

Handel's opera



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

George Friderick Handel (1685-1759) writes all of his opera for over 35 years. Almost within his lifetime though his operas were considered to be almost obsolete with regards to format yet were of the finest kind. Due to format Handel's opera were the most neglected in all of his works until recently. As with most of the musical artist of his time, Handel's opera were modeled on both German and Italian style, with some modifications to suit his artistic taste and that of the English for which they were produced (Sadie, 1992, 614). In the p of his career, Handel composed more than forty operas.

True to the nature of Baroque music, most of these operas show elements of the use of dance rhythms and elaborate melodic lines. Although born a German, Handel's opera was influenced by the conventions of the Italian opera seria, became its most important composer with French grandeur. Perhaps Handel's greatest contribution to the field of opera was his ability to convey emotions with sincerity and clarity through melody, so that he often used the opera seria convention of the da capo aria with dramatic and surprising effect (Sadie, 1992, 614).

Handel's first opera was *Almira* composed in 1705. His fascination with Italian trends showed through his motto arias and obbligato accompaniment in concerto style. In this work however, Handel also showed the influence of his German training as seen by his tendency to repeat rhythmic patterns and relatively infrequent use of highly melismatic melodies. Handel had tried to replace the disorganized plots of much serious middle Baroque opera, with a new type which was strictly organized and formally predictable.

Each scene was constructed mostly by a series of alternating recitatives and arias (usually da capo arias) after which the main characters would exit. His opera entitled *Agrippina* (1709) shown in Venice catapulted Handel to fame. This work shows an extensive borrowings from an earlier (lost) opera, *Rodrigo*, as well as his earlier cantatas. His success in opera occurred at a time when opera was forbidden in Rome (O'Grady, 1998). Handel's major Operas were *Ottone* (1723), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Tamerlano* (1724), *Rinaldo* (rev. 1731).