

MESSIAH

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2009 – 3:00 PM
FIRST FREE METHODIST CHURCH

Linda Tsatsanis, soprano
Melissa Plagemann, mezzo-soprano
Stephen Wall, tenor
Barry Johnson, baritone
Robert Kechley, harpsichord
ORCHESTRA SEATTLE
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS
George Shangrow, harpsichord/conductor

GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685-1759)
Messiah

Symphony
Accompagnato: "Comfort ye"
Air: "Every valley shall be exalted"
Chorus: "And the Glory of the Lord"
Accompagnato: "Thus saith the Lord of hosts"
Air: "But who may abide"
Chorus: "And He shall purify"
Recitative: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive"
Air and Chorus: "O thou that tellest"
Accompagnato: "For behold, darkness"
Air: "The people that walked in darkness"

Chorus: "For unto us a child is born"
Pastoral Symphony
Recitative: "There were shepherds"
Accompagnato: "And lo, the angel"
Recitative: "And the angel said unto them"
Accompagnato: "And suddenly there was with the angel"
Chorus: "Glory to God in the highest"
Air: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion"
Recitative: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened"
Air: "He shall feed His flock"
Chorus: "His yoke is easy"

- Intermission -

Chorus: "Behold the Lamb of God"
Air: "He was despised"
Chorus: "Surely He hath borne our griefs"
Chorus: "And with His stripes"
Chorus: "All we, like sheep"
Accompagnato: "All they that see Him"
Chorus: "He trusted in God"
Accompagnato: "Thy rebuke hath broken His heart"
Arioso: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow"
Accompagnato: "He was cut off"
Air: "But Thou didst not leave"
Chorus: "Lift up your heads"

Recitative: "Unto which of the angels"
Chorus: "Let all the angels"
Air: "Thou art gone up on high"
Chorus: "The Lord gave the word"
Air: "How beautiful are the feet"
Chorus: "Their sound is gone out"
Air: "Why do the nations"
Chorus: "Let us break their bonds asunder"
Recitative: "He that dwelleth"
Air: "Thou shalt break them"
Chorus: "Hallelujah"

- Intermission -

Air: "I know that my Redeemer liveth"
Chorus: "Since by man came death"
Accompagnato: "Behold, I tell you a mystery"
Air: "The trumpet shall sound"
Recitative: "Then shall be brought to pass"

Duet: "O death, where is thy sting?"
Chorus: "But thanks be to God"
Air: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"
Chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb"

Please disconnect signal watches, pagers and cellular telephones. Thank you.
Use of cameras and recording equipment is not permitted in the concert hall.

PART I

Symphony**Accompagnato**

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

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

Accompagnato

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.

Haggai 2:6-7

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.

Malachi 3:1

Air

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

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us".

Isaiah 7:14

Air 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!

Isaiah 40:9

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Isaiah 60:1

Accompagnato

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

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: 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 – Accompagnato**

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

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.

Luke 2:8-9

Recitative

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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11

Accompagnato

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

Luke 2:13

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men!

Luke 2:14

Air

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

He is the righteous Savior and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Zechariah 9:9-10

Recitative

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf be unstopped.

Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

Isaiah 35:5-36

Air

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

Isaiah 40:11

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.

Matthew 11:28-29

Chorus

His yoke is easy, His burthen is light.

Matthew 11:30

PART II

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

John 1:29

Air

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

Isaiah 53:3

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 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.

Isaiah 53:4-5

Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

Chorus

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 53:6

Accompagnato

All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn: they shoot out
their lips, and shake their heads, saying,

Psalms 22:7

Chorus

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him:
let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

Psalms 22:8

Accompagnato

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.

Psalms 69:20

Arioso

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

Lamentations 1:12

Accompagnato

He was cut off out of the land of the living:
for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.

Isaiah 53:8

Air

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell;
nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

Psalms 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...

The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

Psalms 24:7-10

Recitative

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

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.

Psalms 68:18

Chorus

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

Psalms 68:11

Air

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

Air

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.

Psalms 2:1-2

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away
their yokes from us.

Psalms 2:3

Recitative

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

Psalms 2:4

Air

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in
pieces like a potter's vessel.

Psalms 2:9

Chorus

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:6

The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and
of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah!

Revelation 11:15

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and He shall reign
for ever and ever, Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:16

PART III**Air**

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.

Job 19:25-26

For now is Christ risen from the dead,
the first fruits of them that sleep.

1 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.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

Accompagnato

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.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Air

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.

1 Corinthians 15:52-53

Recitative

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written,
Death is swallowed up in victory.

1 Corinthians 15:54

Duet

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.

1 Corinthians 15:55-56

Chorus

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ.

1 Corinthians 15:57

Air

If God be for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31

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 makes intercession for us.

Romans 8:33-34

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 honor, and glory, and
blessing.

Blessing, and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that
sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and
ever.

Amen.

Revelation 5:12-14

ORCHESTRA SEATTLE**VIOLIN**

Susan Carpenter
Lauren Daugherty
Manchung Ho
Maria Hunt
Fritz Klein*
Avron Maletzky
Gregor Nitsche
Susan Ovens
Stephen Provine**
Theo Schaad
Kenna Smith-Shangrow
Nicole Tsong

VIOLA

Katherine McWilliams*
Lorraine Perrin
Andrew Schirmer
Sam Williams

CELLO

Valerie Ross
Matthew Wyant*

BASS

Steve Messick*

OBOE

David Barnes*
Amy Duerr-Day

BASSOON

Judy Lawrence*

TRUMPET

Dan Harrington
Janet Young*

TIMPANI

Daniel Oie

HARPSICHORD

Robert Kechley
George Shangrow

* *principal*

** *concertmaster*

SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS**SOPRANO**

Barb Anderson
Hilary Anderson
Crissa Cugini
Kyla DeRemer
Dana Durasoff
Cinda Freece
Alexandra Heron
Kiki Hood
Jill Kraakmo
Peggy Kurtz
Lila Woodruff May
Jana Marlow Music
Kia Sams
Nancy Shasteen
Melissa Thirloway
Liesel van Cleeff
Pat Vetterlein

ALTO

Jane Blackwell
Pamela Ivezič
Courtney Juhl
Ellen Kaisse
Lorelette Knowles
Theodora Letz
Laurie Medill
Paula Rimmer
Julia Akoury Thiel
Ann Thompson
Kristin Zimmermann

TENOR

Ronald Carson
Ralph Cobb
Alvin Kroon
Jon Lange
Timothy Lunde
Thomas Nesbitt
Vic Royer
Jerry Sams
David Zapolsky

BASS

Stephen Brady
Andrew Danilchik
Douglas Durasoff
Stephen Keeler
Rob Kline
Dennis Moore
Jeff Thirloway
Skip Viau
Rick Wycoff

Canadian soprano **LINDA TSATSANIS** enjoys an active and diverse career. Hailed as "ravishing" (New York Times) and possessing a voice with "crystalline purity" (Seattle Times), Ms. Tsatsanis' career spans the concert hall, opera stage, and performance in movies and television. Ms. Tsatsanis has appeared as soloist with orchestras such as the Seattle Baroque Orchestra, Auburn Symphony, and Pacific Baroque Orchestra and has made recent appearances at the Indianapolis, Boston and Bloomington Early Music Festivals. She keeps a demanding performance schedule in the Pacific Northwest in addition to performances around the United States and Canada. Ms. Tsatsanis holds degrees from the University of Toronto and Indiana University. She has a new solo album with Origin Classical, *And I Remain: Three Love Stories*, and can also be heard on recordings by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and Naxos. Ms. Tsatsanis is a member of Plaine & Easie, winners of the 2009 Early Music America Medieval/Renaissance Competition. Currently, Ms. Tsatsanis is living in Seattle where she studies with Joyce Guyer.

MELISSA PLAGEMANN, mezzo-soprano, performs frequently throughout the Pacific Northwest, and has appeared with some of the area's finest ensembles, including the Seattle Symphony, Tacoma Opera, Orchestra Seattle, Seattle Opera Guild, Skagit Opera, the Seattle Choral Company, Kitsap Opera, and NOISE, among others. Recent opera roles for Ms. Plagemann include Hänsel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Carmen in semi-staged scenes with the Seattle Symphony, Dorabella in *Così fan Tutte*, Rosina in Rossini's *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, and Nicklausse in Offenbach's *Les Contes d'Hoffmann*. Equally at home on the concert stage, she has performed in several recent productions of Mozart's *Requiem*, as well as Copland's *In the Beginning*, and Saint-Saëns' *Christmas Oratorio*, among others. Ms. Plagemann has a special interest in music of the Baroque era, and has performed several masterpieces of J.S. Bach, including both *Passions*, the *B Minor Mass*, and *Magnificat in D*, as well as several of his *Cantatas*. She has also been featured at Seattle's annual Town Hall Bach Marathon in Seattle, singing Bach's *Cantata #18* and J.C. Bach's solo cantata, *Ach, dass ich Wassers gnug*. Other Baroque oratorio repertoire includes Vivaldi's *Gloria* and *Magnificat*, and the *1610 Vespers* by Monteverdi which she will sing with OSSCS this December.

Tenor **STEPHEN WALL** has appeared frequently with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers since 1985. He has been featured in leading and supporting roles with Seattle Opera, Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera, and Tacoma Opera, and has soloed with the symphonies of Seattle, Vancouver, Spokane, Everett, Bellevue, Yakima, Pendleton, Great Falls and Sapporo (Japan). Mr. Wall appears on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah* and sang the role of Joe in Seattle Opera's heralded production of *La Fanciulla del West*.

BARRY JOHNSON, baritone, is a frequent performer in Western Washington, having sung more than a dozen roles with Seattle Opera, most recently Baron Douphol in Verdi's *La Traviata* and Antonio in Mozart's *Le Nozze di Figaro*. Other roles with Seattle Opera have included Yamadori in *Madama Butterfly*, Fleville in *Andrea Chenier*, Prince Ottokar in *Der Freischutz*, and Bushy in *The Ballad of Baby Doe*. Regionally, Mr. Johnson has performed with Portland Opera, Anchorage Opera, Central City Opera, Opera Colorado, Stockton Opera, and Tacoma Opera where some of his roles have included Figaro in *The Marriage of Figaro*, Papageno in *The Magic Flute*, Dr. Falke in *Die Fledermaus*, Schaunard in *La Bohème*, and Mercutio in *Romeo and Juliette*. Concert credits include Seattle Symphony, Tacoma Symphony, Northwest Sinfonietta, American Symphony, and Yakima Symphony. Some favorite concert roles with these companies include Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Brahms' *A German Requiem*, Rachmaninoff's *The Bells*, Handel's *Messiah*, and Faure's *Requiem*. Mr. Johnson has served as stage director for Tacoma Opera's production of Puccini's *Tosca*, *La Bohème*, Rossini's *Le Comte Ory*, and Bernstein's *Trouble in Tahiti*.

Conductor and Music Director **GEORGE SHANGROW** founded the Seattle Chamber Singers in 1969 and Orchestra Seattle in 1979. A musician with a broad range of skills, Mr. Shangrow studied conducting, Baroque performance practice, harpsichord, and composition at the University of Washington. He began his professional conducting career at age 18 and has appeared as guest conductor with the Seattle Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, Tacoma Opera, Rudolf Nureyev and Friends, East Texas University Opera, Oregon Symphony and the Sapporo (Japan) Symphony. He has conducted world premieres of six operas and numerous other orchestral and choral works. Mr. Shangrow is a frequent lecturer throughout the Northwest and has served on the faculty of the Seattle Conservatory of Music, where he taught Music History, Conducting, and Literature. He concertizes frequently as part of the Cohan-Shangrow Duo with flutist Jeffrey Cohan. Having toured Europe several times as keyboardist and conductor, he is a sought-after accompanist and has appeared in concert on the piano and harpsichord with many noted soloists and ensembles such as El Trio Grande, the Kronos Quartet, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and the Seattle Symphony. Seattle music lovers also remember him as a regular announcer on Classical KING-FM and host of *Live By George*. Mr. Shangrow has recorded for London, Voyager, Edel, Sonic Windows, and Lyman Digital.

SAVE THE DATES!

OSSCS Chamber Music Concert
Sunday, January 17, 2010, 3 p.m. – First Free Methodist

OSSCS Mostly Mozart Concert
Sunday, February 7, 2010, 3 p.m. – First Free Methodist

OSSCS Bartok Concerto for Orchestra
Sunday, March 14, 2010, 3 p.m. – Meany Hall

GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL

Messiah

Handel was born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685, and died in London on April 14, 1759. He composed *Messiah* between August 22 and September 14 of 1741. The oratorio was first performed in Dublin on April 13, 1742, under the direction of the composer. In addition to a quartet of vocal soloists and choir, the work is scored for 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, harpsichord and strings.

Dr. Charles Burney, an 18th-century English music historian, wrote that Handel's oratorio, *Messiah*, "has been heard in all parts of the kingdom with increasing reverence and delight; it has fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan and enriched succeeding managers of Oratorios more than any single musical production in this or any other country." We believe that your musical experience will be enriched, and that you will hear with special delight our unique interpretation of one of the most famous of all musical compositions.

George Frideric Handel, renowned in his day as an organist and as a highly prolific writer of Italian operas and English oratorios, was born in Germany in 1685 about a month before J.S. Bach. He received his musical training in Italy, and later became 18th-century England's "national composer." Between February and November 1741, Handel, suffering at the age of 56 from various ailments, both financial and physical, withdrew increasingly from public life. At some point that year, the composer received from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the governors of Dublin's three major charitable institutions an invitation to travel to that city to aid the charities through the performance of his music. Handel was well known in Dublin as a church-music composer, and his works were often played there to benefit charities. It may thus have been this invitation that provided the incentive for Handel to compose "a new sacred Oratorio." In July of 1741, Charles Jennens, who was responsible for the texts of Handel's oratorios *Israel in Egypt* and *Saul*, gave the struggling Handel the libretto of *Messiah*, a compilation of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments.

On the 22nd of August, Handel began to set Jennens' text to music. He finished the first part of his new oratorio (which deals with the prophecy of Christ's coming and his nativity) in six days, the second part (which describes Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, the spread of his gospel, the resistance of the heathen, and the vision of the ultimate triumph of the gospel in the establishment of God's kingdom) in nine days, and the third part (which celebrates the gift of resurrection and eternal life offered to all through Christ's victory over death) in six more days, with two or three additional days for completing the orchestration. Regarding Handel's state of mind during *Messiah*'s composition, biographer Jonathan Keates observes in his 1992 book, *Handel: The Man and Music*, that "etherealized visions of the elderly master refusing food, weeping into the semiquavers and having angelic hallucinations are mostly moonshine."

Musician and writer Christopher Hogwood admits that "The turbulent state of Handel's manuscript, the blots, erasures and emendations that litter the page right to the final bars give enough evidence of tempestuous creation to tempt any romantic biographer." But there is little doubt, in any event, that this enduring masterpiece, completed in 24 days on September 14, 1741, will remain among the greatest compositional feats in the history of music.

In the autumn of 1741, Handel accepted the invitation to visit Dublin, arriving there on November 18 with the completed score of *Messiah* in his traveling bags, but it was not until April 13, 1742, that the oratorio was premiered. Seven hundred people were able to squeeze into Dublin's Musick Hall in Fishamble-street to hear the work performed by the choirs of Dublin's two cathedrals (totaling fewer than forty men and boys) and the string band (reinforced occasionally by trumpets and timpani — oboe and bassoon parts were written later), all directed from the keyboard by Mr. Handel himself. The work created a sensation: "Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience," exulted *Faulkner's Journal*. "The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear." Handel divided his share of the proceeds (about £400), as did the other performers, among Dublin's three most important charities.

Messiah is unique among Handel's works, being his only biblical oratorio using texts from the New Testament, and his only "Christian-contemplative" oratorio. Although the text is not a dramatic narrative but an epic-lyric poem celebrating Christian redemption, Handel's musical approach in setting Jennens' libretto was decidedly dramatic. The work's three parts recall the three acts of Italian operas, and the oratorio is indeed a piece designed by a seasoned operatic professional to "entertain," in the best sense of the word, listeners in a concert room, not chiefly to instruct or edify a congregation or to be used in any sort of worship setting. Handel synthesizes the best elements of the three musical traditions in which he was steeped: the Italian, the German, and the English. He makes use of Italian forms of musical expression, borrowing, rearranging, and transforming into "duet-choruses" (such as "And he shall purify") some passages from his own Italian love duets. In the "Pastoral Symphony" (entitled *Pifa*) that introduces the shepherds, Handel alludes to the music of the *pifferari*, the country bagpipers who descend the Italian mountains during the Christmas season to play in village streets. Handel employs German musical ideas, particularly in the music describing Jesus' suffering and death, where the jagged dotted rhythms and forceful harmonies have a particularly German expressive quality. In that great "coronation march," the "Hallelujah Chorus," melodic fragments echoing the German chorale "Wachet auf" may be heard in "The kingdom of this world" and in "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Handel's melodic shapes, vocal treatment, grand anthem-like choruses, and text-setting display the

"English character" that has ensured *Messiah*'s unchallenged supremacy in the English choral repertoire: in such arias as "He was despised" and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," the rhythms of the music grow out of the natural speech rhythms of the words, so that the music expresses the text directly and powerfully, and then illustrates it almost visually (e.g., "Every valley shall be exalted," "The people that walked in darkness," and "All we like sheep").

The easy accessibility and glorious variety of the music that results from the confluence of these elements (and which

often conceals the exalted art underlying it) has helped to guarantee *Messiah*'s survival, through a seeming infinitude of "arrangements," versions, and types of presentation, as one of the most popular pieces ever composed. As biographer R. A. Streatfeild observes, "*Messiah*, if not Handel's greatest work, is undoubtedly the most universal in its appeal" because it continues to sing to "high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish alike" a magnificent song of salvation, fresh, vital, and full of aesthetic and spiritual grace.

– Lorelette Knowles

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