Program Notes

The Composer

In 1824, 65 years after Handel’s death, Beethoven said this about him: “Handel is the greatest composer who ever lived. I would bare my head and kneel at his grave.” As Messiah was the work of Handel’s that Beethoven knew best (the manuscript on the cover of today’s program is a copy of Messiah written out in Beethoven’s hand), it seems clear that this work had a profound effect on the great symphonist.

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle in 1685 and trained as a violinist and keyboard player, though it was opera composition that most interested him. After his training in Germany, he went to Italy to study and compose operas, and then moved on to England in 1710, where he made a name for himself as a composer of Italian operas, and other works—both choral and instrumental—on commission.

Handel made a good living for many years with his operas, but in the 1730s public tastes began to change and Italian opera fell out of vogue. Looking for an economic alternative for his talents, Handel tried writing “concert operas” on sacred subjects, to be performed in English during the Lenten season. The results, both economically and artistically, were an unqualified success, and his oratorios have remained popular continuously in the 250 years since Handel’s death.

The Composition

Messiah, simply put, the most famous choral work ever composed. Written in three remarkable weeks to a libretto compiled by the acerbic Charles Jennens*, Handel debuted the work in Dublin on April 13, 1742 at a benefit concert for three charities. It was an instant success (two additional performances had to be scheduled) and has never fallen out of the repertoire.

The text of Messiah consists of a series of excerpts from the Bible and the Book of Common Prayer, describing the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Messiah is set in three parts: Part I describes the prophecy, birth and life of Christ; Part II depicts his suffering, death and resurrection (ending with the triumphant Hallelujah Chorus); Part III forms an epilogue, described by Poultney as the “thanksgiving for victory over death.”

Handel himself conducted many performances of the work during his lifetime, and made a number of changes, assigning different arias to different vocalists, modifying the length of various movements and making a variety of other small changes. Today’s performance is not based on any specific performance during Handel’s lifetime, but generally uses choices he made in his later (after 1750) performances. The cuts are intended to keep the length of the concert within two and half hours, without altering the dramatic continuity of the work.

*Jennens wrote the following to a friend of his: “I shall show you a collection I gave Handel, call’d Messiah, which I value highly, & he has made a fine Entertainment of it, tho’ not nearly as good as he might & ought to have done.”
Program

Messiah ................................................... George Frideric Handel (1685–1759)

Part I

1. Sinfonia
2. Recitative Comfort Ye Tenor
3. Air Ev’ry Valley Tenor
4. Chorus And The Glory of the Lord
5. Recitative Thus Saith the Lord Bass
6. Air But Who May Abide Alto
7. Chorus And He Shall Purify
8. Recitative Behold, A Virgin Shall Conceive Alto
9. Air and Chorus O Thou that Tellest Good Tidings Alto
10. Recitative For Behold, Darkness Bass
11. Air The People that Walked Bass
12. Chorus For Unto Us a Child is Born
13. Pifa Pastoral Symphony
14a. Recitative There were Shepherds Soprano
14b. Recitative And, lo, the Angel Soprano
15. Recitative And the Angel Soprano
16. Recitative And Suddenly Soprano
17. Chorus Glory to God
18. Air Rejoice Greatly Soprano
19. Recitative Then shall the Eyes Alto
20. Duet He Shall Feed His Flock Soprano and Alto
21. Chorus His Yoke is Easy

INTERMISSION

Part II

22. Chorus Behold the Lamb of God
23. Air He was Depised Alto
24. Chorus Surely
25. Chorus And with His Stripes
26. Chorus All We Like Sheep
29. Recitative Thy Reuke Tenor
30. Air Behold and See Tenor
31. Recitative He was Cut Off Tenor
32. Air But Thou Didst not Leave Tenor
39. Chorus Their Sound is Gone Out
40. Air Why do the Nations Rage Bass
42. Recitative He that Dwelleth Tenor
43. Air Thou Shalt Break Them Tenor
44. Recitative Hallelujah

Part III

45. Air I Know that my Redeemer Liveth Soprano
46. Chorus Since by Man came Death
47. Recitative Behold, I Tell You a Mystery Bass
48. Air The Trumpet shall Sound Bass
49. Recitative Then Shall be Brought to Pass Alto
53. Chorus Worthy is the Lamb

University Chorus
Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia
Penny Shumate, soprano
Stuart A. Neill, tenor
K. Rebecca Oehlers, alto
Stephanie Abruzzo, continuo
James Kirk, bass
Steven Powell, conductor
Drexel Chorus  
Dr. Steven Powell, director  
Stephanie Abruzzo, accompanist

**Soprano**

#Pamela Boimel ...................................... Biology  
Joanna Burkle ...................................... Music Industry  
#Jenell Carmona ..................................... Mathematics  
Karen Eyet ...................................... Music Industry  
Anna Klebanov ...................................... Business  
Amber Beth Knauss ................................ Psychology  
Dana Masterman ................................ Elementary Education  
#Johanna Mikitka ................................ Architectural Engineering  
Suzanne Paulinski ................................ Music Industry  
Sara Peitz ........................................ Music Industry  
Jennifer Rimmey ................................ Business  
*#Kimberly Rushing .............................. MS Decision Science/MBA  
Michelle Septak ................................ Business  
Danielle Siegel ................................ Biomedical Engineering  
Elissa Stecker ................................ Biology  
Kristine Terrado ................................ Electrical Engineering  
Katie Worst .................................. Music Industry  
Katherine Zimmerman ................................ Music Industry

**Alto**

Laura Baratta ................................ Biology  
Sara Barthol ................................ Architectural Engineering  
Christine Bonanno ................................ Music Industry  
Alicia Buchanan ................................ Environmental Science  
Jennifer Fetter ................................ Biology  
*#Amanda Hunt ................................ Chemical Engineering  
Katelin Kloberg ................................ Interior Design  
Heather Le ................................ Business  
Renee Von Mechow ................................ Information Systems  
Shannon Myrick .................................. Music Industry  
Jessica Phillips ................................ Music Industry  
Vanessa Preston ................................ Interior Design  
Kate Sherlock ................................ Music Industry  
Christina Simeone ................................ Music Industry

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Amber Beth Knauss ................................ Psychology  
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#Johanna Mikitka ................................ Architectural Engineering  
Suzanne Paulinski ................................ Music Industry  
Sara Peitz ........................................ Music Industry  
Jennifer Rimmey ................................ Business  
*#Kimberly Rushing .............................. MS Decision Science/MBA  
Michelle Septak ................................ Business  
Danielle Siegel ................................ Biomedical Engineering  
Elissa Stecker ................................ Biology  
Kristine Terrado ................................ Electrical Engineering  
Katie Worst .................................. Music Industry  
Katherine Zimmerman ................................ Music Industry

**Alto**

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Christine Bonanno ................................ Music Industry  
Alicia Buchanan ................................ Environmental Science  
Jennifer Fetter ................................ Biology  
*#Amanda Hunt ................................ Chemical Engineering  
Katelin Kloberg ................................ Interior Design  
Heather Le ................................ Business  
Renee Von Mechow ................................ Information Systems  
Shannon Myrick .................................. Music Industry  
Jessica Phillips ................................ Music Industry  
Vanessa Preston ................................ Interior Design  
Kate Sherlock ................................ Music Industry  
Christina Simeone ................................ Music Industry
Tenor
David Cherian --------------------------- Electrical Engineering
Michael Maicher ------------------- Commerce and Engineering
#Sean Martin--------------------------- Music Industry
•Bradley Mattson------------------- Business Administration
#Brian Summers------------------- Computer Science
Jordan Turkenkopf----------------- Music Industry

Bass
Jeff Arlen --------------------------- Biology/Pre-Med
Chris Barron --------------------------- Computer Science
Joe Belsh --------------------------- Music Industry
Ross Browne --------------------------- Music Industry
Ray Canzanese --------------------------- Computer Engineering
•Conrad Folkes ---------------- International Area Studies
Ryan Ketner --------------------------- Computer Engineering
Rob Rehner --------------------------- Music Industry
Matt Ridgeway --------------------------- Engineering
John Rizzo --------------------------- Engineering
#Arin Sang-urai ---------------- Film and Video
Kevin Scanlon --------------------------- Music Industry

• Section Leader     # Pi Nu Epsilon Member

Chamber Orchestra of Philadelphia

Violin I
Mei-Chen Liao Barnes
Mu Na Kuprij
Igor Szwec

Violin II
Elizabeth Kaderabek
Solomiya Ivakhiv
Yan Chin

Viola
Ellen Trainer
Scott Wagner

Cello
James Holesovsky
Jenny Lorenzo

Bass
Mary Javian

Oboe
Geoffrey Deemer
Stephen Labiner

Bassoon
Seth Baer

Trumpet
Rodney Mack

Timpani
Martha Hitchins