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Handel At The Court Of Kings



Synopsis

With clarity and with admirable simplicity, keyed to the understanding of children, Opal Wheeler has traced the many-sided career of George Frederic Handel, whose restless nature vied always with his tremendous ability as a composer and director. Handel's strange boyhood, clouded by the fact that his father did not want him to become a musician, and the later years when, thanks to the patronage of the Duke of Saxe-Weissenfels, his music was played before the greatest music lovers of Europe - all of this makes absorbing reading. The selections of Handel's music included here are those best understood and most apt to be mastered by young musicians. One evening, back in 1691, conservative Doctor Handel was shocked and dismayed to find his small son carrying the torch at the head of a band of singers wandering through the little town of Halle. The good doctor never quite understood the all-consuming love of music which drove his son from childhood on and on to the great heights he eventually attained as the beloved Father of the Oratorio, the composer of the magnificent MESSIAH. Opal Wheeler has given us here the most finished, most completely satisfying book on her list of fine music biographies. Handel at the Court of Kings should be a favorite of all children who love music, whether they are young musicians themselves or not.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This series of books is delightful, and we own several. I had purchased a different book on Handel for our homeschooling, but it had an anti-Catholic slant and such a serious and lecturing tone that it took the pleasure out of learning about the composer, especially given the young age of my students. Plenty of time later to sort through those issues, but for now, I wanted them to become

familiar with the basics of the composer's life on a child's level, and to become acquainted with some of his music, so they could appropriate a love of classical music and a familiarity and "friendship" with composers into their lives. The stories are well-written and fascinating. They capture the imagination of a child, beginning as they do with the composer's own childhood and awakening love of music. The illustrations, black-and-white, are lively and engaging. Music for many compositions is included if you have a budding pianist in the house. The companion CDs are mixed. They do include printable coloring pages, and they include recordings of each piece of music included in the text, which are many. However, they are digital recordings, not recordings of actual live musical performance, and therefore sound a bit tinny and sterile. I sometimes play these, but when I can, I try to find the same pieces on youtube recorded by real musicians, or in my own CD collection, so that my kids can hear how the real thing sounds. What a difference hearing a digital rendition of a Handel piece versus the real thing played on a harpsichord! Other than that, these are delightful books. I intend to get the rest of the series as well.

We have enjoyed the Opal Wheeler biographies as her approach is a gentle and kind approach to the life of the artist. It seems many of the biographies provide too much information that isn't appropriate for children, dare I say "mean spirited"? In an age when children need heroes - let's use Mrs. Wheelers books to offer them some. Handel's biography was enjoyed by my boys - almost 10 and 12. We use the music CDs that accompany the stories which adds a great dimension - so much that my boys asked if they would be able to play the music once they have piano lessons. I recommend everything by Opal Wheeler. Zeezok publishing has offered the books in hardcover and they are very nice books. Collect them & build your grandchildren's libraries....

Loved this book. An easy read, thoroughly enjoyed by my children who are 9 and 7. Would read more like this. I wanted more on the creation of the "Messiah" and had to read about it in "George Frideric Handel, Composer of Messiah" (Sowers) by Charles Ludwig. That was also a nice book, and much bigger. Enjoy!

We got this book for our homeschool composer study. My children really enjoyed listening to Handel's story. It made him come alive as opposed to just being a name. We enjoyed it!

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