

STEREO



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GEORG FRIEDRICH HAENDEL

WATER MUSIC

*Original version complete*

THE JEAN-FRANCOIS PAILLARD CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Jean-Francois PAILLARD, Conductor

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# GEORG FRIEDRICH HAENDEL (1685-1759)

## WATER MUSIC

*Original version Complete*

Side 1: 20'30"

1. *Overture (Grave; Allegro)*
2. *Adagio e staccato*
3. *(Allegro); Andante; (Allegro)*
4. *Menuet*
5. *Air*

Side 2: 26'10"

6. *Menuet*
7. *Bourree*
8. *Hornpipe*
9. *Allegro*
10. *Allegro*
11. *Hornpipe*
12. *Menuet*
13. *Aria*
14. *Lentement (Loure)*
15. *Allegro*
16. *Menuet*
17. *Menuet*
18. *Allegro*
19. *Cantabile*
20. *Coro (Menuet)*

C. LARDE, flute

P. PIERLOT, J. CHAMBON, oboes

P. HONGNE, R. DELAGE, bassoons

M. ANDRE, M. LAGORCE, trumpets

P. DEL VESCOVO, R. NAVASSE, horns

H. FERNANDEZ, G. CARLES, violins

Anne-Marie BECKENSTEINER at the Neupert Harpsichord

THE JEAN-FRANCOIS PAILLARD CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

Jean-Francois PAILLARD, Conductor

No work of Haendel is as understandably popular as the "Water Music"; popular in the best sense of the word. Romain Rolland has said of it that "it is a work conceived for a whole people and not for a select elite. A work which, without departing from formal integrity and without deferring to current fashion, communicates ideas that are immediately understandable by all."

However familiar certain sections of the "Water Music" might be, few music-lovers know the entire Suite in its original version. Even musical historians become bewildered by the number of "first editions" with their many changes and alterations. We do not actually know the exact date of composition of the "Water Music" but it was probably not written all at once. We can be sure that it was first performed on the Thames on the 17th of July, 1717.

Friederich Bonnet, a resident of Prussia, wrote as follows: "The King entered his barge at about eight o'clock in the company of his guests, the Duchess of Bolton, the Countess of Goldolphin, Mme. de Kilmansek, Mme. Were, the Earl of Orkney and the Gentlemen of the Kings Chamber who comprised his guard. Next to the King's Barge was that of the musicians numbering fifty, all playing various instruments including trumpets, horns, oboes, bassoons, German 'flauti traversi', French recorders, violins and basses. The music was composed for the occasion by the famous Haendel, the chief court composer. It was so enthusiastically received that it had to be performed three times, twice before supper and once afterward." Since each of these performances lasted a full hour, no less than the entire Suite with all repeats could have been played. (We have chosen to omit certain of the latter in this recording as a record can hardly be the same as a "live" performance under the peculiar acoustical and scenic conditions associated with this piece.

The first edition by Walsh dates from about 1732-33 and is clearly incomplete as it includes only six of the movements. The

"Overture," which had already appeared separately in 1725 is omitted as are several other of the more famous movements. Some of these saw the light of day in collections entitled "A Trumpet Minuet by Mr. Hendell" and "A Minuet for the French Horn by Mr. Hendell". Most of the earlier editions cannot be used as a basis for musical performance since they are filled with obvious defects. We have used instead the edition of 1743 which is beautifully preserved at the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge by kind permission of H. Barret Lennard as well as Arnold's great edition of 1789-1797 revised by F. Chrysander for the Handelgesellschaft.

In truth, the "Water Music" is known more in its "arranged" form than in its original version. The uninhibited enthusiasm of some of the transcribers, particularly as regards the instrumentation, succeeded only in making the sonorities noisier and more ponderous. We also know of a performance in 1748, during the composer's own lifetime, wherein parts of the "Water Music" were accompanied by four "Timbaliers". Even Mozart opened the door to serious abuses by arrangers in his re-orchestration of the "Messiah." The orchestral art of Haendel is possessed of a natural instinct for balance and economy of means which has the coloristic impact of any of our contemporary composers with all their exaggerations. Our attempt has been to recreate the Haendelian sonorities in all their natural freshness. This has required our going back to the purest possible sources, among them some quite unknown to the average record listener. Romain Rolland goes on to say "when you have minutely studied every detail of the score and obtained the highest perfection of ensemble from your orchestra, you will have done nothing but thwart the improvisational fancy of a composer of genius." All music of the 18th Century leaves a large margin to the momentary inspiration of the performer. In the second Movement (Adagio) the notes assigned to the oboe are no more than guide-

posts for the player's own freedom of improvisation and embellishment. Even the instrumentation is fraught with lapses of accuracy (for example, the middle section of the Aria no. 13). In the fourth and sixth movements we have preferred the sound of strings in spite of Arnold's agreement to the inclusion of a bassoon. The entire "suite" consists of twenty movements. It seems clearly divided into two large sections, the first consisting of nine movements. The horns function soloistically whereas the trumpets do not. Together with the dance pieces we find contrapuntal sections reflecting the spirit of the "Concerto Grosso": the French Overture with Horns, and the 9th piece in D Minor effects the transition into the second half which contains movements in D Major and in G. The brass instruments express these with fanfares of great power in contrast with what has gone before. No. 11 is a beautiful Hornpipe and No. 12 uses the "flauto traverso". (The suite contains no less than six "minuets", the most popular dance of the time.) The 17th and 18th movements use recorders, doubtless the instrument referred by Bonnet as "flute francais a bec."

One defect the suite has occasionally is that it is composed of a multiplicity of short movements. The great virtue of Haendel was that he was able to infuse these static forms with great variety without injuring the basic musical architecture. Even if we cannot establish the exact order of movements, there is noticeably a certain progression from movement to movement driving toward a final culmination. For this reason the impact of the suite is considerably reduced by the arbitrary selection of certain sections and the omission of others. This suite in its complete state is the highest achievement in the history of music for out-of-doors.

Jean-francois PAILLARD

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MHS

THE MUSICAL  
HERITAGE SOCIETY

G. F. HAENDEL (1685-1759)

MHS 553S  
SIDE 1

STEREO  
XSV 88874

WATER MUSIC

1. Overture - 2. Adagio e staccato  
3. Allegro - 4. Minuet - 5. Air

The Jean-Francois Paillard Chamber Orchestra  
J.-F. Paillard, conductor

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MHS

THE MUSICAL  
HERITAGE SOCIETY

G. F. HAENDEL (1685-1759)

MHS 5535  
SIDE 2

STEREO  
XSV 88875

WATER MUSIC

6. Minuet - 7. Bourree - 8. Hornpipe  
9. Allegro - 10. Allegro - 11. Hornpipe  
12. Minuet - 13. Aria - 14. Loure  
15. Allegro - 16. Minuet - 17. Minuet  
18. Allegro - 19. Cantabile - 20. Coro

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J.-F. Paillard, conductor  
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