

Hallelujah Handel

Exploring Handel's Messiah

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Programme

- 1. Introduction + Part 1, scenes 1-3**
2. Part 1 : scenes 4-5
3. Part 2: scenes 1-4
4. Part 2: scenes 5-7
5. Part 3: scenes 1-2
6. Part 3: scenes 3-4



Messiah
an Oratorio

Presentation 1

1. History of composition
2. Layout of the whole messiah
3. Sources for the libretto
4. Persuasion
5. Part 1, first half
6. Conversation



History of Composition

1. 1685 (Halle) to 1759 (London)
2. Cosmopolitan and eclectic artist.
3. Drawing on German, French, Italian and English traditions.
4. By training and inclination, primarily a composer for the theatre.

History of Composition

He was in his person a late made and very portly man. His gait, which was ever sauntering, was rather ungraceful, as it had it something of that rocking motion, which distinguishes those whose legs are bowed. His features were finely marked, and the general cast of his countenance placid, bespeaking dignity attempered with benevolence, and every quality of the heart that has a tendency to beget confidence and insure esteem. (Hawkins)

History of Composition

He was impetuous, rough and peremptory in his manners and conversation but totally devoid of ill-nature or malevolence; indeed there was an original humour and pleasantry in his most lively sallies of anger or impatience, which, with his broken English, were extremely risible. His natural propensity to wit and humour, and happy method of relating common occurrences, in an uncommon way, enable him to throw persons and things into very ridiculous attitudes... Handel's general look was somewhat heavy and sour; but when he *did* smile, it was his sire the sun, bursting out of a black cloud. There was a sudden flash of intelligence, wit, and good humour, beaming in his countenance, which I hardly ever saw in any other.

(Burney)

History of Composition



Better than the Hallelujah Chorus?

He saw the lovely youth, Death's early prey!

Alas! Too early snatched away!

He heard his Mother's funeral cries

Rise youth, he says; the youth begins to rise,

Lowly the Matron bowed, and bore away the Prize.

(Theodora, Part II, scene 6, no. 26)

History of Composition

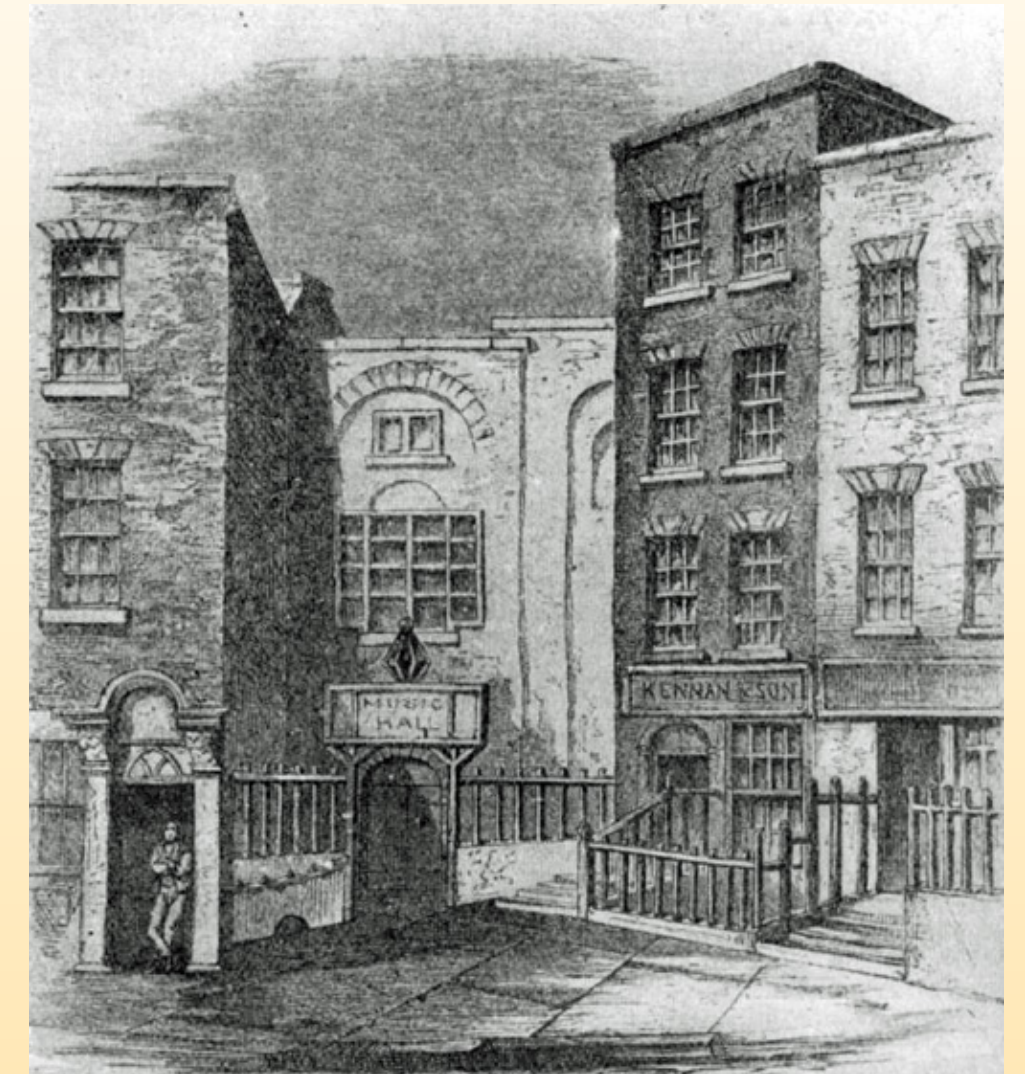
1. Jennens assembled the libretto.
2. As a devout Anglican and believer in scriptural authority, Jennens intended to challenge advocates of Deism.
3. The libretto has been described as "a meditation of our Lord as Messiah in Christian thought and belief".
4. There is no evidence that Handel played any active role in the selection or preparation of the text.

History of Composition

1. The music for Messiah was completed in 24 days of swift composition.
2. Handel received the libretto some time after 10 July 1741.
3. Handel began work on it on 22 August.
4. Part I complete in outline by 28 August
5. Part II by 6 September
6. Part III by 12 September.
7. Then followed by two days of "filling up" to produce the finished work on 14 September.

History of Composition

1. A season of concerts in Dublin in the winter of 1741–42
2. Duke of Devonshire, then Lord Lieutenant of Ireland.
3. First performance in Dublin.
4. Choirs of St Patrick's and Christchurch.
5. Prisoners' debt relief, the Mercer's Hospital, and the Charitable Infirmary.
6. 700 people attended on the 13th April 1742.
7. A second performance on 3rd June for the composer himself.



Layout of the whole Messiah

Part I

"The prophecy and realisation of God's plan to redeem mankind by the coming of the Messiah" (= **Advent and Christmas**, the life of Jesus)

Part II

"The accomplishment of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, mankind's rejection of God's offer, and mankind's utter defeat when trying to oppose the power of the Almighty" (= **Lent, Easter, Ascension and Pentecost**)

Part III

"A Hymn of Thanksgiving for the final overthrow of Death" (= **the Church year**)

Layout of the whole Messiah

Part I

"The prophecy and realisation of God's plan to redeem mankind by the coming of the Messiah"

Scene 1: "Isaiah's prophecy of salvation" (movements 2–4)

Scene 2: "The prophecy of the coming of Messiah and the question, despite (1), of what this may portend for the World" (movements 5–7)

Scene 3: "The prophecy of the Virgin Birth" (movements 8–12)

Scene 4: "The appearance of the Angels to the Shepherds" (movements 13–17)

Scene 5: "Christ's redemptive miracles on earth" (movements 18–21)

Layout of the whole Messiah

Part II

"The accomplishment of redemption by the sacrifice of Christ, mankind's rejection of God's offer, and mankind's utter defeat when trying to oppose the power of the Almighty"

Scene 1: "The redemptive sacrifice, the scourging and the agony on the cross" (movements 22–30)

Scene 2: "His sacrificial death, His passage through Hell and Resurrection" (movements 31–32)

Scene 3: "His ascension" (movement 33)

Scene 4: "God discloses his identity in Heaven" (movements 34–35)

Scene 5: "Whitsun, the gift of tongues, the beginning of evangelism" (movements 36–39)

Scene 6: "The world and its rulers reject the Gospel" (movements 40–41)

Scene 7: "God's triumph" (movements 42–44)

Layout of the whole Messiah

Part III

"A Hymn of Thanksgiving for the final overthrow of Death"

Scene 1: "The promise of bodily resurrection and redemption from Adam's fall" (movements 45–46)

Scene 2: "The Day of Judgment and general Resurrection" (movements 47–48)

Scene 3: "The victory over death and sin" (movements 49–52)

Scene 4: "The glorification of the Messianic victim" (movement 53)

Sources for the libretto

1. The libretto by Charles Jennens
2. King James Bible
3. The Book of Common Prayer (for the Psalms in Coverdale's version)
4. Isaiah, Haggai, Malachi, Zechariah
5. Psalms, Job, Lamentations
6. Matthew (x2), Luke (x4), John (x1)
7. Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, Revelation

Sources for the libretto

1. What is “missing”?
2. Genesis?
3. Gospels?
4. Resurrection “scenes”?

Persuasion

1. *Messiah* is not a typical Handel oratorio; there are no named characters, as are usually found in Handel's setting of the Old Testament stories, possibly to avoid charges of blasphemy. It is a meditation rather than a drama of personalities, lyrical in method; the narration of the story is carried on by implication, and there is no dialogue. (Christopher Hogwood)
2. Contrast with the traditional Passions (Schütz / Bach / Telemann)
3. The story is *not* narrated but implied.
4. The listeners piece together the narrative (enthymeme)
5. Jesus himself does not speak (with rare direct citations)

Part 1: scenes 1-3

Nov/Bär	Title	Form	Bible source	Notes
1	Sinfony			
Scene 1				
2	<i>Comfort ye, comfort ye my people</i>	Acc. T	Isaiah 40:1–3	Isaiah, a new Exodus
3	<i>Ev'ry valley shall be exalted</i>	Air T	Isaiah 40:4	
4	<i>And the glory, the glory of the Lord</i>	Chorus	Isaiah 40:5	
Scene 2				
5	<i>Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts</i> The Lord whom ye seek shall suddenly come to His temple	Acc. B	Haggai 2:6–7 Malachi 3:1	Haggai, splendor of the temple Malachi, the coming messenger
6	<i>But who may abide the day of His coming</i>	Air A	Malachi 3:2	
7	<i>And He shall purify</i>	chorus	Malachi 3:3	
Scene 3				
8	<i>Behold, a virgin shall conceive</i>	Rec. A	Isaiah 7:14 Matthew 1:23	Isaiah, virgin birth, quoted by Matthew
9 / 8	<i>O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion</i> Arise, shine	Air A Chorus	Isaiah 40:9 Isaiah 60:1	
10 / 9	<i>For behold, darkness shall cover the earth</i>	Acc. B	Isaiah 60:2–3	
11 / 10	<i>The people that walked in darkness</i>	Air B	Isaiah 9:2	
12 / 11	<i>For unto us a Child is born</i>	Chorus	Isaiah 9:6	

Sinfony

1. A French overture.
2. First part: slow, with dotted rhythms.
3. Culturally: solemn ceremony and royal splendour.
4. Second part: a courtly dance.
5. Message to the audience: the arrival of the King of Kings.
6. But, the overture is in a minor key, tempering its exuberance.

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Part 1: scene 1

2	2	Comfort ye	Accompagnato	Tenor	Larghetto e piano		C	E major
3	3	Ev'ry valley	Aria	Tenor	Andante		C	E major
4	4	And the glory ... of the Lord	Chorus		Allegro	Oboe	3/4	A major

1. Accompanied (recitative)
2. Aria
3. Chorus

Part 1, scene 1

Movement 2: Isaiah 40:1–3

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.”

Movement 3: Isaiah 40:4

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

Movement 4: Isaiah 40:5

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.

Part 1, scene 1

Movement 2: Isaiah 40:1–3

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Movement 2: Isaiah 40:1–3

Babylonian Exile, words of hope, John the Baptist, hope.

Movement 3: Isaiah 40:4

A great deal of word "painting" on words: exalted, low, crooked, straight, rough, plain.

Movement 4: Isaiah 40:5

First chorus. The alto begins, the other voices answer (mostly homophonically).

The words "for the mouth of the Lord has spoken it" are set as a cantus firmus of solemn and repeated long notes

Part 1, scene 2

5	5	Thus saith the Lord Behold, I will send	Accompagnato	Bass			C	D minor
6	6	But who may abide For he is like a refiner's fire	Aria	Soprano, Alto, or Bass	Larghetto Prestissimo		3/8 C	D minor (alto and bass) / A minor (soprano)
7	7	And He shall purify	Chorus		Allegro	Oboe	C	G minor

5. Accompanied (recitative)

6. Aria

7. Chorus

Part 1, scene 2

Movement 5: Malachi 3:1

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.

Movement 6: Malachi 3:2

But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

Movement 7: Malachi 3:3

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

Movement 5: Malachi 3:1

"Shake" is rendered several times in downward coloraturas. "Desire" is rendered once in upward coloraturas. The music then suddenly calms to an unaccompanied line

Movement 6: Malachi 3:2

Forceful downward runs, leaps and trills of the voice are accompanied by fiery figuration in the strings. Then follows a prestissimo section. Eventually an Adagio (cadenza).

Movement 7: Malachi 3:3

Important word: purify

Part 1, scene 3

8	8	Behold, a virgin shall conceive	Recitative	Alto			C	D major
9	8	O thou that tellest good tidings Arise, shine	Aria	Alto, Chorus	Andante	Oboe (chorus)	6/8	D major
10	9	For behold, darkness	Accompagnato	Bass	Andante larghetto		C	B minor
11	10	The people that walked	Aria	Bass	Larghetto		C	B minor
12	11	For unto us a Child is born	Chorus		Andante allegro	Oboe	C	G major

8. Accompanied (recitative)

9. Aria (Alto) + Chorus

10. Accompagnato

11. Aria

12. Chorus

Part 1, scene 3

Movement 8: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. “God with us.”

Movement 9: Isaiah 40:9, Isaiah 60:1

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! O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Movement 10: Isaiah 60:2-3

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.

Movement 11: Isaiah 9:2

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.

Movement 12: Isaiah 9:6

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.

Part 1, scene 3

Movement 8: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

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"God with us."

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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! O thou that tellest good tidings
to Zion, Arise, shine, for thy Light is come,
and the glory of the Lord is risen upon
thee.

Movement 8: Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

A short alto recitative, to be "called
Emmanuel", translated to "God – with
us", sung with a rest after "God".

Movement 9: Isaiah 40:9

6/8 time. Coloraturas accent the
words "mountain" and "glory", and
the words "God" and "Lord" are set in
long notes. "Arise" (Isaiah 60:1) is
sung on a pronounced "ascending
fourth"

Part 1, scene 3

Movement 10: Isaiah 60:2-3

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.

Movement 11: Isaiah 9:2

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.

Movement 10: Isaiah 60:2-3

Strings playing mysterious repeated motifs in major and minor seconds, until the text switches to "but the Lord shall arise" (which the voice presents as a melisma of two measures), followed by coloraturas on "glory" and an upward octave leap to proclaim in the end "and kings [to the brightness of thy rising]".

Movement 11: Isaiah 9:2

The darkness is illustrated by the bass and the celli in unison, starting with the seconds of the movement before and proceeding in uneven steps, carefully marked for irregular phrasing. On "have seen a great light", the melody begins to leap, and finally reaches on the word "light" a long high note which the voice holds, while the celli continue their movement.

Part 1, scene 3

Movement 12: Isaiah 9:6

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.

Movement 12: Isaiah 9:6

Marked piano, the sopranos enter a
fugue first, singing a delicate theme
with many rests. The tenors' entry is a
shimmering coloratura for more than
three measures. The words "and the
government shall be upon his
shoulders" appears in stately dotted
rhythm, culminating in the names
"Won-derful", "Coun-selor", "The
Mighty God", "The Everlasting Father",
"The Prince – of Peace", with the
shimmering coloratura in the strings.

Conversation

S. For un-to us a Child is born

A. For un-to us a Child is born

T. For un-to us a Child is born Un-to us a son is

B. us a Child is born un-to us a Child is born Un-to us a son is

S. un-to us

A. un-to us

T. giv-en un-to us a son is giv-en un-to us

B. giv-en un-to us a son is giv-en un-to us