

## **Introduction**

1. Music has long been a tradition of Armies down through the centuries. Regimental and Corps songs, marches, dining music and barrack room ballads have strong links with battles fought and won. Ritually, the victorious Regiment 'adopted' the music or folk songs (and frequently the spoils of the battle field and other paraphernalia) of the defeated as a reminder of *The Deeds of That Battlefield Won*. This music was frequently 'reorganised' to better recall the event and to fit the language and customs of the conquering force.

2. It was fashionable for the distinguished Regiments and Corps to commission great composers to write special Chamber Music, Songs and Marches for their exclusive use. On many occasions, Regiments and Corps have adapted contemporary compositions which espouse their traditions and ideals. The RAEME Slow March is one such early eighteenth century composition, adapted for use by RAEME as the Corps Slow March.

## **Authority**

3. The RAEME Slow March was authorised by Army Office in 1992. Reference A refers. Reference B is to be amended in due course.

## **Aim**

4. The aim of this instruction is to describe the RAEME Slow March, its origin and use.

## **Description**

5. The RAEME Slow March is a special musical arrangement for military band of the contemporary composition 'The Harmonious Blacksmith' by LT Russell King, an officer of the Australian Army Band Corps. The melody is at Annex A. The origin of the 'Harmonious Blacksmith' is described in Annex B.

6. The RAEME Slow March may be played on RAEME parades, particularly during the March Past in Slow Time, and with the approval of the Parade Commander on other occasions where a formed body of RAEME troops are parading as part of a composite parade. Units proposing to use the RAEME Slow March should liaise with the Music Director of the supporting Band to have it included in the programme of music. All Army Bands hold copies of the music.

7. The RAEME Slow March was officially played for the first time, by the Band of the Royal Military College Duntroon, during the Corps sponsored *Commemorative United Drumhead Service*, conducted at the Australian War Memorial, Canberra on 24th February 1992.

## **Annexes:**

- A. The RAEME Slow March – 'Harmonious Blacksmith'
  - B. Origins of the Musical Composition – 'Harmonious Blacksmith'
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### THE RAEME SLOW MARCH

1. The RAEME Slow March is adapted from a contemporary early eighteenth century composition, by the renowned German composer George Friderig HANDEL, title 'Harmonious Blacksmith'. The work was originally written for a two handed Harpsichord, about 1720.

2. Musically the composition embodies the tempo and atmosphere of the busy workplace. The composition suggests a sense of priority and purpose, regulated by the disciplined rhythm of the individual segments in harmony, each contriving to carry forward the performers and audience to a satisfying finale. This instrumental work is a delightful surety of writing and felicity of expression.

3. The principal theme of the RAEME Corps Slow March is presented musically as:

Handel arr LT R.T.King

Piano

G D G D G D/A A7 G

G C G G C G G C Bm Am G D

G D G G D Em G Em D Am G/D D7 G

ORIGINS OF THE 'HARMONIOUS BLACKSMITH'**Historical Extract**

1. The Harmonious Blacksmith is an air and variations from Handel's fifth Harpsichord Suites of his first set (1720) and he gave it no fancy name whatever. There is no foundation for the story that Handel heard the air sung by a blacksmith at Edgware, near London, nor justification for the exhibition of the anvil upon which the man beat time as he sang, nor for the inscription of a portion of the air upon the tombstone of a blacksmith in a graveyard at Edgware.

2. The Edgware blacksmith story was first floated by the notoriously inventive Richard Clark in this *Reminiscences of Handel* (1836). In 1889, in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music*, the following appeared from the pen of William Chappell (1809-88):

‘A few months after Clark's publication the writer saw the late J.W. Windsor, Esq., of Bath, a great admirer of Handel and one who knew all his published works. He told the writer that a story of the Blacksmith at Edgware was pure imagination, that the original publisher of Handel's lesson under that name (The Harmonious Blacksmith) was a music seller at Bath, named Lintern, whom he knew personally from buying music at the shop, that he had asked Lintern the reason for this new name, and he had told him that it was a nickname given to himself because, he had been brought up as a blacksmith, although he had afterwards turned to music, and that was the piece he was constantly asked to play. He printed the movement in a detached form, because he could sell a sufficient number of copies to make a profit’.

3. Chappell was a careful and conscientious musical antiquarian and this story is probably true, but there is no copy of Lintern's edition of the piece in the British Museum and Mr W. C. Smith, late of the museum, a Handelian specialist of high standing, said that the earliest copy of the piece that he had yet (1940) been able to find under the name *The Harmonious Blacksmith* was that published by the British Harmonic Institution, arranged as a piano-forte duet, the paper of which bears the watermark ‘1819’.

4. Equally there is no foundation for the statement that the air is by Wagenseil (who was only five years old when it was first printed) and some other attributions have been shown to be equally baseless.

5. Almost the same air, but in the minor, is found in a bourree (music for a Spanish dance) by Richard Jones (1680-1740) and it is not known whether the publication of this preceded or followed that of Handel's suite. But a passage in Handel's opera *Almira*, written 1704, is very like the ‘*Harmonious Blacksmith*’ tune, so it is more than likely that the latter was his own.

6. Beethoven has used much the same theme for the subject of a two-part organ fugue - probably an unconscious reminiscence.

**The Composer**

7. George Frederic Handel was borne at Halle, in Saxony, in 1658, and died in London in 1759. Handel's father was a prosperous barber-surgeon who, as a hard-boiled business man, not unreasonably had doubts allowing his son to become a musician. However, the boy's obvious talent brought favourable comment from the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels and from 1693 he was able to study with Frederich Zachow, an organist and excellent all-round musician

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then in Halle. Three years later he attracted the interest of the Elector of Brandenburg, who wanted to send him to Italy to study. This time his father refused to cooperate and insisted that he should concentrate on his general studies, with a view to becoming a lawyer.

8. Though Handel's father died in 1697, he still followed his wishes and in 1702 enrolled at the University of Halle as a law student. He remained there for a year and then his resolution broke, for better or worse he would be a musician.

9. He went first to Hamburg, where he found employment in the orchestra of Reinhardt Keiser's famous opera house, eventually becoming its conductor. His own first opera, *Almira*, appeared in 1705 with great success and was followed by another, *Nero*, in the same year. It was now clear that Handel was a composer of exceptional talent.

10. In 1706 he left Hamburg and went to Italy. For a composer anxious to shine in opera this was a natural thing to do, for the Italian operatic style dominated the whole of Europe. He spent four years there, in Florence, Rome, Naples and Venice. Everywhere he went he triumphed: his operas in the Italian style, conquered even the Italians themselves.

11. Having learned everything Italy had to teach him, Handel now returned to Germany (1710) to take up the post of Kapellmeister to the Elector of Hanover on the understanding that he would be allowed to visit England that year.

12. He could have scarcely arrived in London at a more favourable moment. Italian opera was all the rage. He was immediately commissioned to write one, in two weeks he had completed *Rinaldo*. It was performed in February 1711 and proved a great success. In June, however, Handel was obliged to return to Hanover and there settled to a rather less exciting musical routine. But in the autumn of 1712 he was back to London - for it was obvious to him that this was where fame and fortune lay. As it happened, his first new opera for London, *Teseo* (1713) was not a success. However he was asked to write music to celebrate Queen Anne's birthday, and later to celebrate the Peace of Utrecht, and was duly rewarded with a pension of 200 pounds a year.

13. This time he cheerfully overstayed his leave from Hanover, thereby annoying his employer, the Elector. But in 1714 Queen Anne died, and now George, Elector of Hanover, became George I of England. At first he was not disposed to forgive his errant Kapellmeister, but gradually the rift was mended. The pension from Queen Anne was continued, and then doubled. The Princess of Wales also paid Handel a further 200 pounds a year to teach her children. He was therefore a comparative wealthy man - or would have been had he not decided to invest in operatic productions on his own account.

14. His first venture was as a member of an operatic company known as the Royal Academy of Music, for whom he quickly wrote a number of successful operas. But by now London had become a battlefield for operatic rivalries. The Italian composer Giovanni Bononcini had been set up as a counter attraction, and different singers engaged by the two composers only added to complications. Matters were not improved when, in 1728, John Gay produced his ballad opera *The Beggar's Opera* - a direct and enormously successful satire on the absurdities of Italian Opera. By June 1728, the academy was bankrupt.

15. Handel promptly decided to become his own manager. After a shaky start he slowly began to retrieve his financial position. It was now, however, that he decided to revive a *Masque* he had written in 1720 for the Duke of Chandos. It was called *Ester*, and because it was based on a Bible story he decided not to stage it, but gave it in concert form. It proved extremely successful, and it dawned upon Handel that dramatic oratorios were something that the English might prefer to opera.

16. Though he continued to write operas, he now began to produce oratorios as well. There success helped to keep him afloat - though in 1738 he came near to being imprisoned for debt.

17. In 1741 Handel visited Dublin, taking with him the score he had written in the space of three weeks. It was called *Messiah*, and it proved to be enormously successful. From now on he abandoned all attempts to write opera, and concentrated solely on the composition of oratorios - which were themselves a kind of opera, even though they were not staged.

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18. The last years of Handel's years were tranquil, though marred by increasing blindness. When he died he was mourned by the entire nation, which had come to regard him as an English composer, just as he regarded himself as an Englishman.

### His Music

19. Unlike his famous contemporary Bach, Handel was a man of the theatre and therefore accustomed to the necessity of making an immediate dramatic impact. Mozart said of him 'when he strikes, he strikes like a thunderbolt': and this is true. Handel's ideas are always sturdy and bold. They grip the attention immediately. He was able, as certain choruses in the great oratorios show, to command the most monumental effects. Yet he could also write music of extreme delicacy - for example, the 'nightingale' chorus in Solomon. He could write counterpoint as complex and ingenious as Bach's, but he could also write melodies of great power, sweetness and simplicity. The following is a summary of Handel's main works:

a. **Operas include:**

**Almira (1705) Rinaldo (1711) Giulio Cesare (1724)**

**Rodelinda (1725) Berneise (1737) Serse (1738)**

**Deidamia (1741)**

b. **Oratorios include:**

**Israel in Egypt (1739) Messiah (1741)**

**Samson (1743) Belshazzar (1745)**

**Judas Maccabaeus (1747) Solomon (1749)**

**Theodora (1750) Jephtha (1752)**

c. **Choral Music includes:**

11 Chandos Anthems (1717-20)

4 Coronation Anthems for King George 11 (1727)

Various secular works, such as: **Acis and Galatea** (1720) and **Alexander's Feast** (1736)

d. **Orchestral Music includes:**

**'Water' Music (1717) Fireworks Music (1749)** and  
Twelve Concerti Grossi (Op 6)

20. Handel also wrote many cantatas, oboe concertos, trio sonatas, vocal solos, church music, and music for the harpsichord. The Harmonious Blacksmith is probably the best known of Handel's work for the two handed Harpsichord, largely because of the legends and controversy surrounding the origins of the work

### Handel the man

21. Handel, as the details of his career suggest, was a man of enormous courage and determination. Like his father, he was shrewd, practical and remarkably independent. At the time when it was customary to lean heavily on patronage, he struck out on his own and despite many changes of fortune, died a wealthy man.

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22. He is said to have had a lively sense of humour, though he was always too busy to be sociable in the sense of spending a lot of time with friends. He collected paintings, and it is said, was inclined to over-eat. He spoke four languages (German, Italian, French and English), and was at home in setting at least three of them to music. He never married - probably because he was too deeply involved in the day to day flurry of his artistic life to have time for domesticity. In his own day he was regarded with awe, as being rather larger than life.

### Reference Works

23. Complete works (with few omissions) published by the German Handel Society, 96 vols. (1859-.1902). A new edition of the complete works (Hallische Handel-Ausgabe) under the auspices of the German Handel Society was begun in 1955. Other works include:

G. Abrahams (ed.) : Handel: a Symposium (1954)

E.J. Dent: Handel (1934)

O.E. Deutsch: Handel, a Documentary Biography (1955)

N. Flower: George Frederic Handel (1947)

H. Leichtentritt: Handel (1924)

E.H. Muller: The Letters and Writings of George Frederic Handel (1935)

P. Robinson: Handel and his Orbit (1908)

R. Rollard: (trand. A.E. Hull): Handel (1916)

W.C. Smith: Concerning Handel (1948)

R.A. Streatfield: Handel (1910)

S. Taylor: The Indebtedness of Handel to works of Other Composers (1906)

P.M. Young: Handel (1947). The Oratorios of Handel (1949)

The Oxford Illustrated Dictionary of Music, Second Edition, M. Hurd, Oxford University Press, Wellington, 1979

The Oxford Companion to Music, Tenth Edition, P.A. Scholes, Oxford University Press, London, 1970.

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