

OSCS Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers

Present

Handel's Messiah

George Shangrow, Music Director

December 15th & 17th, 1995 • First Free Methodist Church

In performing *Messiah* one must deal with the fact that Handel left very little information on how he wanted things done musically in this huge work. This fact presents conductors with a dichotomy in that a) it's great to be left virtually complete freedom of interpretation, but b) it would be nice to have just a few more indications as to "composer's intent."

Experience with a particular composer, as well as with a particular work, helps the conductor to extrapolate the composer's intentions, even from rather sketchy markings. For my interpretation of *Messiah*, in addition to consulting the many performance editions by other Handel conductors and scholars, I have relied heavily on a facsimile of Handel's own conducting score of the work. In this score there may be found many pencil scratchings: dynamic changes, names of soloists, deletions, additions, etc.

With this tool in hand and my experience with Handel oratorios at my side, I set off "working" on how to do *Messiah*. First of all, one must consider the story and its inherent drama. Jacobi, in his book on *Messiah*, has stated that the Bach Passions reflect the facts of the story, whereas Handel's *Messiah* is the poetic version. While Bach certainly has the artistic elements of great poetry in his composition, I basically agree with Jacobi as to the stylistic differences: Bach was writing for God and the Church, Handel was writing for the public audience and God (in that order, I think).

Handelian drama finds its expression in tone painting: the use of melodic, textural, and harmonic device to evoke the description, character, or feeling of a particular text. The best example of tone painting in Handel for me is probably the "flies" chorus from *Israel in Egypt* in which he has both the first and second violins playing horribly fast 32nd note scales in contrary motion, thus painting the sound of the flies buzzing all around. In *Messiah*, we get examples of this type of writing in movements like "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth" and the ensuing aria. Also watch for the wagging

of the 16th notes in the orchestra when in "All they that see Him" the tenor sings "and shake their heads." There are many more examples, and it can be an enjoyable listening session trying to hear all of them.

One device which seems in vogue today regarding the performance of Baroque music is double-dotting. This process reflects taking two notes (found in a sequence of such two-note groups) and changing them from having a ratio of 3-to-1 in length to 7-to-1 in length. This is a Baroque practice written about by a number of the contemporary theorists and composers in both text and example. What many modern performers seem to miss is the direction as to how and when this double-dotting is to be used. The rule for the French Overture style (which is what the opening *Sinfonia* to *Messiah* is) states that only the smallest value dotted note should be double-dotted. So in the *Sinfonia*, we would still have the grandness of the opening rhythm (dotted-quarters followed by eighths) and we would have the rhythmic excitement of the double-dotting of the smallest value notes (the dotted-eighth/sixteenths) starting with the inner parts in the 8th bar.

This practice of double-dotting is sometimes extended to other parts of the work as well. For instance in the bass recitative "Thus saith the Lord," Handel specifically *writes* a non-dotted rhythm. I say specifically because only two bars later he writes a dotted rhythm. It seems to me that even in his haste in composing *Messiah* he was able to notate those note values he wished used. Another chorus in which the rhythm is often tampered with is "Surely He hath borne our grief." Here I find myself nothing short of irritated when the strength of the rhythm of two long notes before the short one is changed to the much weaker rhythm of short-long-short-long. Once again the justification may be found in the fact that Handel notated the rhythm a few times in this chorus in the latter way, so one knows he used it when he wanted it. In the texture area,

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Handel brings some great excitement to the text. Listen to the "burning" texture in "For He is like a refiner's fire" or the dissonance in "Surely He hath borne our griefs" or the disjunct lines with accents in "let us break their bonds." Dynamic contrast is just as important. The crescendo and accent help to bring out these dramatic devices. By using subito (sudden) fortes and pianos in the orchestral accompaniment, important parts of the text may be underlined — note "Why do the nations."

With regards to tempo, I have heard it said that Handel goes fast. I certainly do not dispute the fact that the fast sections in Handel go fast, but to take all the choruses fast just to get them over with or to show the virtuosity of the choir misses the point altogether. Once again, the main consideration is the text. One of the most difficult choruses for me is the very first one. After many performances (almost all of which I have taken at different tempi) I have finally come to the rather stately minuet tempo which seems to me to best bespeak the "Glory of the Lord."

The virtuoso choruses of "He shall purify," "For unto us," "His yoke is easy," etc. demand a careful treatment to keep the florid writing clear. These are fast Handel choruses and need quick tempi. The Lenten choruses need a more leisurely treatment filled with pathos: "Behold the Lamb of God," "And with His stripes." All of the choruses have a particular feeling for me, but the only other one that I would like to mention is the final "Amen" chorus. I take this chorus at a very slow tempo. The reasoning for this is two-fold: 1) the sonic aspects of the music support a slow tempo, and 2) I don't think that a quick, flippant Amen would be Handel's style in ending a three-hour work (not to mention the meter indicates a sense of four beats to the bar rather than the mainstream two!). If one can get over what one is accustomed to hearing for this final chorus, I think that the rewards are great.

by George Shangrow

Handel's Messiah

Catherine Haight • soprano
Hanne Ladefoged • mezzo-soprano
Stephen Wall • tenor
Brian Box • bass

Part I

1. *Sinfonia*

2. *Recitative*

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."

3. *Air*

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

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.

5. *Recitative*

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.

6. *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.

7. *Chorus*

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

8. *Recitative*

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

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

10. *Recitative*

For, behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

11. *Air*

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.

12. *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.

13. *Pifa - Pastoral Symphony*

14. *Recitative*

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.

15. *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."

16. *Recitative*

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

17. *Chorus*

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

18. *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.

19. *Recitative*

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.

20. *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 shall 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.

21. *Chorus*

His yoke is easy and His burthen is light.

—INTERMISSION—

Part II

22. *Chorus*

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

23. *Air*

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.

He was despised...

24. *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.

25. *Chorus*

And with His stripes we are healed.

26. *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.

27. *Recitative*

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

28. *Chorus*

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

29. *Recitative*

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.

30. *Air*

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

31. *Recitative*

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

32. *Air*

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

33. *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.

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of glory.

34. *Recitative*

Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee?

35. *Chorus*

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

36. *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.

37. *Chorus*

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

38. *Air*

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

39. *Chorus*

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world!

40. *Air*

Why do the nations so furiously rage together? And 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.

41. *Chorus*

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

42. *Recitative*

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

43. *Air*

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

44. *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, Hallelujah!

—INTERMISSION—

Part III

45. *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.
For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep.

46. *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.

47. *Recitative*

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.

48. *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.

The trumpet shall sound...

49. *Recitative*

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in Victory!

50. *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.

51. *Chorus*

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

52. *Air*

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 makes intercession for us.

53. *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.

Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers

Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers welcome you on a musical journey this 1995-96 concert season as we travel from the music of the Baroque, to contemporary classical works, to works of oratorio.

Led by founder and music director George Shangrow, OS/SCS is a 120 member, semi-professional orchestra and chorus. The membership includes professional musicians, music teachers, composers, and highly skilled amateurs. Since its founding in 1969, OS/SCS has been at the center of Seattle's musical life and has provided artistically challenging and rewarding opportunities for both Northwest artists and audiences. OS/SCS is distinguished by championing the works of Northwest composers. The group has performed or premiered major orchestral works by Northwest composers during every concert season. In addition, Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers have a unique reputation as one of Seattle's most accomplished interpreters of the music of Handel and Bach.

During the 27th season, Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers will be performing many of the great works of both Handel and Bach including Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* on Good Friday. The group will also

celebrate Bach's birthday in March. As in past seasons, OS/SCS will present the Baroque Courts Concerts in Seattle, and this year, in Bellevue. There are two performances of the ever-popular *Messiah* on December 15th and 17th at First Free Methodist Church. January brings an encore performance of the Three Piano Concerti concert—three concerti featuring three talented pianists. The season will conclude in May with a performance of Saint-Saens' *Organ Symphony*, coupled with Seattle composer Robert Kechley's *Symphony #2, Ferdinand the Bull*. It promises to be a fun and interesting season!



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The Artists

George Shangrow, Conductor, is Music Director of Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers, a position he has held since 1969 when he founded the organizations. His repertoire includes music of all eras with special emphasis on the Baroque and 20th Century literature. He has been featured guest conductor with the Sapporo (Japan) Symphony, Seattle Symphony, Oregon Symphony, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and other ensembles. He has conducted the world premieres of six operas in addition to the classical opera repertoire, primarily of Mozart. He was Music Director and Conductor of Pacific Chamber Opera from 1976 to 1978. As a professor, Mr. Shangrow has taught at Seattle University and Seattle Community College and is a frequent lecturer throughout the Northwest. With his ensembles he has toured Europe several times and has performed throughout the United States as a chamber musician. As a keyboardist he is a sought after accompanist and has appeared in recital with many Northwest artists. He has performed extensively abroad with the Cohan-Shangrow Duo. Mr. Shangrow has recorded with Voyager Records, Edel Records, and Lyman Digital Recording. Northwest music lovers also know George as a broadcast host on Classic KING-FM.

Catherine Haight, soprano, is well known to Seattle audiences for her performances of music of the Baroque period. She has sung the Passions and cantatas of Bach, as well as many of Handel's oratorios. She has performed as soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with Orchestra Seattle and the Seattle Chamber Singers for five years, and will appear again as soloist in their performances of that work in December.

Ms. Haight also appears on a regular basis with Pacific Northwest Ballet. She sang the solo roles in *The Nutcracker*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, *Faure's Requiem*, and most recently, Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, which she will perform with them again in February.

Ms. Haight has also been a featured soloist with other Northwest musical groups including, Bellevue Chamber Choir, Whatcom Chorale, and City Cantabile Choir.

Ms. Haight is a member of the voice faculty at Seattle Pacific University.

Hanne Ladefoged, mezzo-soprano, was born in Denmark and completed her Masters of Musicology at the University of Copenhagen. In 1991 she won scholarships to pursue postgraduate studies in Vocal Performance at Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. In 1993 Ms. Ladefoged was invited to join the Seattle Opera Chorus as a part of their Young Artist Community Outreach Program. She subsequently moved from Bellingham to Seattle, where she is currently engaged in a variety of projects as a vocal performer, lec-

turer and educator. Ms. Ladefoged is particularly interested in the Scandinavian song repertoire, which she has promoted in numerous recitals as well as on the radio. She recently received an award from the Northwest Danish Foundation in recognition of her support for Scandinavian music. Recent performances include portraying "The Psychiatrist" in Christian Asplund's *A Girl's Body* at Crepuscule with the Seattle Experimental Opera, and "Prince Orlovsky, in Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* with the Whatcom Symphony Orchestra in Bellingham. Additionally, Ms. Ladefoged plans to present more Scandinavian recitals throughout the Northwest.

Stephen Wall, tenor, is a resident singer of the Pacific Northwest. He has appeared often with Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers, including performances of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion*, *St. John Passion*, and the *B minor Mass*. He has performed with Seattle Opera in Wagner's *Tannhauser* and *Die Meistersinger*. Mr. Wall has soloed with the Seattle Symphony led by Gerard Schwartz in Mendelssohn's *Lobegesang*. His association with Mr. Schwartz includes appearances with the Vancouver British Columbia Symphony in performances of music by Bach and Wagner.

Mr. Wall has sung elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest area with the Bellevue Philharmonic, Seattle Bach Festival, Seattle Choral Company, Northwest Chamber Orchestra, and the Everett Symphony, as well as with the orchestras of Spokane and Yakima. He has performed in Stravinsky's *Les Noces*, Mussorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Rossini's *La Cambiale di Matrimonio*, in *Samson*, *Messiah* and *Saul* by Handel, and as Edgardo in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* with the Victoria Civic Opera and in Verdi's *Aida*—all in this past season! In addition, Mr. Wall was chosen to perform Rodolfo in *La Boheme* for the inaugural season of the Utah Festival Opera, for which he received rave reviews.

This past October he assumed the villainous role of Normanno in *Lucia di Lammermoor* for the Portland Opera, and also soloed with the Pendelton Oregon Symphony in Verdi's *Requiem*.

Baritone Brian Box is a native of Washington and received his Master of Music degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University. Mr. Box has appeared frequently with OS/SCS as a soloist in cantatas and oratorios. Among his credits are performances of Brahms' *Four Last Songs* with the Western Washington University Orchestra and the leading role in Dominic Argento's opera *Postcard from Morocco* at the University of British Columbia. He is a regular performer with Northwest Opera in Schools, Etc. and Seattle Opera's education program and made his Seattle Opera solo debut as the Corporal in *The Daughter of the Regiment*.

Orchestra Seattle

George Shangrow, music director

Orchestra Seattle operates on a basis of rotating seating, musicians are listed alphabetically.

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Sue Herring
Maria Hunt
Deb Kirkland,
concertmaster
Fritz Klein
Avron Maletzky
Gregor Nitsche
Leif-Ivar Pedersen, principal
second

VIOLAS

Deborah Daoust
Beatrice Dolf
Saundrah Humphrey
Sam Williams, principal

CELLOS

Valerie Ross
Matthew Wyant,
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BASS

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Chris Harshman

TRUMPETS

Robert Gale, principal
Gordon Ullmann

PERCUSSION

Daniel Oie

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Robert Kechley
George Shangrow

Seattle Chamber Singers

George Shangrow, music director

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Patty Adams
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Sue Cobb
Crissa Cugini
Andrea D'Ambrosia
Kyla DeRemer
Dana Durasoff
Cinda Freece
Lorelette Knowles
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Nancy Lewis
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Luna Bitzer
Cheryl Blackburn
Jane Blackwell
Wendy Borton
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Suzi Means
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Nedra Slauson
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Tom Nesbitt
Ben Waldman
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Orchestra Seattle Seattle Chamber Singers

Three Piano Concerti

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Beethoven's Piano Concerto #1 • Mark Salman
Liszt's Malediction • Ann Cumming
Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto #3 • Peter Mack

Tickets \$15 adults, \$10 seniors & students, \$5 children 12 and under.
Call 682-5208 for tickets and information.