

**Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers**  
George Shangrow, conductor

present

**Georg Frideric Handel**

***Messiah***

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*with the*  
**George Shangrow Chorale**

*members of*  
**Orchestra Seattle**

*soloists*  
Catherine Haight, soprano  
Sara Hedgpeth, mezzo soprano  
Stephen P. Wall, tenor  
Brian Box, bass

There will be two fifteen-minute intermissions.

December 18, 20, 22, 23 1991  
First Free Methodist Church  
Seattle, Washington

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This concert is co-sponsored by  
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Special Thanks to  
**First Free Methodist Church,**  
**H. Mark Abbott, pastor,**  
**R. Stanley Haight, music director**

Georg Frideric Handel's

# MESSIAH

Libretto by Charles Jennens, 1742

## 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.

**THE END**

# The George Shangrow Chorale

*George Shangrow, conductor*

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## **Soprano**

Belle Chenault  
Crissa Cugini  
Christina Fairweather  
Kathe Kern  
Mary Ann Landsverk  
Janet Sittig  
Barbara Stephens

## **Alto**

Kay Benningfield  
Marta Chaloupka  
Mary Beth Hughes  
Laurie Medill  
Nancy Shasteen  
Linda Scheuffele  
Nedra Slauson

## **Tenor**

Ron Haight  
Philip N. Jones, Jr.  
Paul Raabe  
Jerry Sams

## **Bass**

Gustave Blazek  
DeWayne Christianson  
Andrew Danilchik  
Skip Satterwhite  
Robert Schilperoort

## **BS/SCS Assistant Conductor**

R. Stanley Haight

## members of **Orchestra Seattle** *George Shangrow, conductor*

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## **Violin**

Susan Dunn  
Danielle Foucault  
Sue Herring  
Deb Kirkland  
Fritz Klein,  
concertmaster  
Diane Lange  
Thane Lewis  
Mark Lutz  
Avron Maletzky,  
principal second

## **Viola**

Paul Benningfield  
Timothy Prior,  
principal  
Michael Watson

## **Cello**

Valerie Ross  
Julie Reed Wheeler,  
principal

## **Bass**

Josephine Hansen

## **Oboe**

M. Shannon Hill,  
principal  
Terry Pickering

## **Bassoon**

Chris Harshman

## **Trumpet**

Matt Dalton, principal  
Gary Fladmoe  
Dan Harrington,  
principal

## **Timpani**

Daniel Oie

## **Harpsichord**

Robert Kechley  
George Shangrow

Orchestra Seattle operates on a policy of rotational seating; therefore, our personnel are listed alphabetically in each section.

## **Acknowledgments**

Classic KING-FM 98.1

Dr. Richard Lyman, audio engineer  
Kristina Newman, harpsichord tuning

# Program Notes

by  
Gary Fladmoe

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Simplistically described, an oratorio is an opera without staging. As the form revealed in the beginning stages, the description is accurate. The earliest examples of oratorio consisted largely of arias (mainly of the *da capo* variety) and recitatives, the standard forms of opera. They were performed without sets, acting, or costumes.

The oratorio seems to have evolved for very practical reasons. In Italy, where opera was immensely popular, the Roman Catholic church frowned upon operatic performance during times of penitence. There were even times when opera was totally banned. Composers found that they could circumvent the church and its rulings by writing works which avoided the objections of the church leaders while still utilizing the popular elements of opera. The result was the oratorio.

Early oratorio style featured the selection of a biblical story (usually from the Old Testament), setting it to poetic verse, and composing operatic numbers which in turn set the poetry to music.

It was within this atmosphere that Georg Frideric Handel lived and worked. During a sojourn in Italy, Handel produced an example of the Italian oratorio, completing *La Resurrezione* in 1708. It was, except for its text, typical of all the conventions of Italian opera.

Late in 1710 Handel arrived in England to begin a position in the employ of the Elector of Hanover. He was to remain in England for more than thirty years, during which time he would "invent" what we would come to know as the English oratorio.

Handel pursued a career as an opera composer. However, opera never achieved the status in England that it had on the continent. Handel discovered that if he was to continue to write opera, he would need to find a vehicle for increased earnings to sup-

port his unprofitable operatic writing. By astutely combining the oratorio conventions he had learned in Italy with the great English choral tradition, Handel found the answer: the English oratorio.

In 1718 Handel composed a work based on the Old Testament book of Esther which he called *The Oratorium*. It retained the conventions of Italian opera but also incorporated a number of choruses. There are no recorded accounts of a performance of the work for the first fourteen years following its writing, but it was produced with apparent success in February, 1732. Handel revised it, retitled it *Esther*, and performed it to financial success in May, 1732.

The success of *Esther* provided Handel with the means of supporting his opera-writing habit in the face of continuing financial difficulties with that medium. Between 1732 and 1741 he would compose other equally successful oratorios, among them *Deborah*, *Athalia*, *Saul*, and *Israel in Egypt*. 1741 witnessed the demise of Italian opera in England. When that occurred, rumors spread throughout Europe that Handel would soon leave England. During the summer of that year, Handel was invited to Ireland. Before arriving there he would compose what has become probably the most familiar and popular oratorio ever written, *Messiah*.

The music of *Messiah* is itself so well-known and easily recognized that it would probably add little to the listener's appreciation to further analyze the musical content of the work. There are, however, fascinating historical considerations associated with the oratorio and its performances. Exploring some of these considerations might help to reveal the musical significance of *Messiah*.

Prior to his departure for Ireland, Handel received from his friend and librettist Charles Jennens the libretto to

a new oratorio, *Messiah*. The libretto and overall concept of the oratorio obviously inspired Handel. He began composing on August 22, 1741, and completed it on September 14, an astonishing 24 days! He immediately set to work composing another of his great oratorios, *Samson*, completing it on October 29, just 68 days after beginning *Messiah*. Shortly after completing these two works, Handel left for Ireland. While in Dublin he produced two concert series which ran from late December until early April. Interestingly, neither *Messiah* nor *Samson* was performed during these concerts, although both were completed.

*Messiah* received its first performance on April 12, 1742, as a benefit program for prisoners in Dublin's jails, for Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's Street, and for the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay. The philanthropic motivation remained with Handel. In May, 1750, he offered the work to the Foundling Hospital in London to use for fund-raising, and willed a set of parts to that institution so that *Messiah* might continue to be used to raise funds.

*Messiah* was an immediate hit in Ireland; but, upon returning to England, Handel encountered ecclesiastical resistance and public lack of enthusiasm. The clerical criticism of the staging of religious subjects in theatrical settings and having Holy Scripture uttered by the likes of musicians was so strong that, on the few occasions *Messiah* was performed, it was titled *A New Sacred Oratorio*, and later simply *A Sacred Oratorio*. Handel withdrew the work from performance from 1745 until 1749. Those few intervening years witnessed a transformation in public sentiment. From the time it was again performed in 1749, under the original title *Messiah*, public acceptance and acclaim were assured.

The libretto itself represented a significant departure from the tradition

which Handel had established. As was indicated above, traditional oratorio style was to set religious stories to original poetry. In the case of *Messiah*, the words were drawn entirely from Scripture, lending credence to the theory that the work was never intended to convey a dramatic element. It seems natural that the text would appeal to both a middle class who were not steeped in the operatic tradition, and to those of higher station who were. Both elements of British society found the Bible a source of joy and inspiration. *Messiah* became a natural vehicle for enhancing the spiritual life of the people.

The scoring of *Messiah* has also been a source of much speculation

and debate. It would probably not be inaccurate to say that every performance during Handel's time was scored differently. Scholars and modern-day performers have sought to construct authentic performances, but the difficulty lies in the fact that each performance was structured by the singers and instrumentalists available at the time. Handel changed the orchestration and keys of the numbers frequently to suit his performance situation. Some of the voice assignments for the solos were even changed so that favored singers could perform them. At least fifteen of the fifty-three numbers in the oratorio have multiple versions dating from Handel's time. We modern "purists" attempt to amass

the forces to give an "authentic" performance. We might better expend our energies in fitting the performance to our resources. In doing so we might more ideally approach "authenticity."

Handel himself perhaps paid this great oratorio its finest tribute. When addressing Lord Kinnoul on the occasion of the first London performance of *Messiah* in March, 1743, he said, "I should be sorry, my Lord, if I have only succeeded in entertaining them; I wished to make them better."

We leave *Messiah* to stand on its own to lift the spirit and meaning of this holiday season to all who hear it.

## Performance Notes

by  
George Shangrow

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 con-

sider 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 rhyth-

mic 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, 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.

There is much more to say, and the editor says no more space. I think that my basic ideas are here encapsulated for the listener, but I would be very happy to discuss them in greater detail with any other "*Messiah*-addicts." I hope that everyone enjoys today's performance of the English-speaking world's favorite oratorio!

## Soloists

Soprano **Catherine Haight** is a graduate of Seattle Pacific University and has a busy vocal studio on the east side. She has appeared as soloist with Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers in their presentations of the Fauré *Requiem*, Haydn's oratorio *The Seasons*, past productions of *Messiah*, and Bach's cantata for soprano solo, *Jauchzet Gott in allen Landen*. In addition to her many appearances with Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers, Ms. Haight has also sung solos with the Bellevue Chamber Chorus, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and the Skagit Valley Bach Choir.

**Sara Hedgpeth**, mezzo soprano, has performed as soloist with Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers on numerous occasions, including *Messiah*, *Abendmusik* concerts and in the 20th Anniversary Gala presentation of Handel's *Israel in Egypt*. Ms. Hedgpeth's other solo engagements include appearances with the Portland Symphonic Choir, the Seattle Choral Company, Northwest Opera in Schools, etc. and many stints as a vocalist for Pacific Northwest Ballet. Ms. Hedgpeth is a regular member of the Seattle Opera Chorus, a Seattle Opera Preview Artist, and will be making her solo debut in their upcoming production of *The Ballad of Baby Doe*.

Tenor **Stephen P. Wall** has appeared many times with the OS/SCS. He was the tenor soloist in this fall's *Missa Solennis* of Beethoven, Beethoven's *Symphony #9* as well as appearing in the title role in *The Return of Ulysses*. His credits with Seattle Opera include roles in *Tannhauser*, *Die Meistersinger* and *War and Peace*. Mr. Wall has been a featured soloist with the Seattle, Spokane, Vancouver (B.C.) and Sapporo (Japan) Symphonies. He currently is Professor of Voice at PLU and Seattle Community College, and last year created the role of Vladimir in Carol Sams' latest opera, *Heaven*.

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*.

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