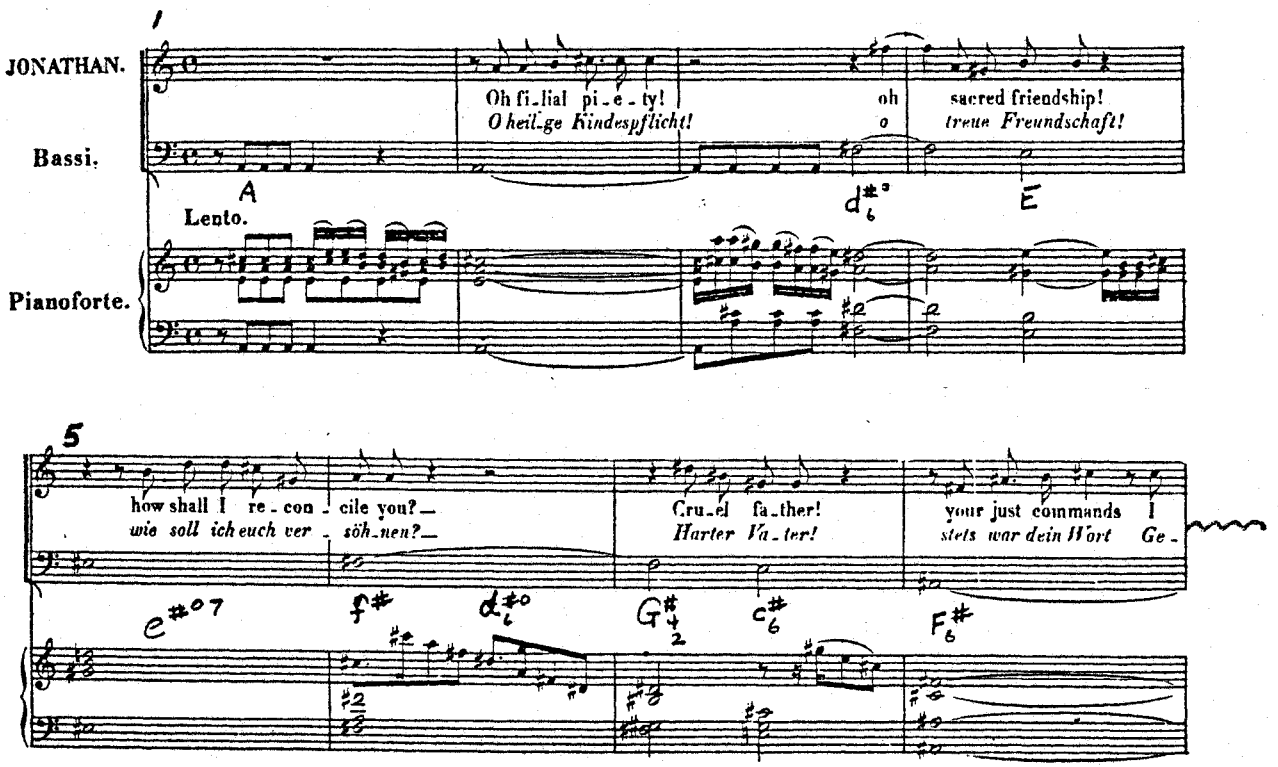


The rhythm and the outline of Saul's rage motif are faintly suggested in the "Welcome" chorus (Ex. 10). It would appear that Saul is answering the warm reception of David with an angry variation of his own.

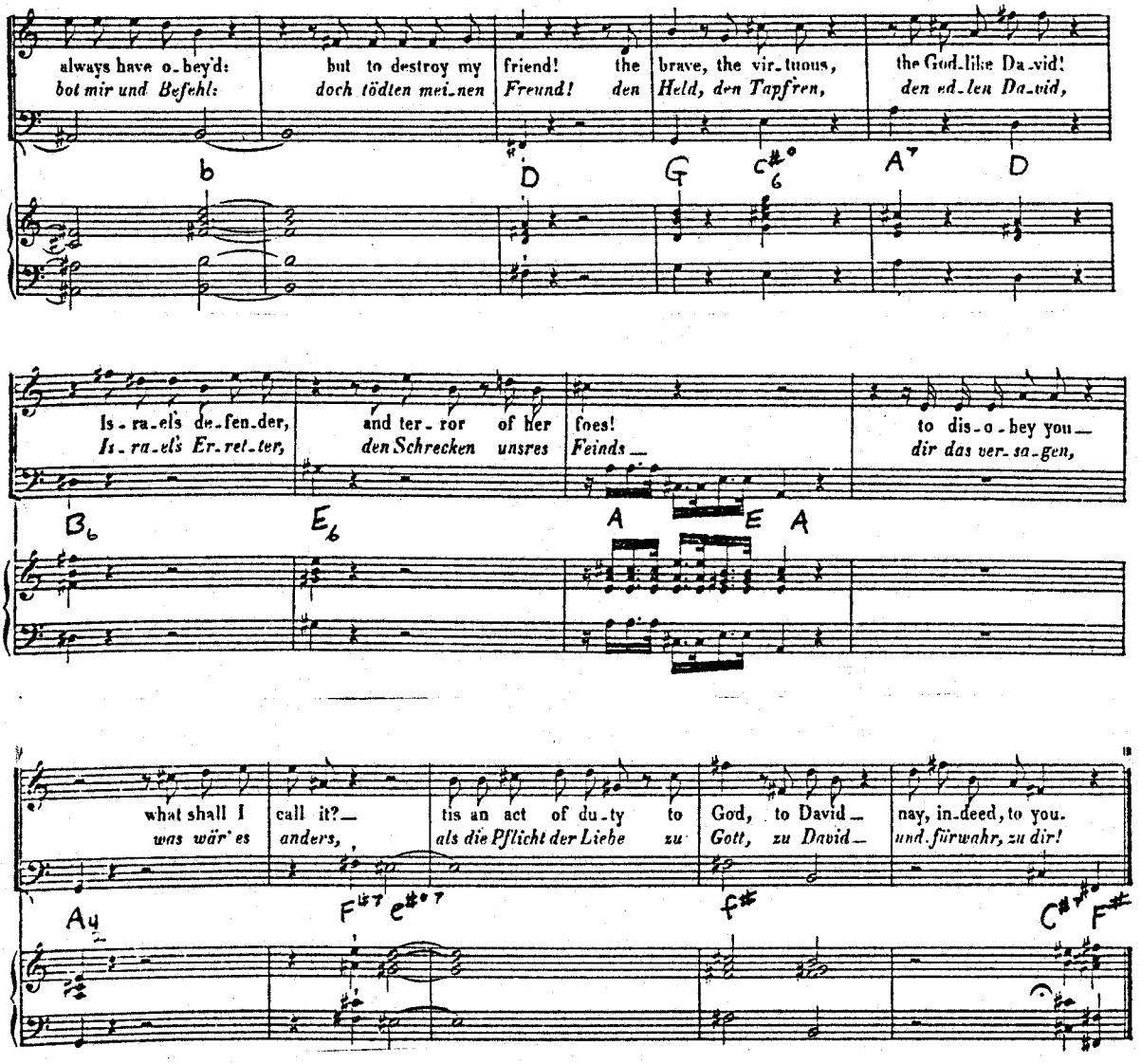
The recitatives and airs of Jonathan, a tenor, contain sensitive text painting and an acute awareness of mood. Upon orders to search out and destroy David, Jonathan sings an accompanied recitative that is somewhat more remarkable than the air which follows it. The recitative, "Oh filial piety" (Ex. 14), represents the difficult position that has been thrust upon Jonathan. The harmonic scheme relates the instability of Jonathan's feelings and adds intensity. The harmonic instability lasts until noticeably more resolve is seen in the text,

and then very solid progressions (mm. 7-22) depict Jonathan's steadfastness in defending David. In the accompaniment, Handel effectively uses the rhythm of the dotted sixteenth notes (m. 16), in contrast with the even sixteenth-note pattern (mm. 1,3), to express agitation as opposed to uncertainty.

Ex. 14 Jonathan's accompanied recitative

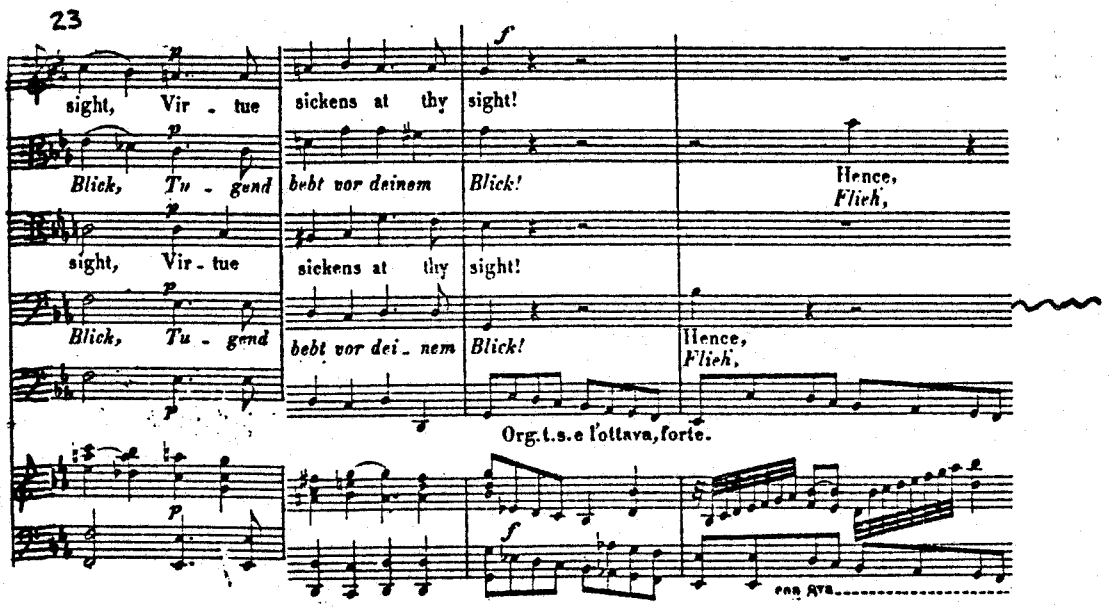


(Ex. 14 continued)



The second act opens with one of the mightest choruses that Handel composed for the drama, "Envy, eldest born of hell" (Ex. 15). The chorus evolves over an ostinato bass that, simply enough, outlines a descending diatonic scale on E flat major. Dotted figurations, repeated chords, and thirty-second-note runs generate constant energy

(Ex. 15 continued)



The music of David, a countertenor, is perhaps the most flexible of any character in the drama. But David and Jonathan are both overshadowed by the power of Saul's music. Winton Dean expresses his perception about Handel's treatment of David:

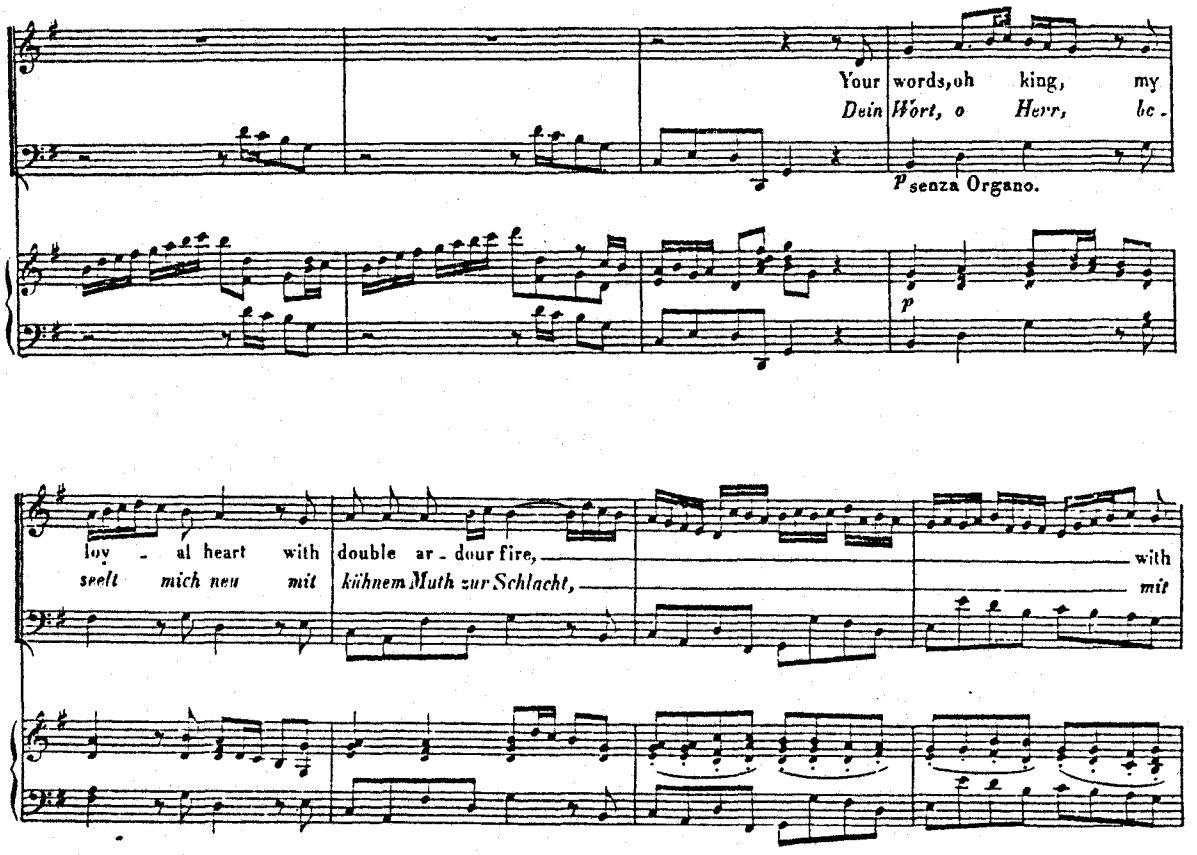
> There is something priggish, almost effeminate, about David. His gentle harp-playing side comes over well, and he has some glorious music, but we can scarcely credit this figure with the destruction of Goliath. His self-righteousness might incense a less precariously balanced mind than Saul's, and his murder of the Amalekite shows him in anything but a flattering light.[1]

In Europe, before Handel's oratorios, the role of David would perhaps seem a fitting vehicle for a castrato performer. The trend in the time of Saul was turning toward the qualities expressed so well in the characters of Jonathan and Saul. As one of the few Handel dramas in which the title character is a bass (Hercules is another), Saul

[1] Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 284.

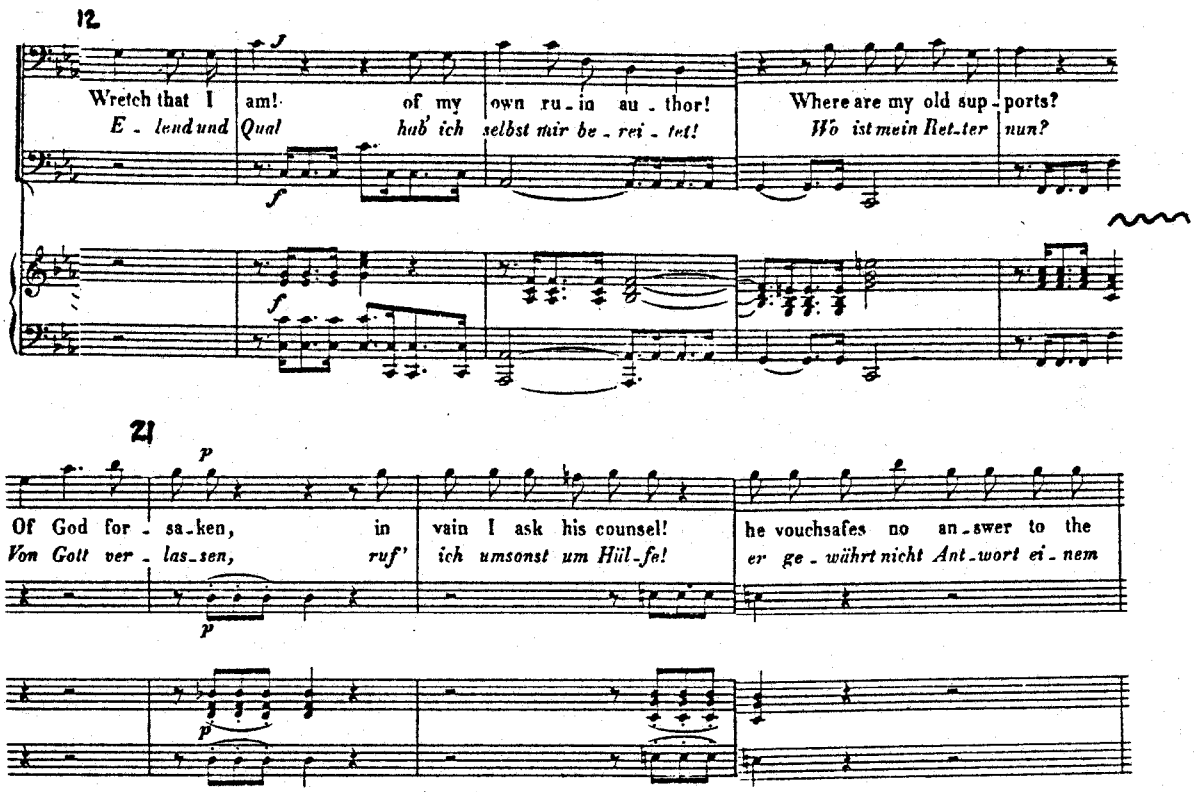
represents a gradual change in vocal ideals. Probably the most admirable music that David sings is in the second act duets with Michal. In the first duet, the two pledge their love to each other, and in the second duet, David sings of his faith and feelings of well-being while Michal urges him to flee for his life. The following second act air (Ex. 16) is indicative of the type of lyricism that typifies Handel's treatment of David.

Ex. 16 David's air



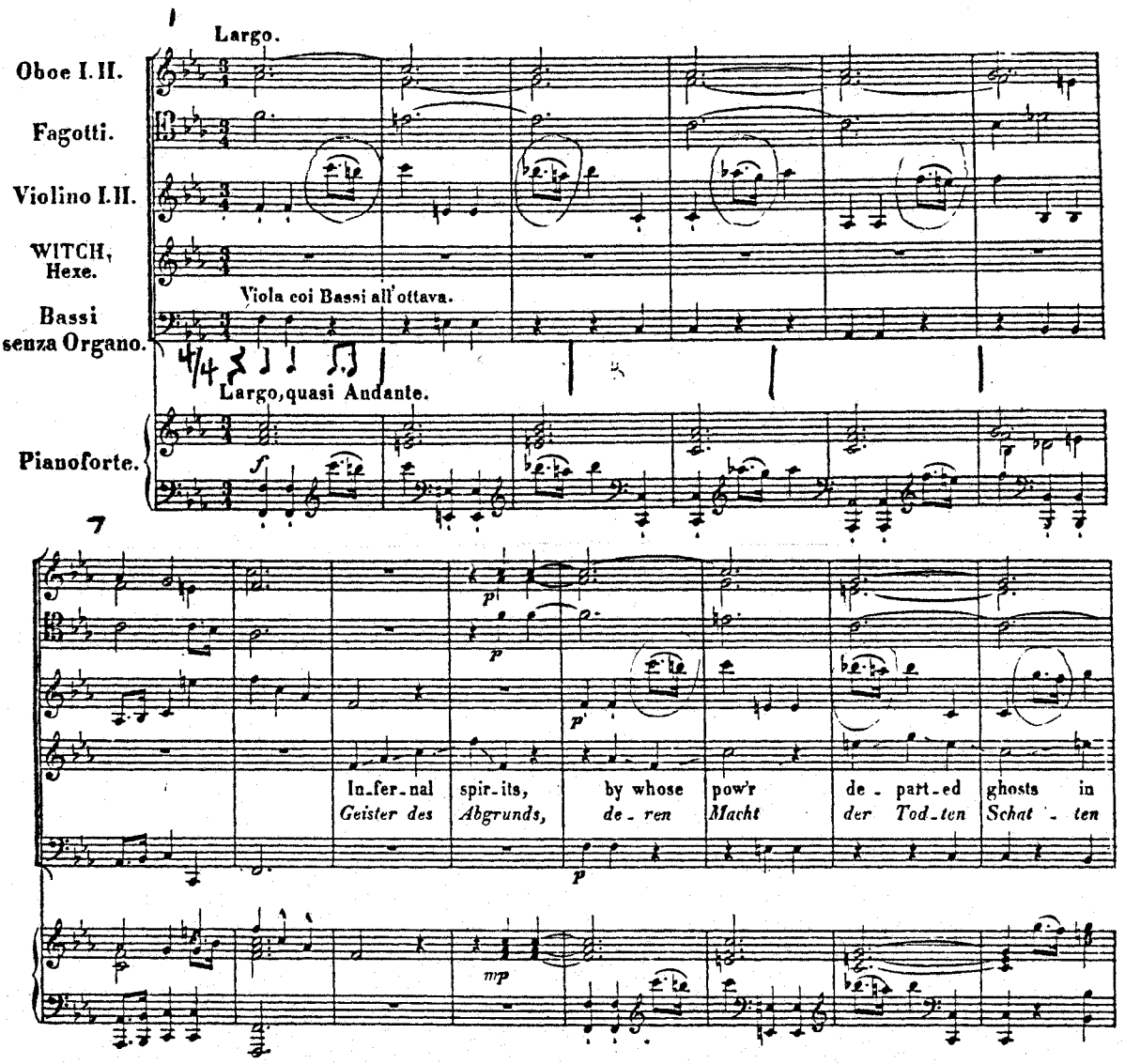
One of the most gripping scenes of the oratorio is the one which begins act three (Ex. 17). Saul's introspective soliloquy is in the form of an accompanied recitative; largo, with dramatic dotted figurations that emphasize phrases which speak of human frailty (mm. 13-16), and more gentle, even eight-notes which complement phrases sung about the Deity (mm. 21-24). This type of powerful recitative is placed strategically in the heart of the bass voice and provides considerable staisfaction technically and dramatically. Here, at Saul's most vunerable moment, is a character with whom everyone can identify.

Ex. 17 Saul's soliloquy



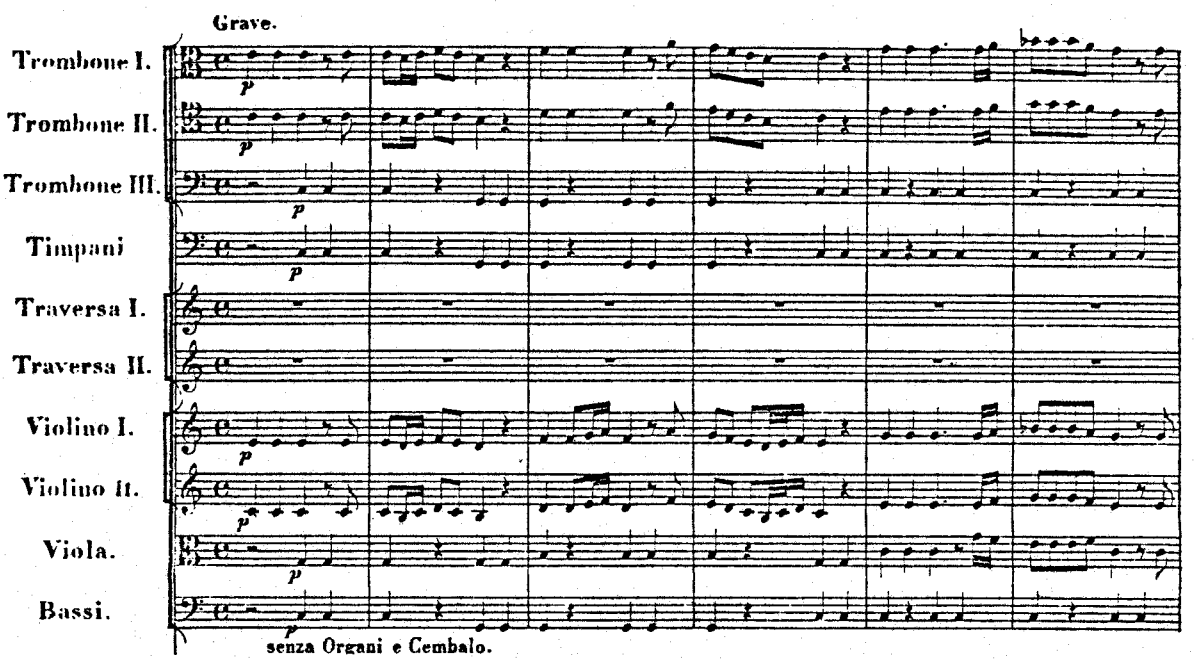
Saul's witch is a picturesque character in the Handel drama, delineated by the mood of her largo, dirge-like incantation in triple meter (Ex. 18). The reiterated two-quarter-note pattern (which, with the rests, implies $\frac{4}{4}$ meter) and then intervening, high violin notes create an eerily-progressing accompaniment to the minor, triadic melody, which proceeds contrastingly in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter. The witch's subtle dramatic energy, combined with Samuel's strong characterization afterwards, form a high point in the drama.

Ex. 18 Witch of Endor

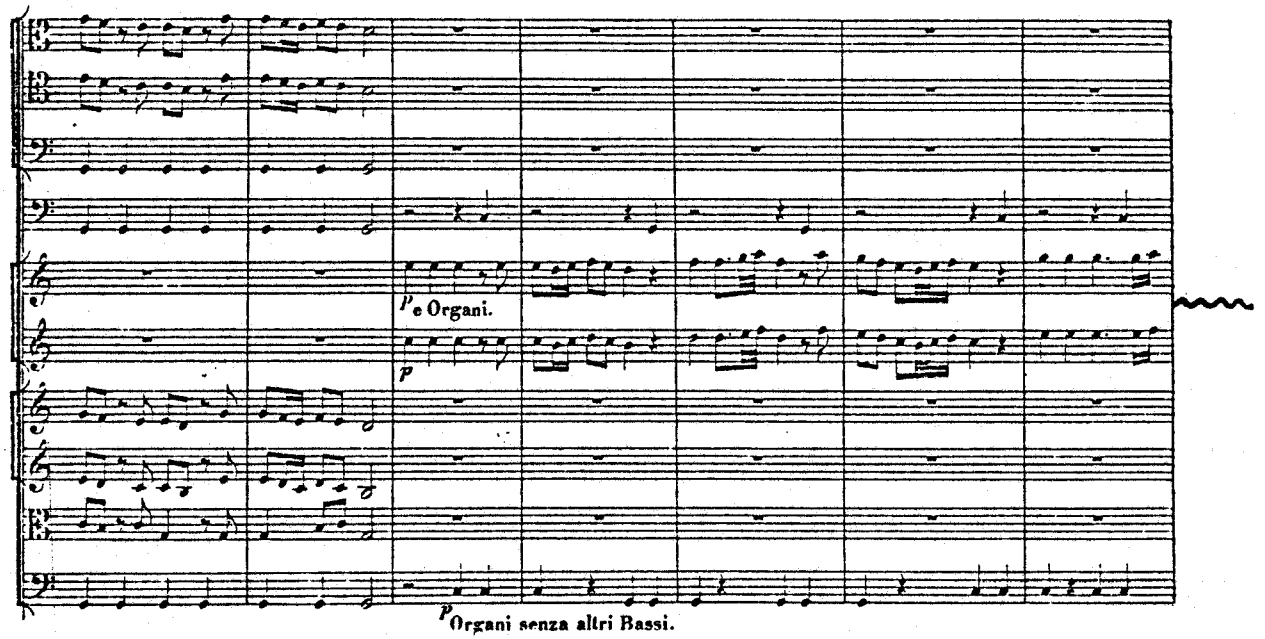


The famous "Dead March" of act three (Ex. 19) provides a moment of reflection as the finality of the tragedy is realized. Setting the mood for the mourning and eulogies, the orchestration used in the march includes two transverse flutes which are heard in a duet of thirds (mm. 9-13). The melody is first heard in the I and II trombone and violin parts (mm. 1-8). The rhythms are monotonous, generated by the constance of quarter notes which are passed on in three, from the melody to the accompaniment. The corporate emotion, which was one of pride and victory in the initial scene of the drama, has now changed to overwhelming grief. In recent times, we can compare the mood to those of the funeral processionals of fallen leaders in the United States, particularly the Kennedys. The national emotion of those moments in history was colored by the violent nature of the incidents. If one understands the ceremonial spirit of the British nation, the mournfully expressive spirit of the scene in Handel's drama is valid.

Ex. 19 Dead March



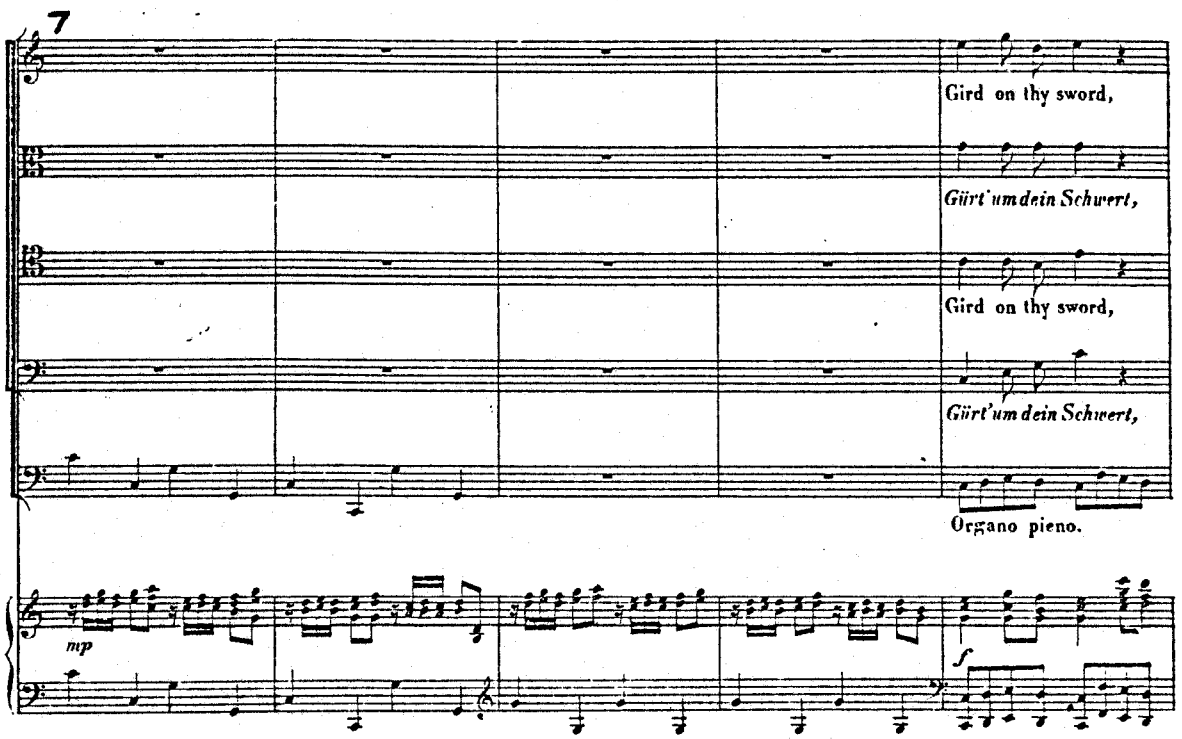
(Ex. 19 continued)



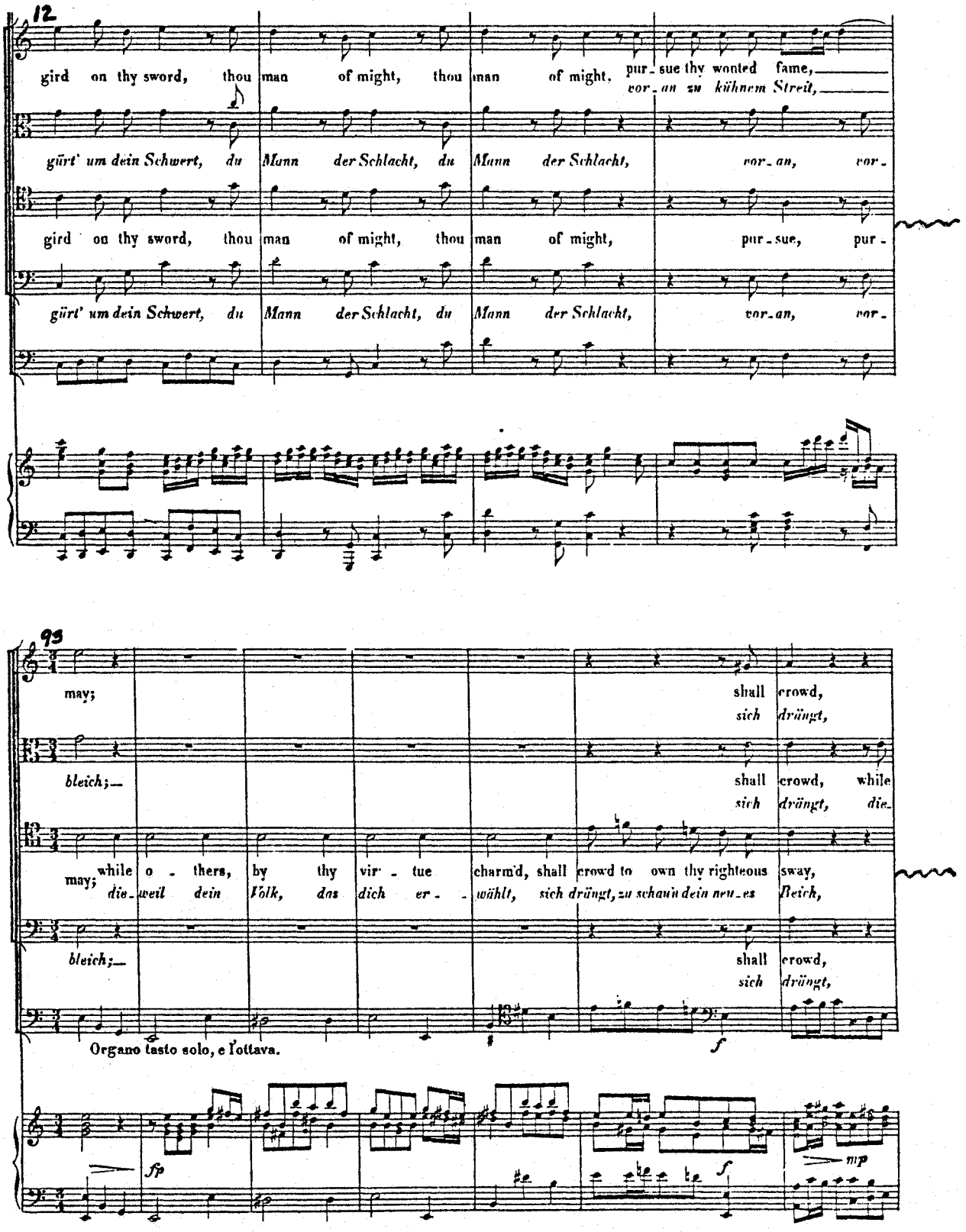
Enthusiasts who recognize Handel solely by the rousing choruses of Messiah would be doubly impressed by the final, crowning chorus of Saul (Ex. 20). The strength of this chorus complements the marvelous opening chorus, and the two serve as the foundation for the work. The vigorous endorsement of David and his charge to "retrieve the Hebrew name" are cast in the chorus as a unified statement of an entire nation. Strong, basic harmonic progressions and enormous rhythmic energy is generated by a large orchestra that features blocks of brass sounds which urge the piece on. The brass and the chorus have their first entry (m. 11) simultaneously as the chorus sings homophonically, "Gird on thy sword, thou man of might." In Handelian fashion, pieces of the phrase are reiterated by all voices. When the text changes (m. 14),

the soprano part is alone with the command verb, "pursue," and the remaining voices enter on the second half of the measure with homophonic repeats of the word. A change from duple meter to triple (m. 93) emphasizes a change in textual ideas as the tenors enunciate a monolithic "while others, by thy virtues charm'd" entirely on C. The final measures unify all of the performing forces with a built-in hemiolic retard (mm. 177, 178) that gives the impression of a gigantic army settling into position. The work then closes as the orchestra cadences to a quiet ending (mm. 180-181).

Ex. 20 "Gird on thy sword!"



(Ex. 20 continued)



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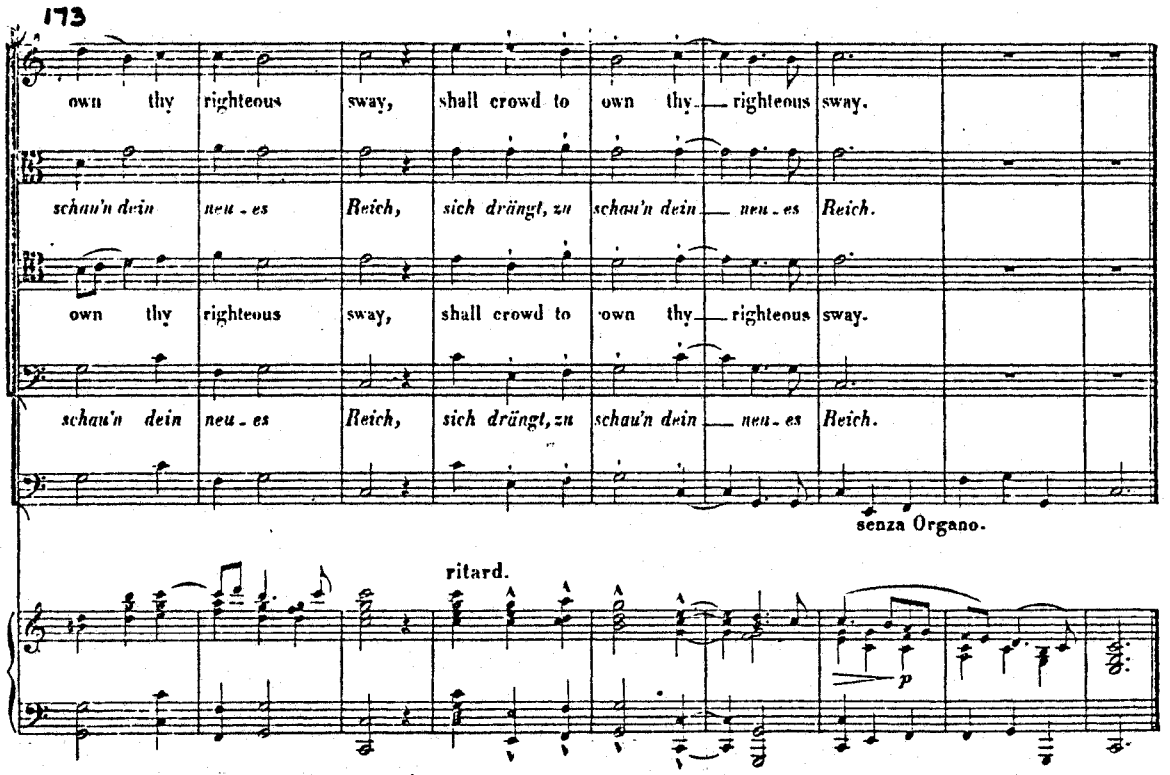

CHAPTER IV

HERCULES

The Libretto and the Music

The story of Hercules is another study in complicated relationships and confusing motivations. With numerous accounts by Sophocles, Ovid, Euripides, Seneca, Homer, and others, the feats of Hercules are recorded in rambling spics and tragedies. Legends tend to take on new meanings with passage of time, and the legend of Hercules has had its share of variations in different countries. We have come to recognize a stylized cycle of "labours," which tell of twelve great acts that Hercules performed, as a unified expression of identity for Hercules.

1. Killing the Nemean lion. This frightful beast, sent by Hera to ravage the Nemean plain and to annoy Heracles (Hercules), he killed by clubbing and strangling it, although it was supposedly invulunerable. Hence-forward he wore its skin.
2. Killing the Hydra. This tremendous snake, one of the many delightful monsters spawned by Echidna, inhabited the Lernaean swamps. As soon as one of its numerous heads was lopped off, others grew in its place. Heracles persuaded his friend Iolaus to burn the stumps before the heads could grow and thus they disposed of the beast, as well as a crab sent by Hera to help it out. This crab became the constellation of Cancer.
3. Capturing the Erymanthian Boar. Heracles brought this redoubtable beast back to Eurystheus and nearly scared him out of his wits.
4. Capturing the Hind of Artemis. Heracles succeeded in capturing this sacred animal after a year's search and Artemis permitted him to carry it off to Argos if he promised to let it go, which he did.
5. Killing the man-eating Stymphalian birds. Heracles chased them from their hiding in the woods by banging a bronze rattle, then shot them down one by one.
6. Cleansing the Augean Stables. These stables, belonging to King Augeas of Elis, had never been cleaned. Heracles accomplished the task in a day by redirecting a river through them.
7. Capturing the Cretan Bull. This bull, which may have been the father of the Minotaur, was taken alive and shown to Eurystheus, like the Hind, then released.

8. Capturing the horses of Diomedes, son of Cyrene and Aras. These horses were fed on human flesh by their owner, the king of the Bistonians. They suddenly became tame when Heracles fed their master to them. He then took them back to Eurystheus and dedicated them to Hera.
9. Capturing the girdle of Hippolyta. Either alone or with an army, Heracles defeated the Amazons and either killed Hippolyta or secured the girdle by holding one of her generals, Melanippe, for ransom.
10. Killing the monster Geryon. Heracles treatened Helios with his bow until the god gave him his golden cup, in which Heracles sailed the river Oceanus to the far west. There, after disposing of the herdsman Eurytion and the ferocious dog Orthrus, he killed Geryon himself, stole his cattle, and returned with them, either in the cup or by a long and arduous route through Spain, France, and Italy.
11. Capturing Cerberus. Heracles made his way down to Hades, dragged up Cerberus, the three-headed dog that watches the gates, showed him to Eurystheus, and duly returned him to his proper place. According to one story Heracles actually fought with and wounded Hades himself.
12. Stealing the apples of the Hesperides. These apples grew on a tree of Night, who leved near the Atlas Mountains. There are various tales as to how Heracles plucked the apples: He either killed the snake or put it to sleep and took the apples himself, or he sent Atlas for them, holding the sky on his shoulders meanwhile.[1]

In the second labor, the goddess Hera is mentioned as having sent a crab to aid the hydra of the Lernean swamps against the onslaught of Hercules. This crab became the constellation of Caner. Hercules's name is a derivative of Hera and means "glorious gift of Hera."[2] Hera's complicated position in mythology comes through her relationship as both sister and wife of the supreme mythological god, Zeus. As the story goes, Zeus wanted a son who would become powerful among both gods and men. By taking on the likeness of the god Amphitryon, Zeus was

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[1] The Reader's Encyclopedia, William Rose Benet, ed., s.v. Hercules," pp. 458-459.

[2] Ibid., s.v. "Hera," p. 458.

able to beget Hercules by Amphitryon's wife, Alcmene, the granddaughter of Perseus. Hera, the jealous wife, foiled the plan to make the expected child the ruler of Greece by bringing another descendant of Perseus, Sthenelus, to premature childbed, and by simultaneously delaying the birth of Hercules. Thus, the sickly child, Eurystheus was born first and became king. It was Hercules's fate to serve Eurystheus and to suffer the vengeful persecution of Hera. Indeed, one of the earliest exploits of Hercules was to strangle two serpents which Hera had sent to kill him in the cradle. The conflict of Hera and Hercules continued in the many legends of mythology, as did the servitude of Hercules to Eurystheus, who imposed the twelve labors upon Hercules.

Numerous incidental or directly related adventures emanate from the classical twelve feats. Through the last three, there is indication that Hercules achieved immortality. Mythology has it that he eventually died after wearing wearing the poisoned shirt dipped in the blood of the centaur Nessus, which his jealous wife, Dejanira, had given him (that episode is treated in Handel's drama). According to that account, Hercules built himself a funeral pyre on Mount Oetna and persuaded Poeas with the gift of his bows and arrows to set it afire. With this, he ascended to Olumpus and married Hebe.[1]

The story of Handel's drama is based on the two tragedies of Sophocles entitled The Trachinian Women (Trachiniai) and on excerpts from Book IX of Ovid's Metamorphoses. Sophocles, the conservative Greek

[1]Ibid., p. 459.

politician who lived to the age of ninety, praised human achievements but believed that mankind was meaningless without the gods. In Sophocles's plays great men went mad with pride and hurtled toward destruction. Sophocles's famous estimate of man is interesting in light of the philosophy that we will observe in our discussion of Hercules.

> Wonders are many, but there is no wonder
> Wilder than Man--
> Man who makes the winds of winter bear him,
> Through the trough of waves that tower about him,
> Across grey wastes of sea;
> Man who wearies the Untiring, the Immortal--
> Earth, eldest of the Gods, as year by year,
> His plough-teams come and go.
> The care-free bands of birds,
> Beasts of the wild, tribes of the sea,
> In netted toils he takes,
> The Subtle One.
> Creatures that haunt the hills, the desert-dwellers,
> His cunning snares; he lays his mastering yoke
> On the horse's shaggy mane,
> On the tireless mountain-bull.
> Speech, too, and wind-swift thought
> And the soul of the ruler of cities
> He hath learned, untaught of any.
> To shun the bitter arrows of the roofless frost,
> The bitter shafts of rain,
> He knows, the all-deviser; for without device
> No morrow finds him. Only against Death
> He shall call for help in vain,
> Yet many a mortal sickness he hath mastered.
> Thus with his wisdom,
> Subtle past foretelling,
> Man wins to joy, or sorrow.
> Does he keep his native laws
> And the justice sworn by heaven?--
> High stands his city. But all citiless
> wanders the wretch that dares make sin his fellow.[1]

According to the philosopher W. T. Jones, Sophocles reflected a mood of confidence in his writings. Serenity is a key word that is

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[1] T. F. Higham and C. M. Borwa, eds., The Oxford Book of Greek Verse in Translation (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), pp. 364, 366.

used in describing Sophocles.

> That the world is one and well ordered, that every part, however discordant, ugly, or inharmonious it may appear, fits into the whole and forms a perfect picture, he never doubted. Men may, and do, err; but over man is a divine law that is the fulfillment of all human striving.[1]

Hercules does err in Sophocles's play, committing adultry with his captive princess, Iole. But through the strategy of Handel's librettist, the Reverend Thomas Broughton, Hercules's sin is eliminated from Handel's drama to heighten the personal conflict of the character whom we may say is the central figure in Handel's Hercules, namely Dejanira.

Broughton's libretto follows the outlines of Sophocles's play, using portions of Ovid's play and his own changes to create a drama that has construction and continuity. So, as Jennens was able to do in Saul, Broughton eliminated the extraneous philosophical and incidental events of the Trinchiniai and the Metamorphoses which would block the way to a cogent musical drama.

The opening of Hercules takes place in Trachis at the palace of Hercules. The Herald, Lichas describes a sad, dejected Dejanira, who fears that her spouse Hercules will not return from the wars at Oechalia. The characters are introduced as Lichas and Dejanira's son Hyllus reinforce the wife's misgivings about her spouse. Hyllus has consulted the oracle, with disastrous result. The temple shook and darkness came over it; the priest prophesied the death of Hercules and the rising flames of Mount Oetna (in accordance with the classical sotry of the death of Hercules). Dejanira acquiesces to the idea of the passing

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[1] W. T. Jones, The Classical Mind, 2nd ed. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1970), p. 6.

of her husband and looks forward to meeting him in the beyond. The chorus (priests) sing of death. As Hyllus is about to go to search for his father, the Herald announces that Hercules is returning a hero, bringing rich booty and the beautiful Oechalian princess, Iole, along with her entourage of virgins. The mood changes to one of rejoicing in the case of the Trachinians, and lamenting for the Oechalians (especially Iole, who has lost her father in the war). Hercules declares that his long labors are over, that Iole should be free in Trachis as in Oechalia, and that he now looks forward to enjoying Dejanira's love. A chorus of joy brings the first act to a close.

Act two opens with the lament of Iole, who asked the question:

> Why was I born a princess, rais'd on high to fall with greater ruin? Had the gods made me the humble tenant of some cottage, I had been happy.

Iole's bittersweet musing afterwards centers on the comparison of a happy maid who is loved by every swain and a princess upon whom many ills wait. Dejanira enters, obviously agitated by suspicion and jealousy. In the dialogue which follows, Dejanira spills out her wrath on Iole, whom she feels has destroyed her happiness with her beauty. Dejanira than sings an air about the force of love and beauty, an air tinged with bitterness. A dialogue follows in which Dejanira suggests that Hercules only attacked Oechalia out of his desire for Iole. Iole insists that such a report was false and that Dejanira should beware of jealousy for own peace of mind. In an air that is slightly self-righteous, Iole sings about the pain that jealousy brings. Dejanira goes on to report to Lichas that Hercules has been false. Lichas, in disbelief, sings an air of great lyricism which speaks

of the constancy of Hercules:

> As stars that rise and disappear
> Still in the same bright circle move,
> So shines unchang'd, unchang'd thy hero's love,
> Nor absence can his faith impair;
> The breast where gen'rous valous dwells,
> In constancy no less excels.

The chorus then comments on the power of jealousy and asserts that Dejanira is accepting "trifles light as floating air" as proof that Hercules has been unfaithful. Hyllus falls in love with Iole, only to be rejected because as, Iole phrases it, "Love finds no dwelling in that hapless breast where sorrow and her gloomy train reside." Hyllus persists, but Iole bids him "banish love" from his breast and dismisses his love as the excited desire to "tread in the steps" of Hercules. Hyllus sings an air which proposes that "Gods have left their heav'n above, to taste the sweeter heav'n of love." The chorus then sings that love and "soft desires" are all "nature's sons." The following exchange brings Dejanira and Hercules together, and Dejanira derides Hercules for having fallen from honor. Hercules replies with a glorious air which speaks of his wonderful ddded and proclaims that when "future heroes rise to glory" they will emulate his ways. Dejanira answers with another variation of her displeasure. In a classic scene of marital conflict, Hercules restates his denial and says that he has to leave to preside over the thanksgiving sacrifices. With a parting phrase, Hercules bids Dejanira to "let these suspicions sleep." Dejanira, in her own hope to regain the devotion of Hercules, remembers a garment given to her by the centaur Nessus who, when mortally wounded by Hercules, assured Dejanira that the garment had power to "revive the

expiring flames of love. Dejanira orders Lichas to take it to Hercules as a means to secure a "pledge of love's renewal." Lichas accepts the task with a happy air that naively tells of prospective bliss. In a passage of reconciliation, Dejanira then begs forgiveness of Iole, acknowledging that error and jealousy led to the situation. Full of emotion, Iole weeps. Dejanira promises to secure Iole's freedom and her paternal throne. In a duet expressing the joys of freedom, Dejanira and Iole are happy again. Dejanira then prays to Jupiter (her father-in-law) to seal her pardon. The act ends with a chorus that speaks of the forthcoming reunion.

Lichas the Herald begins the third act of Hercules with the annoucement that Hercules, after coming through a raging battle unharmed in the Oechalian adventure, has died by the hand of a woman. Lichas describes the event which, true to the mythological account, happened at the temple as Hercules was preparing for sacrificial rites. In a vivid recitative, Lichas tells that, upon seeing the gift of the robe, Hercules smiled with joy. As he put the robe on, Hercules was engulfed with the effects of poison as the altar's flame surged. With agonizing pain, Hercules ripped the garment off, only to pull his flesh apart with it. Lichas, after retelling this story, sings a melody of woe, eulogizing his "unhappy chief." A chorus of grief follows, declaring that "tyrants shall no more dread on necks of vanquish'd slaves to tread." Scene two, back in the tample, has Hercules raging at his fate, during the final moments of his life. The petitions of Hercules to the gods in a concitato air embody the essence of mythology in a powerful manner:

Oh, Jove! what land is this?
What clime accurst, by raging Phoebus scorch'd?
I burn, I burn,
Tormenting fire consumes me--
Oh, I die, some ease, ye pitying pow'rs!
I rage, I rage
with more than Stygian pains;
Along my fev'rish veins,
Like liquid fire, the subtle poison hastes.
Boreas! bring they northern blast,
And through my bosom roar!
Or, Neptune, kindly pour
The sea's collected flood into my breast,
And cool my boiling blood!
Boreas! Or Neptune!
Oh cool my boiling blood!

In a truly moving recitative, Hyllus and Hercules speak desperate pleas for relief. Hercules curses the robe which "clings to my town sides, and drinks my vital blood!" and then orders Hyllus to build a funeral pyre on the summit of Mount Oetna. Dejanira enters the plot at this point, singing a fitful monologue in the palace. In a spirit of terror, she gives way to guilt and madly hallucinates, seeing the furies rising to torment her with snakes. Iole meanwhile forgets her own grief and sympathizes with the protagonists of the tragedy. The priest of Jupiter enters the scene to announce that Hercules has been received in Olympus, the evidence being an eagle perching on the pyre. At Jupiter's command, the priest bids Hyllus and Iole to marry, uniting the houses of Oechalia and Trachis. Iole begins a melody of praise for Hyllus and thanks the gods that heaven has ordained their union. Hyllus joins the melody with a similar statement of joy and the two exult in their happiness. The drama ends with a hymn to the hero, which extols his graciousness in preserving the liberty of the people.

Percy Young's interesting summary of the characters in Broughton's

libretto will amplify the above outline of the events:

> Like Saul, Hercules is a study in jealousy. It is also, like Saul, a commentary on human impotence. Dejanira's murder of her husband (one may agree with her in her judgment of Hercules's motives in bringing back captive the beautiful Iole from Oechalia) illustrates this impotence in simple form. Hercules is done to death painfully, and after cremation, a process warmly described in "Oh Jove! What land is this?" lands safely among the senior deities with easy access to nectar and ambrosia. Dejanira, however, wins more sympathy than Saul. She is richer in portraiture, more heroic and defeated by a problem which might beset any woman passing the prime of her beauty and encountering an apparent rival of Iole's calibre. The whole of Dejanira is contained in the honest-to-goodness scolding of "Resign thy club" (a title which should not be misinterpreted): an upright woman with a rasping tongue and a malignant impetuosity. Iole is a fitting foil to the older woman; graceul in movement, dignified in rebuttal of the false charges laid against her, sympathetic to Dejanira when she should have forfeited all claims to sympathy and courageous in grief. Iole is the ripest of Handel's young women, and marriage with Hyllus, son of Hercules, is (we may hope) a deserved reward for virtuous living under conditions of difficulty. Hercules himself is a bluff soldier with equal zest, if we read the music aright, for battle, murder, and sudden death (provided that he is the dispenser) and bucolic sports. He also has a simplicity of character which places him immediately within the environs of sympathy.[1]

The vividness of the characters in Handel's Hercules is due more to the powers of the composer than to those of the librettist. The texts, although possessing meoments of strength, are almost always carried by the brillance of the music. Julian Herbage has registered his own reaction to the work of Broughton:

> Only too often the words which Handel set were bad or mediocre. His greatest strokes of inspiration were due to texts by such poets as Gay, Dryden, Milton, and Congreve, and, of course, the immortal prose of the Bible. It is no accident that Messiah, Samson, Alexander's Feast, Acis and Galatea, and Semele are among his greatest and most sustained achievements. In his other oratorios he may succeed in spite of his text, but is too often

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[1]Young, Handel, pp. 170, 171.

> defeated by it. Thomas Broughton, who wrote the libretto of Hercules after Sophocle's drama, was certainly an eminent scholar, but he unfortunately happened to live in an age which regarded Rowe's Fair Penitent as the pinnacle of tragedy. His libretto is eminently worthy, but it lacks true dramatic characterization and a sense of the theatre. . . .Broughton's (characters) are merely puppets that adopt the conventional postures of eighteenth-centure tragic stage.[1]

Perhaps so, but if we accept Leichtentritt's charge to study the drama from a standpoint of the moods involved, the merits of Hercules become more apparent. In terms of blood, horror, and passion, Handel's Hercules joins Saul as being a Verdiesque drama. Both works are among Handel's most forward-looking dramas in that sense. As we have stated, both have the common theme of jealousy. But if Hercules does share the human theme and deserves to be included at the top with Saul as one of Handel's finest musical achievements, there are also major differences with regard to dramatic structure, musical style, and formal characteristics. In the words of Streatfeild, "in style it leans to opera rather than oratorio."[2]

One of the first elements of Hercules that contrasts significantly with Saul is the manner of Handel's use of the chorus. Hercules derives its real strength from its solo music. The chorus appears less than in Saul, and when the chorus does appear, its role is substantially different. Never intervening in the action, the chorus is used to build emotions with commentary. The corporate identity of a people such as the Hebrews is not present in Hercules. Generally, the chorus does more of what we have come to expect from the opera chorus of the

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[1]Abraham, Handel: A Symposium, pp. 146-147.

[2]Streatfeild, Handel, p. 309.

eighteenth century, namely, providing punctuation between sections of action and commenting on the situations of the drama. The chorus does not begin an act as does the Epinicion chorus of Saul. Structurally, the chorus is situated at joints of the plot, apart from the action. The following chart illustrates how the chorus assumes a position similar to that of the Greek chorus of ancient tragedy in its function:

Act I	Chorus	
1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10 11, 12 CHORUS, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 CHORUS, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25 CHORUS	12	"O filial piety"--Encouraging statement to Hyllus, who has just declared his intention to go and search for Hercules.
	17	"Let none despair"--Brief instructions which echoes the sentiments of those who have just heard of Hercules' return.
	25	"Crown with festal pomp"--Chorus of joy over the new era of peace.
Act II		
26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, CHORUS, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41 CHORUS, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53 CHORUS	36	"Jealousy"--Comment about the dreadful power of jealousy, that comes after Dejanira falsely accuses Hercules of having an affair with Iole.
	41	"Wanton gods"--Observation about the role of love in nature, which follows the wooing of Iole by Hyllus.
	53	"Love and Hymen"--Literally, "love and marriage." The expression of hope that exists for Dejanira after she sends the magic garment and seeks Iole's forgiveness.

Act III

54, 55, 56, 57, 58 CHORUS,	58 "Tryants no more shall dread"--Comment about the situation as it appears after the death of Hercules.
59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65,	
66, 67, 68, 69, 70 CHORUS	70 "To him your gratitude"--The final number of the work, which praises Hercules for perserving the liberty of his people.

With regard to airs, Hercules differs from Saul in that the da capo air appears often. Thus the pace of the drama is somewhat slower, a quality expanded by the predominance of largos. In style, the airs are close to style galant, a feature that anticipates the new generation to which Gluck belonged. Lang explains a change that helped to bring about galant textures:

> The moving up of the bass into a higher position, so characteristic of the crystalline orchestra of Haydn and Mozart, is already noticeable in this score. This Handel did either by omitting the boudle basses, thus leaving the cellos in charge of the lowest part, or by dispensing with the entire apparatus of the basso continuo. Curiously, among all these novelties we again encounter the archaic basso continuo aria, but its use was deliberate.[1]

Handel offset that texture with his tonal scheme. To the modern listener, because Hercules is a drama of such tragedy, there are several points at which Handel's use of minor tonalities is significant. Almost half of the airs in Hercules are in the minor key, and the flat keys, although not predominant in the airs, appear at critical points in the drama. By way of contrast, five of Dejanira's airs are set in

[1] Lang, Handel, P. 428.

sharp keys, underlining the disharmony of the queen and her surroundings.[1] As we will see in the musical examples, there is also a corresponding amount of chromaticism in the work.

An enormous difference between Saul and Hercules in the orchestration of the two. In Saul, Handel used great variety in instrumentation with such bold strokes as trombones, trumpets, flutes, timpani, theorobo, the organs, and the carillon, being added to his basic complement of strings and oboes. Not so for Hercules, which uses a modest complement of strings and infrequently, a couple of obbligato instruments, namely bassoon and oboe. Handel generously scored the music with dark, low string sound, a move that gives the work a sinister atmosphere. For the few bright moments in the drama, such as the March and the chorus "Crown with festal pomp," trumpets and drums are added. Dean points out that the lack of certain instruments could have been due to circumstances of the 1744-45 season, or to the unavailibility of trombones, etc.[2]

From the standpoint of structure, differences between Saul and Hercules are also marked. Handel did not divide the work into scene complexes as he did in Saul. Dean states that there are psychological reasons for the difference which are related to the backgrounds of the two dramas:

> Like Saul, Hercules is a drama of jealousy; but the background is very different. Saul is a national and political tragedy: the disaster to Saul's people concerns us even more than the destruction of the king and his family. In Hercules on the other hand the issue is personal and psychological. There is no

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[1] Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 419.

[2] Ibid., p. 429.

> need to rank one above the other, but the changed emphasis does influence the form. Where so much of the action is internal, Handel has less reason to jettison the conventions: such a conflict is more easily and more powerfully expressed by building up the stresses within the mould than by refashioning the mould itself. Thus we find in Hercules a succession of self-contained but by no means always regular movements, and none of the fluid sequences that are so conspicuous in the external drama of Athalia, Saul, and Belshazzar. Da capos are more numerous--too much so for a modern audience, especially in Act II. But a closer inspection of the music itself, the invention and the manipulation of the material within the air or chorus, discovers Handel again and again casting his spear into the future.[1]

The full structure of Hercules, with citation of da capo airs and other markings which affect the pace of the drama, follows:

Act I

1 Overture (3 movements)
2 Recitative (largo, accompanied)
3 Air (larghetto, dal segno)
4 Recitative (adagio, accompanied)
5 Air (larghetto)
6 Recitative (secco, 3 characters)
7 Arioso (pomposo)
8 Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
9 Air (largo)
10 Recitative (secco, 1 characters)
11 Air (andante larghetto e staccato)
12 Chorus (largo)
13 Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
14 Air (allegro, da capo)
15 Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
16 Air (allegro ma non troppo, da capo
17 Chorus (andante allegro)
18 Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
19 Air (larghetto andante, dal segno)
20 March
21 Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
22 Air (larghetto 3 mezzo piano)
23 Recitative (secco, 1 character)
24 Air (allegro)
25 Chorus (allegro, ma non presto)

Act II

26 Sinfonia (1 allegro movement)
27 Recitative (secco, 1 character)

[1] Ibid., p. 417.

(dramatic structure of Hercules, continued)

28	Air (larghetto e piano, dal segno)	50	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
29	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	51	Duet (allegro)
30	Air (larghetto, dal segno)	52	Recitative (secco, 1 character)
31	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	53	Chorus (dal segno)
32	Air (andante, dal segno)		Act III
33	Recitative (secco, 3 characters)	54	Sinfonia (largo, furioso, etc.)
34	Air (andante larghetto, dal segno)	55	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
35	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	56	Air (largo)
36	Chorus (largo)	57	Recitative (secco, 1 character)
37	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	58	Chorus (andante larghetto)
38	Air (allegro, dal segno)	59	Air (concitato)
39	Recitative (secco, 1 character)	60	Recitative (accompanied, 2 characters)
40	Air (larghetto, da capo)	61	Air (andante, da capo)
41	Chorus	62	Recitative (accompanied)
42	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	63	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)
43	Air (allegro, da capo)	64	Air (largo, da capo)
44	Recitative (secco, 1 character)	65	Recitative (secco, 4 characters)
45	Air (andante, dal segno)	66	Air (andante)
46	Recitative (secco, 1 character)	67	Recitative (secco, 4 characters)
47	Air (larghetto e mezzo piano)	68	Duet (allegro)
48	Recitative (secco, 2 characters)	69	Recitative (secco, 1 character)
49	Air	70	Chorus (allegro, ma non troppo)

With an extremely slow dramatic pace, Hercules depends upon bold harmonic language for musical interest. The appearance of the greater number of accompanied recitatives is an indication, as it was in Saul,

of new dramatic principles yielding greater variety and heightened intensity. But even with these ideas, Handel's Hercules has enough stereotypes to make the drama a plodding, tedious work by modern standards.

As in Saul, Hercules has a couple of duets, one in which Dejanira and Iole sing of the joys of freedom and another in which Iole and Hyllus sing of their impending bliss. The lovers' duets of both dramas use the technique of having one character sing of the virtues of the other, and vice versa, both then joining together in melismas a third apart. In both Saul and Hercules, Handel shows similar methods of imitation and a preference for triple meter; thus, it can be said that some consistency exists in Handel's concept of the lover's duets.

Just as there are fewer choruses in Hercules than in Saul, there are also fewer sinfonias. Only two sinfonias appear in Hercules, at the beginnings of Acts II and III. The second act sinfonia doesn't have the functional quality that the Saul sinfonias display, but the opening sinfonia of act three serves as a portent of things to come dramatically. The march of act one is brief and adequately depicts the triumphant return of Hercules. The opening overture of the drama meets our expectations as to the character and form of the piece: namely a French overture with a maestoso first section in two parts with dotted rhythms and duple meter, and a second section that features some faster fugal treatment. A menuett follows.

Aside from our comparisons of Hercules to Saul, we should concede that the two works were composed for different forces and purposes (Hercules was clearly composed with its visual merits in mind,

whereas Saul, although conceived theatrically, was not intended for staging). When this perspective is taken, all sorts of possibilities for the success of Hercules as a believable drama surface. Generally, the visual arts can enhance a work that doesn't seem to have much structural variety, to the point that we will accept the work in spite of superficial shortcomings. The reasons for the failure of Hercules in its day were not entirely the same reasons that the work is not popular today. Lang's explanation for that failure extends further than just the conventions:

> It (Hercules) failed. It had to fail beacuse there was something in Hercules that the vast majority of Handel's listeners could not understand, something Handel himself, though he understood, could never again attain. The note of distress, misxed with a vital expressive impulse, is too much even for our generation. Thus the greatest of Baroque music dramas still awaits the recognition it deserves.[1]

We will now look at the music that so many Handel scholars say is evidence of Handel's greatest dramatic achievement. The first example will be the opening first-act accompanied recitative of the Herald Lichas (Ex. 21). Dean has said that the initial measures of this recitative could be the prelude to a late Schubert song.[2] Indeed, the well-balanced figurations of the beginning accompaniment (mm. 1-3) have the subtle harmonic progression that produces chromaticism without the impression of dissonance, a simple effect created by successive dominant seventh chords descending by half steps. After a cadence to the F major chord (m. 3), Lichas outlines the F major triad and then leaps to a clashing dissonance with his E and G (m. 4), and the harmonic

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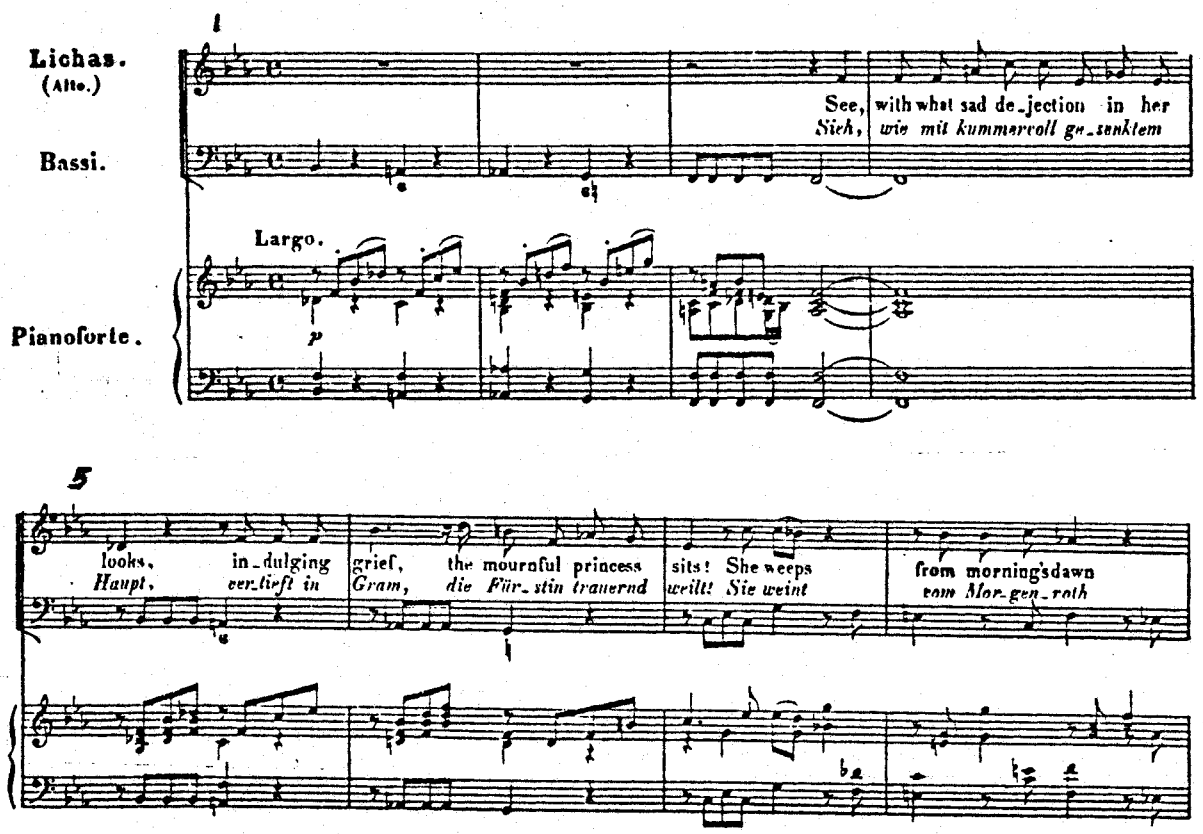
[1]Lang, Handel, p. 428.

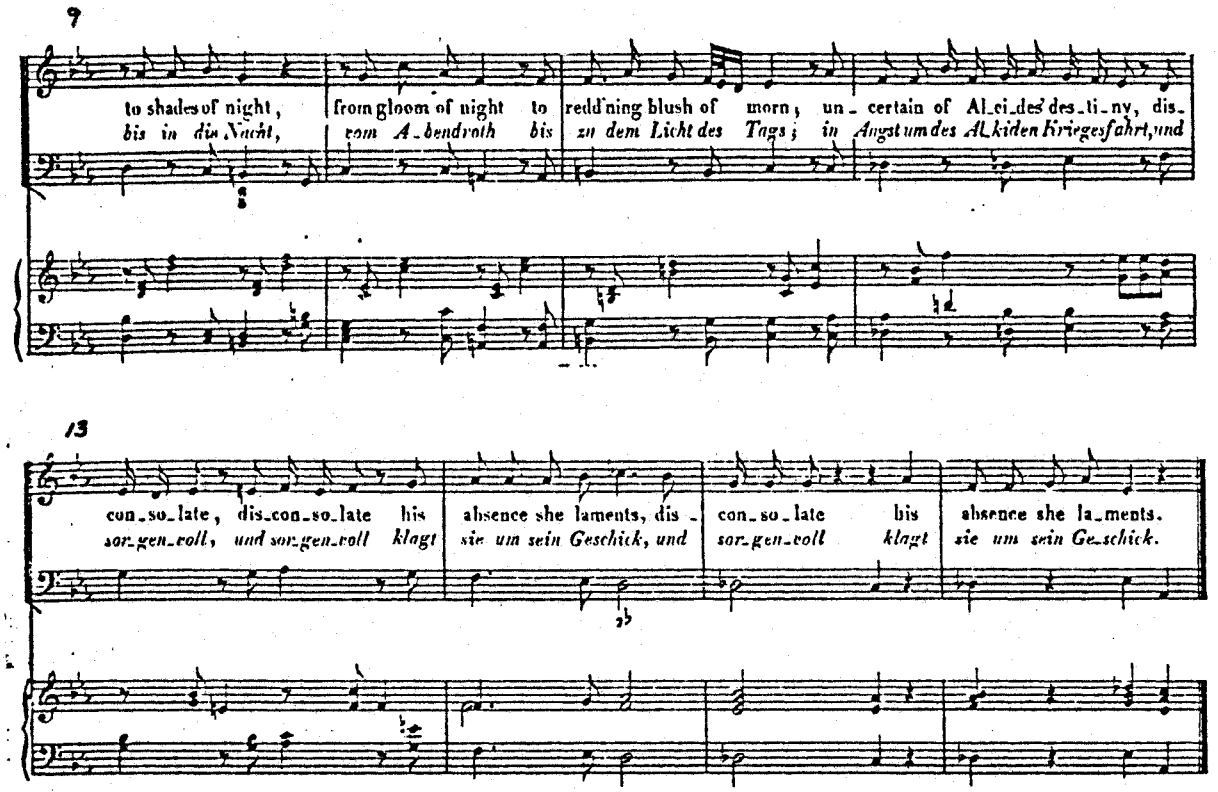
[2]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 420.

pattern is begun anew (mm. 5-6), deviating chromatically to bring us to C minor (mm. 6-7). The skillful text inflection and descriptive painting belies any assumption that Handel's skills were wanting in that regard. Lichas effectively sets the mood for the act, giving us the picture of the dejected Dejanira and creating a sense of foreboding. As the accompaniment figuration changes (m. 7), a melodic sequence (mm. 8-9) ties together related prepositional phrases: "She weeps, *from* morning's dawn *to* shades of night" (italics added). On the word "laments" (m. 14), the enharmonic diminished seventh chord adds more color to express the word. Having begun in B minor (m. 1), the recitative ends with a cadence to A major (m. 16).

Ex. 21 Accompanied recitative of Lichas



(Ex. 21 continued)



The tenor Hyllus reveals his vision of the death of Hercules in an arioso (Ex. 22) accompanied by rapid scales and dotted rhythms. Lang has said that "I feel the god" is in the spacious heroic style that one would ascribe to mature Gluck were it not for the typically Handelian largeness of gesture.[1] There are very similar gestures in some of the recitatives in Handel's Semele.[2]

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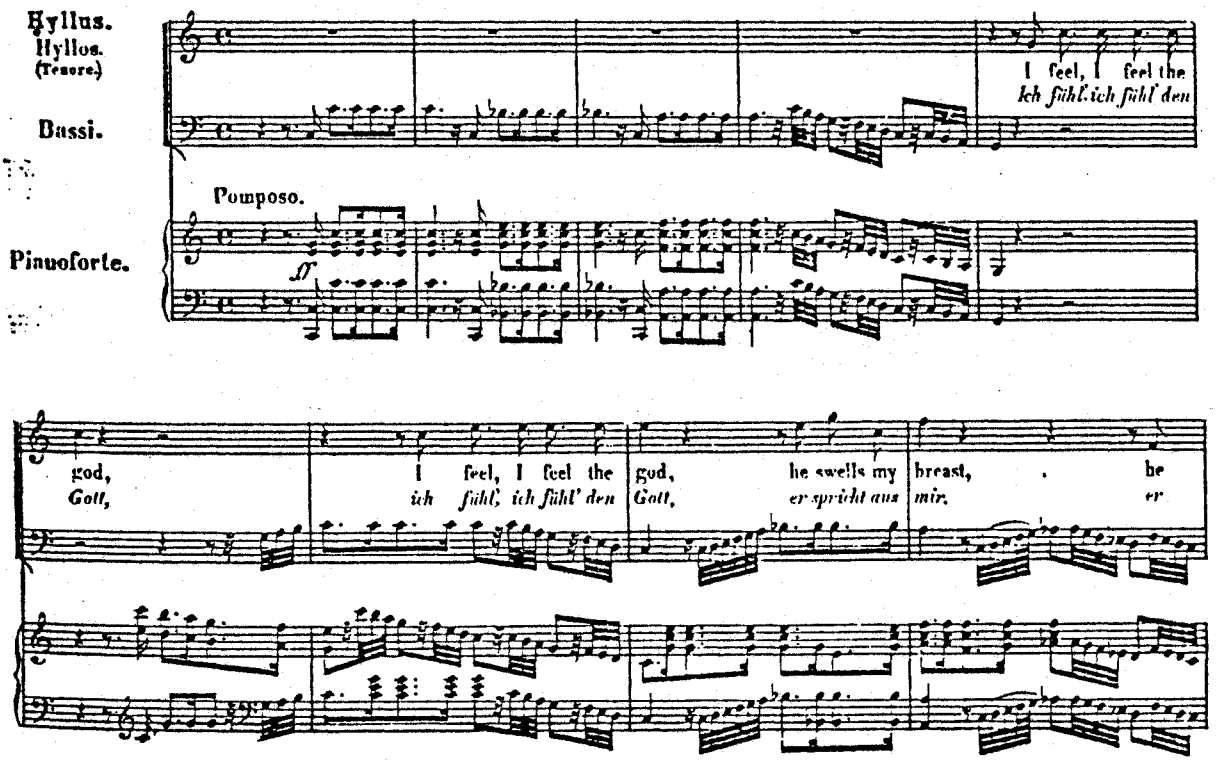
[1]Lang, Handel, p. 424.

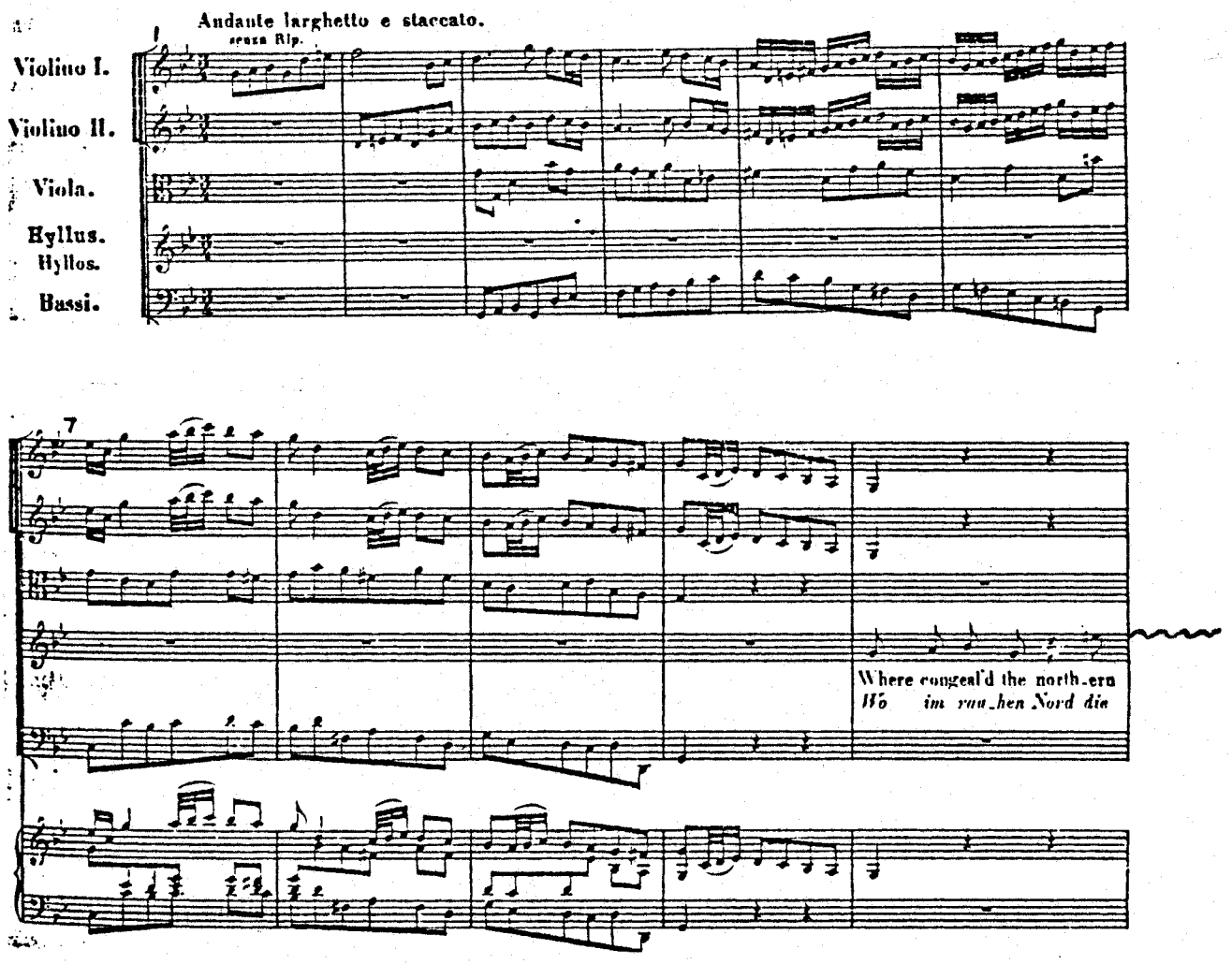
[2]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 420

Ex. 22 "I feel, I feel the god," the arioso of Hyllus



Hyllus continues to sing powerful recitatives and airs which reveal a character of youthful ardor. His music throughout the drama is marked by the energy of melismas and wide melodic intervals. The resolve of Hyllus is expressed in the air, "Where congealed the northern streams," which speaks of the willingness of Hyllus to search in faraway places for Hercules. An interesting imitative beginning to this air (Ex. 23) is accomplished through the use of Hyllus's first melodic motive (m. 11) as the cell for the contrapuntal lines in the accompaniment (mm. 1-3)

Ex. 23 "Where congealed the northern streams"

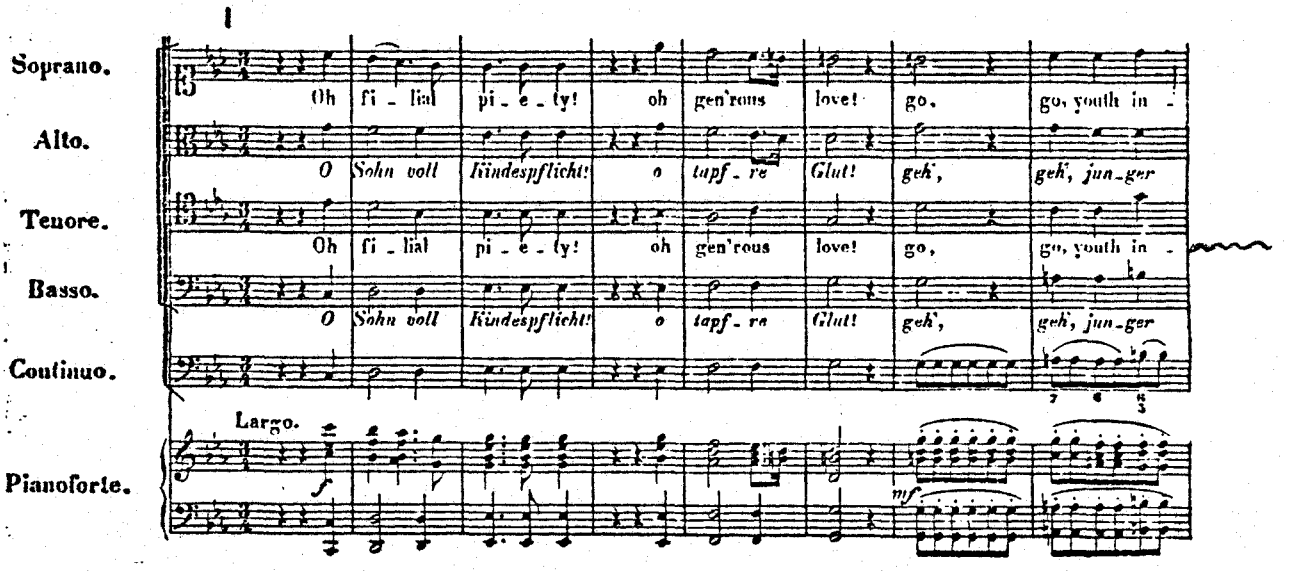


"O filial piety" (Ex. 24) is the first chorus we hear in Hercules. Sharing the title of Jonathan's recitative (Ex. 14) in Saul, the chorus is a similar affective expression of the virtues of a loving son. Formally, the chorus is unique. Framed by two massive, homophonic largos in triple meter, a long double fugue (m. 36) in the relative major key is cast in a duple meter andante. The text of the two largos begins with the words of the title. The first largo differs from the second only by an extension of text and by a chordal eighth-note accompaniment

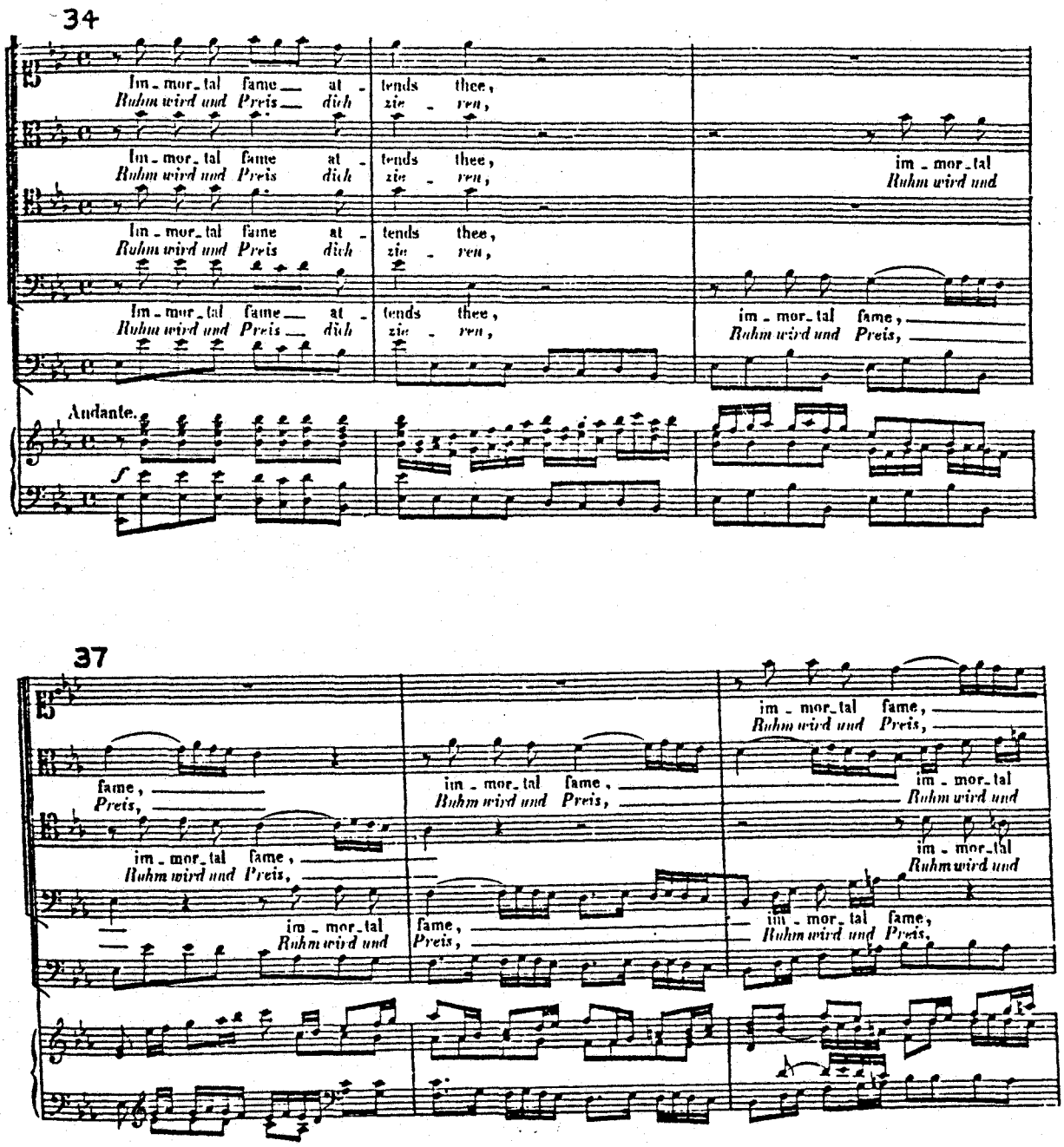
figure (m. 7) The text of the fugue departs from the high-minded reference to the youth's virtue and courage to tell Hyllus that "fame attends" him and "heaven befriends" him in his search for his father Hercules.

Several of the da capo airs in Hercules follow a recitative in which a dialogue signals a dramatic change in the state of affairs. The air then reflects the sentiments of a character, using the return of its first section to embellish the original statement of ideas. Such is the case in Dejanira's first da capo air, which follows the exchange in which the Herald Lichas informs Dejanira that Hercules is alive and well (Ex. 25). Dejanira dispells the gloom and uncertainty that has prevailed by singing an allegro air (Ex. 26) of great virtuosity. The unison violins anticipate Dejanira's melody in the introduction (m. 1-3) and then double the voice, to the exclusion of the other instruments.

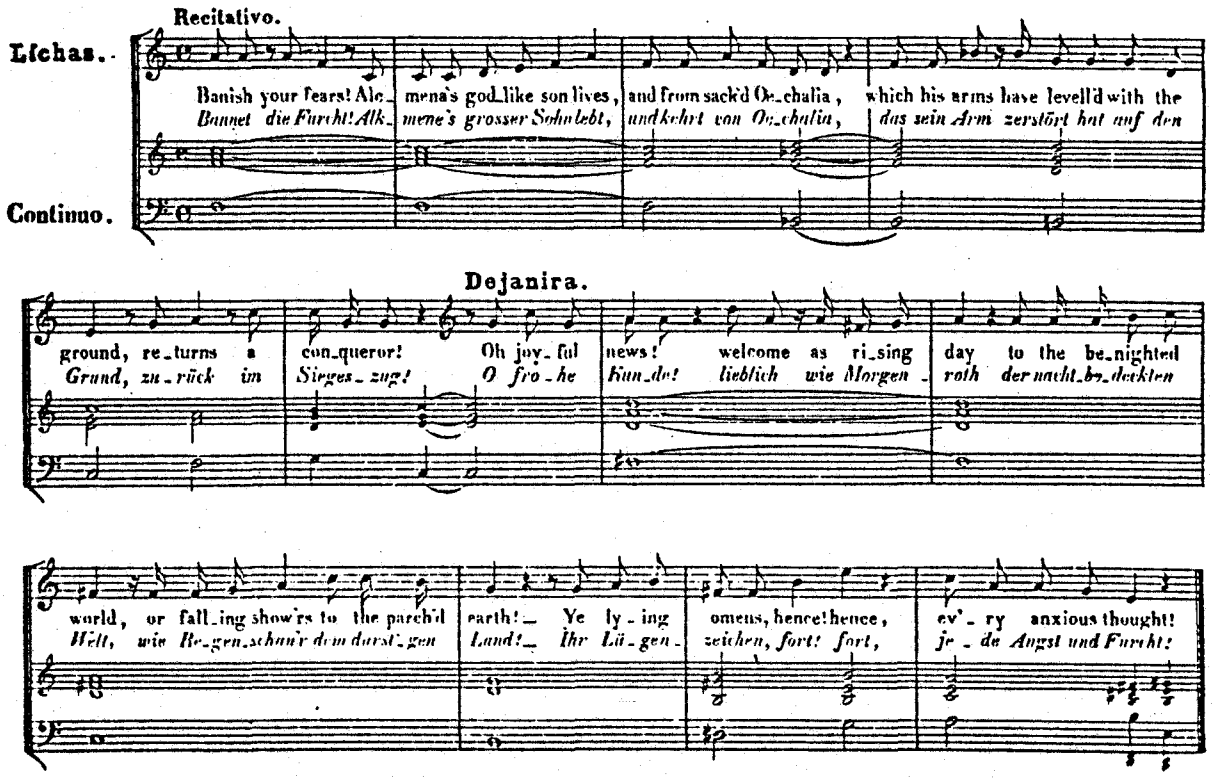
Ex. 24 "O filial piety", the initial chorus of Hercules



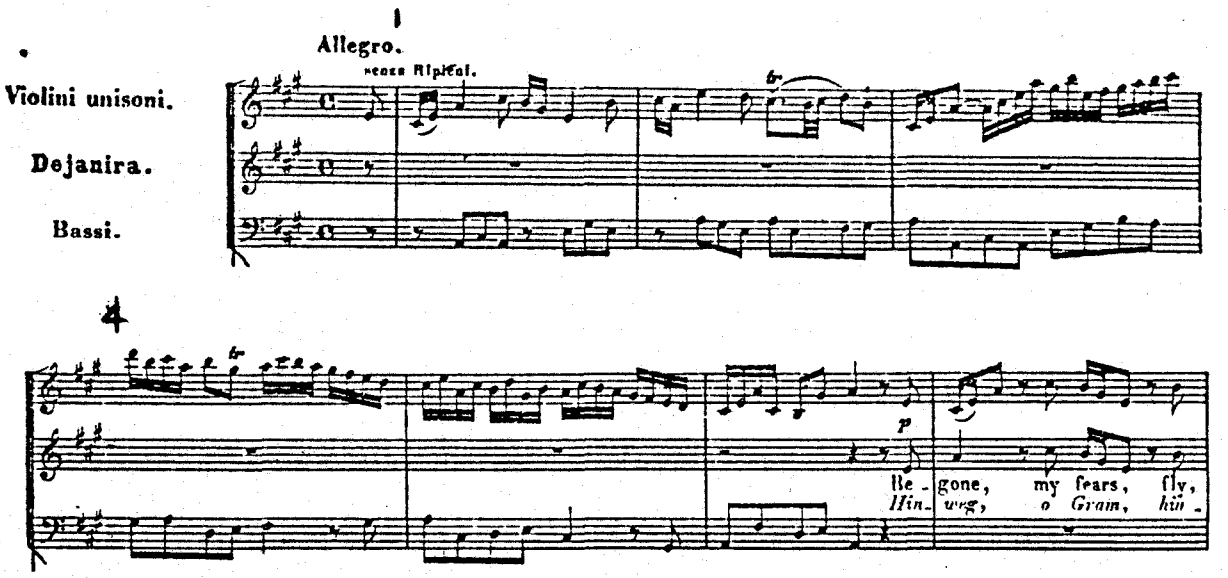
(Ex. 24 continued)



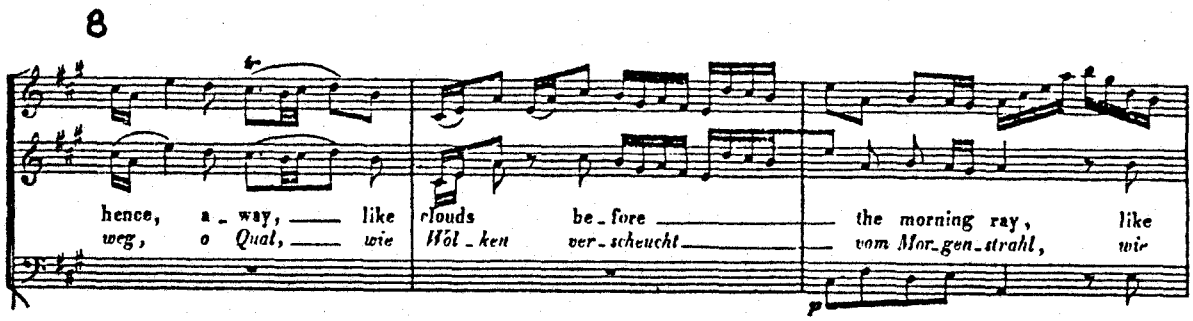
Ex. 25 Secco recitative of Dejanira and Lichas



Ex. 26 Dejanira's air, "Begone, my fears"



(Ex. 26 continued)



Another imaginative double fugue, "Let none despair" (Ex. 27), continues the mood of optimism as the chorus sings that the tide of despair may have turned and that "heav'n can snatch us from the verge of fate." The tenors state the subject (mm. 1-2) and are answered tonally by the altos (mm. 5-9), keeping the vocal range of the first nine measures of the piece to just one note above the octave. Lang is reminded by "Let none despair" of the "duet" choruses in the Messiah in which there are passages for paired voices and a transparent construction.[1] This particular chorus ends homophonically, in the typically Handelian manner of augmentation that begins in the bass voice (m. 70) with an octave leap, while the other three voices continus rising at a faster pace. There is the effect of spreading sonority as the bass moves in the opposite direction until the text joins all the voices again (m. 73) in the same rhythm. The final cadence, strengthened by a 4-3 suspension (m. 74), confirms the F major tonality that is set forth in the fugue.

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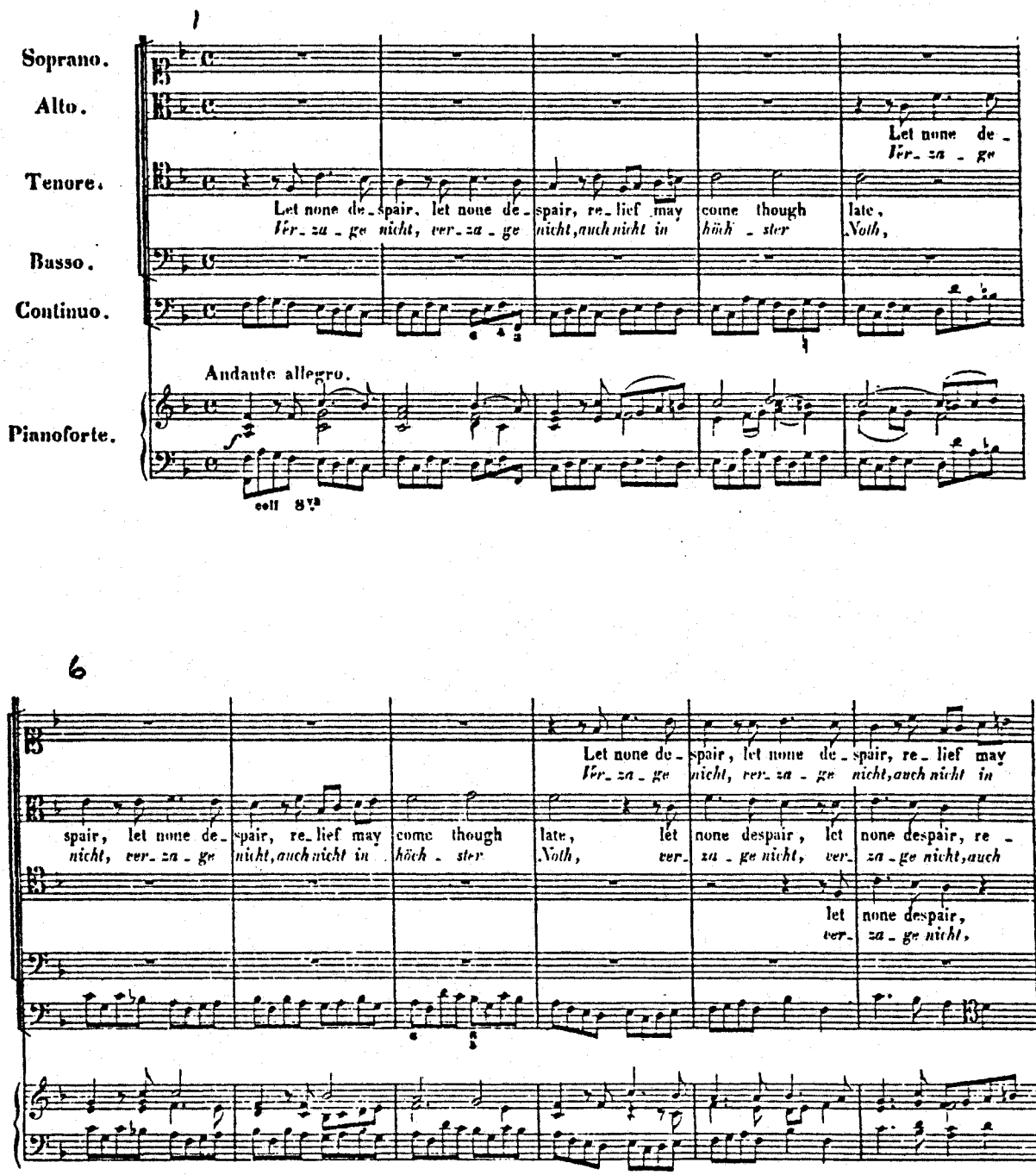
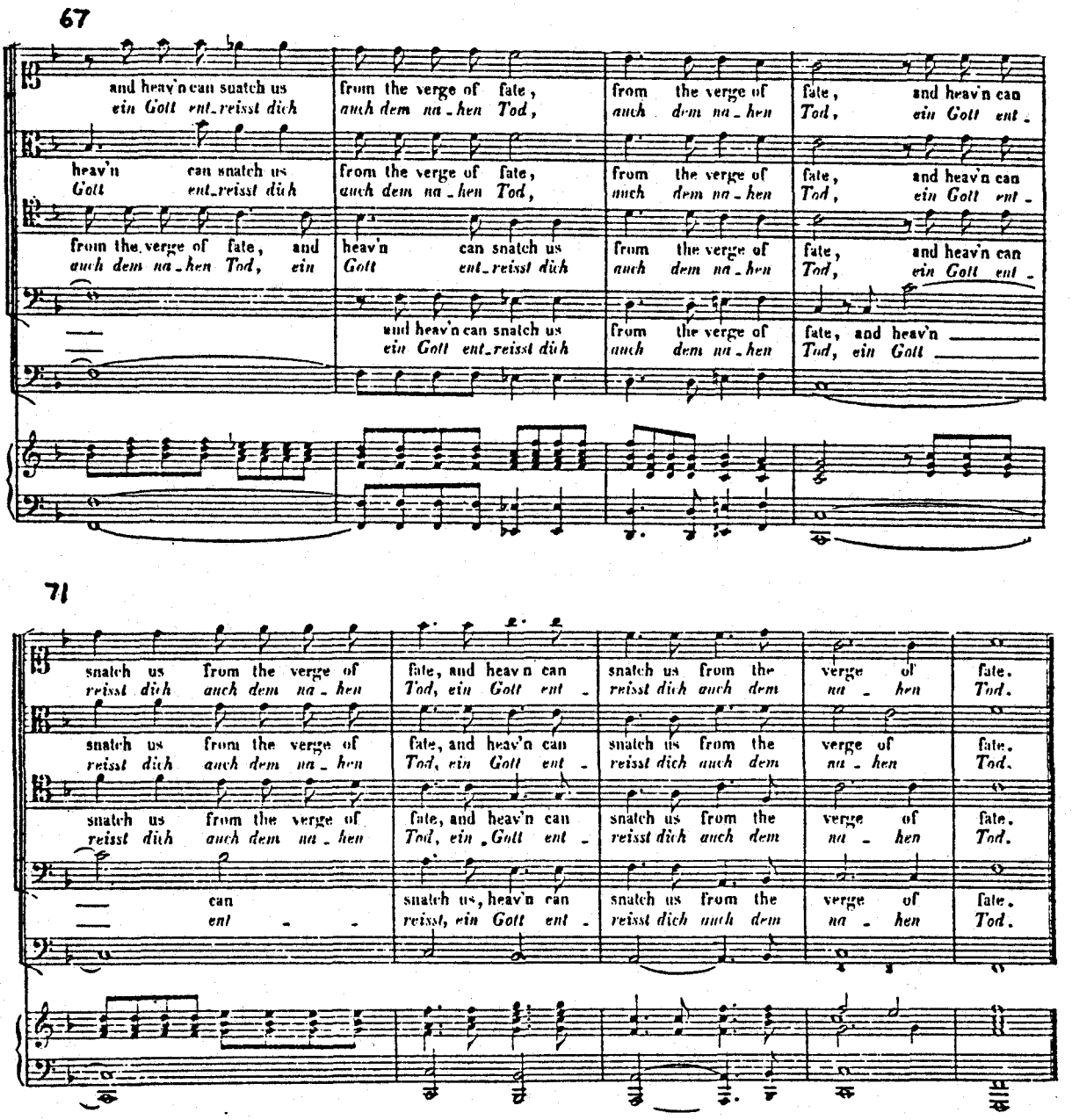
[1]Lang, Handel, p. 424.

Ex. 27 "Let none despair," second chorus of first act, Hercules



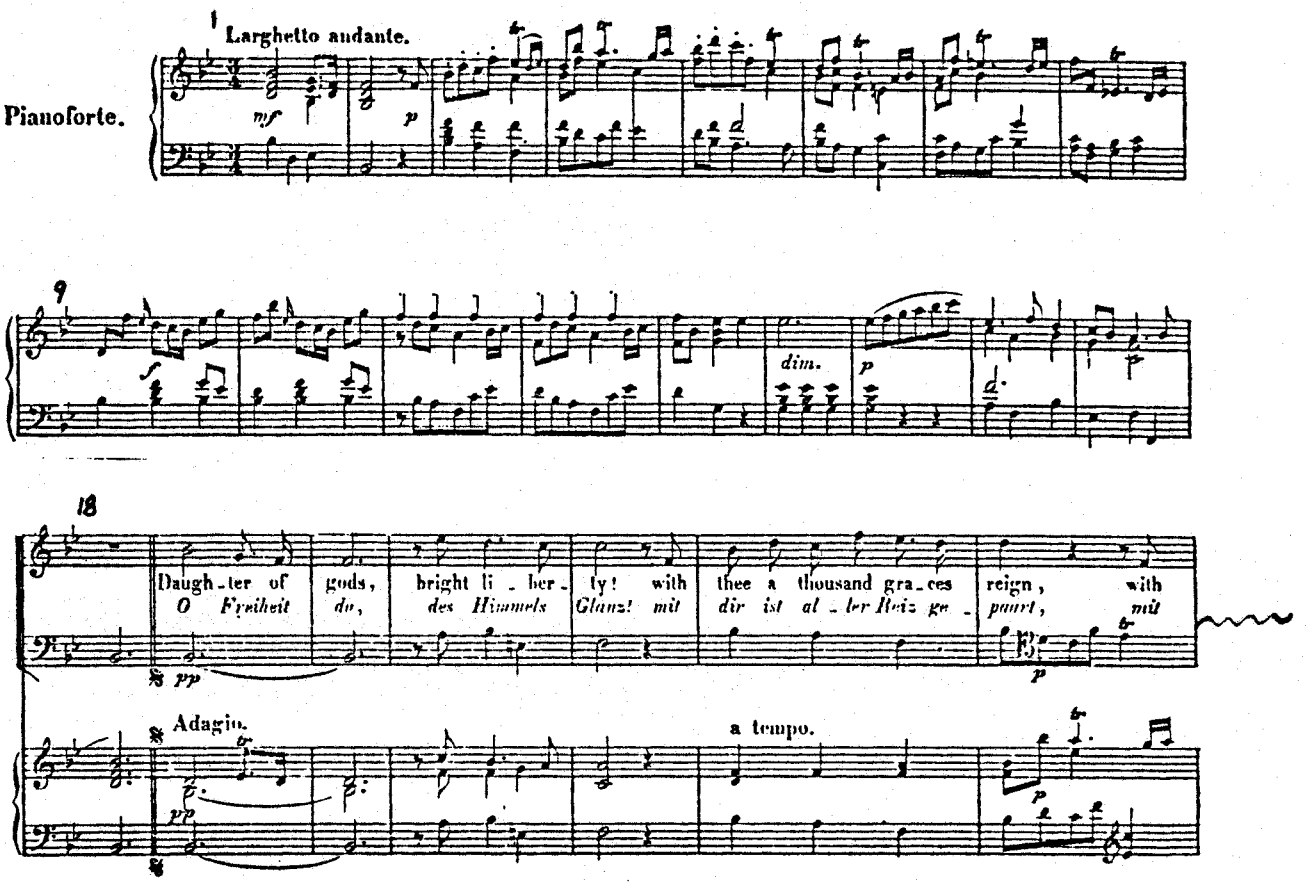
(Ex. 27 continued)



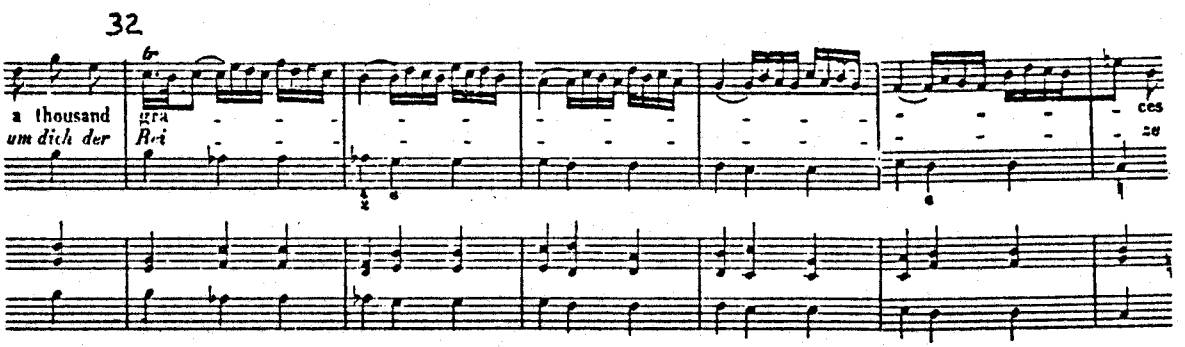
Iole sings a dal segno air entitled "Daughter of gods" (Ex. 28) after the above-mentioned chorus. Conforming to the style of many of the airs in Hercules, Iole's air is in triple time and is marked larghetto andante. Like Dejanira's air, "Begone my fears," this air

begins with a prelude that anticipates the singer's first phrase (mm. 1, 19), a principle that is akin to that of the motto air. Using a trait that is encountered numerous times in Hercules, the first entry of the voice (m. 19) is marked adagio, and for four bars an important phrase is sung. Then, the original tempo is resumed (m. 23). Word painting in "Daughter of the gods" is especially expressive, employing a melisma of sequences (mm. 32-36) to enhance the text, "a thousand graces."

Ex. 28 "Daughter of the gods," an air sung by Iole

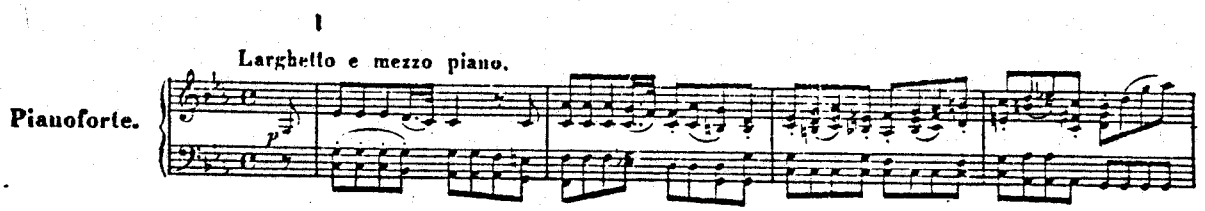


(Ex. 28 continued)

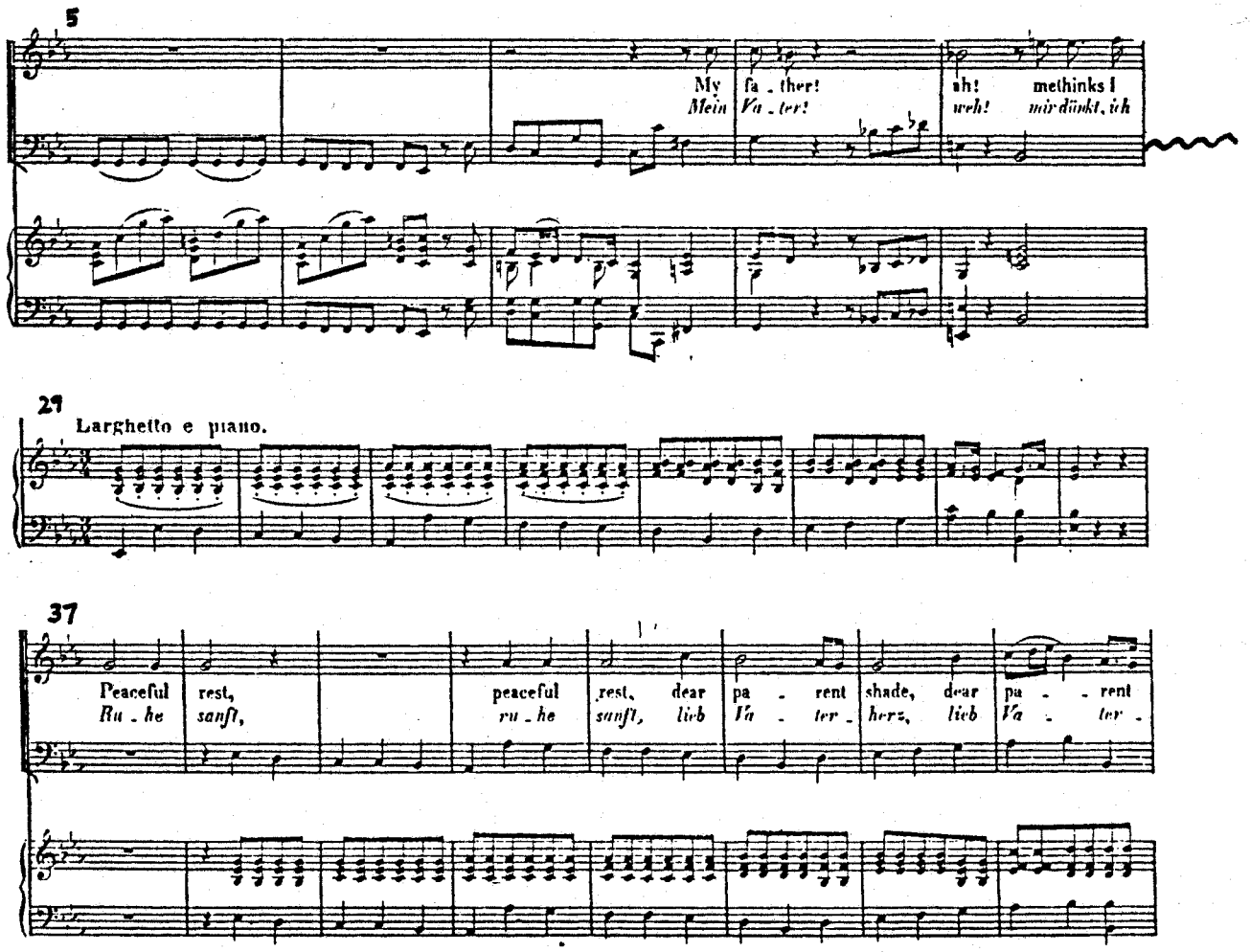


The appearance of Hercules is a traumatic event for Iole, who is suddenly reminded of the slaying of her father. The lament she then sings (Ex. 29) opens with a dark ritornel. Denying us the expected continuation of the motto, a dminished seventh chord (m. 7) turns the air momentarily into an accompanied recitative. After a reminiscence of the death of her father, Iole's thoughts turn into a peaceful elegy in which Handel changes the meter to $\frac{3}{4}$ (m. 29). The voice enters alone, singing the words, "Peaceful rest" on a single tone (m. 37), repeating the same words a half step higher before continuing on a different text.

Ex. 29 Iole's lament



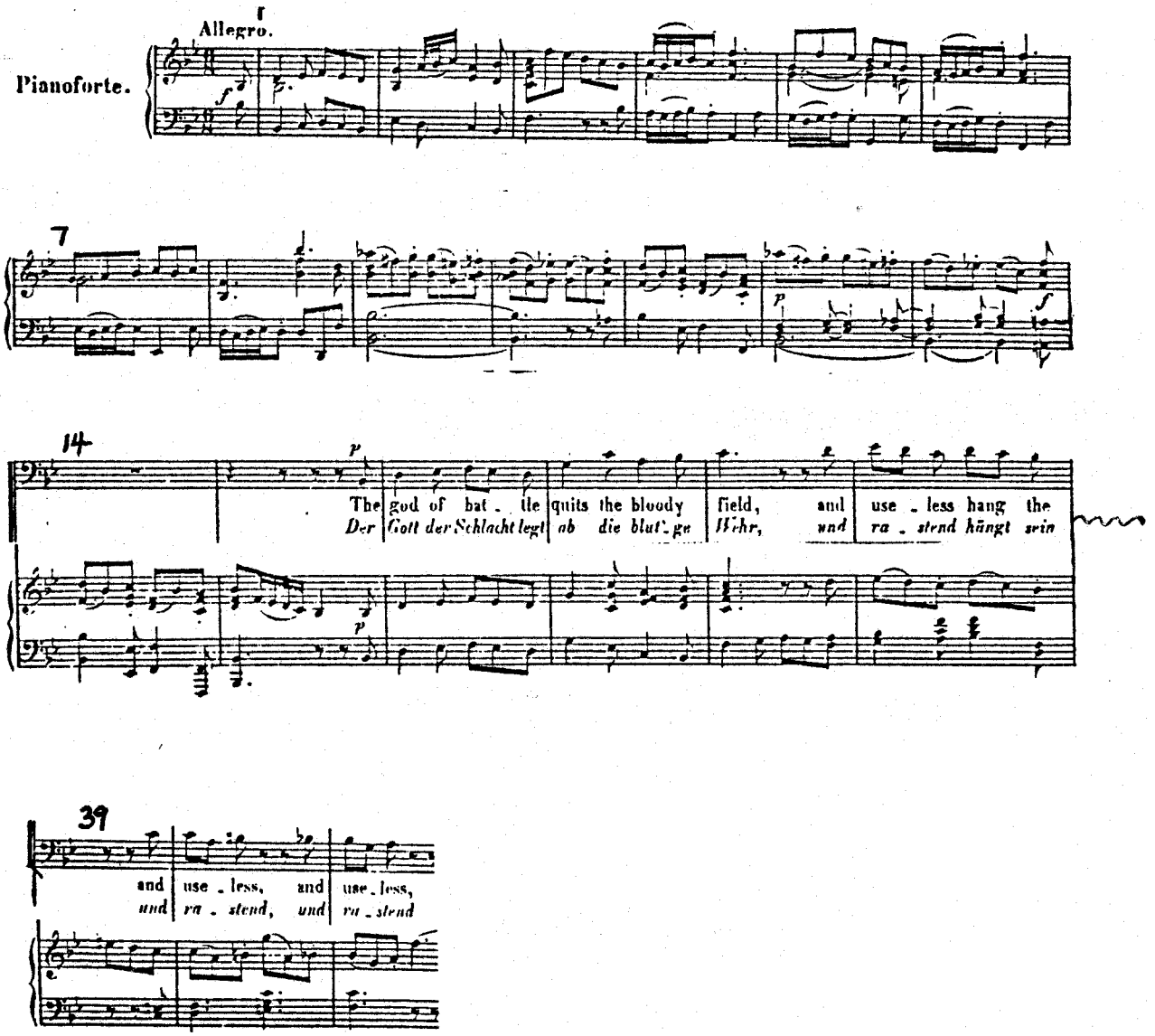
(Ex. 29 continued)



Hercules sings his first air (one of only three in the entire drama) near the end of act one. Not the most remarkable music of the work, "The god of battle" (Ex. 30) has the limited range of an eleventh and would be a simple strophic song were it not for the imaginative accompaniment. Serving the function of brightening the mood after Iole's dark lament, Hercules's air is vigorous and cheerful. One point of interest in the air is the presence of a chromatic descending figure that first appears in the ritornello (mm. 9-10, 11-12), and

then in the voice (mm. 39-40). Dean credits this figure with giving the air a flavor which anticipates Mozart.[1]

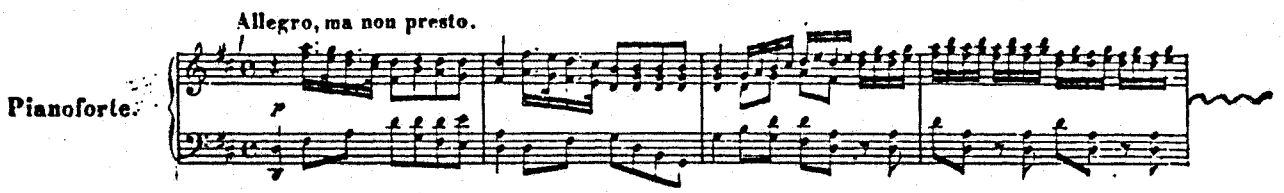
Ex. 30 First act air of Hercules



[1]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 423.

The chorus "Crown with festal pomp" (Ex. 31) brings act one to a resounding close. Seconding Hercules's joy at putting aside war for the pleasures of love, the Thessalian shepherds celebrate the victory over the Oechalians. Mixing the English ceremonial style with pastoral elements, the chorus uses trumpets and timpani in addition to the usual continuo, strings, and oboe. The opening instrumental measures are composed in a dance idiom (mm. 1-4). Roulades of sequences proclaim the word "joy" in all voices after the massive homophonic sonority employed on the text "tells aloud" (mm. 18-22). In canonic style, all voices sing "Crown with festal pomp the day" on a motive begun in the orchestra (mm. 25-30). Variety is enhanced even more in the chorus with the inclusion of a concertato-like duet (m. 42) that continues for eight measures until the chorus ends with a reiteration of "while music's voice tells aloud our rapturous joys!"

Ex. 31 Closing chorus of act one



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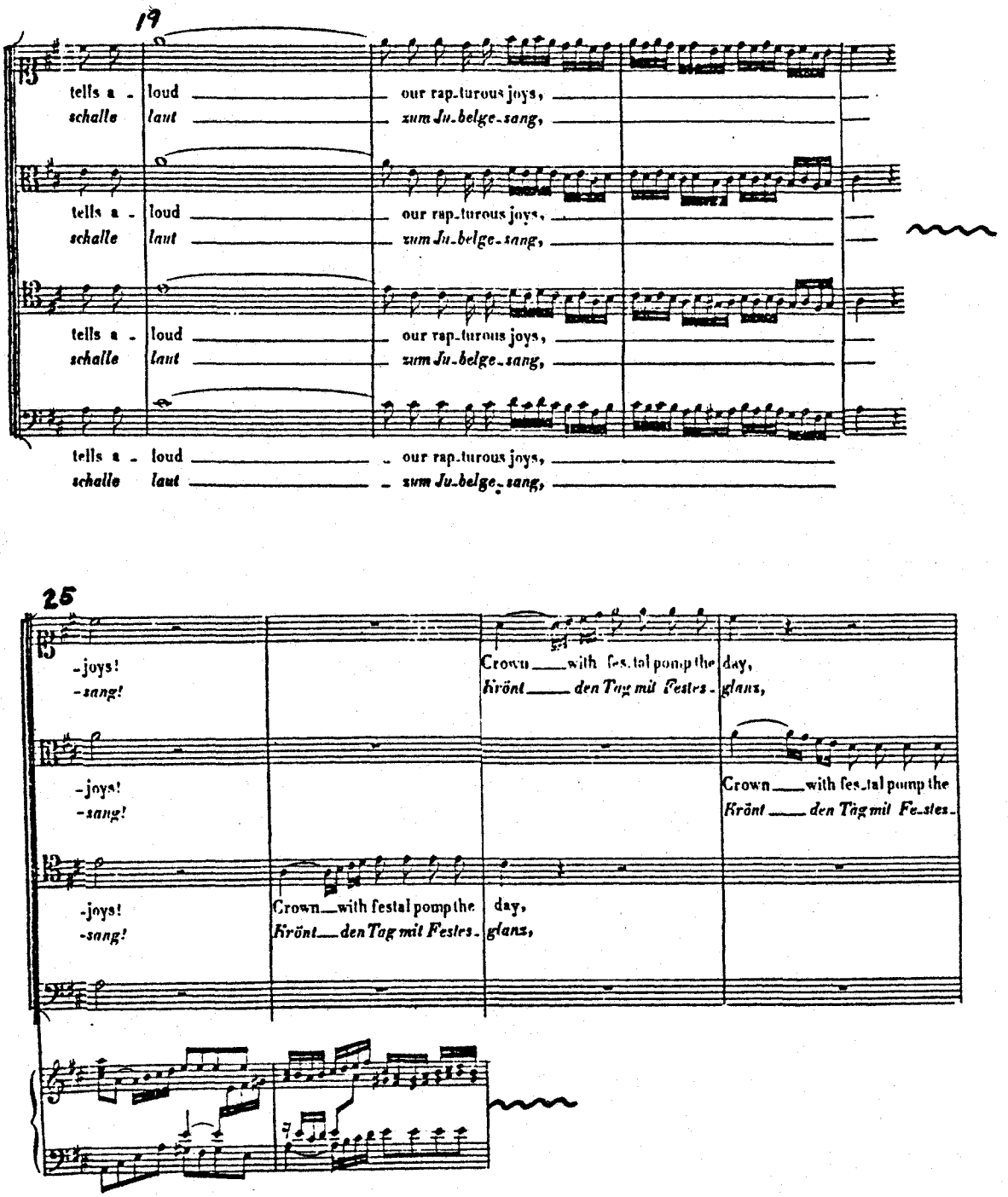

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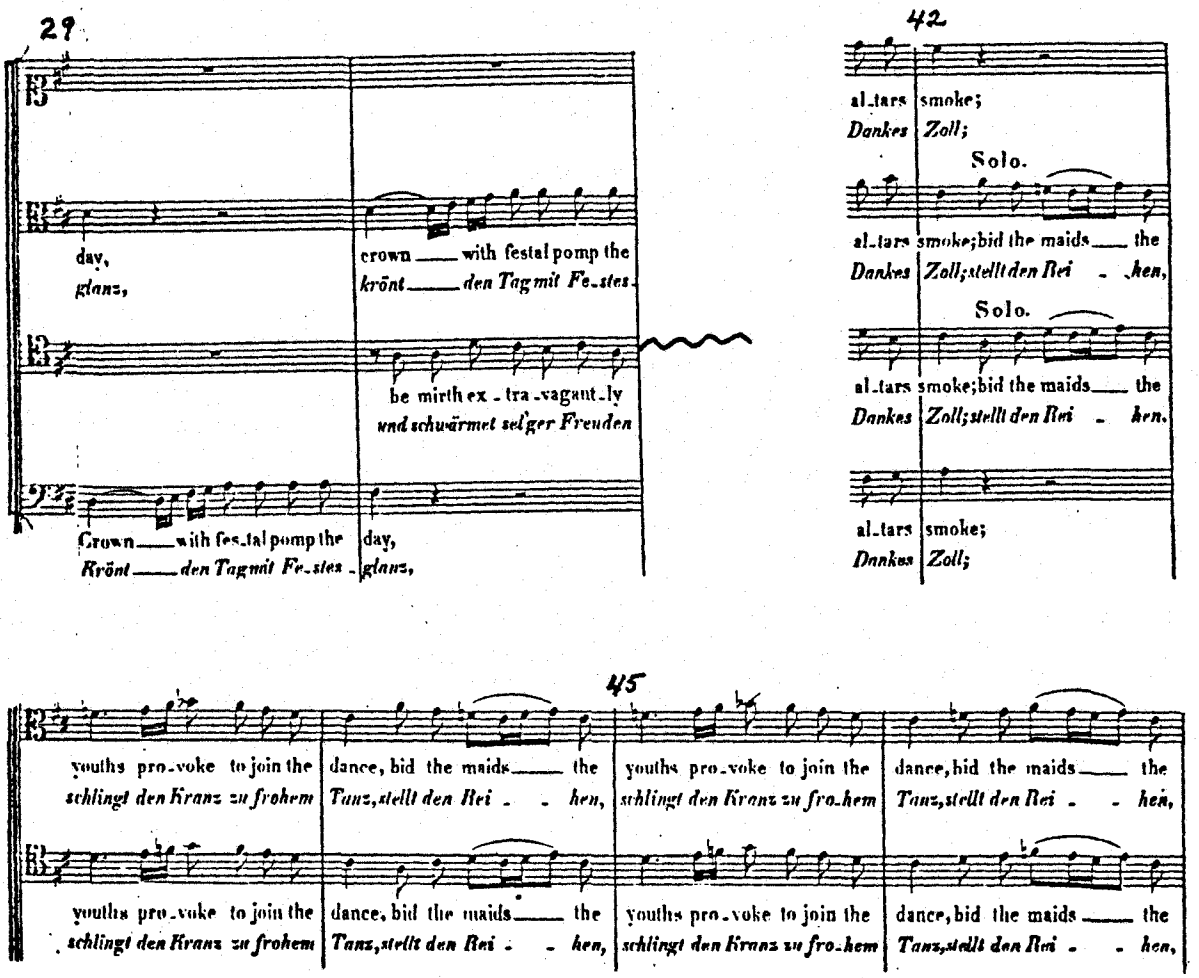
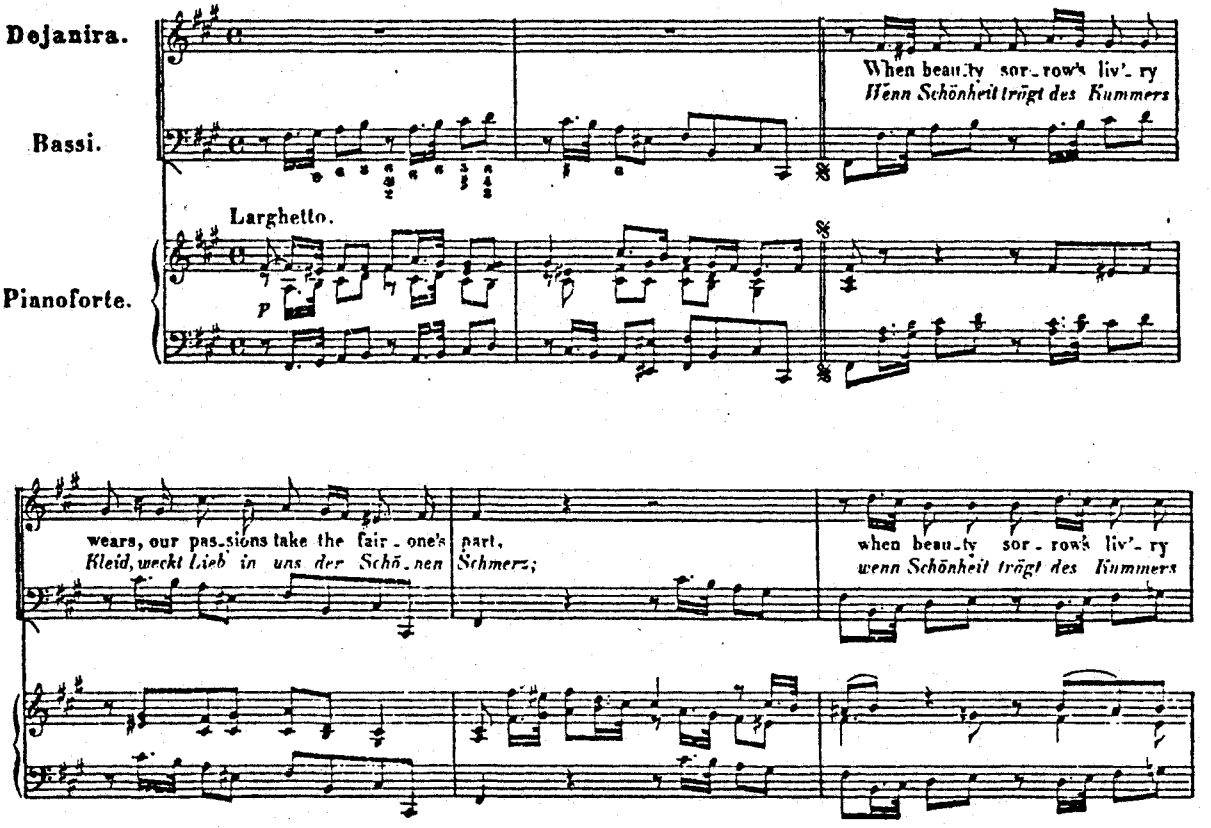


Act two further identifies the increasing pain and suspicion of Dejanira. Her first air of the act (Ex. 32) is Dejanira's sorrowful explanation of how beauty awakens the passions. In the preceding recitative, Dejanira has confronted Iole with the accusation that Hercules was drawn to the young princess by her beauty. Dejanira than sings a melody in $F^{\#}$ minor in which a semitone dotted figure appears in almost every measure of the air, creating the gentle

depiction of fleeting emotion.[1]

Ex. 32 "When beauty sorrow's liv'ry wears"



Handel employs the device of octave leaps, which he also used in the "Envy" chorus of Saul (Ex. 15), to characterize a similar sin in the "Jealousy" chorus of Hercules (Ex. 33). The octaves here, however, are assigned to the orchestral introduction (mm. 1-16) instead of the chorus as in Saul. This chorus also differs from its Saul

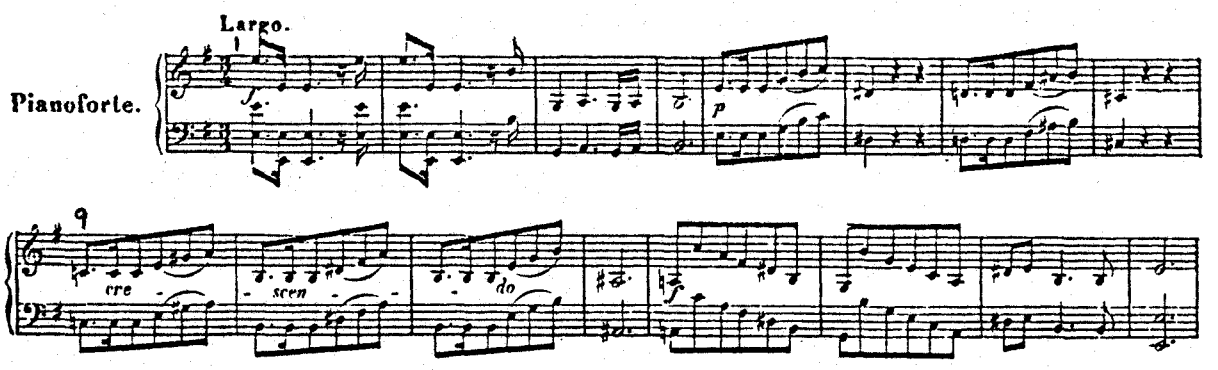
[1]Handel's preference for F# minor for super-emotional high points surfaced in other works, e.g. "Si pieta" in Guilio Cesare, "Padre amato" in Tamerlano.

counterpart in that it is not based on an ostanato. Lang writes of the form as well as of other distinctions that should surely be mentioned:

> Now the chorus takes up the theme of jealousy in a piece of an intensity extraordinary even with Handel. "Jealousy, infernal pest" recreates the tone of Greek tragedy as it had not been heard for two millennia. At the same time it is a wholly modern and prophetic musical composition for beyond the confines of the Baroque. The form is da capo, the means symphonic, for the orchestra does not accompany--it is charged with a genuinely symphonic texture of its own. The convolutions are so calculated that significant thematic elements intrude into the pauses of the vocal parts, and when later both unite on the exclamation "Jealousy," the effect is crushing.[1]

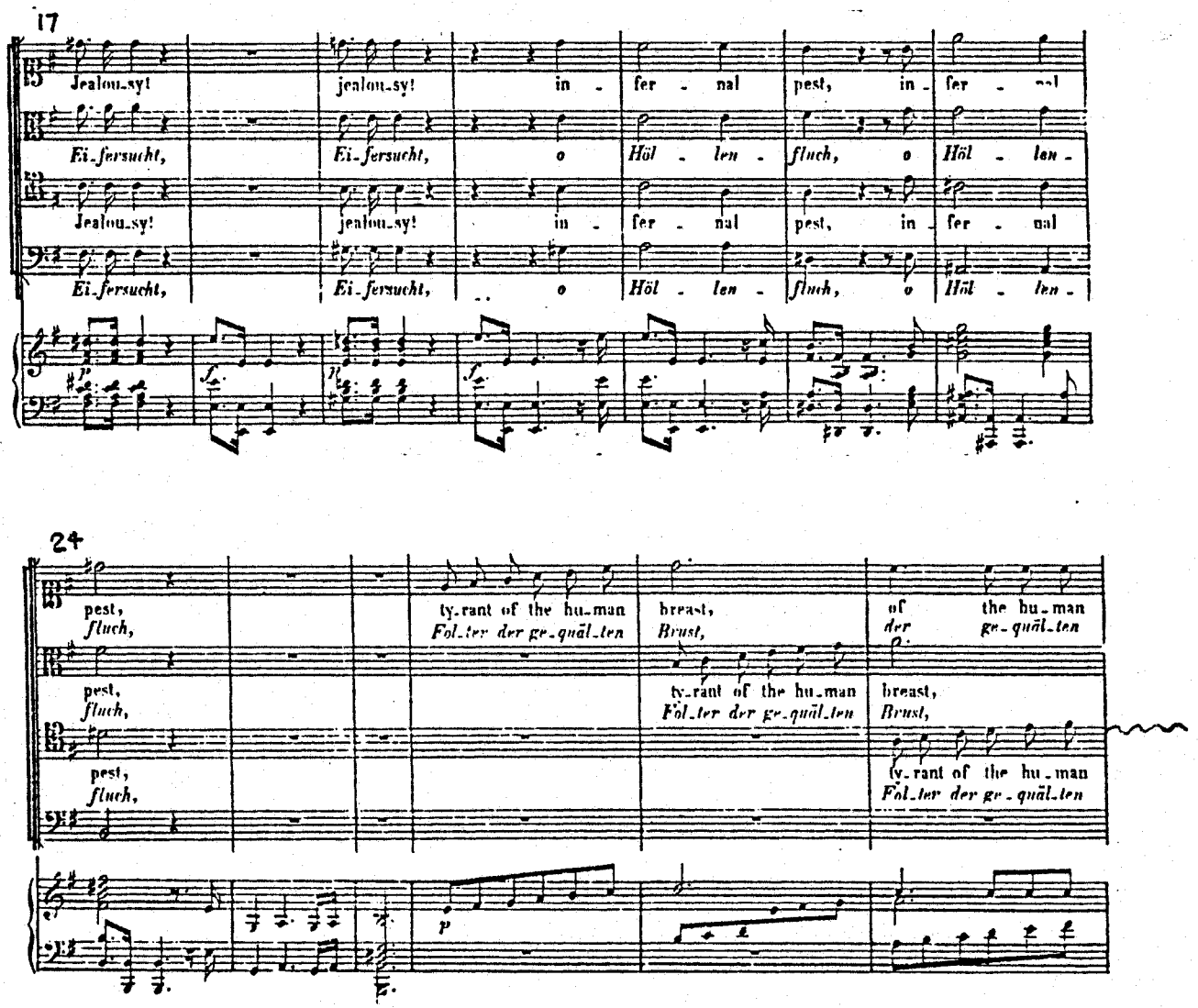
The chorus enters with the homophonic exclamation about which Lang is speaking (m. 17). Handel employs imitation in this chorus in a building-block fashion. An ascending E minor scale is the initial contrapuntal entry (m. 27). Successive minor-scale imitations begin a fourth and a fifth below (mm. 28-29), continuing until major tonality appears, after which the process is repeated with major-scale imitations. A lighter texture prevails in the middle section, marked andante (m. 61) in accordance with the spirit of the text.

Ex. 33 "Jealousy" chorus



[1]Lang, Handel, p. 425. See Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 424 for a constrasting analysis of the form.

(Ex. 33 continued)



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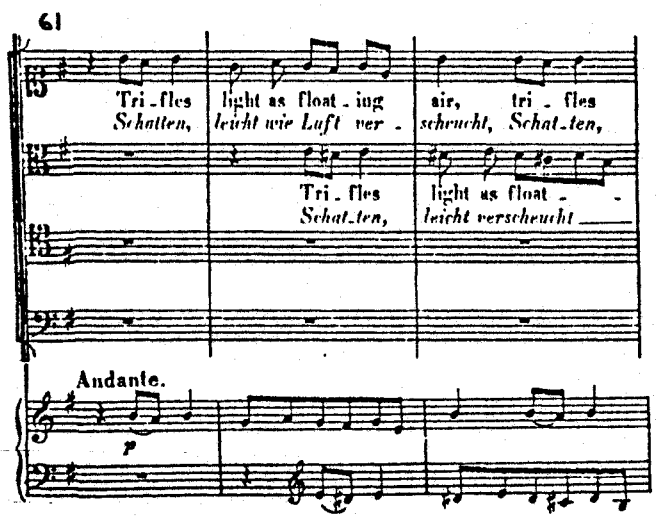
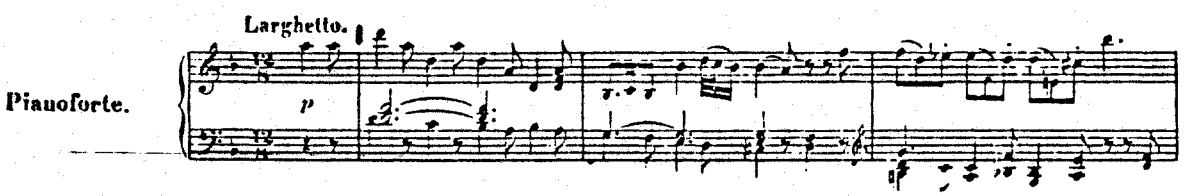


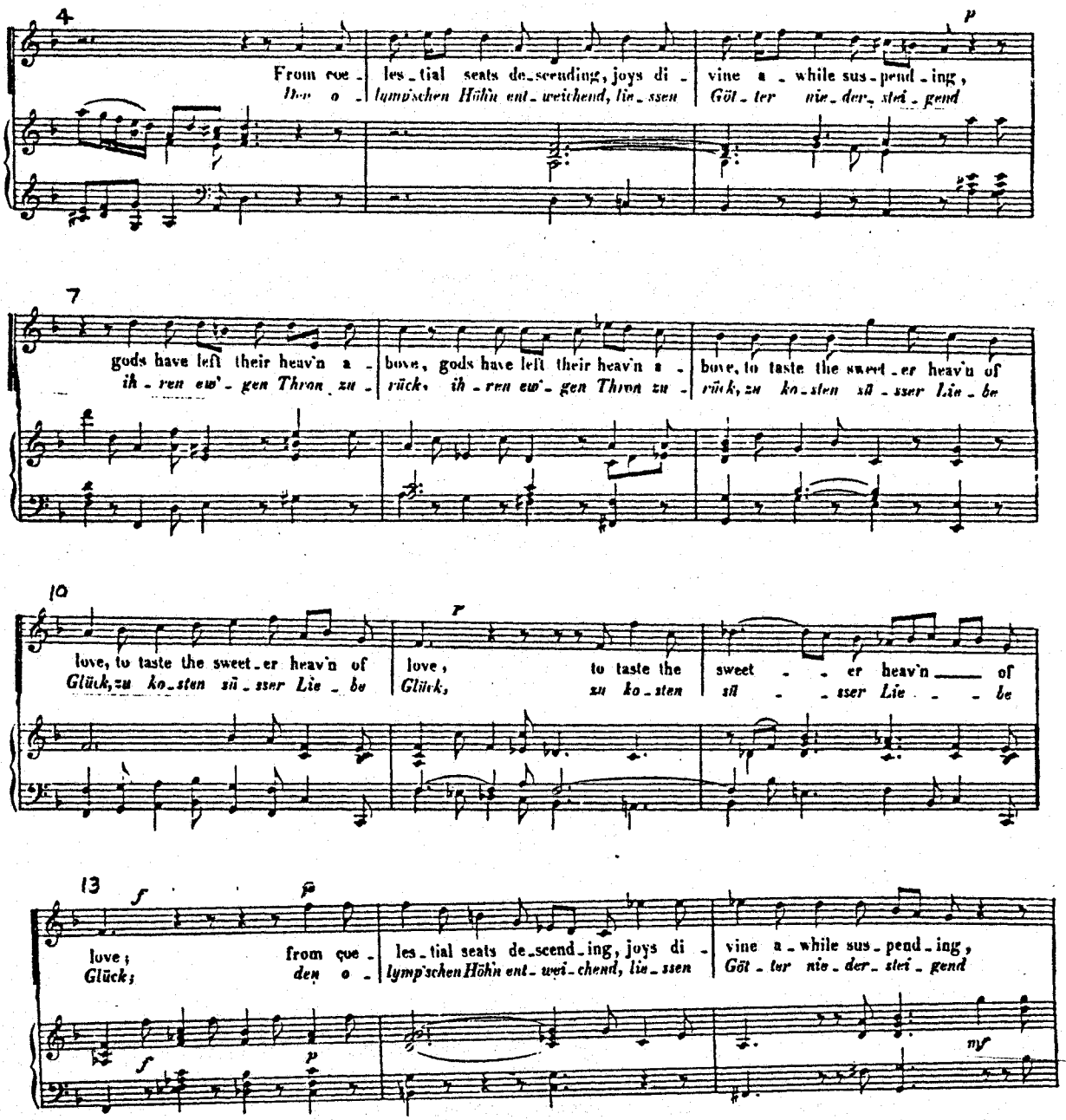
In the subplot of the drama, Hyllus makes futile amorous advances toward Iole. A gentle Siciliano[1] (Ex. 34) expresses the depth of Hyllus's passion saying that "gods have left their heav'n above, to taste the sweeter heav'n of love." In $\frac{12}{8}$ meter, occasionally marked by broken-chord accompaniment (mm. 1, 8-9), the air shows an increasingly chromatic Handel (mm. 3, 8, 11-15).

Ex. 34 Hyllus's Siciliano



[1] Harvard Dictionary of Music, s.v. Silciliana," p. 774.

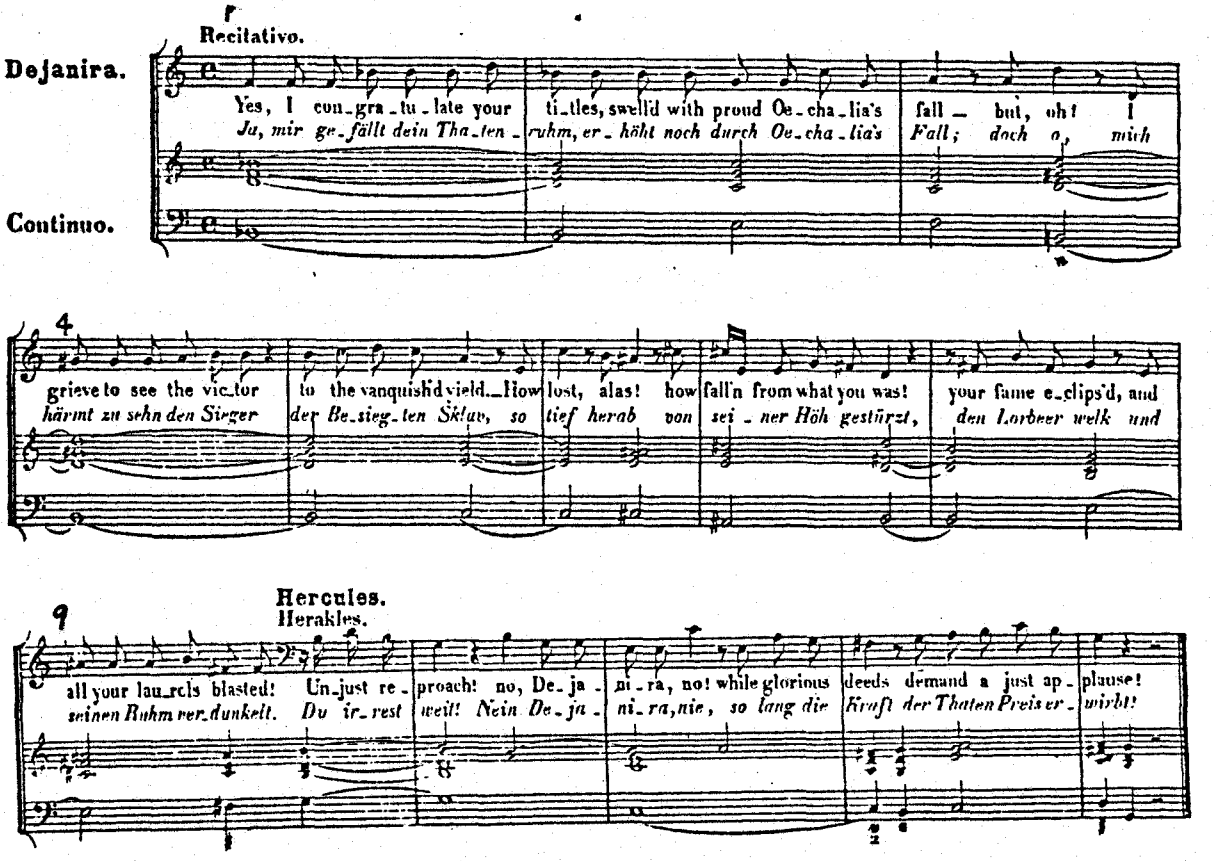
(Ex. 34 continued)



Hercules and Dejanira appear together in only two recitatives in the drama, both in the second. act. The first recitative (Ex. 35) is a short exchange between the two in which Dejanira tells Hercules that she grieves to "see the victor to the vanquish'd yield." The

conflict is evident in the harmonic background of Dejanira's recitative (mm. 1-9) which begins in B♭ major and moves through distant keys with minor chords and diminished chords. Hercules, who doesn't yet realize the seriousness of Dejanira's charge, sings a diatonic recitative with no harmonic surprises (mm. 9-13), setting up his blustery, self-serving air, "Alcides' name in latest story."

Ex. 35 Recitative of Hercules and Dejanira

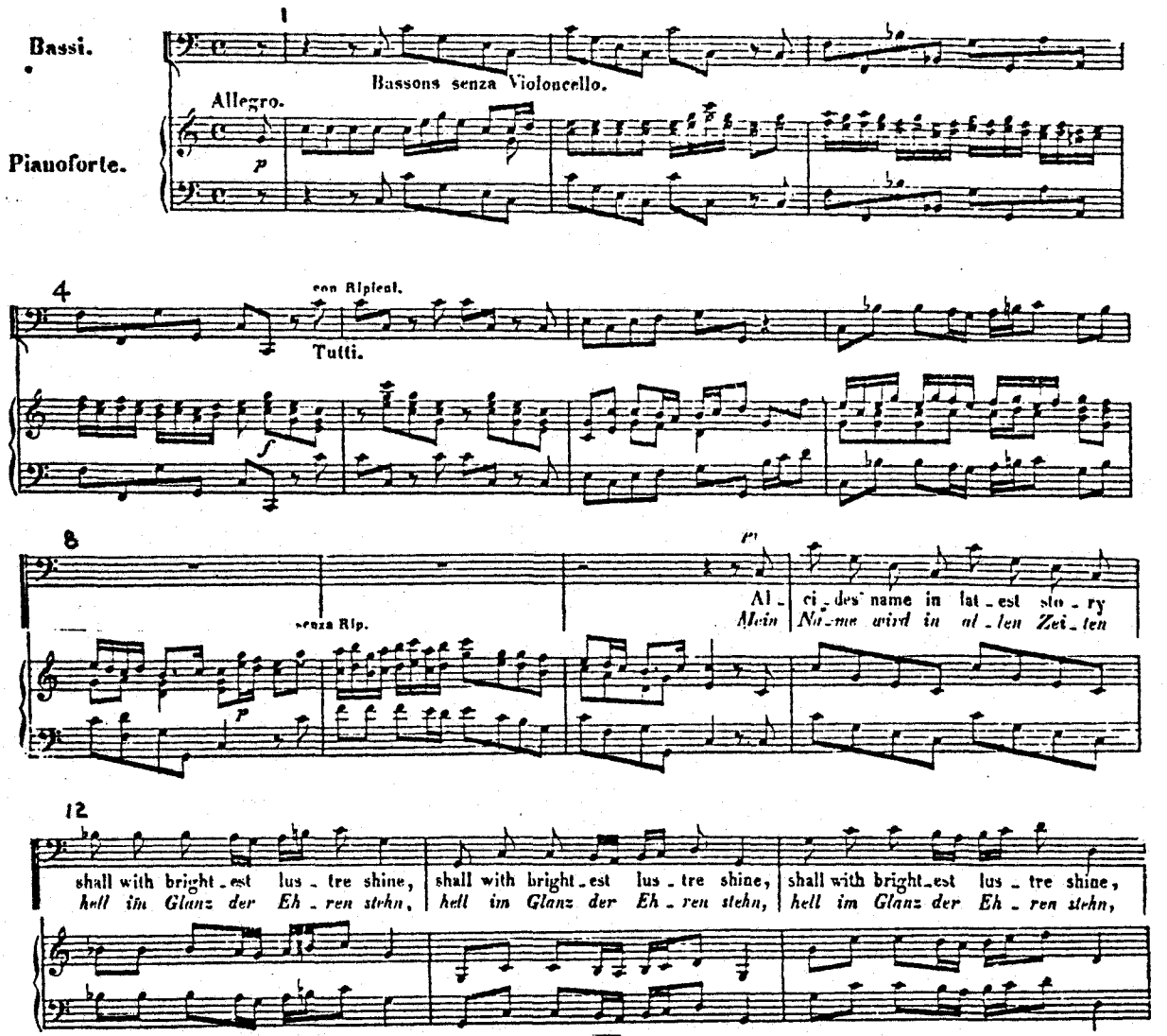


Lang declares that Hercules's air, which follows immediately after the above recitative, borders on being buffa in naiveté and sheer gusto.[1] Like Hercules's first act air, "Alcides' name in latest story" (Ex. 36) is doubled by octaves in portions (mm. 10-15). The

[1]Lang, Handel, p. 426.

opening arpeggios of the voice are anticipated in the orchestral introduction by the bassoon (mm. 1-2), whose octave leaps (mm. 3-4) prepare the haughty mood of the air. A duet of sequenced thirds in the oboes (mm. 3-4) is matched by some virtuosity in the voice (mm. 5-18). This air is the only da capo air that Hercules sings in the entire drama.

Ex. 36 "Alcides' name in latest story"



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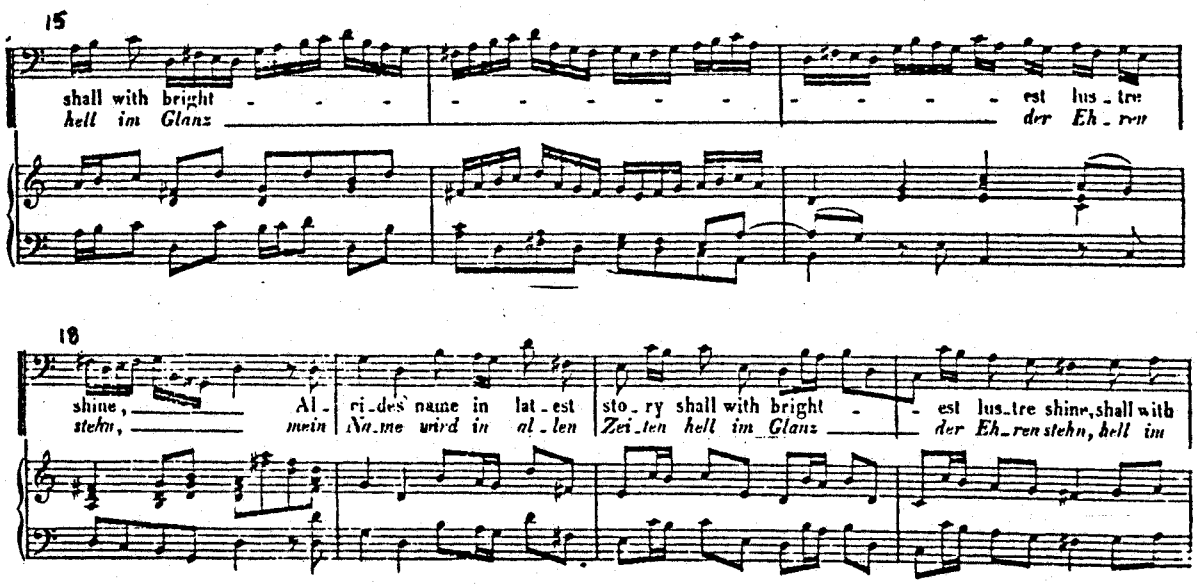
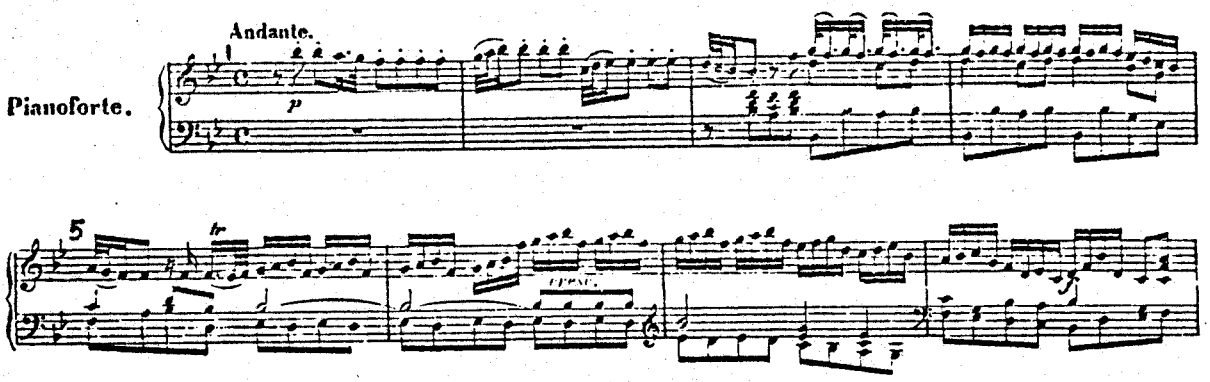


A bitter and contemptuous Dejanira is finally stung to action by Hercules's insensitive reference to his glowing reputation. In "Resign they club" (Ex. 37), Dejanira releases her wrath with music full of resolve and defiance. Bursts of energy accent her anger in thirty-second-note figures which, like many of the airs in Hercules, are anticipated in the orchestral introduction (mm. 2-3, 5). It will also be noticed that the air is a motto air (repeat of the motto is in mm. 13-15).

Ex. 37 "Resign they club"



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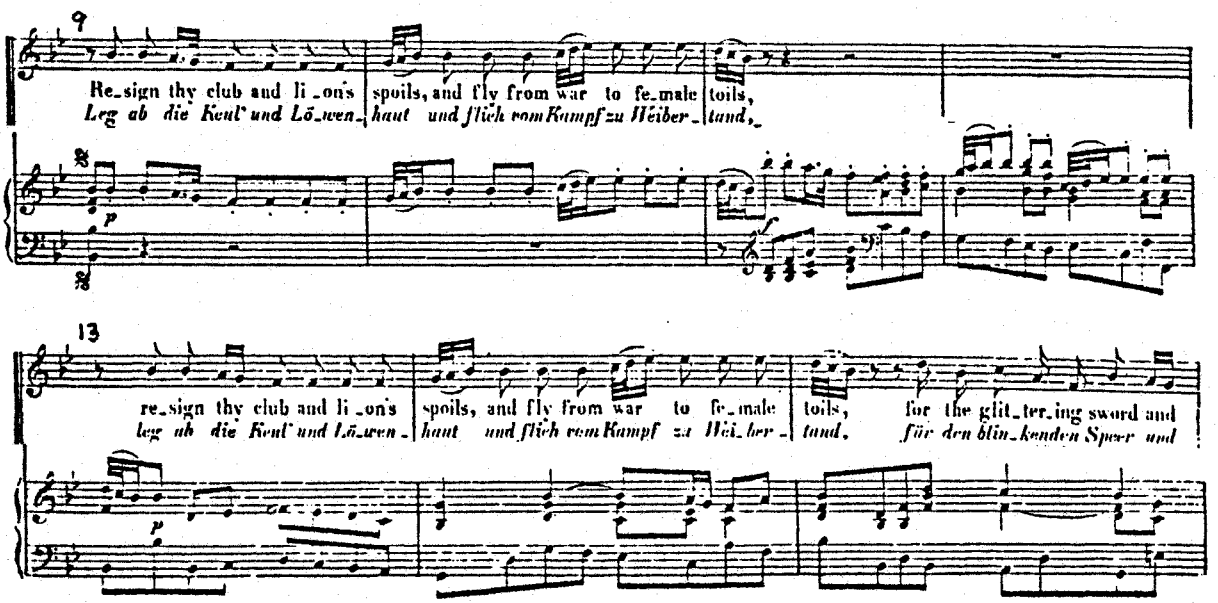
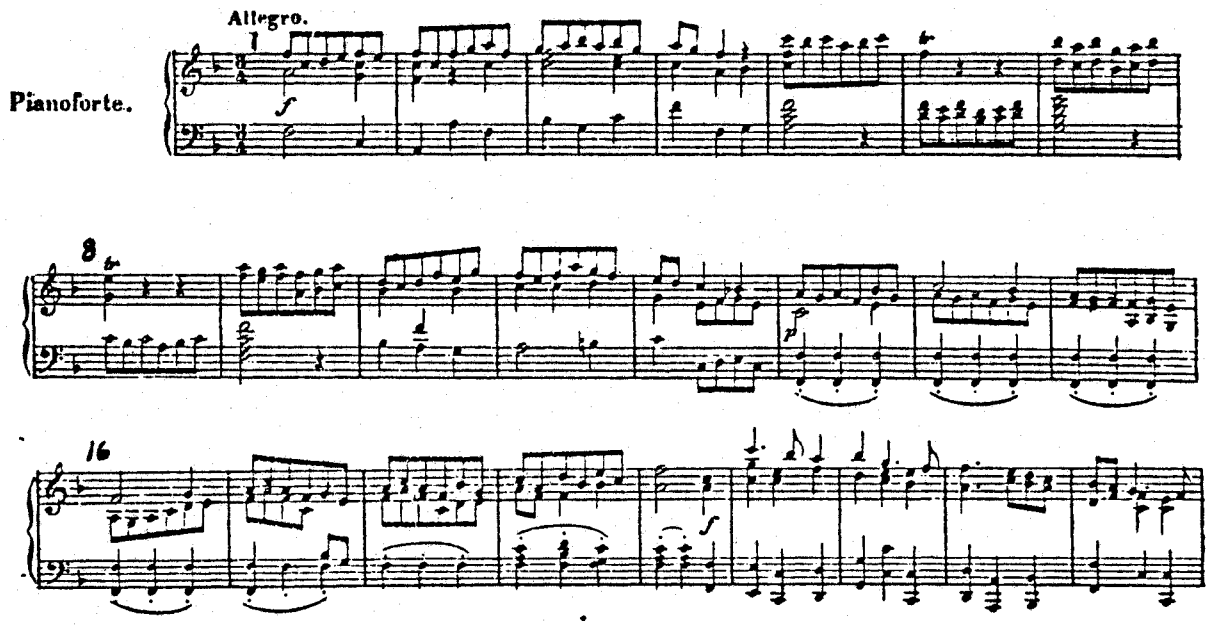


As the end of act two approaches, Dejanira and Iole are brought together in a duet of reconciliation (Ex. 38) which comes about because Dejanira thinks that she has set into motion a scheme that will win back Hercules. According to Lang, the duet is a carefully worked pastoral in chamber style that has decidedly Purcellian echoes.[1] In the first four measures, the primary theme is introduced. Introductory secondary themes and sequences anticipate the bulk of the music that is sung. Dejanira first states the initial theme, without accompaniment (mm. 25-28), as a melisma on the word "joy." An interesting sequence appears afterwards between the voice and the bass accompaniment (mm. 31-32). The bass turns the figure around, and the voice follows suit (mm. 34-36). Iole answers Dejanira with the same music, a fifth higher, to acknowledge her pleasure at Dejanira's new attitude. When

[1] Ibid., p. 426.

the two voices join, the imitative invention is masterful. Dejanira and Iole, who were once pitted against each other, are now in harmony musically. Particularly beautiful in the imitative duet section are the octave leaps which emphasize the difference in the quality of the high ranges of the two different soprano voices (mm. 99-107). The pace of the allegro, triple meter music changes to an adagio, duple meter cadenza at the end of the duet. Both characters then sing in thirds and sixths in a melisma (mm. 147-150) on the text, "and charm my soul to rest." The orchestra closes the piece with a ritornel in the original tempo.

Ex. 38 Duet of Dejanira and Iole



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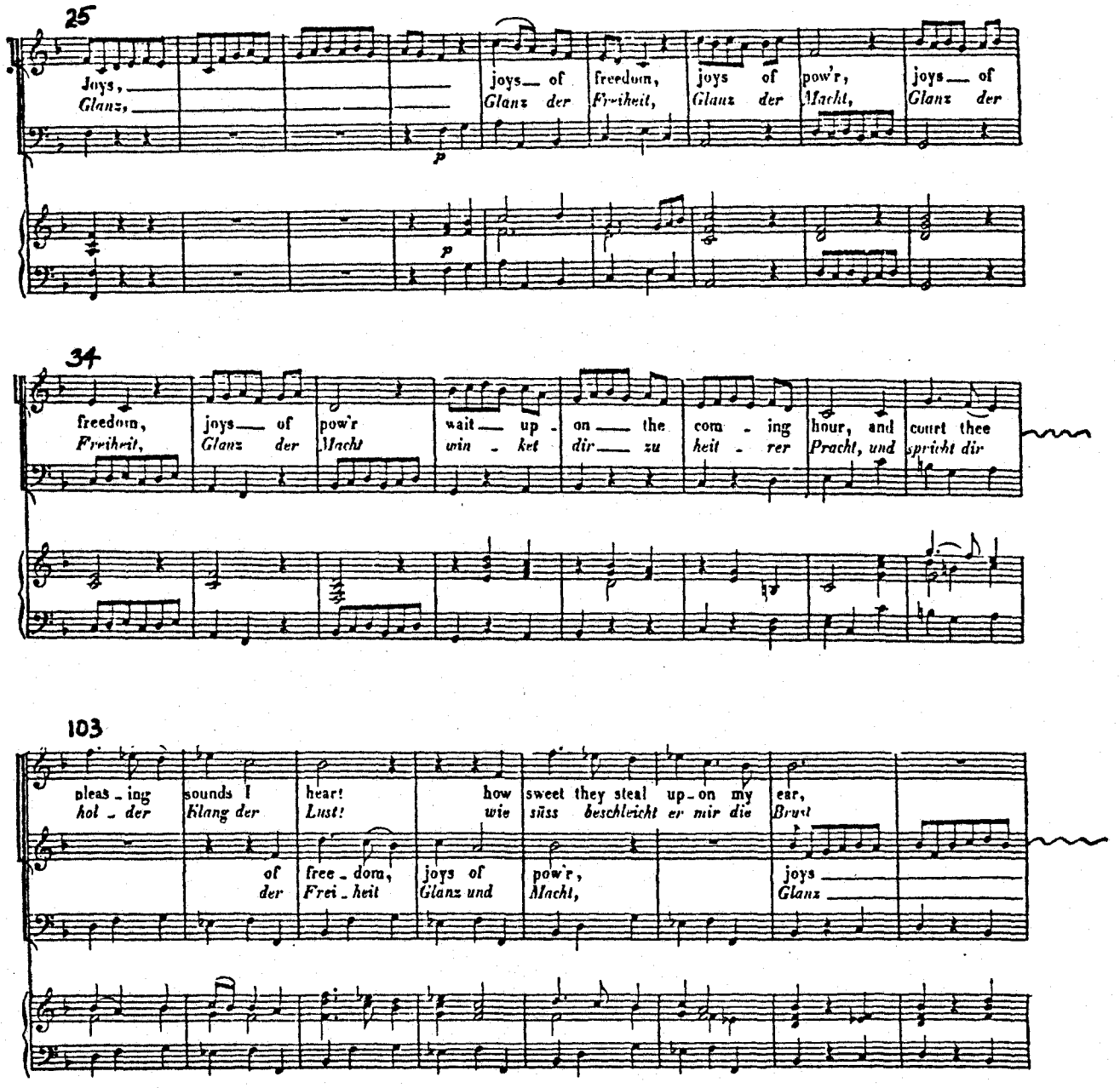

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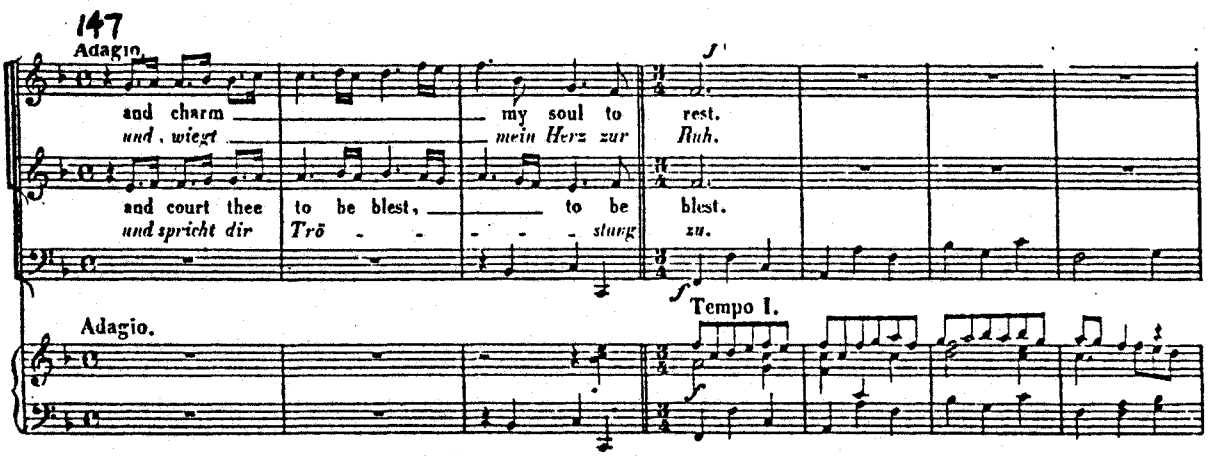
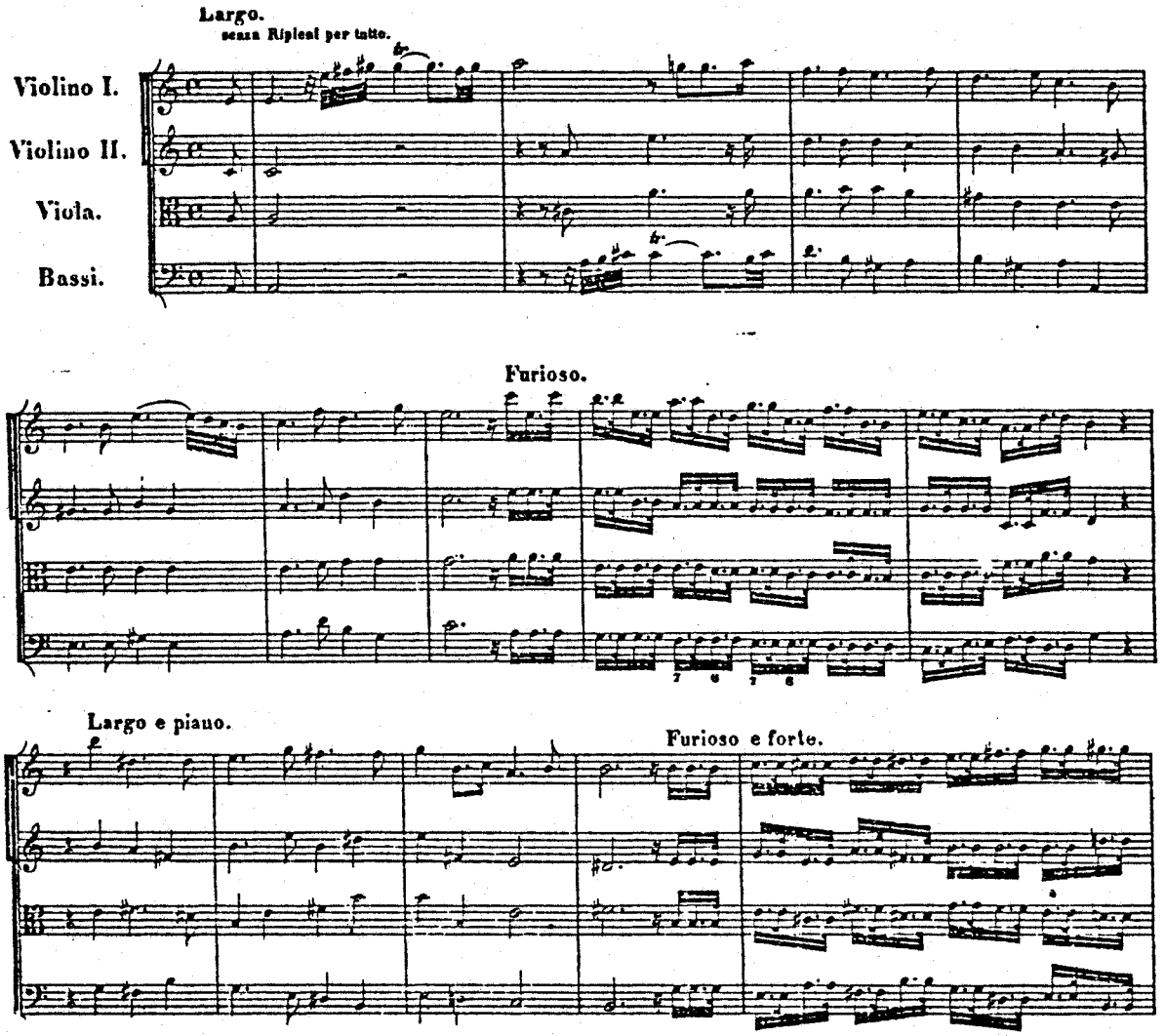


Act three of Hercules displays some of the most passionate music that Handel ever composed. We are aware of the coming tragedy in the music of the opening sinfonia (Ex. 39). As a prelude to the following drama, the sinfonia depicts the catastrophe at the temple before the Herald Lichas comes out to describe the events. With a bold flavor, the initial two A minor chords warn of the imminent crises. In style, the music which follows reminds us of Beethoven at his most tempestuous self. Violent secions of furioso dotted figures (mm. 7-9) are interrupted by hymn-like quiet sections (mm. 10-13), pointing a finger toward the future, when overtures of tragedies would alternate furious music with themes of love or peace to draw the listener deep into the mood of coming events.

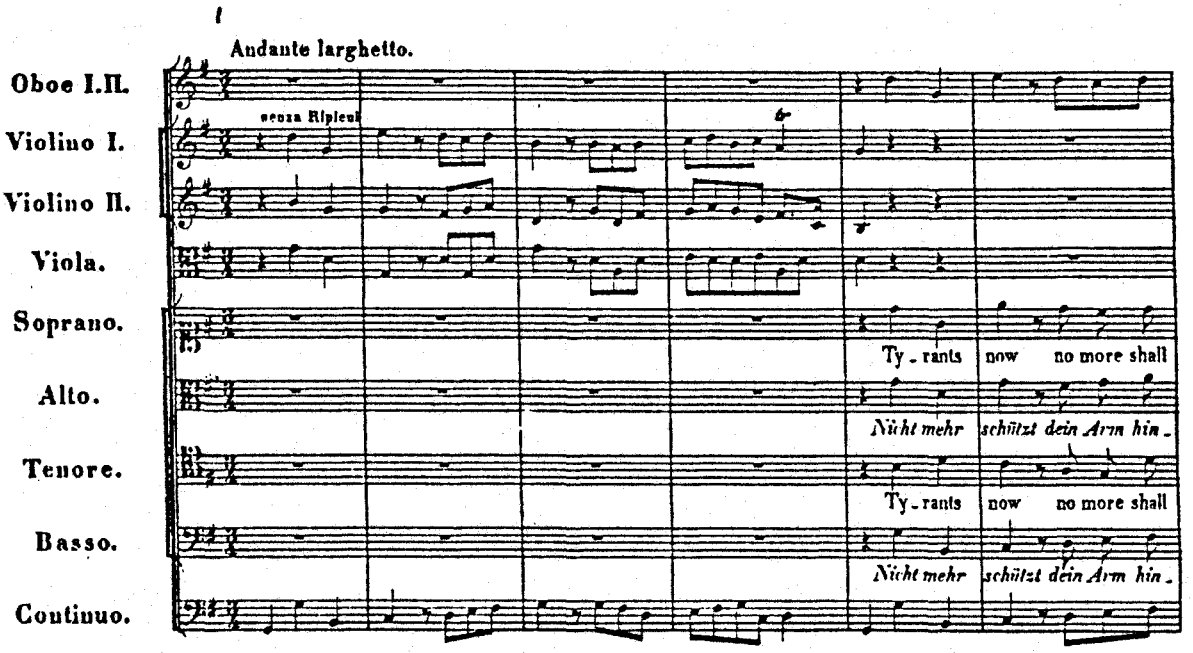
Ex. 39 Act three opening sinfonia



After Lichas tells of the horrifying scene at the temple, the chorus summarizes and comments on the situation. Hercules is portrayed by the chorus as a defender of good and a guard against the horrible monsters which sometimes roamed the earth in mythological tales. "Tyrants now no more"" (Ex. 40) is primarily homophonic, with contrapuntal sections that are tightly knit, keeping the sonority solid. Dean comments about the psychological position of the chorus:

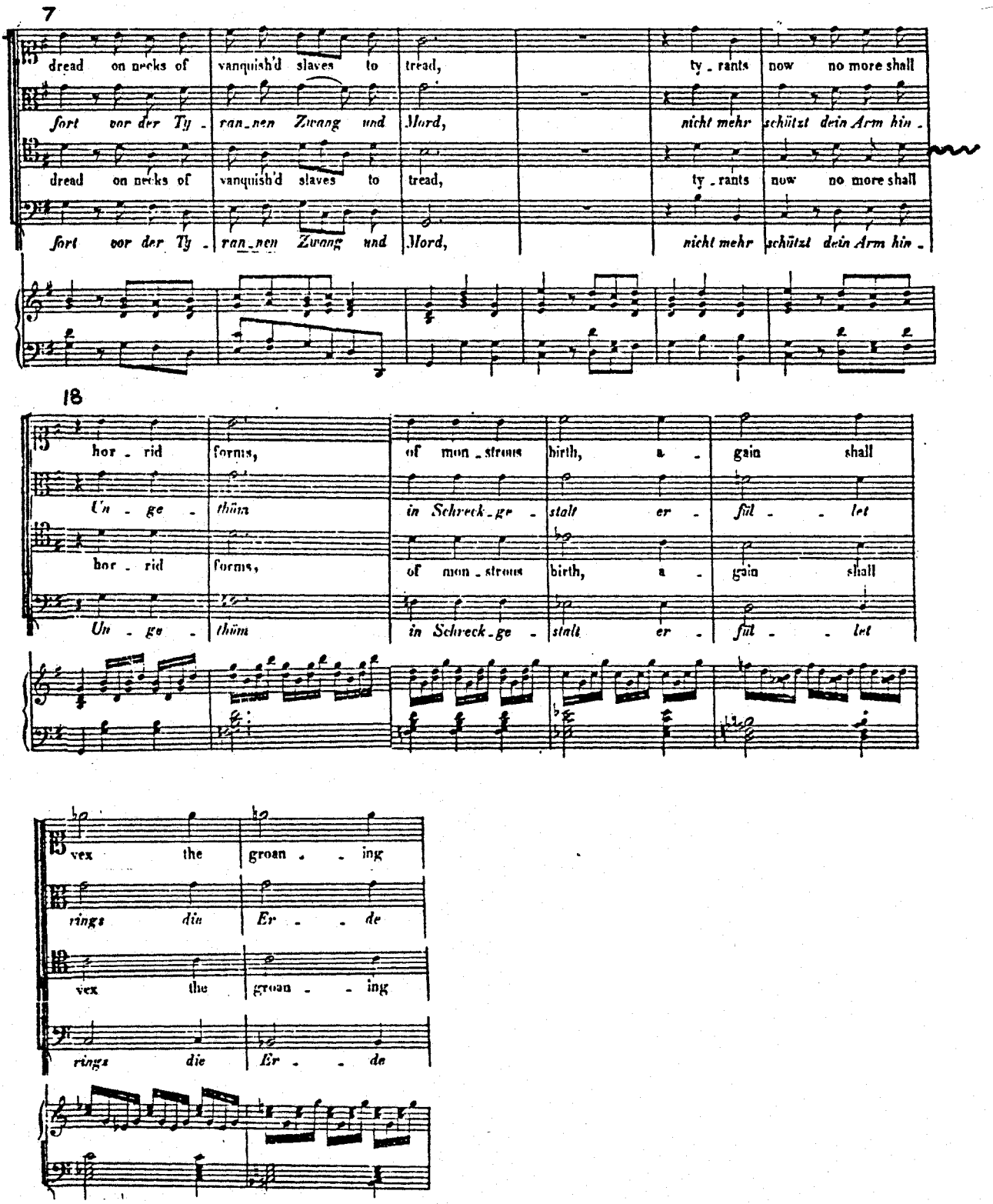
The chorus "Tyrants now no more" is remarkable in more than one respect. Samual Butler pointed out that the jubilant opening is written from the tyrants' point of view, and accused Handel of enlisting sympathy for the wrong side. Certainly the cheerful rhythm and key (G major) show that Handel was not worrying about the "necks "necks of vanquish'd slaves," and the change of mood is startling in the contest. But he is primarily concerned with exploring the dramatic consequences of Hercules's death, first for the tyrants and then for the world whose avenger is no more. The chorus put themselves in the position of each in turn, and contrast the relief of the former with a truly awe-inspiring vision of a world from which the controlling hand has been abruptly withdrawn. Here Handel abandons G major for a series of profound and far-reaching modulations (mm. 18-24), while a great downward scale in the basses beneath violin and viola arpeggios uncovers "horrid forms of monstrous birth."[1]

Ex. 40 "Tyrants now no more"



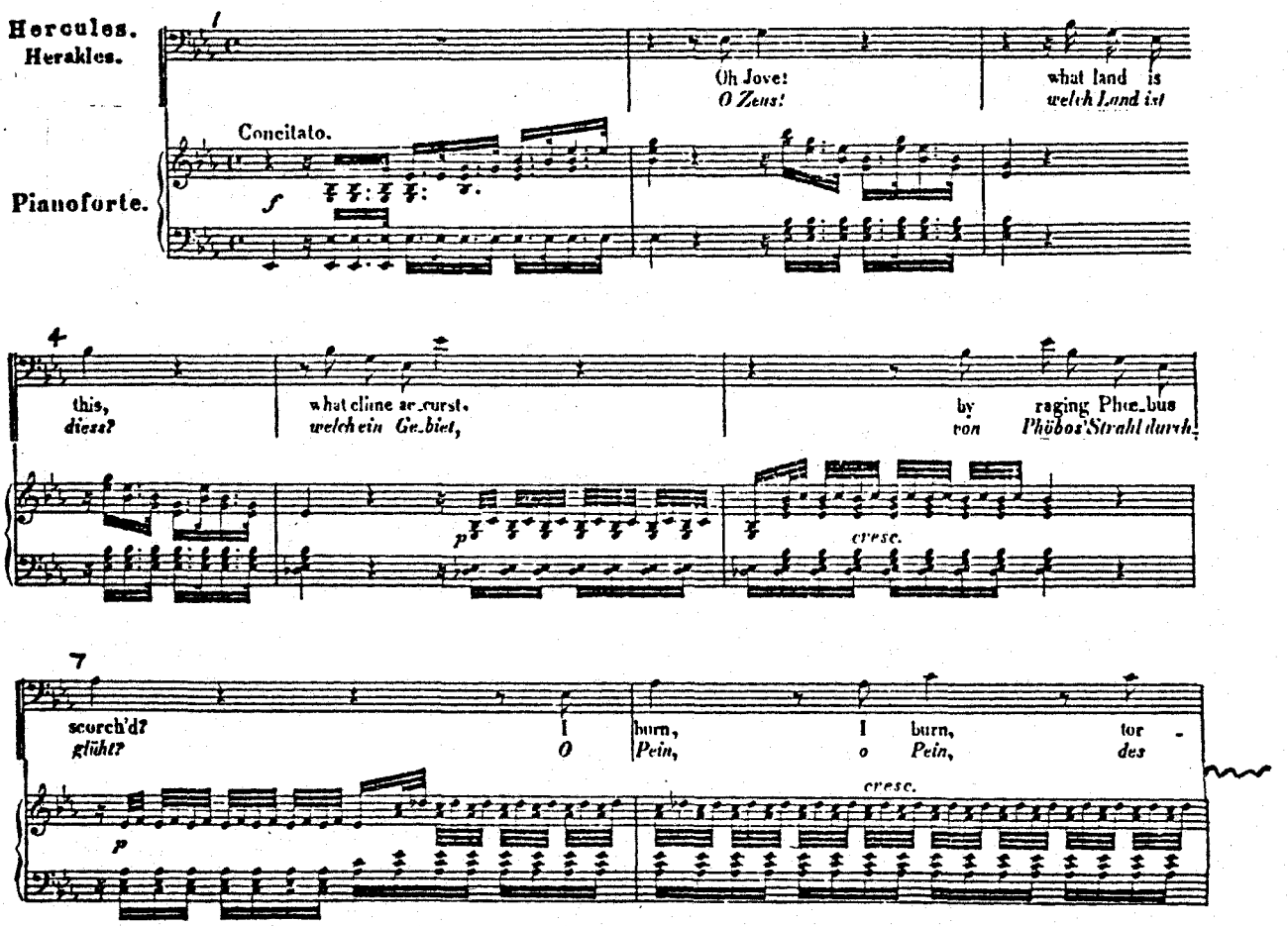
[1]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 427.

(Ex. 40 continued)



An air marked concitato followed by a dramatic recitative shared with Hyllus, marks the final music of the character, Hercules. The air, "Oh Jove! What land is this?" (Ex. 41), begins as an accompanied recitative. A relentless chordal accompaniment puases intermittently for the arpeggiated outlines of Hercules's recitative (mm. 1-6). The cadence at measure eleven signals the end of the recitative. From that point, the orchestra continues in an interlude. After the interlude, almost constant sixteenth-note figurations prevail in the accompaniment, while the voice proceeds with melismas (mm. 19-23) not unlike those of the rage airs in Saul.

Ex. 41 "Oh Jove! What land is this?"



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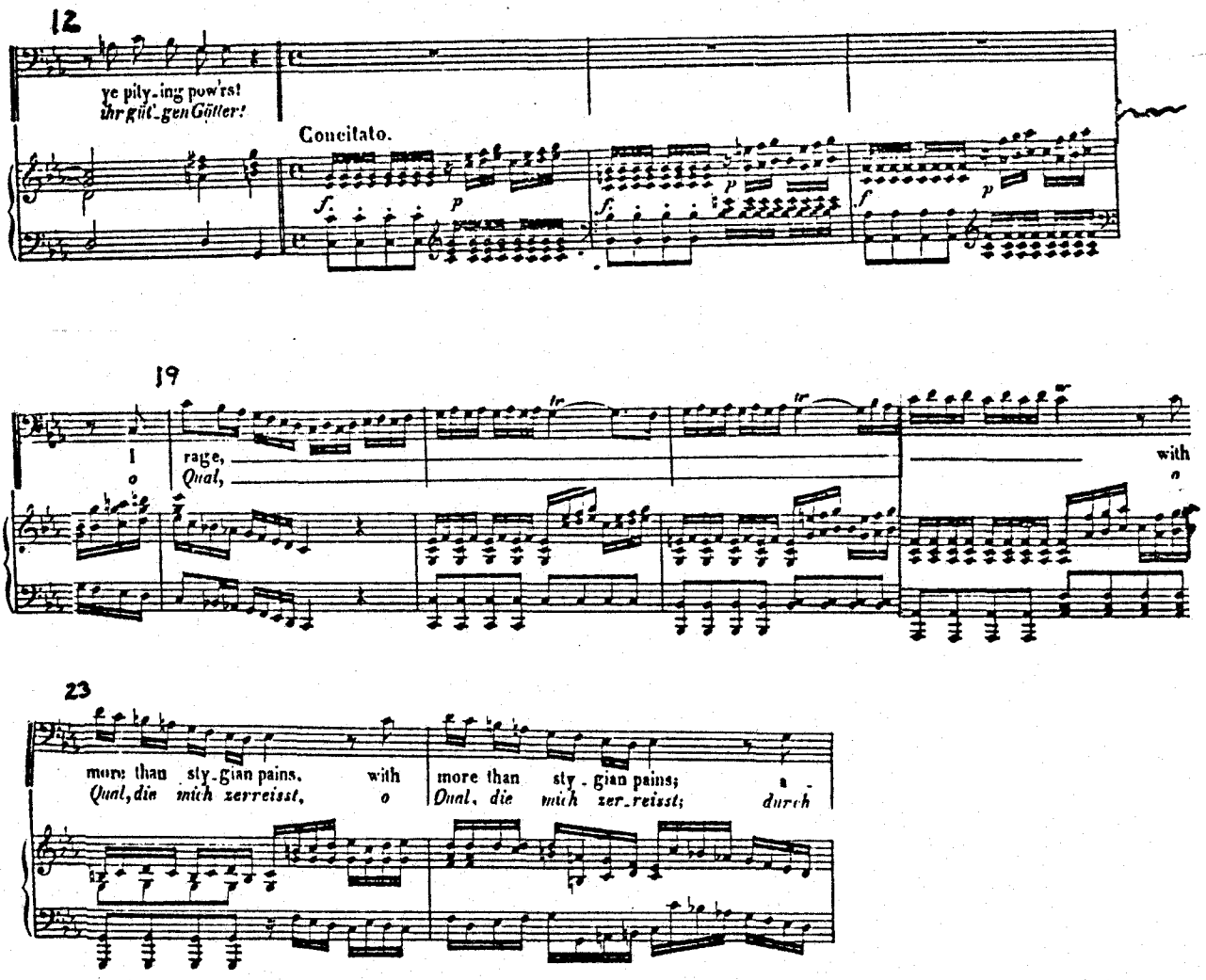


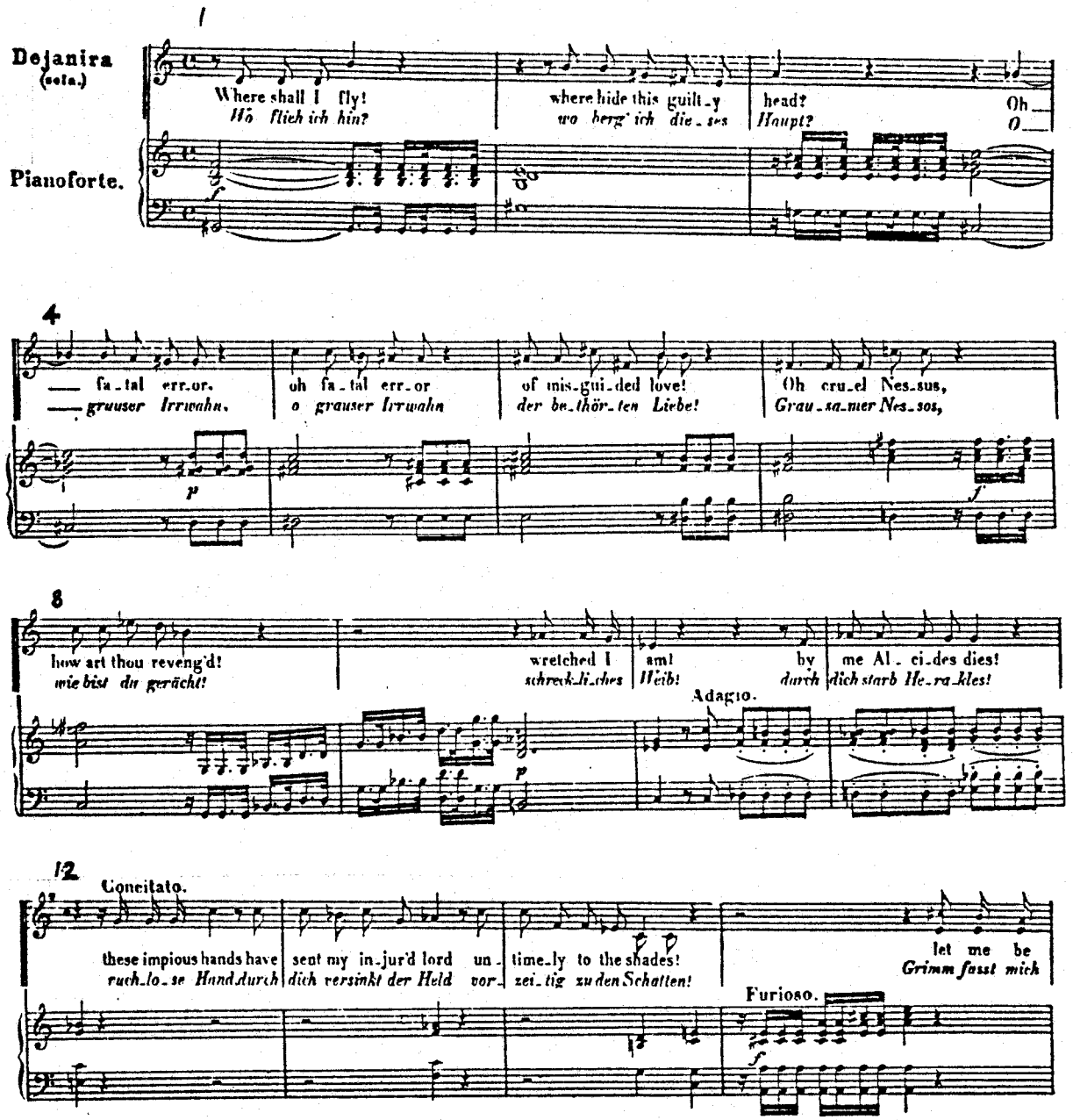
Climaxing the drama is Dejanira's mad scene, a complete recitative and air which, in Dean's words, "steps right out of its period."[1] Were it not for Handel's reluctance to end the drama on a tragic note (a circumstance that was not yet acceptable in his time), the scene would constitute a fitting conclusion to the work. In terms of dramatic insight and musical inventiveness, it deserves to be listed alongside the

[1]Dean, Handel's Oratorios and Masques, p. 427.

other great mad scenes of operatic history. Entitled "Where shall I fly?", the recitative and air (Ex. 42) feature a wide range of dynamics to depict the half-demented state of Dejanira. The opening measure of the recitative consists of a diminished seventh chord on G sharp in the accompaniment, sustained and then reiterated in dotted rhythms similar to ones we have encountered in concitato passages previously. Diminished chords (mm. 3-5, 7-9, 11) continue to build the tension and to increase the feeling of ambiguity. A melodic sequence of semitones (mm. 3-5) in the voice intensifies the repetition of "Oh, fatal error." In the measure of the first adagio (m. 10), the sound of the Italian augmented sixth chord appears, only to evade our expectations because of the upward chromaticism of the bass on the words, "by me Alcides dies!" As the mood changes, so does the course of the harmonic progression, and Dejanira's thoughts become disjointed. Three measures of concitato music (mm. 12-14) burst into furioso figures of sixteenth notes and a thirty-second-note scale (m. 17). A dramatic pause (m. 21) separates this mood from the vision of the Furies, which follows. As Dejanira lists the names Alecto, Megaera, and the black Tisiphone (all mythological Furies), octaves of chromatic, ascending notes appear in the accompaniment (mm. 24-26, 28-29). The dissonant interval of a minor ninth takes the voice to its highest point yet in the air. At that, the mood changes to lento and quiet as Dejanira begs the night to "hide me from their hated sight." Melismas and wrenching intervals characterize the remainder of the air, which changes fitfully from fast to slow. Handel achieves the unexpected in this air, and he is

able to sustain that quality impressively.

Ex. 42 Dejanira's mad scene



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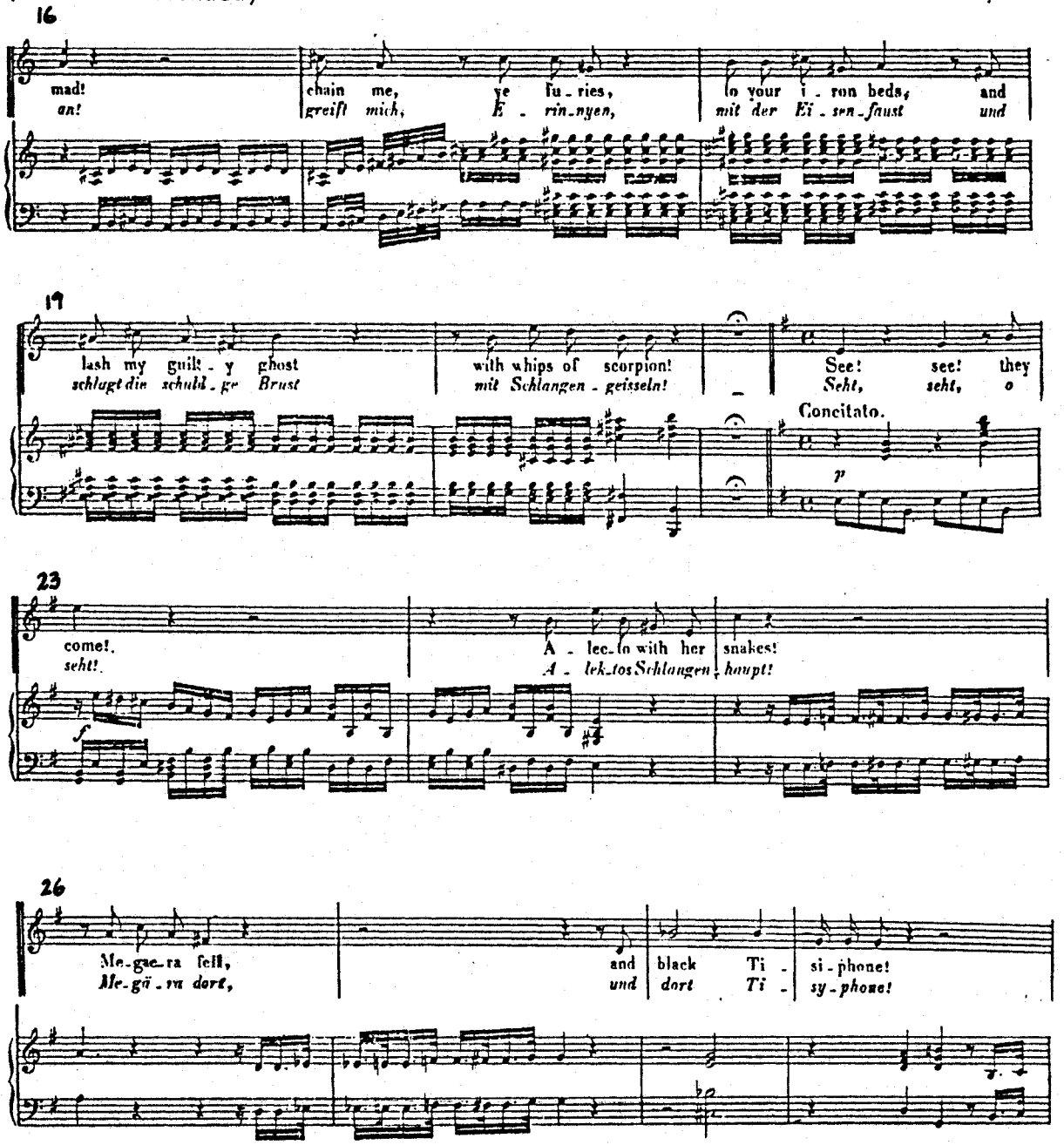

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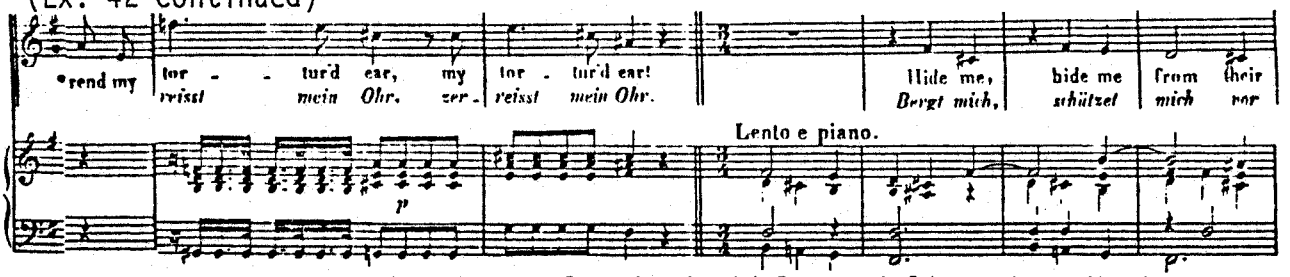
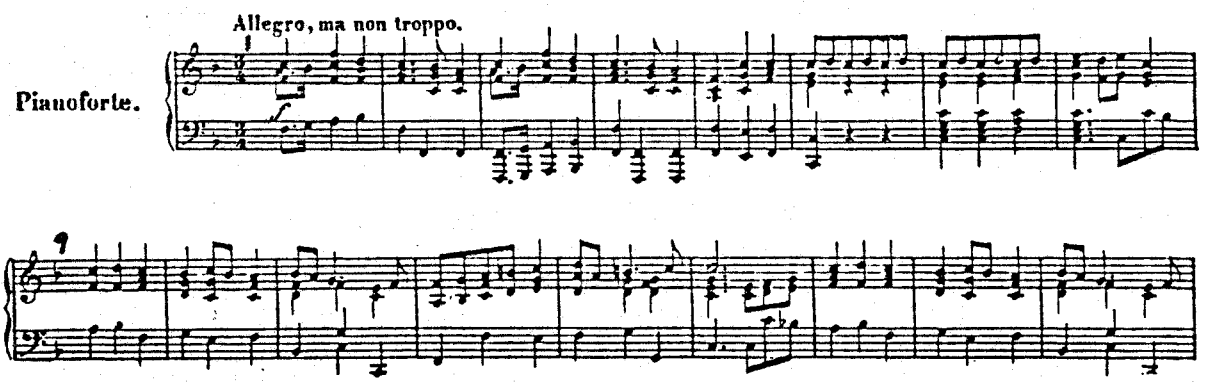


The remaining music of Hercules is decidely anticlimactic. Having fulfilled the prophecy of Hercules's death and having amply treated the inner tragedy of Dejanira, Broughton had to tie together some loose ends. The subplot of the two lovers he concluded in a duet with their marriage. But generally, Handel met the task of composing the survivors' epilogue without the inspired work that went into the most imaginative parts that have just been discussed. Had Handel lived a century later, we could perhaps have hoped for a different kind of resolution. But the conditions of Handel's time still dictated the outcome of this type of drama. In the old fashion, a moralizing, conservative English hymn to Hercules closes the final act. Largely homophonic, this chorus (Ex. 43) praises Hercules as the defended of liberty. Trumpets and oboes are added to the strings.

Ex. 43 The final chorus of Hercules



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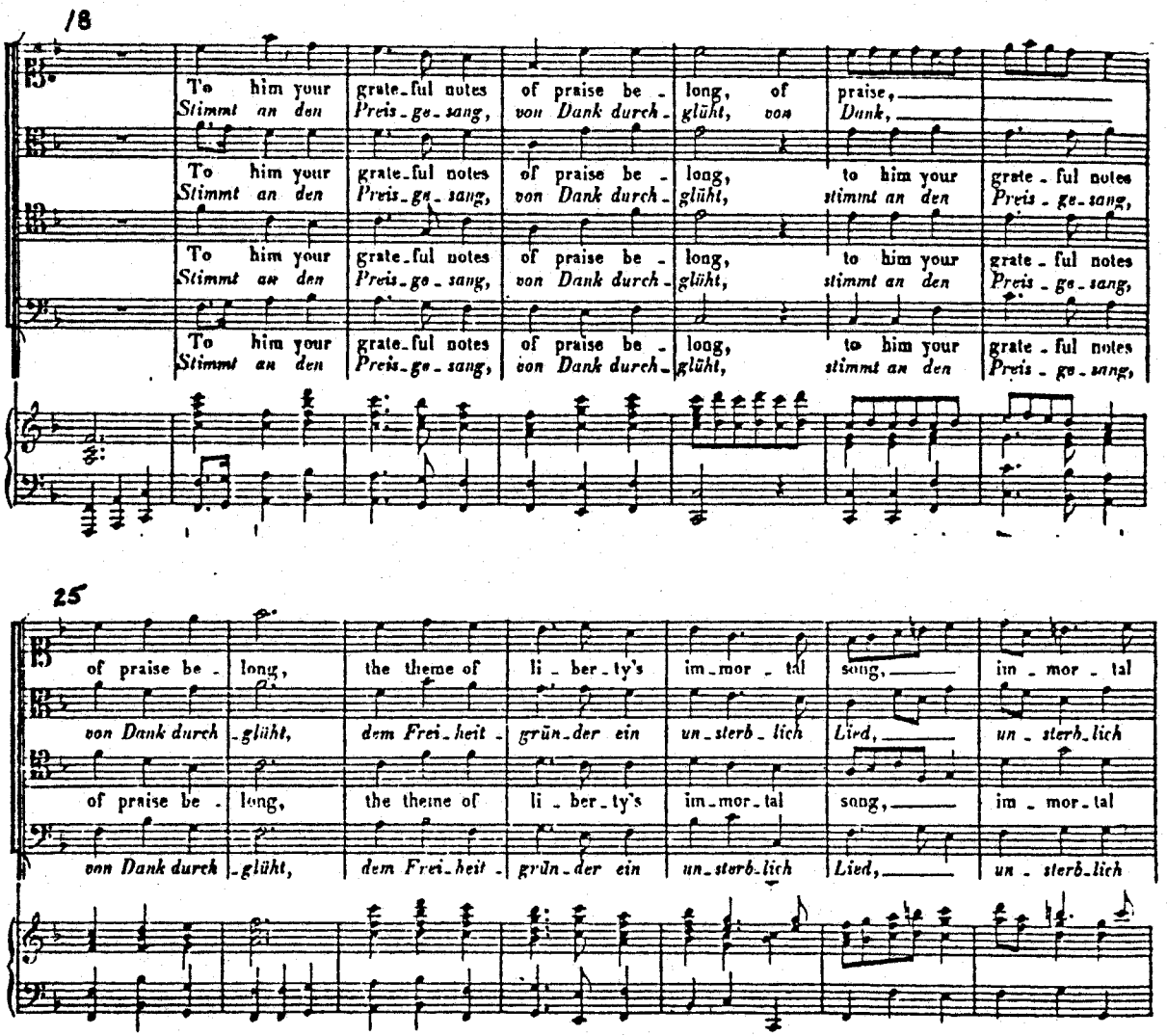

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

This study has necessarily scrutinized only a small fraction of George Frideric Handel's music which, when placed against the panorama of music that was produced from Monteverdi until the eighteenth century, constitutes in many ways the culmination of the entire Baroque era. Attempts to control the vast knowledge about Handel and his compositions have always been met with incredulity at the sheer volume of information that lies unorganized. J. M. Coopersmith's brave but unfulfilled effort to furnish musicians with the first comprehensive catalogue of Handel's works is one such example of the complexity of the subject.[1]

In an effort simply to view the foundation upon which Handel's art was built, this study began with a summary of the evolution of European music of the Baroque period to the point at which Handel entered the process. The majority of that discussion was about dramatic music. At the outset, it was established that the impact of the monodists was significant in fashioning a framework for the medium in which Handel chose to work, since some of the dramatic principles conceived by Caccini, Peri, and Monteverdi reached their fullest flowering at the hands of Handel. We have seen how Handel, although the personification of an epoch in opera, also shared the distinction with Carissimi of composing oratorios unique in the special function which they

[1] Coopersmith prepared an impressive thematic catalogue of Handel's works in a 4,000-page appendix to his dissertation, An Investigation of George Frideric Handel's Orchestral Style (Harvard University, 1932). According to the article "The Present State of Handel Research" by Alfred Mann in collaboration with J. Merrill Knapp (Acta Musicologica 41, 1969, pp. 12-13), the unwieldly work is not generally available and remains the last one of that scope.

assigned to the chorus. Important opera composers, including Cavalli of the early Venetian school and Alessandro Scarlatti, the so-called founder of the later Neapolitan school, were cited for the models which they provided Handel in opera. In this regard, the broad backdrop of opera seria, the opera of moods or affects, in which considerable interest is concentrated into the aria instead of the plot, was presented as being the guiding force in Handel's operatic endeavors. Handel's own elaboration of the recitative, arioso, aria, and duet conformed to the style of his predecessors in opera seria, and yet the amalgamation of Italian texture, French overture and English ceremony was a distinguishing trait of Handel's music.

When Handel went to England, Italian and English opera were fertile ground for him, momentarily. The subsequent events (including John Gay's The Beggar's Opera) brought about Handel's ultimate weaning from the form that he truly loved to the genre that eventually marked him for all posterity as the most famous composer in the field.

We have noted several elements that became so much a part of Handel's later oratorios. The massive sonorities, imitative techniques, and stately qualities of works like Handel's Italian religious choral pieces, his Chandos Anthems, Coronation Anthems, and the first English pastoral, Acis and Galatea, became prominent traits of the oratorios. The legacy of Purcell was incorporated by Handel to the extent that, when Handel's first English oratorio, Esther, appeared in 1732, Handel was already recognized as a choral composer of the first rank in England.

By way of introduction, the biographical outline of the second chapter mentioned the clamor associated with biographical research in the field of Handel.[1] Our summary opted to forego an involved musicological discussion in this area to concentrate on the lifetime pilgrimage from Halle, Saxony, to Hamburg, Florence, Venice, Rome, Hanover, and finally, London. Along the way, the "assimilative" cantatas, church music, oratorios, operas, and vocal chamber music represent a time, before London, when Handel was absorbing the knowledge and temperament of great German and Italian composers. Consequently, just before Saul was composed in 1738, Handel's melodic and contrapuntal powers had reached a high level of maturity, but were perhaps still lacking certain aspects of musical mastery that were to become evident in his English oratorios.

Saul is a great oratorio with gripping drama and exciting music. A well-planned scenic structure and heightened interest in plot development in the drama show that Handel was issuing bold new strokes in the concept of the genre. The chorus in Saul is essential and active. Rarely before had we seen in Handel the chorus which not only commented, but was an integral part of the spectacle, bearing a definite identity. A large orchestra with a healthy dose of brass and unusual intruments such as the carillon, theorbo, and strangely-pitched kettle-drums help to make Saul a sensational experience for the listener. This writer

[1] For an overview, the previously-cited article by Alfred Mann and J. Merrill Knapp in Acta Musicologica 41, 1969, pp. 6-10 is enlightening, surveying the work of Serauky, Lang, Dean, Flower, Weinstock, Moser, Young, Hall, and Cherbuliez. Charles Cudworth also gives information about the broad spectrum of English Handel biographers in his book, Handel, pp. 44-56.

cannot help but be refreshed by the brisker pace of the plot afforded by a rarity of da capo airs. The character Saul has airs of tremendous energy and strength, making his role an enviable one for most basses and bass-baritones. In terms of dramatic interpretation, all of the main character roles provide challenging opportunities.

Looking forward with musical features of the next century, and yet reaching back for the old dramatic structure, Hercules is by contrast more nearly an opera in the old tradition, with period conceits and classical story. Chapter four has noted the prevalence of the da capo type of largo air in triple meter in this drama. Other reaches into the past include a chorus which doesn't intervene into the action, but comments and moralizes; the usual complement of strings and continuo with occasional obbligato instruments; and a structure not divided into scene complexes, but into an organization of a series of recitatives and airs with a few duets, a single arioso, choruses, and sinfonias. But the music of Hercules does give us a foretaste of buffo and style galant features. Chromaticism is also more and more evident as a highly modulatory harmonic language surfaces. This trait accompanies some of the most memorable passages in Hercules, particularly the one about the dying of Hercules and the brilliant mad scene of Dejanira. It is here that Handel exceeds our expectations of what can happen in Baroque drama.

After all is said and done, the most intimate knowledge of any body of music comes from hearing and performing it. There are practical considerations that must be taken into account in planning any performance.

It will be our purpose here briefly to outline some of the more useful considerations with regard to Baroque drama in general, and Saul and Hercules in particular. We have covered the instrumentation of the two dramas in the body of this paper. A listing of the roles and their voice catagories is included here:

Saul		Hercules	
Saul	bass	Hercules	bass
Jonathan	tenor	Dejanira	soprano
David	alto	Hyllus	tenor
Abner	tenor	Iole	soprano
Merab	soprano	Lichas	alto
Michal	soprano	Priest of Jupiter	bass
Doeg	bass	Chorus	SATB
Witch of Endor	tenor		
Apparition of Samuel	bass		
An Amalekite	tenor		
Abiathar	bass		
High Priest	tenor		
Chorus	SATB		

We have mentioned that a complete catalogue of Handel's works is, as yet, unavailable. Meanwhile, for those who want to survey the output from a particular period of Handel's composition, A. Craig Bell has published a Chronological Catalogue of Handel's Works (Grain-Aig Press, Greenock, 1969). Gerald Abraham's previously-mentioned Handel: A Symposium is also a trustworthy guide. For our purposes, Grove's

Dictionary of Music and Musicians (5th ed., 1954) has sufficed as a general listing of the works, since the newer 6th edition has not yet come off the press.

The matter of editions is an immediate concern if one is to give a valid performance of any Handel oratorio or musical drama. We are somewhat more fortunate with respect to a good musical edition in the case of Saul than we are for Hercules. The modern Hallische Händel Ausgabe (HHA) now contains a critical edition of Saul. The edition is edited by Percy Young and is found in Series I, vol. 13. In terms of modern scholarly techniques, the HHA edition is more reliable than the older Chrysander edition. We are compelled to rely on the Chrysander Händel-Gesellschaft for an edition of Hercules (or on copies and subsequent editions of Chrysander's work by lesser known publishers). Criticized in the past for its inaccuracies, the Chrysander edition nevertheless represents a considerable personal achievement for the time in which it was produced. The most conscientious of Handel scholars can consult the original manuscript at the British Musium, where ninety per cent of the Handel autographs are kept. For us in the United States, Winton Dean's Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques remains a good, practical critical guide in matters of cuts and revisions.

The problem of ornamentation in Handel's music has long been a subject of contention. In Handel's own time, ornamentation was an important feature of any vocal performance. Clearly we can benefit from a learned application of certain ornaments in twentieth-century Handel performances. The best policy in determining our own manner of approaching ornamentation is to consult treatises and studies on the subject.

Among those that will provide a point of departure are: Telemann's treatise, Singe-, Spiele-, und Generalbass Übungen; Donington's The Interpretation of Early Music; and Tosi's Observations on the Florid Song. The article on ornamentation in the Harvard Dictionary of Music ends with a list of sources that can lead one even further into the subject.

Nikolaus Harnoncourt, in a study of the Bach's B Minor Mass, made some observations about Baroque performance practice that are outlined in the book, The Choral Experience.[1] In light of the intended unstaged performance of the inherently vivid and theatrical dramas that have been examined in this thesis, those observations express an attitude toward the performance of Baroque music that we would perhaps be wise to adopt:

> 1. Baroque music is not meant to be performed in a pale, prim, and passionless manner. We have only to read descriptions of performers' behavior and audience reaction of the time to know that this music was meant to touch the heart and soul of man in a direct and immediate way. Granted that passion is meant to be kept within the limits of good taste and the artistic and social conventions of the time, it is nevertheless present. Ideally, performances of Baroque music should reflect elements of both passionate subjectivity and calm objectivity in such a manner that the two are integrated and yet still exert their characteristic forces.
>
> 2. Baroque music, like Baroque psychology, is not dynamically dualistic like the music and psychology of later periods. Baroque psychology tended to view man at a given period of time under the influence of a single affect, emotion, or mood--melancholic, sanguine, bilious, or choleric. So too, a given single movement of Baroque is usually governed by a single unvarying affect or mood.

---

[1]Ray Robinson and Allen Winold, The Choral Experience: Literature, Materials, and Methods (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Inc., 1976), pp. 370-371.

3. To a far greater degree than is true in later music, Baroque music demands that the performer be an active, spontaneous collaborator rather than merely a passive, restricted reproducer. It would be highly unfortunate if the search for "correct" tempi, ornamentation, and other aspects were done in such a manner that this sense of validity and participation were destroyed. Ideally the details of performance practice should be so thoroughly integrated into the performer's approach and technique that they become natural and effortless.

4. Finally, it can be said in general that one should avoid distorting Baroque music with stylistic traits from later periods, such as the sweet sentimentality of some early nineteenth-century music, the blurred vagueness of some Impressionist music--to take only the most blatant examples.

In conclusion, the two works of this study confirm the fact that, along with Johann Sebastian Bach, Handel is the embodiment of the final stage of Baroque music and the overseer of the transition to pre-classical techniques. Two very different men, motivated by contrasting yearnings, Handel and Bach effected a snythesis of stylistic principles that evolved over a period of about 150 years. Saul and Hercules bear witness to the fact that Handel did even more; he brought together the best ideas of all of European music and created a phenomenon that stands out as an artistic summit in the over-all musical life of England.

This writer has concluded that the works discussed in this thesis do indeed deserve more attention than has been theirs in the twentieth century. The oratorio Saul contains much that commands our attention from the standpoint of innovations and intrigue. When judged from the series of moods expressed and the bold new musical directions therein, Herecules can be perceived as a drama that merits twentieth-century performance. With judicious omissions, perhaps these two works can one day find their rightful position in the repertoires of performing artists in the Western world.

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