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Music for the Royal Fireworks

Feuerwerksmusik

HWV 351



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Händel, Music for the Royal Fireworks
Feuerwerksmusik



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HÄNDEL

Music for the Royal Fireworks

Feuerwerksmusik

HWV 351

Herausgegeben von / Edited by
Christopher Hogwood

Urtext der Hallischen Händel-Ausgabe
Urtext of the Halle Handel Edition



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ORCHESTRA

Flauto traverso I, II, Oboe I–III;
Corno I–III, Tromba I–III; Timpani;
Violino I, II, Viola; Fagotto I, II, Contrafagotto,
Serpentone, Violoncello, Contrabbasso

Aufführungsdauer / Duration: ca. 20 min.

Zu der vorliegenden Dirigierpartitur sind die Dirigierpartitur
und das Aufführungsmaterial (BA 4299) erhältlich.

In addition to the present study score, the full score
and the orchestral parts (BA 4299) are available.

Urtextausgabe aus: Georg Friedrich Händel, *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe*, herausgegeben von der
Georg-Friedrich-Händel-Gesellschaft, Serie IV, Band 13: *Instrumentalmusik* (BA 4088),
vorgelegt von Terence Best und Christopher Hogwood.

Urtext Edition taken from: *Hallische Händel-Ausgabe*, issued by the
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PREFACE

COMMISSION

The Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle (present-day Aachen) was signed in 1748 to bring to an end the War of the Austrian Succession, a squabble for colonial power largely played out between England and France – in America the conflict is still referred to as “King George’s War”. Many of its conditions were unfavourable to Britain, who, by agreeing to return to the *status quo ante bellum*, had to give up strategic trading positions in Nova Scotia and Gibraltar. On the other hand Madras was given back, and at the same time the succession of the House of Hanover in Great Britain was confirmed, so that dynastically if not commercially, the King could be persuaded to see it as a triumph. But the public called it capitulation, and were fiercely critical of the government. Horace Walpole summarised the situation in a letter to Horace Mann (24 October 1748): “The Peace is signed between us, France, and Holland, but does not give the least joy; the stocks do not rise, and the merchants are unsatisfied [...] in short, there has not been the least symptom of public rejoicing; but the government is to give a magnificent firework”.¹

The first plan had proposed fireworks “to be play’d off before the D[uke] of Newcastle’s house in Lincoln’s Inn-field” in October 1748,² but this celebration was postponed, to give time for grander preparations, extra propaganda, enhanced connection with the King rather than his politicians, a larger public attendance and, possibly, better weather. The site chosen was the fashionable upper part of St James’s Park, recently improved at the

Queen’s instigation, which was becoming separately known as Green Park; it was a short walk from Buckingham House (not yet Palace) and overlooked by the Queen’s Library.

The Green Park “Machine” which housed the pyrotechnics was a theatrical contrivance, its design and operation in the hands of technicians imported from France and Italy. The Chevalier Servandoni (originally Jean-Nicholas Servan), designer of the Machine was, according to Diderot, “grand machiniste, grand architecte, bon peintre, sublime décorateur”.³ He had previously worked for the King’s Theatre as a scene painter for Handel’s operas during the 1720s, and for the fireworks he devised “a magnificent Doric Temple” in best *trompe-l’œil* style:

Tho’ the materials were only wood, and canvas whitewash’d and siz’d, it appeared in great elegance, like a temple of fine stone, with a balustrade on the top, except in the center [*sic*], where instead of a pediment, it went strait up in order to receive some pictures and the king’s arms, to the top of which it was 114 foot high, and being adorned with statues and other figures, festoons of flowers, and other lustres, gave great delight to the beholders, which were innumerable. From this temple, which was 144 feet in length, extended, by 5 arches of a side two low wings, north and south, at the end of each a pavilion, the whole length being 410 feet. The several prints published, not excepting that by authority, of this structure, did not agree with the appearance on the night of performance.⁴

The official *Description*,⁵ whatever its faults, is our best source for a description of the “Inscriptions, Statues, Allegorical Pictures, &c.”

3 Denis Diderot, *Édition critique et annotée*, Paris, 1984, vol. 14 (*Salon de 1765, Essais sur la peinture*), p. 124.

4 *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 19, April 1749, p. 186.

5 *A description of the machine for the fireworks, with all its ornaments, and a detail of the manner in which they are to be exhibited in St. James’s Park, Thursday, April 27, 1749, on account of the general peace, signed at Aix La Chappelle [...]*, London, 1749, later reissued with changes.

1 Horace Walpole’s *Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, ed. W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith and George L. Lam, New Haven, 1954, vol. III, p. 511.

2 *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, vol. 18, July 1748, p. 331.

which decorated the Machine and the transparent pictures which were to be lit from within. The actual fireworks were to be devised and controlled by Gaetano Ruggieri and Giuseppe Sarti, both from Bologna. Working in collaboration with the Royal Laboratory at Woolwich, they planned for an estimated 10,000 rockets and other devices to be let off, culminating in the grand Sun on the top of the Machine, supposed to burn for five hours with "VIVAT REX" in its centre in "bright Fire".

Engravings of the promised structure and descriptions of "the intended Fireworks" were printed, most of them unofficial, together with rumours of an impressively large band of military music:

The band of musick that is to perform at the fire-works in the green-park, is to consist of 40 trumpets, 20 French horns, 16 hautboys, 16 bassoons, 8 pair of kettle-drums, 12 side-drums, a proper number of flutes and fifes; with 100 cannon to go off singly at intervals, with the musick. See the VIEW of the fire-works in our Magazine for December last.⁶

In the caption to that engraving Handel's name is mentioned for the first time: "a Band of a Hundred Musicians are to play before y^e Fire works begin, the Musick for w^{ch} is to be compos'd by M.^r Handel", from which we might assume that the composer was aware of the proposed instrumentation and had agreed to write for it. But Handel's inclusion in the scheme, if not actually an afterthought, appears to have been rather delayed. This may have been the fault of his own diary rather than official procrastination, and probably some bargaining was involved over what was musically possible in terms of the massed military instruments already promised. His impatience with bureaucracy is easily understandable and comes across vividly in the letters that passed between those officials who had the job of dealing with him – the Duke of Montagu, Master General of the Ordnance and the highly-strung Charles Frederick, grandly

titled "Comptroller of His Majesty's Fireworks as well as for War as for Triumph".

They first encountered problems persuading Handel to hold a public rehearsal in Vauxhall Gardens and to include as many military instruments as the King hoped to see:

Duke of Montagu to Charles Frederick (28 March 1749)

I don't see any kind of objection to the rehearsal of the musick at Voxhall being advertised, and when that is done, if any questions are asked how it comes to be there, the true reason must be given. I think Hendel now proposes to have but 12 trumpets and 12 French horns; at first there was to have been sixteen of each, and I remember I told the King so, who, at that time, objected to their [there] being any musick; but, when I told him the quantity and number of martial musick there was to be, he was better satisfied, and said he hoped there would be no fiddles. Now Hendel proposes to lessen the number of trumpets, &c, and to have violeens. I don't at all doubt but when the King hears it he will be very much displeased. If the thing war [were] instead to be in such a manner as certainly to please the King, it ought to consist of no kind of instruments but martial instruments. Any other I am sure will put him out of humour, therefore I am shure it behoves Hendel to have as many trumpets, and other martial instruments, as possible, tho he don't retrench the violins, which I think he shoud, tho I beleieve he will never be persuaded to do it. I mention this as I have very lately been told, from very good authority, that the King has, within this fortnight, expressed himself to this purpose.⁷

Although it is always assumed that Handel did not want to rehearse in Vauxhall for logistical reasons – and surely the full band would not have fitted into the "Music Box" – the fact that the event was to be publicly "advertised" (and the Gardens to make a fine profit from tickets) may have been the true cause. Handel not only wanted the music new for the event, but had recently agreed to repeat the *Fireworks Music* as part of a charity concert at the Foundling Hospital four weeks afterwards; he

6 *The London Magazine*, 14 January 1749.

7 This and other documents quoted here can be found in *Händel-Handbuch*, vol. 4, pp. 422–427.

would not have wanted to lessen the pulling power of this programme.

The argument over the instrumentation may perhaps be reduced to a conflict between professionals (Servandoni, Handel) and amateurs (Frederick, Montagu) in the business of dramatic and musical presentation. Starting from the musically obvious, we can easily surmise that Handel realized three important factors from the very beginning. Firstly, the originally publicised "military" forces could never have played together: 40 trumpets against 16 oboes could not have been contained in a single composition, since the brass would have entirely out-balanced the winds; more probably a series of marches contrasted with fanfares had been envisaged. Montagu reported that the next level proposed was 16 trumpets and 16 horns, and that these were reduced to 12 of each (and eventually 9). Perhaps the simplest explanation is that there were not enough extra military players who could read music; army personnel usually played from memory. Handel was simply biding his time as the figures decreased.

In the second place, any work written for such an extraordinary band would have had no future after its premiere. Handel may have been reminded of this by his publisher, John Walsh, but certainly the prospect of publication as well as the benefit for the Foundling Hospital must have encouraged the incorporation of the strings.

Thirdly, Handel surely realised that no other local composer would, at this stage, be competent to provide the necessary score. Years of experience with theatrical negotiations would have suggested to Handel that he should allow Mr Frederick, clearly a musical innocent, a glimpse of the manuscript showing strings, and use that as leverage to reduce the unworkable numbers of brass. He would offer to eliminate the strings, which would have made no effect in Green Park anyway, in exchange for a manageable number of military instrumentalists who could read music. Meanwhile he

continued to indicate in the manuscript where string parts would be needed at the Foundling Hospital and also continued to resist the idea of a public rehearsal at Vauxhall:

Duke of Montagu to Charles Frederick (9 April)

Sir, — In answer to Mr. Hendel's letter to you (which by the stile of it I am shure is impossible to be of his indicting) I can say no more but this, that this morning at court the King did me the honor to talke to me conserning the fireworks, and in the course of the conversation his Majesty was pleased to aske me when Mr. Hendel's overture was to be rehersed; I told his Majesty I really coud not say anything conserning it from the difficulty Mr. Hendel made about it, for that the master of Voxhall, having offered to lend us all his lanterns, lamps, &c. to the value of seven hundred pounds, whereby we woud save just so much money to the office of Ordnance, besides thirty of his servants to assist in the illuminations, upon condition that Mr. Hendel's overture shoud be rehersed at Voxhall, Mr. Hendel has hetherto refused to let it be at Foxhall, which his Majesty seemed to think he was in the wrong of; and I am shure I think him extreamly so, and extreamly indifferent whether we have his overture or not, for it may very easily be suplyd by another, and I shall have the satisfaction that his Majesty will know the reason why we have it not; therefore, as Mr. Hendel knows the reason, and the great benefit and saving it will be to the publick to have the rehersal at Voxhall, if he continues to express his zeal for his Majesty's service by doing what is so contrary to it, in not letting the rehersal be there, I shall intirely give over any further thoughts of his overture and shall take care to have an other.⁸

Handel evidently conceded the Vauxhall rehearsal which was eventually fixed for 21 April at 11 am; there was also a preliminary rehearsal at Handel's house in Brook Street on the 17th which we presume only involved some of the principal players. The full Vauxhall show attracted "the brightest and most numerous Assembly ever known ... an audience of above 12000 persons (tickets 2s. 6d.)"⁹. Westminster Bridge, so recently built, was al-

⁸ *Händel-Handbuch*, vol. 4, p. 423.

⁹ *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 19, April 1749, p. 185.

ready closed for subsidence repairs making a traffic jam on the old London Bridge inevitable¹⁰ and provoking some bad behaviour: "So great a resort occasioned such a stoppage on *London-Bridge*, that no carriage could pass for 3 hours; – The footmen were so numerous as to obstruct the passage, so that a Scuffle happen'd, in which some gentlemen were wounded" (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1749, p. 185). Normal entry to Vauxhall was a shilling; at the elevated price of 2/6, 12,000 people at 2/6 a ticket, if the number were true, would have yielded a more than tidy profit for the manager, Jonathan Tyers, of over £1500. But the figure has been shown to be physically impossible; allowing for all normal means of transport – foot, carriage, boat – it was possibly 2–3,000 (or even a misprint for 1–2,000?).¹¹

The Royal Artillery Train again loaned Handel their timpani from the Tower, as they had for *Joshua*, but more surprising are the 36 pounds of explosive delivered to Mr Frederick at Vauxhall: "By the Surveyor General Ordered That Lieutenant Colonel Deal Master Gunner at St: James's send Eighteen Chambers with Two Rounds of Powder for each to Vaux Hall tomorrow Morning, the same to be delivered to Charles Frederick Esqr. or his Order, taking his Receipt to return them, and that a Proportion be drawn Accordingly".¹² "Chambers" were small pieces of ordnance without a carriage, used to fire salutes.

It would seem that incidental salutes were to be added to the rehearsal, and, if so, they may in fact have been included within the composition, as the second issue of the published

Description states ("After a grand Overture of Warlike Instruments, composed by Mr. *Handel*, in which eighteen small Cannon were fired [...]". Certainly 36 pounds of gunpowder divides nicely amongst 18 cannon and would have effectively supplied the "bruit de guerre" which Handel specified at bar 44 of the opening movement.

In spite of the (over-estimated) number of people at the public rehearsal, no description of Handel's music appears in any report of the event, either public or private. The same neglect has to be admitted for the actual show itself, where the numbers were even greater, but the music still marginalised by the spectacle and its incidental disasters. While it was still light, the King, his son, the Duke of Cumberland, and the court toured the Machine, and presented purses to the operatives.

The whole Band of Musick (*which began to play soon after 6 o'clock*) perform'd at his Majesty's coming and going, and during his stay in the Machine.¹³

At half an hour after eight, the works were begun by a single rocket from before the library, then the cannon within the chevaux de frize were fired; two rockets were afterwards discharg'd at the front camera of the inclosure, when 101 pieces of cannon placed on *Constitution-hill*, were discharged; after which a great number of rockets of different sorts, balloons, &c. were discharged, to surprising perfection.¹⁴

However, the surprising perfection did not last:

About half an Hour after Nine, in discharging some of the works from the Pavilion at the Left Wing of the Building, it set Fire to the same, and burnt with great *Fury*, so that that, and two of the Arches, were burnt to the Ground; and had not the Carpenters made a Breach by casting

10 See Donald Burrows, *The Master Musicians, Handel*, Oxford, 1994, p. 298 fn. 27.

11 See David Hunter, "Rode the 12,000? Counting coaches, people, and errors en route to the rehearsal of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks", a paper read at the Manchester Baroque Music Conference, July 2004, not yet published.

12 Public Record Office, WO 47/34, Minutes dated 19 April 1749; information from Jacob Simon and David Hunter.

13 The bracketed information was added in *The Gentleman's Magazine's* account after the event; in its earlier reports, 7 o'clock had been quoted as the starting time.

14 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, vol. 19, April 1749, p. 186. Presumably the cannon were positioned at a short distance from Green Park for public safety.

away two Arches, and removing the Timber, and for the Assistance of some Fire-Engines which were in Readiness, in all Probability the whole Fabric would have been consumed. Messengers were going to and from his Majesty all the Time of this Misfortune; and when it was brought under, a Present was made to the most diligent in stopping the Flames.

During the Fire, the grand Rockets and the Sun were discharged; but this Accident prevented the exhibiting some of the most considerable of the Fireworks.

About Eleven the whole Building was illuminated, and continued so until between Two and Three o'Clock. His Majesty and the Royal Family withdrew about Twelve.¹⁵

In spite of mishaps, the whole show lasted some nine hours. A tantrum from the designer, the last thing Mr Frederick needed, was quickly sorted out: when the pavilion caught fire, Servandoni drew his sword on Frederick; he was disarmed and taken into custody, but released the following day after apologizing. At the end the sun, "32 feet in Diameter" and the literal highlight of the scheme, survived to fulfil expectations.

COMPOSITION PROCESS

The *Fireworks Music* autograph bears vivid evidence both of the arguments over the scoring that went on between Handel and the royal administration and of Handel's progressive modifications for further performances. The exact proportions of wind and brass that he intended for Green Park are listed down the left-hand margin of the first page of the score (R.M.20.g.7, f. 16^v), with the number of players *per parte*.¹⁶ Later, we may deduce, he added the instructions for the doubling strings that

would be needed later at the Foundling Hospital (*e Violino 1* etc.), and very lightly cancelled those lines which were not needed for the outdoor version, but needed to be still legible for the copyist. Finally he seems to have gone through the score deleting those items which were solely for the outdoor performance: at the bottom of the first page *et Serpent* was crossed out after *Contra Bassone*, and at bar 44 of the first movement the instruction that seems to read *alla b[ruit] de Guerre* was removed. In *La Réjouissance* we can see when Handel first decided that string parts would definitely be needed in future: his initial thought, as can be deduced from the accolade on the surviving stub between ff. 28^v and 29^r after an original folio with bars 5 to 18 was removed, was to score this number for three trumpets and timpani alone. He then added a fifth stave to these four to accommodate *Violoncelli e Contra Bassi* (the added bar lines do not connect with the upper staves), and instructions to the other staves, which were later lightly cancelled. At the start of the new page (from bar 5) we find the violin parts inserted into the trumpet and horn staves in the first accolade, but both together on a stave of their own in the second accolade (from bar 11). For the final Menuet, which was taken ready-made from the *Occasional Oratorio*, the strings have their own staves, which again are lightly cancelled. The preceding Menuet in D minor is curiously written across the top of two pages of an added bifolium but, from the position of the names in the margin, the strings would appear to have been there from the start.

A further adaptation of scoring can be seen in *La Paix* where, in addition to having string cues, Handel inserts *Tr* for the two oboe lines; although this was his normal abbreviation for Trombe, neither of these parts would have been playable on the natural trumpet, and we must assume that he intended "traversi"; either flutes were a later idea for the outdoor scoring, or (more probably) a change was in-

15 See the second issue of the *Description* [...], see fn. 36, p. 8.

16 See the facsimile of R.M.20.g.7, together with *A Description* [...], and a selection of contemporary engravings (*Documenta Musicologica, Zweite Reihe: Handschriften Faksimiles XXXII*, Kassel, 2004).

tended for the Foundling Hospital. Neither trumpets nor flutes are mentioned in any of our other sources for this movement; they first reappear as "Tr." in Chrysander's edition (1886) without explanation, as "Trav." and "Tr" in a later Eulenburg score (1958) and as Tromba I and II in the earlier HHA volume (1962, 1976).

The opening movement, the Overture proper, makes up the greater part of the work, and at 186 bars plus a 71 bar *da capo* is one of the longest single instrumental movements that Handel wrote. Its roots lie in two earlier concertos which are now bound in the same autograph volume as the *Fireworks Music*. Both were intended as interludes during oratorio performances, and both share the same material for their main movements.¹⁷ In the F major concerto, HWV 335b, we can see the change in Handel's writing when he was essentially copying and transposing rather than composing. The D major concerto, HWV 335a, richly scored with two trumpets, timpani and four horns, is in a manner later adopted by Handel for his *Concerti a due cori*. HWV 335a is a composite of organ concerto and concerto for orchestra, with a bass line in movement 2 marked *Violon./Org* and an indication for *Organo ad libitum* after that movement; 335b is marked *Vc. et Violoni/Org*. Both concertos have the "fade-out" endings that Handel used for the end of an opera, but were equally useful if the concerto was designed to segue into the final act of an oratorio.

Although in the second movement of HWV 335a the two oboes and bassoon simply double the strings, in the first and last movements they are free to alternate and to combine forces with the horns in the *due cori* manner; the strings pursue an independent path throughout. The second movement we will meet again in the *Fireworks Music*; here the brass take no part in the fugal sections, and

only venture to the dominant in the modulating passages. The final $\frac{3}{4}$ Allegro ma non troppo (83 bars in both versions) is related distantly to the E major Andante section of the Coronation Anthem "My heart is inditing", HWV 261 (to the text "Upon thy right hand did stand the Queen").

The annotations on the first of these concertos, HWV 335a, show how Handel at one stage intended to raid it for material for the *Fireworks Music* as well as probably using its finale as part of the indoor version of the *Fireworks Music* (see below). But the opening sections of both the concertos and of the *Fireworks Music* are actually derived from a pre-existing keyboard work, the *Aria mit 24 Variationen* by Johann Philipp Krieger (1649–1725), the Kapellmeister in Halle and Weissenfels.



This simple melody was quarried by Handel for the memorable opening bars of both the Concertos and the Overture, and had already been used in 1737 in *Berenice* to make a Sinfonia of 19 bars; its last appearance is in a revised version of *Solomon* (1759), assembled by Smith junior.

Embedded in *La Paix* are several fragments which may derive, consciously or subconsciously, from Telemann's *Musique de table*, a publication which we know was in Handel's library; the start of *La Réjouissance* is patently based on an aria from the opera *Numitore* by Giovanni Porta, written nearly thirty years earlier, which had been staged by the new Royal Academy of Music in 1720, when Handel was Master of the Orchestra there. However, this same melody is found in Rameau's opera *Naïs*, which opened in Paris the same week

¹⁷ Both works can be found in: Georg Friedrich Händel, *Concerti a due cori*, HHA IV/16, ed. Frederick Hudson, Kassel and Leipzig, 1983, pp. 35–74 and 75–86.

as the firework display in London, in celebration of the same peace treaty (but from the opposing side), and may well derive from traditional military signals.

Handel was as ready to borrow from himself as from any other composer. In addition to taking over and expanding the opening section of the two Concerti to create the new Ouverture (with some telling excisions where the forward momentum had lapsed), in the section starting at bar 94 Handel spliced in 14 bars of his earlier material from HWV 335a (bars 13–29), now decorated with scales. This technique, described by Winton Dean as “grouting”, is best displayed a little later at the cadence of the first section of the Allegro. Handel originally had bar 110 leading directly into 115 (as can be seen from the *custodes* at the end of the bar). Finding this too curt, he made an attempt to simply splice in some semiquaver passage-work, bars 67–75 taken over literally from the second movement of HWV 335a (the manuscript shows the relevant indicators for the copyist). Only as a final solution did he decide to write in four newly composed bars of semiquavers, creating a copyist’s nightmare at the page-turn between bars 113 and 114, but a perfectly proportioned final cadence.

Handel’s instinct for proportion also led to the excising of superfluous bars in the opening section; such contractions are visible in the manuscript between bars 19 and 20, and again between bars 31 and 32 where two bars were removed. He also had doubts about the length of *La Paix*, removing the central repeat marks, and then replacing them again with *stat*.

His eye for improvement means that the structurally very similar passages of semiquavers borrowed from the Concerto HWV 335a are upgraded in the *Fireworks Music* from the constant bariolage of the concerto to running patterns where Handel rings the changes to figuration in every bar even when the harmony is unvarying (compare the pedal point of bars 111–114 in the *Fireworks Music* with the

structurally identical bars 97–101 in the Concerto). He was also critical of smaller details as well as the “grand plan”; in bar 59 of the opening Allegro we can see him recharging his pen to change a single note in the trumpet line from e” to a”, neatly breaking the too-predictable repetition, but still preserving formal order. Handel’s natural sense of economy shows in bars 99ff. (repeated from bar 162); since the texture of true fugal writing from the earlier concerto would have been too thin for this monumental work, he adopted the harmonised version of the fugue subject almost *notatim* from the second movement of HWV 335a (bars 19–27).

The later movements present fewer problems, although Handel’s alterations are not always water-tight; at the end of the Bourrée he cancelled *La seconda volta senza Hautb: et Bassons* but left *2 fois* at the top. Obviously the version without winds was only possible when strings were present, but it leaves open the question of whether the movement was to be played twice by winds alone. Similarly at the opening of *La Réjouissance* he lightly cancelled the *e Violino 1* and *e Viola* but overlooked the second violins, cellos and basses. There are similarly confusing corrections at the end of the movement and after the final Menuet.

A possible explanation is suggested by the indicator  with *Vide* at the end of *La Paix*. This takes the copyist back to the final movement of HWV 335a, and probably that movement (possibly preceded by the Organo ad libitum improvisation indicated in the left-hand margin of f. 7^v) formed the finale of the indoor version of *Fireworks Music*, at last giving the strings an independent existence. However, when the music was published in parts by John Walsh (first advertised on 2 June 1749 and issued on the 25th), he included all the movements in the autograph as *The Musick for the Royal Fireworks in all its Parts viz. French Horns, Trumpets, Kettle Drums, Violins, Hoboys, Violoncello, & Bassoons. with a Thorough*

Bass for the Harpsicord or Organ. Walsh omitted the second bassoon part and contrabassoon entirely, and offered no viola part, but provided figuring for the bass-line. A later issue added the words "Handel's Fire Musick" before the Overture, and there were several arrangements for "German Flute, Violin or Harpsicord" issued over the next forty years. The first printed full score appeared in Samuel Arnold's edition in 1788, clearly based on the Walsh parts, with an added viola part and including the figuring given by Walsh on the (single) bass line; however, Arnold chose to give Corno I a part identical to Corno II, presumably since the high tessitura of Handel's first horn part would have been considered impractical in 1788. No further full score appeared until Chrysander's volume 47 in 1886, the first to be based on the autograph.

PERFORMANCE CRITERIA

The extant evidence from Handel's only two performances of the *Fireworks Music* is hardly sufficient for modern concert usage; for the "open air" version, Handel's sequence and scoring is clear enough and if the number of players has to be modified the intended proportions between the instruments can still be retained, noting that all the instruments are utilised *en masse*, with no solos indicated anywhere in the original score. Even the percussion, although reduced from the original suggestion of "8 pair of kettle-drums, 12 side-drums" to three sets of timpani, would still suggest a proportional reduction to 4 or 5 side-drummers. No music was written out for the side-drums, but the players were trained in a variety of beats and signals such as the "flam, drag, rooffe, diddle, rowle" (described by Randal Holme in the *Academy of Armoury*, c. 1686). Of the specific rhythms, the rapid dactylic pattern ♪♪♪♪♪ was universally recognised as

the signal for "Fire!", hence its presence in all battle music. Whether the timpani part was also open to elaboration is unclear; the notation is fully rhythmic as it stands, with only one *tr* in the whole of *Fireworks Music* (bar 42 of the opening movement) and none in its earlier Concerto version. However, for indoor performance it is clear that Handel intended different scoring and probably a different sequence of movements; the most radical interpretation would be a sequence of Overture, Bourrée and La Paix, followed by the Allegro ma non troppo from the Concerto HWV 335a.

Since in his normal indoor orchestral ensembles Handel preserved a ratio of roughly one oboe for every 3 or 4 violins, the winds of *Fireworks Music* in its indoor version would require at least 4 oboes, and between 2 and 4 bassoons balancing strings 8 V. I, 6 V. II, 5 Va., 4 Vc. und 2 Cbb., although the oboes might be replaced with traversi (or the players may even have changed instruments) in La Paix. Multiple timpani would rarely have been used indoors, and it is probable that the side-drums (like the serpent) were intended for Green Park only. The viola line was an after-thought and Handel's indications to double Oboe III, Bassi or Tromba III are only partially useful as instructions for extrapolating a plausible part – the solution proposed by Chrysander, for instance, in the first half of La Réjouissance is very unlikely, being almost all on the bottom string and crossing below the bass-line in bar 8. The version proposed editorially here is sometimes in unison and sometimes at the octave with the bass (or, in the first movement, Ob. III), according to eighteenth-century practice; editorially transposed sections in the first movement are shown in small notes in this edition.

The question of applying a *da capo* formula to the pair of minuets remains open. The instructions for two repeats of Minuet II are explicit, but for concert purposes sometimes too lengthy; a solution can be to alternate wind

and brass scoring for each section, and add a *da capo* without repeats for the full ensemble, i. e. A¹, A², B¹, B², A³, B³ (A: bars 1–8, B: bars 9–16).

No continuo instruments would have been expected in the open-air, but it is possible that Handel would have directed from the keyboard for the Foundling Hospital performance, the more so if (as it seems) he incorporated movements from HWV 335a. However, the figuring published by Walsh (not included in this edition) is very fallible and needs a thorough overhaul if it is to be used today.

Christopher Hogwood

EDITORIAL NOTE

All editorial additions are indicated as follows: letters by italics, notes and other signs through smaller print, ties and slurs by broken lines, and figuring in the Basso continuo by round brackets. All letters and dynamic signs (f, p, etc.) which have been taken over from the sources are reproduced in direct print: such dynamic signs are given here in the style in normal use today (e. g. p instead of *pia* or *pian*, etc.). The numbering of the individual movements is included for practical reasons. As far as possible, ornaments have been reproduced according to modern typographical usage.

VORWORT

DER AUFTRAG

Der Frieden von Aachen wurde 1748 unterzeichnet, um den Österreichischen Erbfolgekrieg zu beenden, der überwiegend ein Streit um Kolonien zwischen England und Frankreich war – in Nordamerika wird dieser Konflikt immer noch als „King George's War“ bezeichnet. Viele Bedingungen dieses Friedens waren ungünstig für Britannien, das, indem es akzeptierte, zum *status quo ante bellum* zurückzukehren, strategisch wichtige Handelspositionen in Neuschottland und Gibraltar aufgeben musste. Andererseits wurde Madras zurückgegeben und die Erbfolge des Hauses Hannover in Großbritannien bestätigt, so dass der König überzeugt werden konnte, den Frie-

den, wenn schon nicht kommerziell, so doch dynastisch als einen Sieg anzusehen. Die Öffentlichkeit aber nannte ihn eine Kapitulation und übte heftige Kritik an der Regierung. Horace Walpole stellte die Lage in einem Brief an Horace Mann vom 24. Oktober 1748 zusammenfassend so dar: „Der Frieden zwischen uns, Frankreich und Holland wurde unterzeichnet, er ist aber nicht im mindesten erfreulich; die Aktien steigen nicht, und die Kaufleute sind unzufrieden [...] kurz gesagt, es hat nicht das leiseste Anzeichen von öffentlicher Freude gegeben; die Regierung wird aber ein prächtiges Feuerwerk veranstalten.“¹

1 Horace Walpole's *Correspondence with Sir Horace Mann*, hrsg. v. W. S. Lewis, Warren Hunting Smith und George L. Lam, New Haven 1954, Bd. III, S. 511.

Der erste Plan sah für Oktober 1748 ein Feuerwerk „vor dem Haus des Herzogs von Newcastle in Lincoln's Inn-field“ vor,² die Feier wurde aber verschoben, um Zeit für umfangreichere Vorbereitungen, zusätzliche Propaganda, besseren Kontakt zum König statt zu seinen Beamten, eine größere Besucherzahl und, wenn möglich, besseres Wetter zu gewinnen. Als Austragungsort wurde der gepflegte obere Teil von St. James's Park gewählt, der erst vor kurzem auf Veranlassung der Königin verschönert worden war und separat als Green Park bekannt wurde. Er lag in der Nähe von Buckingham House (damals noch nicht „Palace“ genannt) und wurde von Queen's Library überragt.

Die „Green Park Machine“ war eine Bühnenkonstruktion, für deren Errichtung und Bedienung man sich Techniker aus Frankreich und Italien geholt hatte. Der Chevalier Servandoni (eigentlich Jean-Nicholas Servan), der die Maschine konstruiert hatte, war nach Diderot, „ein großer Maschinenmeister, großer Architekt, guter Maler und geschmackvoller Dekorateur“.³ Er hatte in den 20er-Jahren im King's Theatre als Bühnenbildner für Händels Opern gearbeitet. Für das Feuerwerk entwarf er „einen prächtigen dorischen Tempel“ im besten Trompe-l'œil-Stil:

Obwohl es sich bei den Materialien nur um Holz und mit Leim und weißer Farbe gestrichene Leinwand handelte, wirkte er sehr elegant, wie ein Tempel aus gutem Stein, oben mit einer Balustrade, außer in der Mitte, wo er anstelle eines Giebels hoch aufragte, um einige Bilder und das königliche Wappen aufzunehmen, bis zu dessen Spitze er 114 Fuß hoch war. In seinem Schmuck mit Statuen und anderen Figuren, Blumengirlanden und anderem Zierrat entzückte er die zahllosen Betrachter sehr. Von diesem Tempel, der 144 Fuß lang war, aus erstreckten sich zwei niedrige Flügel mit 5 Bögen auf jeder Seite nach Nord und Süd. An den Enden der Flügel stand jeweils ein Pavillon, das Ganze maß 410 Fuß. Die verschiedenen Abbildungen dieses

Bauwerks, die publiziert wurden, die amtliche nicht ausgenommen, stimmten nicht mit dem Erscheinungsbild am Abend der Darbietung überein.⁴

Die offizielle *Description*⁵ ist, was immer ihre Mängel sein mögen, unsere beste Quelle für die Beschreibung der „Inschriften, Statuen, allegorischen Bilder usw.“ die das Bauwerk schmückten, sowie der transparenten Bilder, die von innen her beleuchtet werden sollten. Das Feuerwerk selbst sollte von Gaetano Ruggieri und Giuseppe Sarti, beide aus Bologna, geplant und beaufsichtigt werden. In Zusammenarbeit mit dem Royal Laboratory in Woolwich planten sie, etwa 10 000 Raketen und andere Feuerwerkskörper hochgehen zu lassen. Gipfeln sollte das Ganze in der großen Sonne mit der Inschrift „VIVAT REX“, die oben auf der Maschine fünf Stunden lang in „hellem Feuer“ brennen sollte.

Stiche der vorgesehenen Bauwerke und Beschreibungen „des geplanten Feuerwerks“ wurden gedruckt, die meisten davon inoffiziell, zusammen mit Gerüchten über eine bemerkenswert große Militärkapelle:

Die Musikkapelle die bei dem Feuerwerk im Green Park spielen soll, soll aus 40 Trompeten, 20 Hörnern, 16 Oboen, 16 Fagotten, 8 Paar Pauken, 12 Kleinen Trommeln sowie einer entsprechenden Anzahl von Flöten und Querpfeifen bestehen; mit 100 Kanonen, die nach und nach einzeln zur Musik abzufeuern sind. Siehe die Ansicht des Feuerwerks in unserem Magazin vom vergangenen Dezember.⁶

In der Bildunterschrift zu diesem Stich wird Händels Name zum ersten Mal erwähnt: „Eine Kapelle von hundert Musikern soll spielen, bevor das Feuerwerk beginnt, die Musik dazu soll von Mr. Handel komponiert werden“, weshalb wir annehmen können, dass der Kompo-

2 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Bd. 18, Juli 1748, S. 331.

3 Denis Diderot, *Édition critique et annotée*, Paris 1984, Bd. 14 (*Salon de 1765, Essais sur la peinture*), S. 124.

4 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Bd. 19, April 1749, S. 186.

5 *A description of the machine for the fireworks, with all its ornaments, and a detail of the manner in which they are to be exhibited in St. James's Park, Thursday, April 27, 1749, on account of the general peace, signed at Aix La Chapelle [...]*, London 1749, später mit Veränderungen neu herausgegeben.

6 *The London Magazine*, 14. Januar 1749.

nist über die vorgesehene Instrumentierung im Bilde und einverstanden war, für diese zu schreiben. Händel wurde aber, wenn nicht sogar erst nachträglich, offenbar erst relativ spät in den Plan einbezogen. Dies könnte eher an seinem Terminkalender als an einer Verzögerung von offizieller Seite gelegen haben. Wahrscheinlich hatte es schon Verhandlungen darüber gegeben, was angesichts der bereits geplanten Vielzahl von Militärmusikinstrumenten musikalisch überhaupt möglich war. Seine Ungeduld mit der Bürokratie ist leicht verständlich und kommt deutlich in den Briefen zum Ausdruck, die die beiden Beamten wechselten, die mit ihm verhandeln sollten – der Generalfeldzeugmeister Herzog von Montagu und der überempfindliche Charles Frederick, der sich hochtrabend „Kontrolleur des Feuerwerks seiner Majestät sowohl für Krieges- als auch Siegeszwecke“ nannte.

Zunächst war es schwierig für sie, Händel davon zu überzeugen, eine öffentliche Probe in Vauxhall Gardens abzuhalten und so viele Militärmusikinstrumente einzubeziehen, wie der König zu sehen hoffte:

Duke of Montagu an Charles Frederick (28. März 1749)

Ich weiß nicht, was dagegen spräche, die Probe der Musik in Voxhal abzuhalten. Und wenn das geschieht und gefragt wird, wie es dazu kommt, muss der wahre Grund angegeben werden.

Ich glaube, Hendel schlägt jetzt vor, nur 12 Trompeten und 12 Hörner zu verwenden. Zuerst sollt es je 16 geben, und ich erinnere mich, das dem König gesagt zu haben, der sich damals aber gegen jegliche Musik aussprach. Als ich ihn über das Ausmaß der Militärmusik unterrichtete, die es geben sollte, war er zufriedener und sagte, er hoffe, dass keine Fiedeln dabei sein würden. Jetzt schlägt Händel vor, die Anzahl der Trompeten usw. zu reduzieren und Violinen zu verwenden. Ich zweifle nicht im mindesten daran, dass der König, wenn er das hört, sehr wenig erfreut sein wird. Wenn die Angelegenheit dem König mit Sicherheit gefallen soll, darf es keine anderen als militärische Instrumente geben. Alles andere wird ihn nach meiner Überzeugung in schlechte Laune versetzen. Daher bin ich mir sicher, dass es Händel ziemt, so viele Trompe-

ten und andere militärische Instrumente wie möglich zu verwenden, wenn er schon nicht die Anzahl der Violinen reduziert, was er, wie ich denke, tun sollte, obwohl ich glaube, dass er niemals davon überzeugt werden kann. Ich erwähne das, weil ich sehr spät aus einer sehr zuverlässigen Quelle erfahren habe, dass der König innerhalb der letzten 14 Tage sich selbst für diesen Vorschlag ausgesprochen hat.⁷

Obwohl stets angenommen wurde, dass Händel aus logistischen Gründen nicht in Vauxhall proben wollte – sicherlich hätte das vollständige Orchester nicht in die „Music Box“ gepasst – könnte der wahre Grund der Umstand gewesen sein, dass die Veranstaltung öffentlich angekündigt werden (und der Park einen guten Gewinn aus dem Kartenverkauf ziehen) sollte. Händel wollte nicht nur neue Musik für die Veranstaltung haben, sondern hatte kurz vorher auch zugesagt, die *Feuerwerksmusik* bei einem Wohltätigkeitskonzert vier Wochen später im Foundling Hospital zu wiederholen.

Der Streit über die Instrumentierung war vielleicht nur Ausdruck eines Konfliktes zwischen Fachleuten (Servandoni, Händel) und Amateuren (Frederick, Montagu) im Geschäft dramatischer und musikalischer Darstellung. Wenn man beim musikalisch Offensichtlichen beginnt, kann man annehmen, dass Händel von Anfang an drei wichtige Faktoren erkannte.

Erstens konnten die ursprünglich bekanntgegebenen „militärischen Kräfte“ niemals zusammen spielen: 40 Trompeten und 16 Oboen können nicht gleichzeitig in einem Musikstück eingesetzt werden, weil die Blechbläser die Holzbläser dann völlig übertönen. Wahrscheinlich hatte man zunächst an eine Folge von Märschen im Wechsel mit Fanfaren gedacht. Montagu berichtet, dass man als nächstes 16 Trompeten und 16 Hörner vorschlug und dass diese auf je 12 (und schließlich 9) reduziert wurden. Die einfachste Erklärung

⁷ Diese und andere hier zitierte Dokumente stehen im *Händel-Handbuch*, Bd. 4, S. Anm. 1, S. 422–427.

dafür ist vielleicht, dass es nicht genug zusätzliche Militärmusiker gab, die Noten lesen konnten. Militärmusiker spielten gewöhnlich auswendig. Händel wartete einfach ab, bis man die Anzahl der Musiker hinreichend reduziert hatte.

Zweitens hätte jedes für ein so ungewöhnlich großes Orchester geschriebene Werk nach seiner Uraufführung keine Zukunft mehr gehabt. Händel wurde vielleicht von seinem Verleger John Walsh daran erinnert, zweifellos aber werden sowohl die Aussicht auf Veröffentlichung als auch das Wohltätigkeitskonzert im Foundling Hospital Händel bewogen haben, Streicher einzufügen.

Drittens erkannte Händel sicherlich, dass damals kein anderer Londoner Komponist imstande war, die erforderliche Partitur zu erstellen. Seine jahrelange Erfahrungen mit Theaterverhandlungen dürften Händel auf die Idee gebracht haben, Mr. Frederick, der offensichtlich ein musikalischer Laie war, einen Blick auf eine Manuskriptstelle mit Streicherstimmen werfen zu lassen, und dies als Lockmittel zu benutzen, um die zu hohe Anzahl der Bläser zu reduzieren. Er wird angeboten haben, die Streicher, die im Green Park ohnehin keine Wirkung gemacht hätten, gegen eine vertretbare Anzahl von Militärmusikern auszutauschen, die Noten lesen konnten. Unterdessen fuhr er fort, im Manuskript einzutragen, wo im Foundling Hospital Streicher benutzt werden würden, und setzte auch seinen Widerstand gegen den Plan einer öffentlichen Probe in Vauxhall fort:

Herzog von Montagu an Charles Frederick (9. April)
Sir, – als Antwort auf Mr. Hendels Brief an Sie (der nach dem Stil zu urteilen mit Sicherheit nicht von ihm selbst stammt) kann ich nicht mehr sagen, als dass mir heute Morgen bei Hofe der König die Ehre gab, mit mir über das Feuerwerk zu sprechen. Während dieses Gesprächs gefiel es seiner Majestät, mich zu fragen, wann Mr. Hendels Ouverture geprobt werden sollte. Ich sagte seiner Majestät, dass ich wegen der Schwierigkeiten, die Mr. Hendel in dieser Hinsicht mache, wirklich nichts darüber sagen könne. Der [Park-]Chef von Voxhall hat nämlich

angeboten, uns all seine Laternen, Lampen usw. im Werte von 700 Pfund zu leihen, wodurch wir dem Zeugamt Ausgaben in eben dieser Höhe ersparen würden, dazu 30 seiner Angestellten, um bei der Illuminierung zu helfen, unter der Bedingung, dass Mr. Hendels Ouverture in Voxhall geprobt werden würde. Mr. Hendel hat bisher abgelehnt, das in Foxhall zu machen, was seine Majestät offenbar nicht richtig fand. Ich denke, dass er sich völlig falsch verhält, und da es mir überaus gleichgültig ist, ob wir Händels Ouverture bekommen oder nicht, da sie ganz einfach von einem anderen geliefert werden kann, werde ich die Genugtuung haben, dass seine Majestät erfährt, warum wir sie nicht haben. Da also Mr. Hendel den Grund kennt und weiß, welchen Nutzen und welche Ersparnis eine Probe in Voxhall bringt, und dennoch fortfährt, seinen Eifer, Seiner Majestät zu dienen, zum Ausdruck zu bringen, indem er tut, was diesem so sehr zuwiderläuft, indem er die Probe nicht dort stattfinden lässt, werde ich jeden Gedanken an seine Ouverture aufgeben und mich um eine andere bemühen.⁸

Offenbar akzeptierte Händel schließlich die Probe in Vauxhall, die dann für den 21. April 11 Uhr vormittags angesetzt wurde. Am 17. des Monats gab es auch eine Vorprobe in Händels Haus in der Brook Street, an der sicherlich nur einige der wichtigsten Instrumentalisten beteiligt waren. Die gesamte Darbietung in Vauxhall zog „die glänzendste und zahlreichste Versammlung [an], die es je gegeben hat [...] ein Publikum von über 12000 Personen (eine Eintrittskarte kostete 2 Shilling 6 Pence)“⁹. Die gerade erst errichtete Westminster Bridge war wegen Reparaturarbeiten aufgrund von Senkungen schon wieder geschlossen, weshalb ein Verkehrsstau auf der alten London Bridge unvermeidlich war,¹⁰ der wiederum gelegentlich schlechtes Benehmen hervorrief: „Ein so großer Zustrom führte zu einer derartigen Stockung auf *London-Bridge*, dass drei Stunden lang kein Wagen passieren konnte; – die Lakaien waren so zahlreich, dass sie den Weg versperrten, so dass ein Handgemenge ent-

8 *Händel-Handbuch*, Bd. 4, s. Anm. 1, S. 423.

9 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, Bd. 19, April 1749, S. 185.

10 Siehe Donald Burrows, *The Master Musicians, Handel*, Oxford 1994, S. 298, Anm. 27.

stand, in dem einige Herren verletzt wurden“ (*The Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1749, S. 185). Der normale Eintritt in Vauxhall betrug einen Shilling; bei dem erhöhten Preis von 2 Shilling 6 Pence hätten 12 000 Besucher dem Direktor, Jonathan Tyers, einen Profit von über 1500 Pfund eingebracht. Diese Besucherzahl kann aber nicht stimmen; in Betracht der normalen Verkehrsmittel – Fuß, Wagen, Schiff – waren es vielleicht 2–3000 (vielleicht handelt es sich bei den 12 000 sogar um einen Druckfehler statt 1–2000).¹¹

Der Königliche Artilleriezug ließ Händel wieder seine Pauken aus dem Tower aus, wie es schon für *Joshua* geschehen war. Überraschender sind aber die 36 Pfund Schießpulver, die Mr. Frederick nach Vauxhall geliefert bekam: „Auf Befehl des Generalinspektors hat Oberstleutnant Deal, Stückmeister in St. James's, 18 Kammern mit Pulver für je zwei Salven morgen früh nach Vaux Hall zu schaffen und Charles Frederick Esqr. oder seiner Ordonnanz zu übergeben, seine Quittung entgegenzunehmen und die Übereinstimmung von Quittung und Lieferung zu bestätigen“¹². „Kammern“ waren kleine Geschütze ohne Lafette, die zum Salutschießen verwendet wurden.

Vermutlich wurden die Salutschüsse während der Probe abgegeben, und wenn das so war, können sie tatsächlich auch in den Ablauf der Komposition eingegliedert gewesen sein, wie die zweite Ausgabe der gedruckten *Description* konstatiert („Nach einer großen Ouverture mit Militärinstrumenten, komponiert von Mr. Handel, während der achtzehn kleine Kanonen abgefeuert wurden [...]). Sicherlich lassen sich 36 Pfund Schießpulver gut auf 18 Kanonen verteilen – sie werden

wirkungsvoll für den „bruit de guerre“ gesorgt haben, den Händel im Takt 44 der Einleitung angab.

Abgesehen von der (überschätzten) Anzahl der Leute auf der öffentlichen Probe, gibt es in keinem Bericht über das Ereignis, weder öffentlich noch privat, eine Beschreibung von Händels Musik. In gleicher Weise wurde die Veranstaltung selbst negiert, auf der die Menschenmenge sogar noch größer war, die Musik aber durch das Feuerwerk und seine katastrophalen Begleiterscheinungen noch mehr an den Rand gedrängt wurde. Als es noch hell war, besichtigten der König, sein Sohn, der Herzog von Cumberland und der Hofstaat die Maschine und machten den Arbeitern Geldgeschenke.

Die ganze Musikkapelle (die kurz nach 6 Uhr zu spielen anfang) spielte, als seine Majestät kam und ging, sowie, während er sich in der Maschine aufhielt.¹³

Um halb Neun begannen die Feuerwerke mit einer einzelnen Rakete, die vor der Bibliothek abgeschossen wurde, dann wurden die Kanonen innerhalb des chevaux de frise abgefeuert; dann wurden zwei Raketen vor dem vorderen Tor der Einzäunung gezündet, während auf dem *Constitution-hill* 101 Kanonen abgefeuert wurden; danach zündete man mit überraschender Perfektion eine große Anzahl von Raketen verschiedener Art, Ballons usw.¹⁴

Die überraschende Perfektion hielt jedoch nicht lange an:

Als man gegen halb zehn einige der Feuerwerkskörper vom Pavillon am linken Flügel des Gebäudes aus zündete, geriet der Pavillon in Brand und brannte so heftig, dass er zusammen mit zwei Bögen niederbrannte. Ohne die Zimmerleute, die eine Bresche schlugen, indem sie zwei Bögen und das Bauholz entfernten, und ohne die Hilfe einiger Spritzenwagen, die bereitstanden, wäre höchstwahrscheinlich die ganze An-

11 Siehe David Hunter, „Rode the 12,000? Counting coaches, people, and errors en route to the rehearsal of Handel's Music for the Royal Fireworks“, ein Vortrag der Manchester Baroque Music Conference vom Juli 2004, nicht publiziert.

12 Public Record Office, WO 47/34, Minutes, datiert 19. April 1749; Information von Jacob Simon und David Hunter.

13 Die Information in Klammern wurde im Bericht von *The Gentleman's Magazine* nach dem Ereignis gegeben. In früheren Berichten war 7 Uhr als Anfangszeit angegeben worden.

14 *The Gentleman's Magazine*, S. 186. Vermutlich hatte man die Kanonen wegen der öffentlichen Sicherheit in einer gewissen Entfernung von Green Park aufgestellt.