Members from
SEATTLE CHAMBER SINGERS

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Nedra Stauson

TENOR
Ralph Cobb
Ron Haight
Paul Raabe
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BASS
Paul Benningfield
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DeWayne Christenson
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ORCHESTRA SEATTLE

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VIOLIN
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Deb Kirkland, concert master
Diane Lange
Avron Maletzky, principal
Danielle McCutcheon
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OBEO
Huntley Beyer
Shannon Hill, principal

BASSOON
Chris Harshman

TRUMPET
Gary Fladmo
Dennis Schreffler, principal

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Owen Bjerke

HARPSICHORD
Robert Kechley
George Shangrow

Orchestra Seattle and Seattle Chamber Singers
George Shangrow, conductor

present

Georg Frideric Handel

MESSIAH

with members from
Seattle Chamber Singers
&
Orchestra Seattle

soloists
Catherine Haight, soprano
Emily Lunde, mezzo soprano
Stephen P. Wall, tenor
Brian Box, bass

There will be two fifteen-minute intermissions.

December 18 & 20, 1992
First Free Methodist Church
Seattle, Washington

This concert is co-sponsored by
Western Pianos
Washington State Arts Commission

Special Thanks to
First Free Methodist Church,
H. Mark Abbott, pastor,
Ron Haight, music director

Winterbrook Beverage Group
Christina Newman, harpsichord tuner
Performance Notes
by George Shangraw

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 diabolical problem in that it's great to be left with virtually complete freedom of interpretation, but 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 out "working" on how to do Messiah. First of all, one must consider the 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 poet's view. While this 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, use of melodic, textural, and harmonic device to evoke the description, character, or feeling of a particular text. A 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 waggery of the 18th notes in the orchestra when in "All they that see Him." Handel often 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-dotted. This process reflects two notes (found in a sequence of such two-note groups) and changing them from having a ratio of 3:1 to 1 length to 7:10 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-dotted is to be used. The rule for the French Orverture style (which is what the opening Sinfonia to Messiah is) states that only the small short one dotted note is doubled. So in the Sinfonia, we would still have the grandness of the opening rhythm (dotted-quartets followed by eighths) and we would have the rhythmic excitement of the double-dotted of the smallest value notes (the dotted-eighth/sixteenth) starting with the inner parts through the 8th bar.

This practice of double-dotted 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 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 note those value notes he wished used. Another chorus in which the rhythm is often tampered with is "Surely He hath borne our griefs." Here I find myself nothing short of irritated when the strength of the rhythm of two long notes before the short one changed to the much weaker rhythm of short-long-short-long. Once again the justification may be found in the fact that Handel noted 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 taketh away our transgressions..." 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 sudden (sudden) forte and pianissimo 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 fine line. After many doublings (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," "Hosanna is and so," etc., demand a careful treatment to keep the floor of words clear. These are fast Handel choruses and need quick tempo. The Lament 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 reason 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, flickering 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 — the opposite of the main theme). If one can get over what one is accustomed to hearing for this final chorus, I think that the rewards are great.

Mark Your Calendars!
with these Orchestra Seattle Seattle Chamber Singers events:

Baroque Courts I
February 7, 1993
McKee Chapel, Lakeside School

Featuring the music of J.S. Bach, Handel, Vivaldi & Morley. Treat yourself like royalty!

Valentine's Day Ball
February 14, 1993
Spanish Ballroom
Four Seasons Olympic Hotel

It's never too early to be thinking of love and romance! More details about our special ball and annual Chamber Music Marathon TBA.

Call 682-5208 for more information.

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SAMSON

Don't miss this premiere Seattle performance of Handel's dramatic oratorio, SAMSON.

January 31, 1993
3:00 pm
Meany Theatre, U of W

Seattle Chamber Singers
Orchestra Seattle
George Shangrow, Music Director

Tickets $12.00/gen, $10.00/seniors & students
Call TicketMaster or 682-5208
9. Air and Chorus
O that good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high
mountain; O that 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 shep-
d herd; 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 burden 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 ac-
quainted 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 chastise-
ment 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 omnipo-
tent 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 the 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 swal-
lowed 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.
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 dire 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 or the plot of the drama. This work is basically a poem woven into Handel's oratorio. Messiah is a poem written by the poet of the same name, and the Church and the Choir was written for the public audience and God in (that order, I think).

Handelian drama finds its expression in tone painting and modulation, and harmonic devices 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 waggery of the 16th notes in the orchestra when in "All they that see Him" is sung, "shake their heads 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 to thrive today regarding the performance of Baroque music is double-dotted music. This process reflects the actual music notation of the time. In Messiah, we would see the grandness of the opening rhythm, dotted-quarter rhythm followed by eighth notes. In Messiah, we would see the rhythmic excitement of the double-dotted music of the smallest value notes (the dotted-eighth/eighteenth) starting with the inner passages up to the Barbiere. This practice of double-dotted music is extended to other parts of the work, as well. For instance in the bass recitativo "Thus saith the Lord," Handel specifically writes dotted rhythm. I say specifically because only two bars later we hear a dotted rhythm. It seems to me that even in his haste in composing Messiah he was able to note those value changes he wished used. Another chorus in which the rhythm is often tampered with is "Surely He hath born our griefs." Here I find myself nothing short of irritated when the strength of the rhythm of two long notes before the chorus is changed to a much weaker rhythm of short-long-long-long. Once again the justification may be found in the fact that Handel noted 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 test. Listen to the "burning" texture in "For He Hath loosed the prison "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 sudden fortissimo and pizzicato 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, and 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 line. After much discussion (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 virtuosic choruses of "He shall purify," "For unto us," "His yoke is easy," etc. demand a careful treatment to keep the flow clear. These are fast Handel choruses and need quick tempi. The Lentsen choruses need a more serious treatment filled with pathos: "Behold the Lamb of God!" and Messiah Stripes. All of the choruses have a particular feeling for me, but the only one that I would like to mention is the final "Amen" chorus. I take this chorus at a very slow tempo. The reason 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, flighty Amen would be Handel's style in ending three-hour work (not to mention the meter indicates a sense of four beats to the bar). This is the main reason. If one can get over what one is accustomed to hearing for this final chorus, I think that the rewards are great.

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