

**PRESS KIT**

**for the presentation of the 2022 HANDEL FESTIVAL programme,  
and announcement of the 2022 HANDEL PRIZE WINNER**

**Music in authentic venues  
in the city of George Frideric Handel's birth,  
Halle an der Saale**

**Friday, 11 February 2022, 12 noon  
In the Chamber Music Hall of Handel House**

**With:** **Egbert Geier**, Mayor of the City of Halle

**Dr. Jürgen Fox**, Chairman of the Saalesparkasse Executive Board /  
Member of the Handel House Foundation Board of Trustees

**Wolfgang Hirschmann**, Professor of Historical Musicology at  
Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg / President of the  
Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft

**Walter Sutcliffe**, Artistic Director of Halle Opera / Director of  
*Orlando*

**Clemens Birnbaum**, Director of the Handel House Foundation /  
Executive Director of the Handel Festival

# PRESS KIT Halle Handel Festival 2022

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## 100 years of the Handel Festival in Halle – 27 May – 12 June 2022

From 27 May to 12 June 2022, the Handel Festival will be celebrating its founding one hundred years ago with a sparkling array of events ranging from grand opera and solemn oratorios through to cross-genre events. The festival will open with a new production of the opera *Orlando*, which was the first Handel opera to be performed in Halle and in 1922 closed the “*Hallisches Händelfest*”, as that festival was called. Numerous other operas, oratorios and concerts will make the 17 days of the festival a high point for Baroque music fans. Rounding out the programme are a number of exciting and innovative events that break down all barriers between “serious” and “popular” music. Numerous famous stars of Baroque music, including any number of Handel Prize winners from past years, will be joining in the centenary celebrations with music in Halle.

During the festival, this year’s Handel Prize will be awarded to the distinguished Handel scholar, Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann, who teaches at Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg and is also President of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft. Besides the opulent musical programme and an exclusive CD special edition, a richly illustrated companion book and the annual exhibition, *Fireworks and Halle-lujah* will immerse festival visitors in the extensive history of the Halle Handel Festival – a festival in perfect tune with the times, built on tradition. Advance ticket sales are due to start on 11 February 2022.

With 67 main events and numerous accompanying events in Halle and the surrounding region, the tradition-steeped Handel Festival once again guarantees a superlative and diverse programme in 2022. For example, a new production of *Orlando* awaits audiences. The new artistic director of Halle Opera, British-born Walter Sutcliffe, is the director, while the musical direction is in the hands of another Briton, Christian Curnyn. Also representative of Handel as a composer for the stage, *Caio Fabbricio* is a virtuoso pasticcio in its first revival in modern times at the Goethe Theatre in Bad Lauchstädt. And with *Fernando, Re di Castiglia* audiences can experience a genuine world premiere. There will also be continued emphasis on the dialogue between cultures and exchanges with musical idioms beyond that of Baroque.

Like *Orlando*, the dramaturgy of numerous concerts and oratorios on the festival agenda is inspired by the performances of the year 1922: not only will the events – the programmes of which, in some cases, have been specially reconstructed for this occasion – take place in the original venues; the same ensembles, or their present-day successors, have also been taken on board. There will also be joyful reunions with numerous Handel Prize winners from previous years, who are determined not to miss the opportunity to congratulate “their” festival, including audience favourites such as Jordi Savall, Philippe Jaroussky, Ragna Schirmer and Romelia Lichtenstein, as well as countertenor Axel Köhler, who continued to accompany the festival as a director after his retirement from the stage.

It is not only the *genius loci* that makes performances in Halle feel so authentic, but also the numerous renowned period ensembles, whether regular guests or debutants – such as the ensemble Divino Sospiro from Portugal who will be presenting the version of *Messiah* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to the Halle public.

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That Handel's music has lost nothing of its fascination and magnetism even in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is demonstrated by accompanying projects such as the popular Bridges to Classics open-air concert, as well as encounters with the jazz scene and a poetry slam. To this day, Handel's music is as present as ever even beyond the confines of opera and oratorio. An international academic conference will shed light on the Handel revival that has made him the most-performed Baroque composer today.

The music scholar, music historian and university lecturer **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann** will receive the 2022 City of Halle Handel Prize, which is awarded by the Handel House Foundation. With this award, the Board of Trustees of the Handel House Foundation is honouring Professor Hirschmann's wide-ranging, highly committed work with which he has set standards and exercised an important influence for more than a decade, for example as one of two heads of edition, and as a member of the Editorial Board of the Halle Handel Edition.

The Handel House Foundation looks back over the eventful history of the Handel Festival in Halle in an annual exhibition under the patronage of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany. Even back in 1922, the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* and the *Hallelujah Chorus* from *Messiah* were considered essential parts of the programme; and it is after these two constants in the festival programme that the 2022 annual exhibition is named. The exhibition opens on 23 February 2022 (the date of Handel's birth), at 5pm, and will be on view until 8 January 2023.

Parallel to the large-scale special exhibition, a high-quality, richly illustrated companion book is to be published that not only retraces the history of the festival, but also contains contributions from several famous people who express their attachment to the Handel Festival.

In addition to this, the Handel House Foundation is releasing an exclusive CD special edition of recordings made between 1958 and 2008. This is on sale exclusively in the Handel House museum shop.

The festival's executive director Clemens Birnbaum is looking forward to the centenary programme: "We are uniting 100 years of living Handel history in Halle in one great anniversary festival thanks to the active support of many along the way, and I am especially glad that in his letter to the Handel Festival the President of the Federal Republic of Germany wishes us a 'successful anniversary season and an auspicious future'. I would like to thank all those whose support enables us to celebrate such a great event with audiences from near and far. In addition to the City of Halle, the state of Saxony-Anhalt and the federal government, I would like to mention by way of example Lotto Sachsen-Anhalt, Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Saalesparkasse.

Mayor Egbert Geier emphasises the huge importance Handel has for his city: "Handel was and still is one of the most important natives of Halle. His music delights people the world over and we are all happy and proud to be able to uphold his memory with one of the largest festivals internationally, and the most important in Saxony-Anhalt."

Dr. Jürgen Fox supports the Handel Festival in several ways, including as a member of the Handel House Foundation Board of Trustees: "The Handel Festival is a magnet for visitors from all over the world. The special bond between all the

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people of Halle and their festival is just as strong. As Chairman of the Board of the Saalesparkasse, I am delighted to be able to pursue our longstanding partnership again this year and, together with Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung, to go on actively contributing to the success of the Halle Handel Festival.”

### HÄNDEL-FESTSPIELE

since 1922 in Halle an der Saale  
27 May – 12 June 2022

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## Operas at the Handel Festival

<b>ORLANDO</b> (HWV 31)	Halle Opera (new production) 27 / 29 May, 4 / 10 June
<b>ARIODANTE</b> (HWV 33)	Goethe Theatre, Bad Lauchstädt 28 / 29 / 30 May
<b>FERNANDO, RE DI CASTIGLIA</b> (HWV 30)	Francke Foundations (world premiere) – <i>concert performance</i> 31 May (Performance based on the Halle Handel Edition)
<b>SIROE, RE DI PERSIA</b> (HWV 24)	Carl Maria von Weber Theatre, Bernburg 5 / 6 June (Performance based on the Halle Handel Edition)
<b>CAIO FABBRICIO</b> <b>Pasticcio (Händel, Hasse and others)</b> (HWV A9)	Goethe Theatre, Bad Lauchstädt (premiere in modern times) 10 / 11 / 12 June

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## Oratorios at the Halle Handel Festival

<b>DER MESSIAS (Händel / Mozart)</b> (HWV 56 / KV 572)	Halle Cathedral 28 May
<b>SUSANNA</b> (HWV 66 – abridged version of 1922)	Halle Cathedral 29 May
<b>BROCKES PASSION</b> (HWV 48)	Halle Opera – <i>stage production</i> 2 / 12 June
<b>SEMELE</b> (HW 58 – German version of 1922)	George Frideric Handel Hall 5 June
<b>LA BELLEZZA RAVVEDUTA NEL TRIONFO DEL TEMPO E DEL DISINGANNO</b> (HWV 46 <sup>a</sup> – performance based on the Halle Handel Edition)	Ulrichskirche Concert Hall 5 June

## Operas at the 2022 Halle Handel Festival

Kicking off the anniversary season, a new production of **Orlando**, the “the musically richest of all Handel operas” (Winton Dean), will be premiered which at the same time takes us back to the roots of the festival. This magic opera – which is spectacular in more ways than just vocally, and the libretto of which is based on *Orlando furioso* by Ludovico Ariosto – is one of the composer’s masterpieces and in 1922 founded the Handel festival tradition in Halle. Walter Sutcliffe is responsible for this new production by Halle Opera; the musical director is the Baroque specialist Christian Curnyn. In the title role you can hear countertenor Xavier Sabata.

Following on from this, with **Ariodante**, another Handel classic that was inspired by Ariosto’s famous epic poem is featured on the programme. After the acclaimed co-productions of Handel operas *Rinaldo* and *Giustino*, this performance by Lautten Compagny Berlin and the Carlo Colla & Figli Puppet Theatre – their third joint project – was programmed for 2021, but could only be realised in a digital version. Now, the live premiere can at last be held at the Handel Festival under the musical direction of Handel Prize winner Wolfgang Katschner. This very special theatre experience is possible thanks to funding by Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Saalesparkasse.

After this, a veritable world premiere awaits the audience in the shape of **Fernando, Re di Castiglia**. This opera fragment deals with the family and political conflict between the Portuguese king Dionisio and his son, which through the intervention of the title character ultimately reaches a happy conclusion. Given the obvious parallels with the English royal family, Handel transferred the action to a neutral, oriental milieu and published his opera under the title *Sosarme*. Now, in cooperation with the London Handel Festival, the ensemble Opera Settecento directed by Leo Duarte for the first time puts the original version of this gripping, unfinished historical drama up for discussion.

Also returning to Halle at last is the Orfeo Barockorchester from Linz, conducted by Erich Traxler, with **Siroe, Re di Persia**, a co-production with the Donaufestwochen festival in Strudengau, on the programme.

This multimedia production is a follow-up to the successful collaboration on *Atalanta* in 2019. Once again, the scenography of this story of treason, revenge and forbidden love was designed by Kobie van Rensburg.

Besides his own compositions, you can also enjoy a taste of the accomplished theatre practitioner Handel as an arranger. In 1733, with **Caio Fabbricio**, the composer staged a new version of Hasse’s opera of the same name, in which the plot was condensed to the bare essentials and enhanced in best pasticcio tradition with coloratura-laden arias by Albinoni, Vinci and, of course, Handel himself for the billed star singers. This co-production with Concert Royal Köln marks the first performance of this sparkingly virtuosic display in modern times.

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## Oratorios at the 2022 Halle Handel Festival

Back to the roots is also the motto for the oratorios on the 2022 festival agenda, which feature a whole host of first-class performers. This programme includes the performance of Handel's *Susanna* in Halle Cathedral, in the previously unpublished, abridged version by Arnold Schering. This was performed in the same venue in 1922 and is kept in the Handel House Foundation Collection. The Leipzig Baroque Orchestra and the MDR Radio Choir under the direction of its artistic director Philipp Ahmann, will be ensuring a contemporary, historically informed performance.

The arrangement of *Messiah* is by an authoritative hand. This Handel classic will be performed in the famous, but now only rarely performed German version by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, which stands out above all by virtue of its opulent woodwind parts. With this performance the renowned Portuguese period ensemble Divino Sospiro will be making its debut in Halle, supported by the equally renowned Gulbenkian Choir of Lisbon and a prominent quartet of soloists. The conductor is Massimo Mazzeo. Traditionally, the performance of *Messiah* is presented by Lotto Sachsen-Anhalt.

The boundaries between opera and oratorio were often blurred in Handel's day. Many of his sacred compositions have a dramatic quality that earned them the reputation of being "opera in ecclesiastic garb". Inspired by this, Halle Opera has boldly created a fully-staged production of *Brockes Passion*, which director Walter Sutcliffe presents as a reflection on the nature of religion. To the biblical characters Barthold Heinrich Brockes adds a series of additional persona who comment continuously on the actions of the former. Originally programmed for the 2021 festival, it was premiered in October and will now take place in 2022 with a festival cast that includes Handel Prize winner Romelia Lichtenstein. Michael Hofstetter is the musical director.

Describing it as "after the manner of an oratorio", Handel does not make it easy to situate his setting of the mythological story of *Semele* either. During his lifetime he himself never provided anything but a concert performance of the work. And so it was performed at the opening concert of the first Halle Handel festival in on 25 May 1922. For the centenary celebration, Handel Prize winner Howard Arman will conduct the German version as arranged back then by Alfred Rahlwes for large musical forces, and which has been specially reconstructed for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Handel Festival. The performers are Staatskapelle Halle, the Robert-Franz-Singakademie, which participated in the performance in Halle back in 1922, and Konzertchor Leipzig.

Lastly, rounding out the programme is probably the most popular Italian oratorio in Handel's catalogue of works: *La Bellezza ravveduta nel trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno*, in which four allegorical figures – **Beauty, Enjoyment, Enlightenment and Time** – play out a dramatic contest of truth and deceit, eternal bliss and fleeting happiness. An authentic performance is provided by period specialist Ottavio Dantone, conducting Accademia Bizantina.

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## Home-comers – concerts at the Handel Festival

Looking ahead without forgetting one's own roots – this balancing act the Halle Handel Festival has always succeeded in accomplishing, in keeping with Sir Thomas More's famous phrase: "Tradition is not about keeping the ashes, but passing on the flame". This is why we are welcoming not only exciting new faces from the early music scene to this centenary festival: the 2022 festival season also offers a reunion with prominent Handel Prize winners from previous years.

Kicking off this reunion is the internationally acclaimed countertenor **Philippe Jaroussky**. He will be making his first public appearance in Halle as a conductor, conducting the ensemble *Artaserse*, with whom he will present a broad cross-section of famous arias by Handel. The soloist for this evening is the soprano **Emőke Baráth**.

**Ragna Schirmer**, the 2012 prize winner, who won an ECHO Klassik award for her Handel recordings, among others, will be devoting her piano recital to the *Suites de pieces pour le clavecin*, and at the same time shedding light on a quite different facet of the composer's work.

The concert by **Jordi Savall** and his orchestra, *Le Concert des Nations*, is entitled *The Elements and the Furies*. The star conductor and gamba virtuoso from Catalonia will be evoking the powers of nature and the spirits of hell as portrayed in music by Handel, Gluck and Rameau.

The gala concert entitled *Four at One Stroke* promises to be a veritable summit meeting of stars of the early music scene. Here, under the musical direction of **Wolfgang Katschner**, countertenor **Valer Sabadus** and mezzo-soprano **Vivica Genaux** meet together in a virtuoso medley of bravura arias by Handel and Hasse. Leading us through the evening's programme is **Axel Köhler**, who was closely associated with the Festival for decades both as a countertenor and a director. Such a star-studded line-up in one concert is possible only thanks to the support of Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and the Saalesparkasse.

Other highlights in the programme include a performance of the cantata *Aminta e Fillide* conducted by **William Christie**, a gala concert with countertenor **Iestyn Davies** and, under the title *Handel's Bestiary*, a reading by **Annett Renneberg** and Handel fan **Donna Leon** with musical accompaniment by singers **Inga Kalna** and **Maite Beaumont**. The ensemble **Il Pomo d'Oro** will be conducted by **Zefira Valova**. The **Pera Ensemble** conducted by its musical director **Mehmet Yeşilçay** will be indulging in a sensual encounter between Occident and Orient. The historical Timur was one of the most violent rulers of the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and came into belligerent conflict with the Ottoman Empire. This story, which inspired Handel, among others, to write his *Tamerlano*, will now be told for the first time by musicians from different cultures of Europe, Turkey and Mongolia.

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## Serious vs popular music: beyond the divide

Besides the music of the composer to whom the festival is dedicated, the Handel Festival has always regularly turned its attention to other musical genres and new concert formats which systematically push back the boundaries set up by cliché. Good music is not a matter of serious or popular, but above all the pleasure of a shared concert experience.

One of the highlights of this year's festival agenda will doubtless be the grand open-air concert on 11 June, entitled **Bridges to Classics**. For this concert, which builds bridges from Handel's music to symphonic rock concerts, thousands of people throng to the beautiful natural backdrop of the Galgenberg Gorge. For years, the creative mind behind this project has been saxophonist and conductor Bernd Ruf. Alongside him and Staatskapelle Halle are musicians who have a wealth of experience in crossing musical boundaries. The star guest in 2022 is **Robert Hart**, the singer of Manfred Mann's Earthband.

There will be an opportunity to see Handel from a new angle in St. George's Church, where singer **Lia Pale**, in collaboration with Women in Jazz, will present a programme that she has entitled **The Handel Songbook: Yes, I'm in Love**. Here, Pale and her group simply do what is common practice in jazz – taking existing musical material and making something new and original out of it. The only difference is that she takes her songs from the "great European songbook", that is, works by Schubert, Schumann and Brahms. Now, the singer is devoting herself to a project close to her heart and for this special evening has added a "Handel songbook" to her repertoire, which will build another exciting bridge between Baroque and jazz.

The argument about whether poetry or music comes first is almost as old as opera itself. But distinguished composers have always known that a successful opera is only ever as good as the libretto that it sets to music. This is why, since 2018, the Handel Festival has regularly given present-day verbal acrobats their due. Once again in 2022, a **poetry slam** awaits the audience in Handel House. Halle-born slammer Katja Hofmann presents the texts and performances on the theme of the annual festival. A mixture of words and wit with a pinch of profundity. We can't wait to see the winner and look forward to an evening full of poetry.

The WuK Theater Quartier is hosting the Handel Festival for the first time in 2022 and this premiere promises to be extraordinary. In **Baroque Lounge I**, the Argentine all-round artist Marcello Nisinman re-arranges the grooviest hits in the history of music, removes centuries-old patina and by doing so builds a bridge to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Stigie larve*, the famous *accompagnato* from Handel's *Orlando*, sets the tone for the concert. With her remarkable, deep register, the Italian alto Candida Guida conjures up the spectres of hell, but also the lyrical and deeply emotional arias from operas by Handel and Mozart. This is how lively early music can sound! In **Baroque Lounge II**, Musica Sequenza, founded at the Juilliard School of New York, live electronics artist Carlo Grippa and the singer Margret Bahr coalesce Handel's music into a unique sound collage.

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## The city as a stage – open-air concerts, church concerts and more

“Music in authentic venues” is the slogan of the Halle Handel Festival, during which the whole city will once again be turned into a stage – and often with free admission. This starts on the opening day of the festival, 27 May, with a **ceremony at the Handel monument** including musical accompaniment followed by a carillon concert at the Red Tower, after which you are invited to a grand **Organ Night** starting at 6pm. Here, renowned organists in five different churches will perform on the “queen of instruments”.

One new item on the programme is the street theatre performance entitled **Vogelfrei**, in which feathered creatures offer a multifaceted show of dance, circus artistry, puppetry and song on Marktplatz.

But open-air music can be enjoyed not only on Marktplatz but also in the **Botanical Garden, in a promenade concert** to which the Halle University Choir and Pfeiferstuhl Music provide the elegant musical backdrop, as well as on board the MS Händel II. Here, to the sound of the *Water Music* performed by Sachsen-Anhalt Brass, you can put yourself in the role of King George I who let himself be entertained by Handel on his royal barge trips on the Thames. And that’s not to mention the closing concert in the Galgenberg Gorge, where the centenary will be celebrated once again with a grand fireworks display!

To round out the experience of Baroque life, there is no shortage of culinary offerings with a musical touch – such as the **Walking Dinner**. Added to this is a series of free **lunchtime concerts** in Handel House. The singers include one of the prize winners of the London Handel Singing Competition, a renowned competition which has marked the start of an international career for many a talented young singer.

But besides these new, innovative formats, tradition continues to loom large at the Handel Festival. In this centenary year, several concerts make reference to the **festival’s roots**. For example, in the banqueting hall of the Leopoldina you can hear a Romantic Choral Concert that was performed in the same venue on 2 May 1922. The same applies to the chamber music concert in the Löwengebäude auditorium by Roberta Mameli and Jonathan de la Paz Zaens and the symphony concert in Ulrichskirche, as well as to the large-scale church concert in St. Maurice’s Church (*Moritzkirche*), which is devoted to Halle composers and also follows the programme of the festival’s year of inception.

One major theme during the 2022 festival season is *Orlando furioso*, the inspiration behind the first performance of a Handel opera in Halle. The Handel revival that this triggered and made him the most frequently performed Baroque composers today will also be examined in the **International Academic Conference**. Parallel to the new stage production of *Orlando* at the opera house, a concert entitled **Angelica Diabolica** will present further adaptations of Ariosto’s story with a musical accompaniment by Kammerorchester Basel. Together with soprano **Giulia Semenzato**, they will perform settings of *Orlando* by composers such as Porpora, Torelli and Sabadini.

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## 2022 Handel Prize winner

The music scholar, music historian and university lecturer **Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann** will receive the 2022 City of Halle Handel Prize, awarded by the Handel House Foundation. With this award, the Handel House Foundation Board of Trustees is honouring Professor Hirschmann's wide-ranging, highly committed and standard-setting work.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann has been actively involved in Handel research in Halle for more than a decade and his influence has been extremely important, for example as one of two heads of edition, and as a member of the Editorial Board of the Halle Handel Edition, of which he has also edited certain volumes (*Berenice*, *Giustino*, currently in preparation). The academic Handel conferences of the past few years during the Handel Festival have borne his signature in their thematic and interdisciplinary orientation. He has also published numerous important contributions to Handel research. In addition, he has supervised research on the subject of Handel, such as the fundamental research project about the reception of Handel under Germany's dictatorships, the results of which were published in two weighty volumes as part of the Handel House Foundation Studies collection.

He furthermore supervised the thematically related research project, funded by the German Research Foundation (DFG) and Martin-Luther-Universität Halle-Wittenberg in collaboration with the Handel House Foundation, on the political instrumentalisation of the music of the past in 20<sup>th</sup>-century Germany, using the example of Georg Frideric Handel, the results of which have also been published as part of the Handel House Foundation Studies collection. One important concern of Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann is to ensure that young scholars should take an interest in Handel. In this context, let us mention his initiative to create an international Handel research prize. Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann also contributes regularly and constructively to the study courses organised by the Handel House Foundation.

Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Hirschmann's numerous activities in relation to Handel can be seen not least in his active and intensive work on the committees of various Handel institutions. In particular, these include his presidency of the Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft e.V. and his longstanding membership of the Advisory Council of the Handel House Foundation, of which he is the chairman, as well as, in the same context, his advisory role as a member of the foundation's Board of Trustees.

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## 100 Years of the Halle Handel Festival

By Clemens Birnbaum

Although there were already performances of Handel's music in the city of his birth back in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and even if we can call the concerts surrounding the inauguration of the Handel monument in 1859 an early Handel festival, the year 1922 is considered to be the actual year of creation of the Handel Festival in Halle. For this 1922 "*Hallisches Händelfest*", a many-faceted programme was compiled which included nearly every category of his work. Besides oratorios (*Semele* and *Susanna*), chamber music and instrumental music performed by large musical forces, as well as a festival church service, the programme also featured the first-ever performance of a Handel opera in Halle: *Orlando* – in German, with the title *Orlandos Liebeswahn* ("Orlando's Madness of Love").

While in 1922 it was for the most part local ensembles and musicians who were involved in the festival's making, this has changed during the now 100-year history of the Handel Festival. Today, performers and audiences come from all over the world. The festival has an international reputation; it is the most famous music festival in the state of Saxony-Anhalt and one of the largest Baroque music festivals in Europe. At no other music festival can audiences enjoy up to five fully staged Baroque operas in such a short period.

Looking back over 100 years of history, we can see both continuities and discontinuities. Both the diversity of the programmes and the performance of music across Handel's entire oeuvre are continuities. This includes performances of compositions or particular versions of Handel's works that for a variety of reasons have previously gone unheeded. Frequently, it has marked the first performance of the works in modern times. One such example is the series of performances of Handel's opera pasticcios since 2014. Until then, they were no more than a footnote not only in terms of performance practice, but also of scholarship.

Another constant is the close connection between scholarship and musical practice. This was already reflected in the 1922 Handel festival: the renowned musicologist Arnold Schering held a festival lecture and was also responsible for the "new arrangement" of the oratorio *Susanna*. International academic conferences still take place in the context of the Handel Festival to this day – and to this day new scholarly findings pertaining to the historical and critical edition of Handel's works (the Halle Handel Edition) are still included in the festival programme.

In the 1920s, despite scholarly expertise, Handel's oratorios and operas were extensively rearranged for performance. After initial demands for "faithfulness to the original" in the 1930s, the first concerts featuring period instruments were performed at the 1941 and 1942 Handel festivals in Halle by ensembles led by Gustav Scheck and August Wenzinger. But it was still quite some time before the principles of historically informed performance practice were established in Halle, partly for reasons of state policy. With the founding of the new Handel Festival Orchestra in 1993, whose musicians use replicas of period instruments and historically informed playing techniques and devices, the debate came to a temporary end.

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The different Handel Festivals reflect the Handel images of the times. Here too, there were continuities and discontinuities, sometimes related to the instrumentalisation of his music by the current political system. Both in the cultural policy of the National Socialists and in the GDR, the need was felt – because of the relationship of the respective state to the Church, for example – to reinterpret the oratorios, which were based on biblical texts, in line with ideology. The cultural policy of ensuring that the Handel Festival should not be an elitist event is another continuity. To achieve this goal, special formats have been and are still being developed, for example Handel's Open since 1996, Bridges to Classics in Galgenberg Gorge since 1999 and more recently, the Baroque Lounges, poetry slams, and others.

During the GDR period, Handel was put forward as an important representative of the Enlightenment and humanism. In this context, state cultural policy demanded that new productions of Handel's operas be based on a "realistic performance style". Nevertheless, precisely in the 1980s, there were also Handel opera productions in Halle that deliberately disregarded the prescribed ideal of a "realistic performance style" and made use of alienation. In this respect we can cite the productions of Peter Konwitschny, such as *Floridante* at the 1984 Handel Festival in the Goethe Theatre in Bad Lauchstädt.

In recent times, Handel has been placed in a European and even cosmopolitan context – whereby the idea of cosmopolitanism should not be construed as an attempt at dissociation from Stalin's anti-cosmopolitan and anti-formalism campaign of the late 1940s and early 1950s, but as something with a completely different objective. The festival programmes since 2010 have reflected this cosmopolitan image of Handel with regular intercultural concerts. Each period has its own Handel image. It would be exciting to know what mirror later generations will hold up to us, and which Handel image we are following today at the Handel Festival.

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## “Fireworks and Halle-lujah – 100 Years of the Handel Festival in Halle”

2022 annual exhibition of the Handel House Foundation  
**under the patronage of the President of the Federal Republic of Germany**

1922 is considered as the year of creation of the Handel Festival in Halle an der Saale. During this self-styled “*Hallisches Händelfest*”, for the first time pieces from every category of his work were performed – including *Orlando*, the first-ever performance of a Handel opera in the city of the composer’s birth, at the then municipal theatre, the *Stadttheater*.

In 2022 the Handel Festival will be celebrating its centenary and looking back over an eventful history. From the beginning, particular attention was paid to questions of performance practice. Even back in 1922, the *Music for the Royal Fireworks* and the *Hallelujah Chorus* from *Messiah* were considered essential parts of the programme; and it is after these two constants in the festival programme that the 2022 annual exhibition is named. The Handel monument, erected on Marktplatz in 1859, is a not only meeting point for Handel lovers, but a special focal point throughout the festival.

In the exhibition, you’ll see how everything revolves around Handel, enjoy an impressive fireworks display, be immersed in the magical world of Handel opera and reminisce with us about magical moments and performers of the highest quality! And be sure not to miss the surprising multimedia presentations where there’s no shortage of fun and technical sophistication.

The annual exhibition opens on 23 February 2022 (the date of Handel's birth), at 5pm, and will be on view until 8 January 2023.

Curated by: Dr. Konstanze Musketa and Christiane Barth

Designed by: Axel Göhre

**The Handel House Foundation thanks Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Saalesparkasse for their generous support.**

Besides the anniversary exhibition in Handel House, numerous other museums in the city are also celebrating the Handel Festival centenary with special exhibitions, special guided tours and historical walking tours of the city. These include the Francke Foundations, Moritzburg art museum, the Marktkirche, Neue Residenz palace, the municipal museum Stadtmuseum Halle and the Kunstverein art gallery at Halle Opera.

You will find more detailed information on all events in the festival annual programme.

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## Special publications

### **Catch up on 100 years of the Handel Festival in words and music**

Parallel to the large-scale special exhibition, a high-quality, richly illustrated **companion book** will be published that not only retraces the history of the festival from various perspectives, but also contains contributions from several famous people who express their attachment to the Handel Festival. There are contributions from famous names, such as the former director of Handel House, Edwin Werner, who talks about the performance practice applied to early music in Halle between 1922 and 1933, Matthew Gardner, who reports on the role of the Halle Handel Edition in performances at the Handel Festival in Halle, Handel Prize winner Silke Leopold, who takes a look at 'Handel's Orlando one hundred years ago', Juliane Riepe, who provides a short history of the Handel festival during the Nazi period, and Bernhard Schrammek, with an article on Handel recordings in the GDR.

**This publication has been made possible thanks to the generous support of Ostdeutsche Sparkassenstiftung and Saalesparkasse.**

In addition to this, the Handel House Foundation is releasing an exclusive **CD special edition** of recordings made between 1958 and 2008. The CD contains extracts from recordings of the Handel Festival originally released by Eterna, including the legendary performance of *Poros* from 1958. Other recordings make direct reference to Handel Festival events, for example the German-language recording of Handel's *Messiah* with the Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra and Berlin Radio Choir conducted by Helmut Koch, who put his stamp on the oratorio performances at the Halle festival between 1955 and 1974.

The book *Feuerwerk und Halle-luja – 100 Jahre Händel-Festspiele in Halle* ("Fireworks and Halle-lujah – 100 Years of the Handel Festival in Halle", in German), published by Verlag E. A. Seemann Henschel GmbH & Co. KG, Leipzig, will be presented at the opening of the special exhibition on 23 February 2022. This, like the CD special edition – **is on sale exclusively in the Handel House museum shop.**

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## Visitor Information and Information on Ticket Sales

The 2022 Handel Festival visitors' office in Handel House is open daily from 27 May to 12 June, from 10am to 6pm. Here, visitors can get information about events, the programmes of individual events and unsold tickets. Visitors can also purchase the festival magazine. This provides an overall insight into the festival, with interesting features on the performers, background information about performances and much more besides. The box offices open one hour before the start of performances at the respective venues.

### **Tickets for the 2022 Handel Festival are available:**

- Via the hotline +49 (0)345 / 5652706 (Monday to Friday: 7am-7pm, Saturday: 7am-2pm)
- At: [www.haendelfestspiele-halle.de](http://www.haendelfestspiele-halle.de)
- From all CTS-Eventim advance ticket booking agencies all over Germany
- In Saxony-Anhalt also from TiM Ticket in Mitteldeutsche Zeitung service centres and Galeria Kaufhof Passage in Halle

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## Press release

### 2022 marks the centenary of the Handel Festival LOTTO provides €56,000 in funding for Baroque music festival

Magdeburg, 11 February 2022 - This year, the Handel Festival, 27 May–12 June, celebrates a major anniversary: for 100 years, Halle, the city of Georg Frideric Handel's birth, has preserved and cultivated the legacy of this important composer.

“The remarkably successful path from the first Halle Handel Festival in 1922 to the greatest Baroque music festival in Saxony-Anhalt, admired the world over, is truly worth a ‘Hallelujah!’,” says LOTTO's Managing Director, Stefan Ebert. “We are delighted to see how much influence the Handel Festival, with its authentic venues, has in projecting the image of Saxony-Anhalt as a region steeped in music.”

LOTTO Sachsen-Anhalt has supported the Handel Festival since 1998 – with funding totalling 940,000 euros. Of this, **56,000 euros** of lottery funding\* went towards this year's centenary Handel Festival.

“Every year, the Handel Festival traces an arc from tradition to modernity”, says LOTTO's Managing Director, Stefan Ebert. “It is filled with artistic surprises and cultivates Handel's musical heritage with great commitment and true appreciation.”

One highlight of the centenary celebrations at the 2022 Handel Festival is the adaptation of the 1922 programme – all its nine concert, opera and oratorio programmes, including the festival lecture and festival service of worship.

#### *Further information:*

\*Lottery funding resources are a fixed part of lottery ticket sales and are granted on the basis of applications for projects in Saxony-Anhalt. Any not-for-profit association can submit an application for a specific project to LOTTO Sachsen-Anhalt. For every euro spent on a LOTTO Sachsen-Anhalt product, around 20 cents are used to serve the public interest.

Since 1991, LOTTO Sachsen-Anhalt has provided funding of over 30M euros to the City of Halle – including for Kinderstadt Halle an Salle, exhibitions at the Kunstverein Talstrasse art gallery and for the Women in Jazz Festival.

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## Press release

### Happy anniversary from HWG

**The real-estate company will present the closing concert of the Handel Festival**

**Halle (Saale), 11 February 2022.** Tradition binds people. For ten years now, the Handel Festival and the Hallesche Wohnungsgesellschaft mbH (HWG) have maintained a fruitful partnership. They are united by the determination to show not only the people of Halle but also the many thousands of festival-goers that the city of Handel's birth is a place worth living in and loving.

Even if it is only a coincidence of history, it is nonetheless remarkable that both HWG and the Handel Festival are celebrating their centenary this year. "Warmest congratulations to the Handel Festival on its anniversary. The festival is a part of Halle – just like the buildings we own. Given these similarities, we are delighted to have the privilege of supporting this major event again this year," says HWG's Managing Director, Simone Danz.

For the first time, HWG will present the closing concert in the Galgenberg Gorge. Starting at 9pm, Staatskapelle Halle conducted by Peter Kopp will be providing an atmospheric evening concert.

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## Press release

### Stadtwerke Halle supports the centenary Handel Festival

**Halle (Saale), 7. March 2022 – True to its slogan “Halle has it all. All the time. Secure supply.”, Stadtwerke Halle public utilities group aims to supply the people of Halle not only with energy, water, waste disposal and mobility, but culture too. This is why it traditionally supports the Handel Festival, which this year is celebrating a major anniversary.**

“We congratulate the Handel Festival on its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday and are especially delighted that after the Covid-related cancellations it is once again able to take place here in Halle. Since 1922, the festival has enriched our city on the Saale with its diverse programme, and inspired music and culture lovers from all over the world. We want to sincerely thank the Handel Festival team for so much commitment. The Stadtwerke have been supporting this first-class event for many years and want to do our bit towards building a rich cultural landscape in Halle an der Saale,” says Matthias Lux, Managing Director of Stadtwerke Halle.

Stadtwerke Halle operates in four fields of business:

- **Energy**  
Energy supply, provision of energy-efficiency services
- **Water and Waste Management**  
Water supply, sewage treatment, waste disposal, secondary raw materials
- **Mobility**  
Local public transport, mobility, logistics
- **Services**

In addition to its public utilities mandate, Stadtwerke Halle not only assumes economic responsibilities, but is also involved in long-term environmental projects, projects to improve quality of life in Halle an der Saale, children and youth work, sports, art and culture, as well as science and innovation.

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Through Halle-Crowd, Stadtwerke Halle provides a funding platform for numerous small-scale projects in Halle.

#### Stadtwerke Halle GmbH

Stadtwerke Halle is a powerful corporate group providing the full range of basic utilities for the city of Halle and services to industry: its operations range from energy and water supply to local public transport, recycling, sewage treatment, waste disposal, street-cleaning, ice and snow-clearing services, logistics, landfill and infrastructure services and data processing, right through to the provision of swimming facilities and street-lighting – all from a single source. With 2,904 employees and interns and an annual turnover of €682M in 2020, Stadtwerke Halle is the largest industrial employer in Halle an der Saale and the largest municipal utility in Saxony-Anhalt.

Internet: [www.stadtwerke-halle.de](http://www.stadtwerke-halle.de)

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