

Le Rejouissance By Handel

Music for the Royal Fireworks

In the Spring of 1749, King George II of Great Britain commanded that a magnificent fireworks display should take place in Green Park in London. This was to celebrate the signing of a Peace Treaty (where two countries promise not to fight) between Britain and France. Handel provided special music to be played with the fireworks display.

As the music was to be played outside, Handel decided not to use string instruments. Instead he used wind and percussion instruments. This was because the sounds would carry much further in the open air. So Handel's outside orchestra had:

24 oboes and 12 bassoons – woodwind family

9 trumpets and 9 horns – brass family

kettle drums and snare drums – percussion family.

An enormous wooden building was put up in the Green Park, with a gallery for all the musicians. Above the building was a model of a vast sun. This was to burst into flames during the fireworks display. Thousands of people came to see the fireworks and to hear the special music Handel had composed. Firstly, 101 brass cannon fired a royal salute. Then Handel began to conduct his music.

One part of the music was called *La Paix* meaning Peace.

Another was called *La Rejouissance*, the rejoicing.