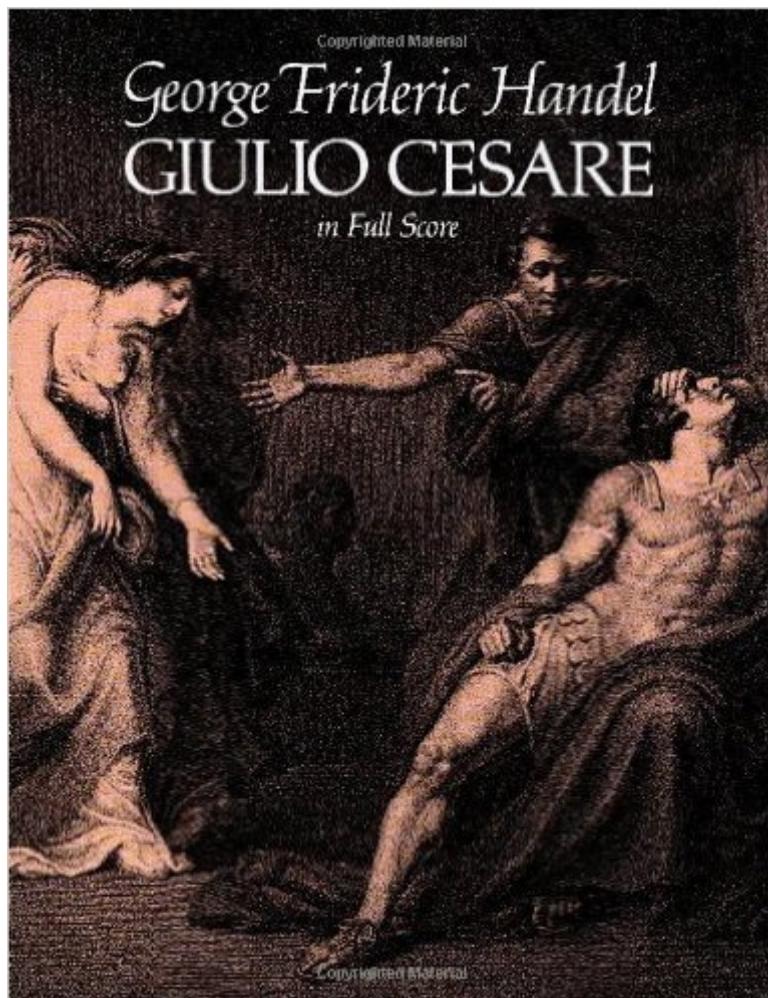


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Giulio Cesare In Full Score (Dover Music Scores)



Synopsis

Giulio Cesare in Egitto (Julius Caesar in Egypt), to give the opera its rarely used full name, was composed by Handel in 1723-24 and first performed at the King's Theatre, Haymarket, London, in 1724. It remains one of the most popular of Handel's Italian-language operas, enjoyed for its many gorgeous melodies, inspired orchestration, and exciting plot: the time-honored story of Caesar and Cleopatra in Egypt. One of the composer's mature works, Giulio Cesare offers an impressive stage spectacle, punctuated with scenes of great dramatic power. However, it is also a work in which Handel began to expand the operatic conventions of the day. Thus we find greater clarity and depth of characterization, more effective use of orchestral color, and the use of recitatives both to carry the action forward and to provide a more forceful vehicle of expression. Musicians, music scholars, and music lovers will welcome this handsome reprint of the full score of Giulio Cesare, reproduced complete and unabridged from the definitive Deutsche Handelgesellschaft edition. Moreover, the affordability of the Dover volume brings a baroque masterpiece within reach of all music lovers.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Giulio Cesare in Egitto is one of several Opera Serias Handel wrote in Italian on a Roman Historical subject. As you can probably guess, it deals with Julius Caesar's affair with the femme fatale of all femme fatales, the Egyptian Queen Cleopatra. For those few who don't know, Caesar's affair predates her more famous liaison with Marc Antony. It's a fascinating subject, and no less a writer

than Bernard Shaw wrote a play about it. In the Opera, Handel executes an interesting bit of gender bending that probably delighted Shaw. Caesar is a contralto, Ptolemy, Cleopatra's husband and King of Egypt, an Alto. Pompey the Great's wife is also an alto, as is the royal Egyptian advisor, Nireno. Cleopatra, of course, is a soprano, as is Sextus Pompeius, the son of Pompey the Great. In short, there are six male characters, and only two female characters, but they are sung by six women and only two men. Now, this is the subject for a book or a doctoral dissertation, hardly to be successfully addressed in a 1000 word .com review, but it brings to mind a professor of Shakespeare studies I had in college. Despite well established Elizabethan casting practices, this professor used certain speeches of Rosalind's from *As You Like It* to suggest that Shakespeare was, in fact, gay. Now, given this Opera's quite normal rococo casting practice, I wonder what my professor would've said about Handel? At any rate, Dover's complete score of *Giulio Cesare* is an extraordinary bargain. It is a reprint of the 1875 Deutsche Handelgesellschaft edition, edited by renowned Handel scholar, Friedrich Chrysander. The score is basically for string orchestra, with winds used for extra color. There are alternates to several numbers, and they are conveniently placed behind the numbers they would replace.

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