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After two centures of near-total neglect, Handel's operas are now increasingly popular in the theatre, but modern productions are hampered by dependence on obsolete and inaccurate editions, and by ignorance of the musical and theatrical practice of Handel's age. Although Handel's autographs and performing scores have long been available, they have never before been fully studied, still less the very early manuscript copies. The manuscripts have yielded a great deal of unknown music, besides throwing fresh light on Handel's methods of composition and performance practice.
This book covers Handel's first seventeen surviving operas, including his greatest and most successful. Each opera has a chapter, with a full synopsis of the libretto (including all original stage directions) and a comparison with its literary and dramatic sources. Each chapter covers the history of the opera in performance and the different versions in the manuscripts. Every known surviving manuscript has been examined. Eight appendices cover all performances in Handel's time, borrowings, modern revivals, new information on his singers, and a complete index of Italian first lines in all Handel's works.

About the Authors:

Wynton Dean is the author of *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*. John Merrill Knapp is Emeritus Professor of Music at Princeton University.

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