



Bonus

Teacher Resource Guide

Teaching Music through
Performance in Orchestra

Volume 3

Grade 3

Chamber Suite in D

George Frideric Handel
(1685-1759)

arr. Samuel Applebaum

BELWIN MILLS

STRING ORCHESTRAS

Because of the generic nature of the information about Handel and Baroque stylistic characteristics, certain units below also appear in Stephen Benham's article, "Allegro from Concerto Grosso No. 5," found in Volume 3 of *Teaching Music through Performance in Orchestra*. Stephen Benham's excellent research and descriptions have been used *verbatim* in some of the units of this article. He is an Associate Professor of Music Education at Duquesne University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.



Unit 1: Composer

George Frideric Handel was one of the most versatile composers in music history. His compositions span multiple genres, including orchestral and vocal styles. He is responsible for creating and developing the English oratorio, of which *Messiah* is perhaps the most famous example.

Handel received his earliest music education in Halle, in the Saxony-Anhalt region of Germany. He received his earliest music education in Halle, although it appears that his father encouraged him to study law. In spite of his father's prohibitions, which included a prohibition on musical instruments, Handel found ways to practice. His talent was recognized at age nine by the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, who encouraged Handel's father to provide George Frideric with an education in music. As a result, Handel was soon studying organ, harpsichord, and composition with Friedrich Zachow, organist at the Liebfrauenkirche in Halle.

Handel attended the University of Halle in 1702–1703 but quickly left to study opera and composition in larger cities of Germany and Italy. He was later active in Hamburg, Naples, and Rome and appointed as Kapellmeister to the electoral court in Hanover in 1710. By the fall of 1710, Handel had taken his first trip to London, England, which would become his adopted country.

By 1714, Handel was well established in London and had already received royal commissions to write music for the church and the royal court. His output was prolific and included Italian, German, and English sacred music, secular cantatas, operas, oratorios, and, to a lesser extent, works for orchestra and instrumental chamber ensembles. His most important instrumental music dates from the London period, including the *Water Music* and *Royal Fireworks* suites. Although less well-known, Handel's two sets of *concerti grossi*, Op. 3 and Op. 6, reflect his understanding and mastery of the Italian art form. It is likely that Handel's association with Arcangelo Corelli, who conducted Handel's oratorio *La resurrezione* in Rome in 1708 in the presence of the composer, influenced Handel's compositional style in regard to the *concerti grossi*.

Handel's lifespan is roughly parallel to another important Baroque composer, Johann Sebastian Bach (1685–1750), who spent the majority of his working years in cities close to Halle, including Cöthen and Leipzig. Unfortunately, the two great composers were never able to meet. By the time Bach became acquainted with Handel's work, Handel was already firmly established in England. Handel did return to visit his family in Halle on at

least two occasions (in 1719 and 1729). Records indicate that Bach sent invitations to Handel during both visits, but with no positive result. In the last years of his life, Handel experienced significant health problems, including blindness and perhaps a type of seizure disorder. Handel died in London on April 14, 1759.

Unit 2: Composition

This suite follows the Baroque *sonata da chiesa* (church sonata) format of slow-fast-slow-fast movements as standardized by Corelli. Applebaum derived this chamber suite from the Violin Sonata, Op. 1, No. 15 (Handel Gesellschaft Edition, Vol. XXVII). In the 1935 G. Schirmer edition entitled “Six Sonatas,” the original composition is listed as Sonata VI in E Major and is written for violin and a richly romanticized piano part. Applebaum’s arrangement is in the easier key of D major, and the time values of the notes have been changed in every movement, that is, sixteenth notes in the violin sonata are now eighth notes in the chamber suite, with appropriate changes to the meters, e.g., $3/2$ is now $6/4$. The basso continuo line remains unaltered from the violin sonata, but the inner voices have been realized by Applebaum in a style more appropriate for strings than keyboard.

In the third movement, Largo, in the G. Schirmer edition, the editor provided a Double (variation) to show twentieth-century performers one way of embellishing the skeletal violin melody written by Handel. The keyboard part remains unchanged. As shown in Unit 7 below, Applebaum repeats this short nineteen-measure movement but moves the melody from the cellos to the violins for the second half. This is not a Double in the true sense of the word (doubling note values as a way of writing a variation), but it does vary the texture in the chamber suite. It also provides a welcome textural change for the cellists.

Unit 3: Historical Perspective

The early eighteenth century was a time of tremendous conflict in Europe. The War of Spanish Succession (1701–1704) was fought over conflicting claims to the Spanish throne from France and other European (primarily Holy Roman Empire) countries. When the war ended in 1713, this did not have a positive result on the court of Hanover, where Handel was employed at the time. Handel’s purported support for the treaty may have led to his dismissal from Hanover, at which point Handel remained in England.



The beginning of Handel's residence in London also coincided with the ascension of George I to the throne in 1714 and the onset of the subsequent Georgian period, which lasted until approximately 1830. Like Handel, George I was not a native English speaker but spoke German, as he was also Elector of Hanover. George I died in 1727 and his son, George II, assumed the throne, which he held until his death in 1760. Handel found favor with both kings and enjoyed substantial royal patronage throughout his career, although his popularity waned as public taste changed in England.

Unit 4: Technical Considerations

The key of D major predominates throughout, with brief excursions into the dominant and relative minor. Applebaum has provided ample fingerings and bowings, which always saves preparation time for the teacher. A keyboard part is provided, but it is better suited for harpsichord (acoustic or electric) rather than piano.

Unit 5: Stylistic Considerations

No fewer than eleven performance practice directions are listed at the beginning of the score by the editor. While some people may quibble about the historical accuracy of the Baroque style as published in this 1977 Belwin-Mills edition, it is at least helpful stylistically and musically to young string players. Rather than criticize the over-editing by "historically informed" standards, one should think of this edition as an excellent tool for teaching phrasing encapsulated in a thoroughly delightful composition. Most notable is the letter "s" that Applebaum places over certain notes "to be played a bit softer than the preceding note." This addresses one of the most grievous musical sins of young players: emphasizing or "hitting" the last note of a phrase. One can use the imagery of the strong-weak phrase ending as a curtsy or a flourish with the arms when taking a bow during the eighteenth century.

All instruments can remain in first position for all four movements, except for a few half-position fingerings in the double bass and a short excursion up to a high C-sharp in the first violins. A-sharps are found in the third movement.

Unit 6: Musical Elements (Teaching Concepts and Strategies)

Special care should be given to the detailed performance practice suggestions listed at the beginning of the score. Because there are few technical difficulties for an advanced middle school or a high school string orchestra, there is ample opportunity to emphasize the nuances of phrasing. Great care should be taken with tapering the ends of phrases, which is not natural for young players, and which is often overlooked by conductors of young groups.

Even though modern instruments are being used, the conductor can insist upon a much lighter, though no less lively, approach to playing in a good Baroque style. Avoid the heaviness of style from nineteenth-century influences on string playing. Buoyancy and a sense of forward motion are necessary to keep these movements from flagging and being heavy-footed. In rehearsal, the conductor may ask the players to hold their modern bows on the winding instead of the frog. This approximates the Baroque bow hold and gives a different feel to bowing from using the modern bow hold. Ask the students to retain this sense of lightness when holding the bow in the traditional manner after experimenting with the Baroque bow hold.

Especially in the slow movements, experiment with playing without vibrato, listening carefully to the many types of shading the bow can produce without playing every note with vibrato. Using vibrato only as an ornament, rather than continuously, is one of the many performance practices that was used in various parts of Europe at the time of composition. Whether to play with or without vibrato in the concert will be up to the conductor, of course, but it is worth experimenting with in rehearsal.

Unit 7: Form and Structure

This piece is an excellent example of various Baroque formal structures. The second and fourth movements show the embryonic sonata-allegro form that grew out of the binary dance form. The first movement is an example of through-composed or “continuous generation” of thematic ideas, a common structural feature of many Baroque compositions. Movements are unified structurally through the use of rhythmic and intervallic motifs that recur throughout a single movement.



SECTION	MEASURES	EVENT AND SCORING
MOVEMENT I: ADAGIO		Through-composed
a	1–10	D major; melody in first violins throughout movement
b	11-18	
c	19-24	A major
a'	25-38	D major; the similarity of m. 35 to m. 9 is one example of how previous ideas can recur, however briefly, as a unifying element
	38	Ends on an F-sharp major chord, which is the dominant of B minor with an implication of an <i>attacca</i> to the second movement; nevertheless, Handel begins the second movement in D major
MOVEMENT II: ALLEGRO		Binary dance form
a	1-5	D major; melody in first violins throughout the movement
a	6-10	Exact repeat of mm. 1–5 except for the last two beats of m. 10
b	11-24	Arpeggiated figurations in the first violins
a'	25-31	Modulates to A major by the repeat sign at the end of the first half; though based on the opening theme, this section acts as what would later be known as the closing theme in sonata-allegro form later in the century; repeat of first half
a	1-39	A major, but reverts to D major in mm. 36–39
c	40-48	Begins in B minor (relative minor) and modulates for only four measures, arriving back in D major at m. 53
d	49-66	A major, eventually returning to D major; mm. 53–57 is similar to, but not an exact repeat of mm. 15–19

MOVEMENT III: ANDANTE		ABAB form, with the second half a re-orchestration of the first half
a	1-8	B minor; melody in cellos mm. 1–19
b	9-19	E minor; section ends on an F-sharp major chord, the dominant of B minor
a'	20-27	B minor; melody in first violins mm. 20–38
b'	28-38	E minor; movement ends on an F-sharp major chord, which is the dominant of B minor with an implication of an <i>attacca</i> to the fourth movement; nevertheless, Handel begins the fourth movement in D major
MOVEMENT IV: ALLEGRO		Binary dance form
a	1-15	D major; melody in first violins throughout the movement
b	16-24	D major, modulating to A major by the end of the first half
c (a')	25-29	A major
d	33-44	E minor; hemiola in mm. 42–43; therefore, a slight accent on the downbeat and third beat of m. 42, and on the second beat of m. 43
e	45-51	A major; continuous eighth-note figurations in first violins
f	52-58	Begins in A major, ends in D major
G	59-67	D major; mm. 59–60 reminiscent of mm. 5–6, but with reversal of order of rhythmic figures

Unit 8: Suggested Listening

George Frideric Handel:

Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, Nos. 1-12

Concerti Grossi, Op. 3, Nos. 1-6

Violin Sonatas

Water Music

**Unit 9: Additional References and Resources**

Burrows, Donald. *Handel*. New York: Schirmer Books, 1994.

Burrows, Donald, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Handel*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Sadie, Stanley. *Handel Concertos*. London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972.

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