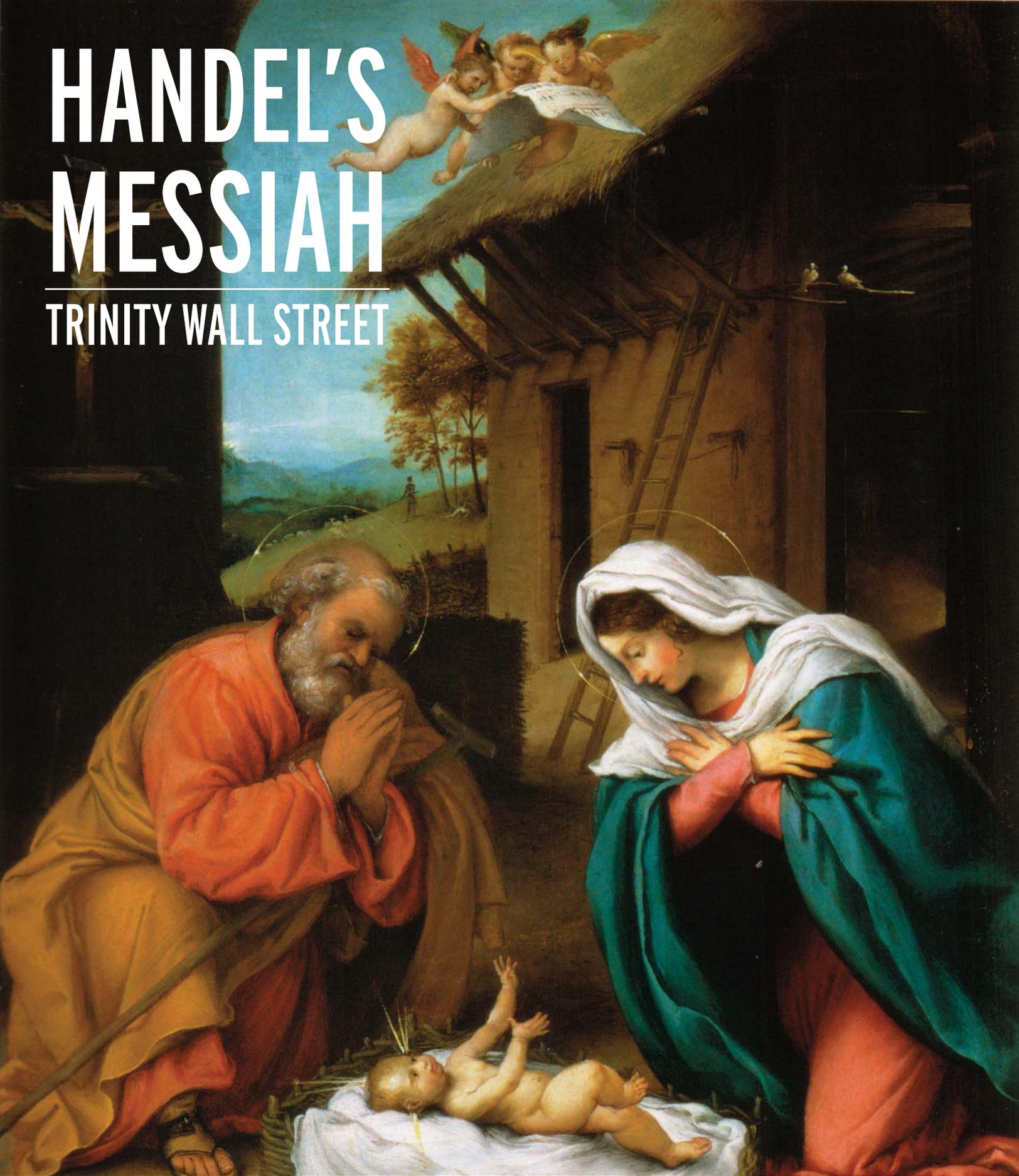


HANDEL'S MESSIAH

TRINITY WALL STREET



 STATE THEATRE
NEW JERSEY

KEYNOTES



HANDEL'S MESSIAH

THE CHOIR OF TRINITY WALL STREET

TRINITY BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

JULIAN WACHNER, CONDUCTOR

Trinity Wall Street presents its acclaimed performance of Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Julian Wachner. *Messiah* and Trinity have a long history—Trinity presented one of the first performances of the work in North America in 1770, and the Grammy®-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street and Trinity Baroque Orchestra are still widely regarded as some of the greatest interpreters of the work.

Cover: Lorenzo Lotto, *Nativity of Christ* (1523)

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State Theatre New Jersey—creating extraordinary experiences through the power of live performance.

JULIAN WACHNER

As Director of Music at New York's historic Trinity Wall Street, Julian Wachner oversees an annual season of hundreds of events, with duties including conducting Trinity's flagship weekly series, Bach at One, canvassing the entire choral-orchestral output of J. S. Bach, and leading Compline by Candlelight, Trinity's innovative fully improvised variation on this ancient monastic ritual. In addition, Wachner curates the long standing and cherished series Concerts at One presenting an eclectic program of weekly concerts for Lower Manhattan and beyond through its HD live and on-demand webcasting. Also at Trinity Wall Street, Wachner serves as the Principal Conductor of NOVUS NY (Trinity's resident contemporary music orchestra), The Trinity Baroque Orchestra, and The Choir of Trinity Wall Street. Wachner is also Music Director of the Grammy Award®-winning Washington Chorus, with whom he won ASCAP's Alice Parker award for adventurous programming and Chorus America's Margaret Hilles Award for Choral Excellence.



With multiple Grammy® nominations to his credit, Wachner's recordings are with Chandos, Naxos, Atma Classique, Erato, Cantaloupe Music, Arsis, Dorian, Acis, and Musica Omnia.

THE CHOIR OF TRINITY WALL STREET

As peerless interpreters of both early and new music, the Grammy®-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street has changed the realm of 21st-century vocal music, breaking new ground with its artistry described as "blazing with vigour...a choir from heaven" (*The Times*, London). This premiere ensemble can be heard in New York City and around the world in performances alternately described as "thrilling" (*The New Yorker*), "musically top-notch" (*The Wall Street Journal*), and "simply superb" (*The New York Times*). The choir leads the liturgical music on Sundays at Trinity Church and St. Paul's Chapel, while performing in Bach at One, Compline by Candlelight, and many other concerts and festivals throughout the year, often with the Trinity Baroque Orchestra and NOVUS NY. Critically acclaimed annual performances of Handel's *Messiah* are part of its long and storied tradition, and attending the Choir's performances at Trinity's annual Time's Arrow Festival has quickly become the holiday tradition of many New Yorkers as well.

TRINITY BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

Praised by *The New York Times* for its "dramatic vigor" and "elegantly shaped orchestral sound," the Grammy®-nominated Trinity Baroque Orchestra made its debut for Trinity Church Wall Street's 2009 performances of *Messiah*, and has since performed early music masterworks with The Choir of Trinity Wall Street. In early 2016, Trinity's ever-popular Bach at One series completed a presentation of Bach's entire monumental output of sacred vocal music. In addition to a soon-to-be released recording of Handel's *Messiah*, the Trinity Baroque Orchestra has recorded with The Choir of Trinity Wall Street for Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and *J.S. Bach: Complete Motets*.

With Julian Wachner as principal conductor, the group boasts a varied roster of North America's finest period players. Robert Mealy, described by *The New Yorker* as "New York's world-class early music violinist," serves as principal concertmaster. In addition to performing with the finest orchestras, several of the players hold positions at distinguished institutions including Yale University, Harvard University, Indiana University, and the Juilliard School's Historical Performance Program.

The Bishop of Elphin's rapturous review of *Messiah's* Dublin premiere points out how immediately this great work caught the public imagination. Since that day in 1743, *Messiah* has become one of our most familiar and popular musical landmarks. The chief difficulty with approaching this work today, of course, is that very familiarity: like *Hamlet* or *Lear*, "the" *Messiah* has become so much a part of our cultural landscape that it seems always already known. But, again like Shakespeare, its greatness lies in the fact that it is also always more interesting and remarkable than we have remembered.

In July 1741, Handel's librettist Charles Jennens wrote to a friend: "Handel says he will do nothing next Winter, but I hope I shall persuade him to set another Scripture Collection I have made for him, and perform it for his own Benefit in Passion Week. I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excells every other subject. The Subject is *Messiah*." In fact, within the month Handel was hard at work. He began composing *Messiah* on August 22 and finished a rough score by September 12, a little more than three weeks later.

The composition of *Messiah* proved to be a turning-point in Handel's career. He had begun working with a new kind of English oratorio as early as 1732, when he composed *Esther*, but the arrival of *Messiah* as part of his London series marked a decisive transition from Italian operas to English oratorios. *Messiah* is, however, very different from Handel's other oratorios, all of which are essentially dramatic versions of Biblical stories presented without staging. The idea of setting the crux of Christian belief, the story of Jesus's birth, death, and resurrection, was at the time a novel and potentially shocking one; to have this story told entirely in the form of Biblical quotations from both the Old and New Testament was remarkable indeed.

Except for the brief nativity scene in Part I, where the Angel speaks to the Shepherds, *Messiah's* libretto is constructed wholly from passages in the third person, thus avoiding the chief objection against oratorio in general and this subject in

particular: the Messiah never actually sings. But this also opened the way for a far greater breadth of textual reference. Jennens used a passage from St. Paul that neatly sums up the program of his "Scripture Collection": "God was manifested in the Flesh, justify'd by the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the World, received up in Glory."

And despite the minimal forces he uses, Handel's musical language in *Messiah* is full of variety. Just as Handel's own speech was an eloquent mix of at least four languages, so too his musical discourse accommodates with ease the English anthem tradition, the Italian opera aria, the tumultuous crowd-scenes of German Lutheran Passions, and even the French opera overture (its first appearance in an oratorio). Such stylistic wealth was somewhat lost on Jennens, who thought that the score was not entirely up to his libretto and complained vociferously about "some weak parts, which he was too idle & too obstinate to retouch, tho' I used great importunity to persuade him to it."



Maso di Banco, *Madonna and Child* (c.1335)

Jennens's pressure to alter parts of the work (particularly the overture, in which he thought "there are some passages far unworthy of Handel, but much more unworthy of the *Messiah*") seems to have materially contributed to a major breakdown for Handel in April of 1743, "a return of his Paralytick Disorder, which affects his Head & Speech." The librettist admitted shortly thereafter "that a letter I wrote him about [*Messiah*] contributed to the bringing of his last illness upon him...This shews that I gall'd him: but I have not done with him yet." Interestingly, Handel scholar Frederic

Fehleisen has pointed to the structural importance of the Overture in presenting several motivic ideas that are crucial to the musical and theological unfolding of the work; the whole is bound together in a tonal scheme so important that the threat of undoing its crucial threads seems to have made Handel physically ill.

After its rapturous welcome in Dublin, *Messiah* received a rather more mixed reception in London the following season, where Jennens noted “a clamor rais’d against it, which has only occasion’d it’s being advertis’d without its Name.” Perhaps because of this controversy, Handel seems to have been reluctant to revive *Messiah* the following season. It was performed again in 1745, but not repeated until 1749, when it

assumed what was to become its regular place at the end of his season, just before Easter.

It is pleasant to find that what its librettist described happily as “a fine entertainment” had so salutary an effect on the world. In re-creating the musical conditions of Handel’s own performances, we may hope that we re-create the reactions of Bishop Elphin’s fellow-listeners: “They seem’d indeed throughly engag’d from one end to the other ...which Show’d that they were not only pleas’d but affected with the performance.”

— © Robert Mealy



Gentile da Fabriano, *Adoration of the Magi* (1423)

OVERTURE

PART ONE

Arioso for Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. *Isaiah 40:1-3*

Air for Tenor

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. *Isaiah 40:4*

Chorus

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. *Isaiah 40:5*

Recitative for Bass

Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and the dry land; and I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: Behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. *Haggai 2:6-7 and Malachi 3:1*

Air for Alto

But who may abide the day of his coming? And who shall stand when he appeareth? For he is like a refiner's fire. *Malachi 3:2*

Chorus

And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. *Malachi 3:3*

Recitative for Alto

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us." *Isaiah 7:14 and St. Matthew 1:23*

Air for Alto and Chorus

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. *Isaiah 40:9 and 60:1*

Arioso for Bass

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people: but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. *Isaiah 60:2-3*

Air for Bass

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. *Isaiah 9:2*

Chorus

For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. *Isaiah 9:6*

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)**Recitative for Soprano**

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. *Saint Luke 2:8*

Arioso for Soprano

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. *Saint Luke 2:9*

Recitative for Soprano

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *Saint Luke 2:10-11*

Arioso for Soprano

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, *Saint Luke 2:13*

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men. *Saint Luke 2:145*

Air for Soprano

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee.

He is the righteous Saviour, and he shall speak peace unto the heathen. *Zechariah 9:9-10*

Recitative for Alto

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. *Isaiah 35:5-6*

Air for Alto and Soprano

He shall feed his flock like a shepherd: and he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

Come unto him, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; and he will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of him; for he is meek and lowly of heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. *Isaiah 40:11 and Saint Matthew 11:28-29*

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and his burthen is light. *Saint Matthew 11:30*

INTERMISSION

PART TWO

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.
Saint John 1:29

Air for Alto

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. He gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: he hid not his face from shame and spitting. *Isaiah 53:3 and 50:6*

Chorus

Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. *Isaiah 53:4-6*

Arioso for Tenor

All they that see him laugh him to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, *Psalm 22:7*

Chorus

He trusted in God that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he delight in him. *Psalm 22:8*

Recitative for Tenor

Thy rebuke hath broken his heart; he is full of heaviness: he looked for some to have pity on him, but there was no man, neither found he any to comfort him. *Psalm 69:20*

Air for Tenor

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow.
Lamentations 1:12

Recitative for Soprano

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of thy people was he stricken. *Isaiah 53:8*

Air for Soprano

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. *Psalm 16:10*

Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of glory shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory. *Psalm 24:7-10*

Recitative for Tenor

Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? *Hebrews 1:5*

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship Him. *Hebrews 1:6*

Air for Bass

Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them. *Psalm 68:18 (Ephesians 4:8)*

Chorus

The Lord gave the word: great was the company of the preachers.
Psalm 68:11

Air for Soprano

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. *Romans 10:15*

Chorus

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world. *Romans 10:18 (Psalm 19:4)*

Air for Bass

Why do the nations so furiously rage together: why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together: against the Lord, and against His Anointed. *Psalm 2:1-2*

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. *Psalm 2:3*

Recitative for Tenor

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision. *Psalm 2:46*

Air for Tenor

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *Psalm 2:9*

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. *Revelation 19:6, 11:15 and 19:16*

PAUSE

PART THREE

Air for Soprano

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. *Job 19:25-26 and Corinthians 15:20*

Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. *I Corinthians 15:21-22*

Recitative for Bass

Behold, I tell you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: *I Corinthians 15:51-52*

Air for Bass

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. *I Corinthians 15:52-53*

Recitative for Alto

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory. *I Corinthians 15:54*

Duet for Alto and Tenor

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. *I Corinthians 15:55-56*

Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. *I Corinthians 15:57*

Air for Soprano

If God be for us who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who maketh intercession for us. *Romans 8: 31-34*

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain and hath redeemed us to God by His blood to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen. *Revelation 5:12-137*





Georg Friedrich Handel (who later anglicized his name to George Frideric Handel) was born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685. Considered one of the greatest composers of the baroque period, he wrote music in a wide variety of instrumental and vocal genres. His canon includes 42 operas, 29 oratorios, more than 120 cantatas, trios and

duets, numerous arias, chamber music, a large number of ecumenical pieces, odes and serenatas, and 16 organ concerti.

At the age of 12, Handel became the assistant organist at the cathedral of Halle, where the principal organist was his teacher, the composer Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau. In 1703, Handel moved to Hamburg, one of the principal musical centers of Germany, where he played violin in the opera orchestra. He wrote two operas for the Hamburg theater, *Almira* and *Nero*.

Handel lived in Italy from around 1706 to 1710, traveling to Florence, Venice, Rome, and Naples. Among the works he composed for some of the most important patrons of those cities are his first two oratorios and the opera *Agrippina*. These works reveal his growing mastery of Italian musical style.

In 1710, Handel returned to Germany and became musical director to German prince George, the Elector of Hanover. Later that year he visited England, where his Italian opera *Rinaldo* was performed with great success. After another brief stay in Hanover, Handel received a leave of absence to return to London. In 1714, his former Hanover employer became King George I of England. The new king bestowed special favors on Handel, who made London his permanent home, becoming an English citizen in 1727.

In England Handel continued to compose in the Italian style, but he also absorbed the characteristics of English music,

especially English choral music. As musical director of the Royal Academy of Music from 1719 to 1734 he became London's leading composer and director of Italian operas; indeed, he became the most important opera composer of the baroque era. Among the best known of his approximately 40 operas are *Rinaldo* (1711), *Giulio Cesare* (1724), *Rodelinda* (1725), and *Alcina* (1735).

Today Handel is far better remembered as a composer of English oratorios than of Italian operas. The earliest of his 17 English oratorios—among them *Esther*, *Saul*, and *Israel in Egypt*—date from the period when he was still writing Italian operas. From 1740 on, however, he abandoned opera and concentrated on the English oratorio. From this later period comes *Messiah* (1741), the most influential and widely performed oratorio of all time. Among his other outstanding works in this genre are *Samson* (1741), *Belshazzar* (1744), *Solomon* (1748), *Theodora* (1749), and *Jephtha* (1751). Mostly based on Old Testament stories, Handel's oratorios are three-act dramatic works, somewhat like operas but performed in concert, without staging or action. They are unusual in their prominent use of the chorus.

In 1741, Handel was invited to Dublin by the 3rd Duke of Devonshire, to give concerts for the benefit of local hospitals. It was at one of these concerts that his *Messiah* was first performed, on April 13, 1742, at the New Music Hall in Fishamble Street. It was a hit in Dublin but did not receive a warm reception when it debuted in London the following year. The oratorio gained in popularity, eventually becoming one of the best-known and most frequently performed choral works in Western music.

Among Handel's other frequently-performed compositions are the orchestral suites *Water Music* (1717) and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), both composed to accompany royal celebrations. *Zadok the Priest* (1727), which he wrote for the coronation of George II, has since been performed at every British coronation.

Handel died at age 74 on April 14, 1759, at his home in London. He was buried in Westminster Abbey with full state honors. More than 3,000 mourners attended his funeral. The last performance he attended before he died was *Messiah*.

The word *baroque* is derived from a Portuguese word meaning “a pearl of irregular shape.” The term was used as a pejorative description of the heavily ornamented art and architecture of this period, implying strangeness, abnormality, and excess. These days, baroque is a name for one of the richest and most diverse periods in classical music.

The Baroque Era (roughly 1600-1750) marks the beginning of what we generally think of as Western classical music. Many of the most basic forms, techniques, concepts, and conventions were formed or codified during this time, including:

- The tonal system (the organization of pitches into major and minor keys)
- The understanding of harmony and melody as separate concepts
- The emergence of genres such as concerto, sonata, opera, suite, cantata, and oratorio
- The growth in size of the orchestra
- The increasing variety and complexity of orchestral music

Baroque music is known for its excesses and extravagances: long melodies with elaborate ornamentation (decorative notes, such as trills and turns, that are not part of the melody). The feature most closely associated with classical music of this period is the use of intricate counterpoint—the interplay of two or more different musical lines (“voices”) that move independently from each other, but sound harmonious when played simultaneously. Often the voices echo and imitate each other, but not in exact duplication; for example, they can use different pitches, invert the echo, or reverse thematic material. Contrapuntal music was governed by rules, sometimes strict ones. Though counterpoint was used long before the Baroque era, it was at this time that it reached its full flowering.

Another feature of Baroque music is the basso continuo (“continuous bass”), sometimes referred to simply as the “continuo.” Comprising a keyboard instrument (typically the harpsichord) and one or more low-pitched instruments (such as the bassoon or cello), it provided a continuous foundation for the rest of the music.



Baroque architecture: Green Gallery, Munich Residenz

Baroque music plays with contrasts: loud and soft, different instruments, solo vs. ensemble, etc. To achieve these effects, composers started to become much more specific about which instruments should be used in a particular piece. Instruments capable of standing out from the rest of the orchestra—such as the violin and trumpet—became more popular. The orchestra, which was still evolving at this time, was relatively small (an ensemble referred to as a chamber orchestra).



Baroque chair from the late 1600s

The best-known composers from the early part of the Baroque era came from Italy: Monteverdi, Corelli, and Vivaldi. By the middle of the 18th century, German composers came to the forefront, Telemann, Bach, and Handel in particular. In France, composers such as Couperin, Rameau, and Lully contributed to the development of a distinct national style. Purcell was first and foremost among England’s Baroque masters.

TO CLAP, OR NOT TO CLAP...

People who have never attended a classical music concert are sometimes apprehensive about applauding at the wrong time. If you're one of those people, here are some general rules to guide you at the performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

Just before the concert begins, the audience will applaud the arrival onstage of the concertmaster (the first violinist, who acts as the leader of the musicians). They'll applaud again when the conductor and soloists enter.

Messiah is composed in four sections: the overture and three parts. Within each of the three parts there are separate numbers, each with a definite beginning and end. (The demarcation of the parts and individual numbers is made clear in your playbill and in the libretto on pages 6-8 of these *Keynotes*.) The usual practice is to hold your applause until the end of the overture and the conclusion of each of the three parts—and not to applaud between the individual numbers. If you're still not sure when to applaud, just take your cue from the rest of the audience.

TO STAND, OR NOT TO STAND...

There is a longstanding tradition for the audience to rise to its feet during *Messiah's* famous "Hallelujah" chorus. No one knows for sure where or why this practice started. At the concert, you can stand or remain seated, whichever you prefer; there's no special religious significance attached to this section of the work.

BE CONSIDERATE.

All it takes is one ringing cell phone, noisy latecomer, or loudly whispered conversation to spoil a concert for the entire audience. Be sure to arrive on time and turn off phones and other electronic devices before the performance begins. Hold your comments and conversation until intermission and the end of the concert.

Even if you're not making or receiving calls, those little squares of light are a distraction to anyone sitting near you. So please refrain from texting, checking email, etc. during the concert.



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