Subject: Handel - Music for the Royal Fireworks
Posted by Wayne Parham on Tue, 31 Aug 2004 14:26:57 GMT
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This is one that you might think would shake the house if you weren't familiar. It is actually a mellow selection, suitable for morning play. A low-power SET amp and single driver speakers will sound beautiful, as it is has soothing passages of strings and wind instruments. My midhorns had a lazy time with my morning selection, and a tenth of a watt was plenty.The story behind this is rather funny. George Frideric Handel was employed by King George II, the King of England, when he wrote the Music for a Royal Fireworks suite in 1749. The king had ordered a fireworks display for the people as part of the celebrations and thanksgiving around the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, which was a treaty ending the war of the Austrian succession.Reports say that the traffic on the London Bridge was backed up for three hours and there was no way you could get a carriage across. There were 12,000 people in the audience that day. A very large and complex machine was built in Green Park for the fireworks display. But the display was said to have been uninspiring, that is at least until it set the right pavilion on fire, which burnt through the middle of the fireworks display. Two people were killed. Luckily for Handel, this all took place after his performance was over. The musicians were through playing before the fireworks began.The music was not originally written for orchestra. While it did include strings, the wind and percussion instruments were the prominent sounds. Handel's original scoring was for winds and percussion only; Before the performance he decided to add strings. The original performance included a group of around 100 musicians. In the first movement, the original score calls for 9 trumpets, 9 horns, 24 oboes, 12 bassoons and 3 timpanists. It wasn't until later that he rewrote it to fit a more orchestral instrumentation.