

G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

Suite in Bb Major (nos. 30 to 33 in New Grove list).

Written and published without Handel's permission by Walsh, in 1733 (no. 7). Published as second volume of suites, containing eight suites. These suites considered to be weaker than the original set as Walsh somehow got the music without Handel's usual practice of revising the works before publication. There is a neglect of tonal order (unlike the first set), with no orderly succession of keys. It is most unlikely that Handel would have agreed to pairs of consecutive suites in the same key. Brahms borrowed the theme for his *Handel Variations* from the first suite in this second collection. Written probably for harpsichord. (Info from Paul Lang's book on Handel).

Allemande; Courante; Sarabande; Gigue. The prelude from Bb suite no. 34 can be used here also. 2 versions exist of the Allemande and Sarabande.

Allemande: (allmand) - literally "German" . Time of 4 beats, form is 2 equal halves. Each section opens with a short note at the end of the bar (or 3 short notes). Character - serious but not heavy, moderate speed. Ballroom association between slower allmand and quicker courante.

Courante: (corrant) - literally "running". Either Italian type (rapid) or French (greater variety of rhythm). Both 3 in a bar, simple binary form. Aristocratic dance since at least 16th century.

Saraband: possibly from Spain. 3 in a bar, phrases begin on first beat. Sober steady pace, nobility. Accent sometimes on 2nd beat.

Gigue: (jigg) Popular dance in England, Ireland and Scotland. In combination of 3's - long short effect. Simple binary form. Became custom to open 2nd section with first figure or inverted 1st figure. Can be like a fugue.

Key - Bb. Elizabethan virginal composers generally kept to one key as did Purcell, Couperin and sometimes Corelli and Handel.

Form - nearly all the movements in the suite of the period from Purcell/Corelli to Handel/Bach kept to simple binary form - 1st half modulating to the dominant and second half modulating back to tonic, each half repeating. There was no attempt at variety of material within the limits of a movement. Motifs were set at the beginning and adhered to throughout. The suite is the oldest cyclic form. Froberger (1616 to 67) is credited with having established convention of allemand-courante-saraband-gigue.

Handel's life - born in Halle, Germany, 1685. Originally an organist. Influenced by Italian operas after visits to Italy. Moved to London in 1710, taking over Purcell's legacy. Set up Royal Academy in London, for opera performances, opening 1720. Italian operas are performed first but prove unpopular due to language barrier. *The Beggar's Opera* in English, performed in 1728 is successful, and hereafter, operas etc are written in English. In the 1730's a second academy is opened and operas/oratorios such as *Orlando*, *Deborah*, *Athalia*, and *Alexander's Feast* are written and performed. Walsh is Handel's publisher who also publishes the second book of suites in 1733. In 1737, both opera

companies collapse in bankruptcy. Handel moves to Aix but in 1737, he returns to London. *Messiah* is written in 1741. Handel dies on April 14, 1759 and is buried in Westminster Abbey. He wrote many oratorios, operas, organ and keyboard works.