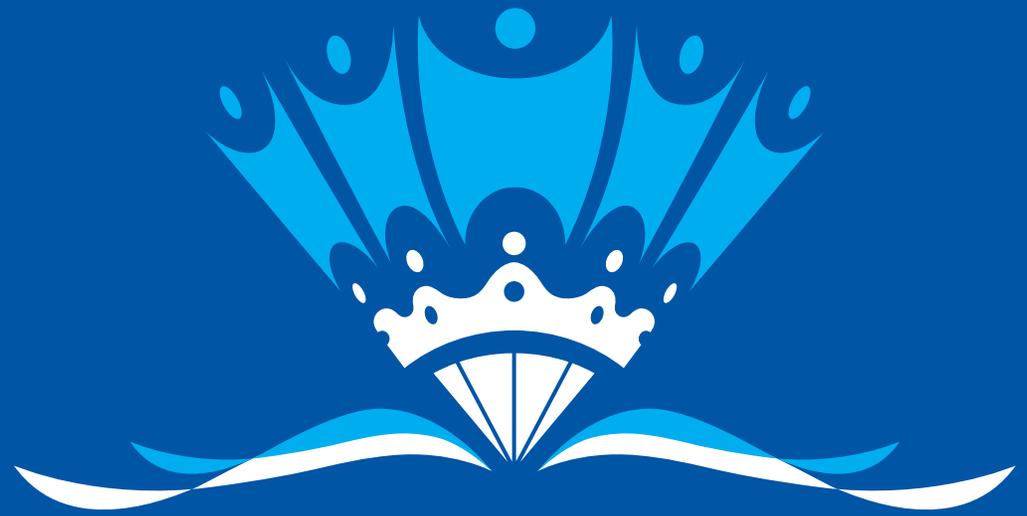


NEW WATER MUSIC FOR THE THAMES
DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT

ENSEMBLE H₂.0

ANNE DUDLEY	"FAST - SLOW - FAST"
DEBBIE WISEMAN	"GIGUE"
JOHN LUNN	"BOURREE"
HOWARD GOODALL	"RIGAUDON"
STEPHEN WARBECK	"AIR ON THE RIVER"
GAVIN GREENAWAY	"PASSEPIED"
JULIAN NOTT	"OVERTURE & ALLEGRO"
CHRISTOPHER GUNNING	"JUBILEE GAVOTTE-ROCK"
GRAHAM FITKIN	"SLOWISH"
ADRIAN JOHNSTON	"ALLA HORNPIPE"
JOCELYN POOK	"LONDON BELLS"



THAMES
1952 DIAMOND JUBILEE 2012
PAGEANT

NEW WATER MUSIC

ORIGINAL MUSIC BY

ANNE DUDLEY • GRAHAM FITKIN • HOWARD GOODALL • GAVIN GREENAWAY
CHRISTOPHER GUNNING • ADRIAN JOHNSTON • JOHN LUNN • JULIAN NOTT
JOCELYN POOK • STEPHEN WARBECK • DEBBIE WISEMAN

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INTRODUCTION

In the nearly 300 years that have passed since Handel wrote his three ever-popular “Water Music” Suites many things have changed in the life of a composer. Although composers still strive to write that original ‘hit tune’ and struggle against seemingly impossible deadlines imposed by our ‘patrons’, we have at our disposal a wider range of tools to assist us. I’m sure Handel would marvel at the technology we now take for granted: a vast library of recordings, instantly available on-line, to check the originality of a tune which seems too good to be true; the software/hardware combination that allows a full set of orchestra parts to be printed from a score in a matter of minutes; or the possibility that composers can make an audio demo with a computer and sampled instruments giving a good idea of what the completed piece will eventually sound like, even if, like me, they can’t fully imagine it using their ‘inner ear’.

Another thing Handel didn’t have access to is the recording studio. This may sound facile but the multi-layered and subtly textured music heard in modern movies, for instance, would not be possible without the recording studio - using sophisticated production techniques like multi-track recording, equalization, compression, computer sequencing, sampling and synthesis. Whereas Handel would rework a piece to suit the available players, nowadays (outside of the concert hall) we are more accustomed to listening to an unchanging recorded interpretation of most new work. Anyone who’s heard a version of a movie theme in an arrangement by someone other than the original composer will recognise how important tone and timbre are (perhaps over and above melody and harmony) to the identity of modern music.

The challenge here is how to perform 11 pieces by 11 composers each with their own sound signature, live, on a boat, sailing down the middle of the Thames. By using technology - drum pads to trigger samples of orchestral percussion (gran cassa, piatti, concert toms, snares) and electronic keyboards to emulate piano, vibraphone and tubular bells plus other more unusual instruments like sarangi and harmonium - we neatly solve the problem, without having to worry about how to fit all the instruments on to the limited space on deck.

One other major technological advantage we have nowadays is the ability to throw the sound of our ensemble the vast distance to the Embankment using a PA system. King George had his royal barge close to the performers so he could hear what they were playing - now everyone on the river banks will be able to hear as well.

- GAVIN GREENAWAY

THESE PIECES WERE COMMISSIONED BY THE
THAMES DIAMOND JUBILEE FOUNDATION,
AND PERFORMED FOR THE FIRST TIME AT
THE THAMES DIAMOND JUBILEE PAGEANT
ON SUNDAY 3 JUNE 2012

SOMETHING IN THE WATER

RE-IMAGINING HANDEL FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

How many composers does it take to write a New Water Music suite? That may sound like the start of a joke, but for the eleven composers who rose to this auspicious challenge it was anything but.

The celebration of a Monarch’s Diamond Jubilee is truly a once in a lifetime event and an opportunity for a very English occasion. The glittering centrepiece of Her Majesty’s celebrations will surely be remembered as the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant on Sunday 3rd June 2012. The River Thames, flowing and sparkling beneath the hulls of a thousand vessels large and small, transformed into a great processional route as boats from across the commonwealth sail together in united celebration. With waving flags, rejoicing crowds and the sound of music ringing out, this jubilee flotilla - winding its way from Battersea to Tower Bridge - is the largest and grandest yet seen on the river.

Some of the music heard on the day is born of this crew of gallant composers, and a hand-picked band of nineteen musicians, as they endeavoured to present their collective take on one of Handel’s most famous works ‘al fresco’ on the deck of a special ‘New Water Music’ barge. It was always going to be an ambitious project, but as this recording alone shows, it was a rewarding one.

A BIT OF HISTORY...

It is of course not the first time such an event has been undertaken on the Thames, for the river has been privy to such pomp and ceremony before. Direct inspiration for this river pageant, however, comes specifically from that which took place in the Summer of 1717, when a flotilla was mounted for King George I. Something of a PR exercise for a Monarch who was apparently rather less than 'flavour of the month' with his subjects at the time, that balmy evening on the Thames saw gilded barges of noble folk take to the water, not to mention the premiere of a new music suite from a composer who seemingly needed to get back in favour with the King.

Before George was crowned King of England, he ruled as elected Prince at the court of Hanover, where Handel was also a court composer. Taking a rather extended leave of absence in order to soak up the sights, sounds and arts of London, the composer left court and never returned; instead gaining favour with Queen Anne's own court in London. When Anne died and George took her place on the English throne, the composer surely had some explaining to do. The music of course did much of the talking and this particular commission perhaps sealed the deal; indeed the King enjoyed Handel's 'Water Music' so much that he is reported to have commanded two further performances right then and there on the Thames. It's easy to understand why it was so well received then and remains so popular today, for Handel composed a veritable chocolate box of themes and pieces, perfect for the occasion of an English summer's evening on the river.

FILLING HANDEL'S SHOES...

The role of 'court composer' falls not to one composer then but eleven for this particular royal assignment, with Maestros Dudley, Fitkin, Goodall, Greenaway, Gunning, Johnston, Lunn, Nott, Pook, Warbeck and Wiseman joining the ranks of Handel, Henry Purcell, Hubert Parry, Edward Elgar, Arnold Bax and Arthur Bliss as composers by appointment. Only the latter three composers actually held the official post of 'Master of the King/Queen's Music', England's answer to 'court composer', but whether officially in post or not it is an undoubted honour to compose for a royal occasion. That sense is reflected in the music that these composers have written.

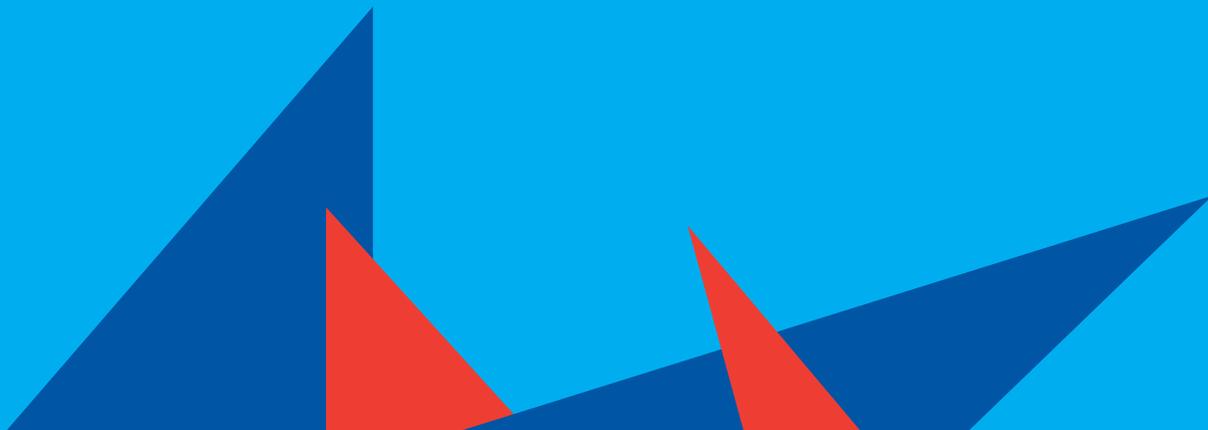
From joyful contemporary anthems and busy fanfares to summer calypsos, swashbuckling music for pretend pirates and beyond, the composers have each taken their lead from elements of Handel's original – some more than others – and distinctly made their individual mark on this most special commission. What's also striking is how very different each piece sounds from the other, despite everyone starting from the same brief. This ultimately speaks volumes for the talent of the group and their unmistakable voices as composers.

Different as they may be, when presented together they create a jubilant musical whole and a dedication befitting the sixty-year reign of a Queen whose unwavering devotion to her people inspires such pride and demands much celebration.

Long Live The Queen.

Michael Beek

Writer, Film Music Journalist, Producer





DEBBIE WISEMAN

“GIGUE”

When I received the email from Gavin allocating the title “Gigue” to me for my movement I was delighted. I was motivated to compose something fun, dramatic and lively for the Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant, and the title “Gigue” (sometimes referred to as “Country Dance” in Handel’s original Water Music) opened up these musical possibilities. Having spent most of my composing life working with pictures to inspire me, I was now faced with a blank piece of manuscript paper, no pictures, and simply the image of the 18-strong floating ensemble playing joyfully on the barge!

Although we were encouraged to use Handel’s original title as inspiration, we were also encouraged not to take this too literally and to use our own musical voice, so I decided that I would simply take the rhythmic, dance-like feel of Handel’s Gigue, and then start afresh.

Without the pictures I would normally have to inspire me, I decided to imagine my own story. The natural rhythm of the Gigue is lively – a rollicking, upbeat feel - and for some reason it suggested pirates... Cartoon-style, rum-swigging, old-world pirates, that is, rather than the much more unpleasant modern-day version; think Captain Pugwash - three-cornered hats, parrots on shoulders, that sort of thing... I decided that the piece would start with a pirate ship attacking the flotilla! They would then be confronted by the courageous defenders of the flotilla, and it won’t be hard to pick out in the piece the heroic trumpet and piccolo-led theme written for our gallant bunch! I also imagined the pirates plotting in a tavern, a little worse-for-wear from a heavy night’s drinking, and the section led by the solo violin musically tells this part of the story. In the end, of course, the champions of the flotilla are triumphant and defeat the aggressive and impudent pirates. The piece concludes with a final defiant statement of the heroic theme on solo trumpet, and the pirates are gone forever.

This little story, and Handel’s title, helped to inspire the music, without pictures, and I hope you’ll enjoy the piece, with or without the pirate pictures to accompany it!



HOWARD GOODALL

“RIGAUDON”

Heaven knows how anyone heard Handel’s Water Music from the banks of the Thames in July 1717, played in the watery open air on gentle baroque instruments, but at least the king did from his adjacent barge, and seems to have been thrilled. Our modern instruments are louder and stronger and technology will provide an amplification Handel did not have, though I suspect his musicians had to compete with rather less noise than is heard on the present-day river; never mind on a Jubilee pageant day. Handel’s Rigaudon is one of the livelier but lesser-known of the Water Music gems but immediately caught my imagination. My method was simple: I played through his piece once on the piano then put it away, forbidding myself to glimpse it again, taking away two tiny fragments of remembered melody and began composing my own Rigaudon as if it were from scratch. What I could retain of Handel’s two nuggets slipped in there, I hope unobtrusively, but once they were there I gradually absorbed them seamlessly into my own new material and more or less forgot what was his, what was mine. I wanted my Rigaudon to be fun, cheeky and rhythmic, with a reflective pause for breath in the middle. Feel free, tides and currents allowing, to dance.

ANNE DUDLEY

“FAST - SLOW - FAST”

The Queen’s Thames Diamond Jubilee Pageant fires the imagination - a once in a lifetime opportunity for a genuine outdoor pageant, on my favourite river. How to score music for a moving boat? My first thoughts were of wind instruments - for a proper “outdoor” sound - and percussion to drive it all along and reverberate under the bridges!

Allegro-adagio-allegro is the classic baroque form: fast, slow, fast, a simple but effective musical sandwich. Taking inspiration from the robust allegro of Handel’s original Water Music, I based the opening on repeated notes and varying harmonies in a pounding 3/4 rhythm. From this the theme takes shape, rising and assertive, initially on trombones. The repeated notes take the music through a sequence of different keys. In contrast, the melodic Adagio is led by a trumpet obbligato. Harmonically this movement takes its inspiration from the baroque - and Morricone! Then, completing the musical sandwich the Allegro is re- stated with an extended ending.





CHRISTOPHER GUNNING

“JUBILEE GAVOTTE-ROCK”

The idea behind the music on our barge is that it should reflect, somehow, the music of Handel's own Water Music, but that it should also feel as if it is composed by somebody living in the 21st Century. This is not necessarily a straightforward brief; there are any number of current trends in music - there has never been a more diverse selection of musical styles to choose from. There were other challenges to consider too; the music had to be celebratory in some way, had to work in an open-air environment, and the instrumentation of it had to be such that a maximum of 20 musicians be used - our barge could not accommodate more! This complicated set of parameters led to a considerable amount of hair-tearing on my part, and in the event I had two goes at it. The first was completely classical in tone - a set of fanfares with a quasi-hymn tune and small quotes from Handel's Minuet. This was rehearsed during a voyage along the Thames one particularly bleak February afternoon, with rain, winds, and low temperatures forcing the long-suffering musicians to don every item of clothing they possessed. Despite the adverse conditions, the rehearsal was considered a success, except that it was pointed out that our music was insufficiently different in nature from that which would be played on some other boats. Back to the drawing board!

For my second attempt I decided on a complete change of style. I'd have percussion in the way current-day film composers tend to use it, and the new line-up would feature strong sounds from some electronic keyboards and saxophones, but I'd still keep the brass. I decided to abandon Handel's Minuet, which frankly wasn't inspiring me, and instead use the main thematic material of the composer's Gavotte. I've used it in my own way, but it should be easily recognisable; there's even some contrapuntal stuff in the middle section where the string quartet comes to the fore, and the two trumpets and saxophones are usually playing in a simple canon. So - Handel with a rock beat? No, not really, but it does contain Handel, a rock beat now and then, and hopefully a bit of Gunning too!



GRAHAM FITKIN

“SLOWISH”

My piece takes the Lentement movement as its starting point. I took the pulse of the original, looked at its tune and the rhythmic implications of the original music. Harmonically it remains slow but I endeavoured to work in a fair amount of pomp too.



ADRIAN JOHNSTON

“ALLA HORNPIPE”

Born in Carlisle. Studied at Edinburgh. Started off as a one-man band for silent films, playing live around the world at festivals such as Pordonone, Avignon, Telluride, and the Midnight Sun Festival.

Alla Hornpipe: A frisk in the border country.



JOHN LUNN

“BOURREE”

'Bourree' started life very much inspired by the 7th movement of Handel's first Water Music suite in F major. My initial intention was to create a piece of great exuberance but after doing some research in to the origin of the 'Bourree', a French dance of the 17th century, I came across this quotation written in 1739 "its distinguishing feature resides in contentment and a pleasant demeanor; at the same time it is somewhat carefree and relaxed, a little indolent and easygoing, though not disagreeable."

I have tried to capture that description!



JULIAN NOTT

“OVERTURE & ALLEGRO”

I decided that my Introduction and Allegro should be loud, fast, fun and furious. A kind of fanfare to set the proceedings off, to shut people up and hopefully make them take notice. Handel and other later Baroque composers often did this with a double-dotted French Overture and a fugue, as he did in the original Water Music “Introduction and Allegro”, but I wasn't sure this was quite high octane enough for today's attention-deficit suffering audiences. So I have written a piece that goes to the max, making full use of our loudest instruments, the brass, to produce music as loud as a small group of instruments can manage. At the same time I wanted to make some reference to the styles and forms of the time, and to Handel in particular, who happens to be one of my favourite composers. Therefore my piece is replete with cycle of fifths sequences, a little fugue in my ‘Allegro’, counterpoint, and some typical Handelian chord progressions.



GAVIN GREENAWAY

“PASSEPIED”

“Passepiéd” is inspired by the movement of the same name from Suite No. 1 in F major HWV348. I start with almost a direct quote, played on the marimba with electric guitar accompaniment, but after that the piece is built on tiny fragments from Handel's original. The central section in D minor, for example, is based closely on the 3 note ‘tonic-dominant-tonic’ motif from the first bar, but in a melodically and harmonically repetitive minimal style that Handel would not have thought adequate!



JOCELYN POOK

“LONDON BELLS”

This piece includes part of a poem by Rudyard Kipling called The Bells And Queen Victoria, and features the mezzo soprano Lore Lixenberg and the Tamil vocalist Manickam Yogeswaren.



STEPHEN WARBECK

“AIR ON THE RIVER”

Gavin Greenaway proposed a few bars from Handel's Water Music as a possible starting point for the composition. Thinking about the river Thames, (and I have spent many hours watching it since I moved to London in 1977),

I was drawn to writing a piece in 10/8 and then I was surprised to find a way of combining the two ideas.

I know the wonderful group of musicians who have been chosen to work on this project, and the prospect of writing for their very special talents was also an inspiration.

Album produced by GAVIN GREENAWAY

All pieces conducted by their composers.
Musicians Contracted By Hilary Skewes & Co
Music Preparation: Jill Streater, Global Music Services

Recorded at British Grove Studios, Chiswick, May 3rd and 4th, 2012
Recording engineer: Nick Wollage
Album mastered by Mike Brown at Original Sound

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ENSEMBLE H₂O

Violin - Thomas Gould, Marije Ploemacher
Viola - Maxine Moore
Cello - Richard Harwood
Flute / Piccolo / Alto Sax / Tenor Sax - Nick Moss
Clarinet / Bass Clarinet / Alto Sax / Tenor Sax - Martin Robertson
Trumpet - Mike Lovatt
Trumpet - Bruce Nockles
Trombone - Dan Jenkins
Trombone - Matthew Knight
Bass Trombone - Ian Fasham
Marimba / Timpani / Percussion - Frank Ricotti
Ethnic Drums / Percussion - Paul Clarvis
Drum Pads - Jonathan Atkinson
Guitar - Huw Davies
Bass Guitar / Double Bass - Andy Pask
Keyboard - Jeremy Holland Smith
Keyboard - Ross Hughes