

George Frideric
HANDEL

HERCULES
an Oratorio

for Soli, Chorus, and Orchestra
with German and English text

MINIATURE SCORE

K 01301

P R E F A C E.

The Oratorio of HERCULES was composed in about four weeks, in the months of July and August, 1744. The date of the commencement of the work is wanting, but doubtless fell within the latter half of July. The first Act was completed July 30th, the second August 11th, the third the 17th, and the work "völlig geendiget" (fully completed) on the 21st of that month. This last date, however, through the carelessness of the binder, is almost entirely cut away from the original manuscript, and, therefore, not to be determined with absolute certainty. The first performance, directed by Handel himself, was given January 3^d, 1745.

Thomas Broughton, a clergyman, was author of the text. With regard to the sources of his materials, he says in the short "Advertisement": — "The following Drama is founded on the Story of Hercules and Dejanira, as it is related by Ovid in the Ninth Book of his *Metamorphoses*; and the same Subject, as it is treated by Sophocles in the Tragedy call'd the *Trachinians*." The first edition of the textbook bears the title:

"Hercules. | a Musical Drama. | As it is Perform'd at the | King's Theatre | in the
Hay-Market. | The Musick by Mr. Handel. | London: Printed for J. and R. Ton-
son and S. Draper | in the Strand. 1745. | [Price One Shilling.]" 40 pp. in 8^{vo}. (*British
Museum 161. e. 37.*)

The changes made by Handel in the score in course of the year are comparatively unimportant and evidently, for the most part, made to adapt it to the powers of the singers, engaged in the performances. Thus Lichas as an independent alto part, almost disappears; the music being either omitted in the production of the work, or shortened and transferred to the tenor, Hyllus. The beautiful airs "The joyful hours" (p. 51) and "Oh scene of unexampled woe" (p. 195), in the conducting score are transposed to B flat and C minor and partly copied out in Handel's own hand. A change was also made in the Finale of the second Act, by which the third air of Lichas "Constant lovers" (p. 171), raised to the key of A, was given to Iöle, the duet of Dejanira and Iöle omitted, and, to please Signora Frasi, the chorus with soprano solo "Still caressing" took the place of the chorus "Love and Hymen" (p. 181). The air of Dejanira "Cease, ruler of the day" (p. 167) was one of the omissions in the performance.

The original manuscript shows also a singular indecision on the part of the composer in regard to the opening scene. He first began the work with Dejanira's recitative "Oh Hercules" (p. 14), but after the conducting score had been made, prefixed the recitative and air of Lichas, with which it now opens. This circumstance explains with sufficient probability the fact that Handel's usual "angefangen", with the date, is wanting. In the subsequent abridgement — almost suppression — of the part of Lichas, this opening recitative and air, as well as Dejanira's air "The world" (p. 15) with the recitative at the close of the first scene, fell away. Thus the original beginning was restored — the "Oh Hercules" of Dejanira's part —, in fact, at the performance, of the entire first scene of Act I, this short recitative alone was retained.

It requires no argument to show that such changes should be allowed no weight against the authority of the original manuscript in the preparation of a correct score.

Whoever in a public performance of this noble work, cares to give it with its author's original unity of design, will make as few omissions as possible.

LEIPZIG, August 1st, 1859.

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