

George Frederick Handel



The Waiting Handel by Batt

The blind Handel is seen smoking as he awaits the arrival of his amanuensis. Behind him hangs the portrait of himself, painted in earlier days. It now hangs in the National Portrait Gallery. His harpsichord stands open behind him, and the wig and stock, symbols of a world in which he is no longer interested, are discarded, and his food is left untouched, his immense appetite of his younger life now gone.

- 1685 Born in Halle
- 1694 Organ pupil of Zachow at the Church of Our Lady, Halle
- 1702 Law student at Halle University; organist of the Calvinist cathedral
- 1703 Violinist and harpsichordist in Hamburg opera orchestra
- 1705 *Almira* (Hamburg)
- 1706-9 Time in Italy, Florence, Rome, and Venice. Made contact with the Scarlattis and Corelli. Wrote operas and many cantatas
- 1710 Engaged as Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover; made first visit to London
- 1711 *Rinaldo* (London)
- 1712 settled in London
- 1717 *Water Music* written; engaged as director of music to Earl of Caernarfon (later Duke of Chandos) at Cannons, near London
- 1718 *Acis and Galatea*
- 1719 Visit to Germany to recruit singers for Royal Academy of Music of which Handel was musical director
- 1723 composer to Chapel Royal
- 1724 *Julius Caesar*
- 1726 naturalised English
- 1727 four anthems for George II's coronation (including *Zadok the Priest*)
- 1729 second Royal Academy established after collapse of first; visit to Italy to recruit singers
- 1733 first organ concerti
- 1735 first Lenten series of oratorios in London
- 1737 collapse of Handel's opera company (and its rival, the Opera of the Nobility)
- 1739 *Saul, Israel in Egypt*; composed orchestral concerti
- 1742 *Messiah* (Dublin)
- 1752 *Jephtha*; deterioration of eyesight, leading to blindness by 1754
- 1759 died in London, and buried in Westminster Abbey