LIBRETTO

PART 1: "EXODUS"

RECATIVATIVE: Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he set over the children of Israel taskmasters to afflict them with burdens, and they made them serve with rigour. Exodus i. 8, 11, 13

CHORUS: And the children of Israel cried out in their bondage, and in their sorrow they cried out unto the Lord. Exodus ii. 23

RECATIVATIVE: The word of the Lord came to Moses, his servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen; these showed His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. He turned their waters into blood. Ps. cv. 26, 27, 29

CHORUS: They fled to drink of the river. He turned their waters into blood. Exodus vii. 18, 19

AIR: Their land brought forth frogs, yea even in their king's chambers. Psa. cv. 30

CHORUS: He gave their cattle over to the pestilence; blights and blains broke forth on man and beast. Exodus xi. 9, 10

CHORUS: He spake the word, and their came all manner of flies and lice in all their quarters. He spake; and the locusts came without number, and devoured all the fruits of the ground. Ps. cv. 31, 34, 35

CHORUS: He gave them hailstones for rain; fire mingled with the hail ran along upon the ground. Ps. cv. 32; Exodus ix. 23, 24

CHORUS: He sent a thick darkness over the land, even darkness which might be felt. Exodus x. 21

CHORUS: He smote all the firstborn of Egypt, the chief of all their strength. Ps. cv. 36, 37

CHORUS: But as for his people, He led them forth like sheep; He brought them out with silver and gold; there was not one feeble person among them. Their tribes. Ps. cxliv. 33; cv. 37

CHORUS: Egypt was glad when they departed, for the fear of them fell upon them. Exodus xii. 11

CHORUS: He subdued the Red Sea, and it was dried up. Ps. cvii. 14

CHORUS: He led them through the deep as through a wilderness. Ps. cv. 9

CHORUS: But the waters overthrew their enemies, there was not one of them left. Ps. cvii. 11

CHORUS: And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. Exodus xiv. 31

PART 2: "SONG OF MOSES"

CHORUS: Moses and the children of Israel sang this song upon the Lord, and spoke, saying: I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. Exodus xv. 1

DUET: The Lord is my strength and my song; He is become my salvation. Exodus ii. 2

CHORUS: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father's God, and I will exalt Him. Exodus xv. 2

DUET: The Lord is a man of war: Lord is His name. Pharaoh's chariots and his host hath He cast into the sea; his chosen captains are also drowned in the Red Sea. Exodus xv. 3, 4

CHORUS: The depths have covered them; they sank into the bottom as a stone. Exodus xv. 5

CHORUS: The right hand, O Lord, is glorious in power; Thine right hand, O Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy. Exodus xv. 6

CHORUS: And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast overthrown them that rose up against Thee. Exodus xv. 7

CHORUS: Thou sendest forth Thy wrath, which consumeth them as stubble. Exodus xv. 7

CHORUS: And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as a heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. Exodus xv. 8

AIR: The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil, my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Exodus xv. 9

AIR: Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Exodus xv. 10

CHORUS: Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchest out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Exodus xv. 11, 12

DUET: Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. Exodus xv. 13

CHORUS: The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away: by the greatness of Thy arm they shall be as still as a stone till Thy people pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased. Exodus xv. 14, 15, 16

AIR: Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thine to dwell in, in the Sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. Exodus xv. 17

CHORUS: The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Exodus xv. 18

RECATIVATIVE: For the horse Pharaoh went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them; but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea. Exodus xv. 19

CHORUS: The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Exodus xv. 18

SOLO & CHorus: And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them. Exodus xv. 20, 21

SOLO & CHorus: Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. Exodus xv. 21, 18
The solemn procession of the Israelites through the Red Sea's wild waves is well-documented in various media, often referred to as a "deep" (note the plunging of the vocal lines at the word, "deep").

Three trombones, which reinforce the more commonly used trumpets and drums, often provide the orchestral sound with a wonderful deep tone to balance their strength. Other colorful instrumental touches in this section include the use of flutes to produce prelude, postlude, and other settings. "They led them forth like sheep," and the employment of vibrantly "buzzing" violins to paint the plagues of flies, lice, and locusts.

Part II, "Moses' Song," celebrates the miraculous escape of the Israelites across the Red Sea. In this section, the solo voices play a more important role, with three arias and three duets, but the chorus remains dominant. A striking orchestral introduction featuring unexpected changes of tonality is followed by the superbly Handelian double chorus, "I will sing unto the Lord," in which galloping horses can be heard in the choral rhythms. Equally powerful is the double chorus, "The people shall howl," one of Handel's most exultant and dramatic. It builds successively. In the sound of a gospel choir at a retreat dinner, the chorus rises to a climactic sound. And, "seraphim" climbs melodically above sustained bass notes as the chorus describes the weary wanderings of the Israelites through a desert of desolation, a sumptuous desert, concerned to the promised land. A particularly stunning effect is achieved at the close of the choral chorus, "We are come into the land of milk and honey," where "the depths con- gel in the heart of the sea" in single, stark notes in the bass. The section concludes with a splendid finale, considered by some to be unsurpassed in the entire corpus of Handel's work, in which the operatic quality of the music is derived. Other highlights return to "triumph gloriously" initerableness.

If Messiah is generally considered the greatest of Handel's oratorios, Israel in Egypt, which Jonathan Keates describes as an "almost complete line through the gap between man and God," ranks a very close second. Though it has no dramatic plot and no individual characters, every possible choral device is employed to bring out the ever-expansive choral pieces, including choral recitative and arioso, fugal and double fugal, and dramatic narrative. R.A.

PERFORMERS

Music Director and Conductor

George Shawong

Soloists


Seattle Chamber Singers, Chorus I

Sopranos: Barbara Dobson, Sue Cobb, Kirsti Hood, Loreleie Knowles, Caroline Pachaud, Kelly Sanderlind, Sean Cleef Tenors: Ralph sophie, Timothy Lunde, Tom Nesbit, Ben Waldman

Seattle Chamber Singers, Chorus II

Sopranos: Debra Browning, Susan Dier, Cindy Freeze, Jill Kraakmo, Nancy Lewis, Alessia Mileto, Paula Rimmer Tenors: Alex Chun, Jon Lange, Dave Spurling

Altos: Sharon Agrin, Cheryl Blackwell, Penny Deputy, Laurie Medill, Veronica Pasinski, Nicki Slaunton

Basses: Greg Abbott, Brian Box, Andrew Divicich, Dick Ethington

Orchestra Seattle

Vladimir Djahia Akropolovitch Hobson, Sue Herrington, Deborah Kirkland (conductor, master), Pim Klein (principal second), Pam Kummert, Mary Laughery, Kelly Nitsche, Leafi LaVineda, Pedersen, Janet Showler

Violins: Sarahndra Humphrey (principal), Sharon Petri, Stephanie Reid, Sharon Tiveten

Celeste: Evelyn Albrecht, Julie C. Reed (principal first orchestra), Valerie Ross, Matthew Wynd (principal second orchestra)

Bassoon: Allan Goldstein (second orchestra), Josephine Hansen (first orchestra)

Oboe: M. Shannon Hill (principal), Taina Karl

Rarousa: Jeff Eldridge (principal), Judy Lawrence

Trumpe: Craig Penrose, Gordon Ullman (principal)

Trumpet: David Brewer, Czaehmoch Escobedo (principal), David Holmes

Percussion: Owen Bjerke, Daniel Dye

Harpsichord Robert Keyes, Lisa Lewis

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

OS5SCs are grateful for the support of:

Washingtion State Arts Commission
King County Arts Commission
Seattle Arts Commission
Corporate Council for the Arts
Seafirst Bank
The Boeing Company
Microsoft Corporation
Davie Wright Tremaine LLP
CLASS FM 98.1

Directors of Boards

Alvin S. Mitten, President
Rebecca Tymiuk, Treasurer
Sharon Agrin, Chairwoman
Douglas Darussof
Kerry Fowler
Dr. Richard Lynn
Michael Yantis
Richard Wofford

Administrative Personnel

George Shawong, Music Director
Jane Blackwell, Librarian
Andrew Danilchik, Librarian
John Jacks, Bookkeeper

Special Thanks

Lyman Digital Recording
Susan Peterson for use of her harpsichord
Kristina Newman for tuing it
Kori Cowan, Grammy Award-winning Audio Engineer
Byzantium, Berkeley, program design and cover art...and all of our outstanding volunteers!

On Oct. 1, 1739 (almost exactly 259 years ago), within four days of receiving the score of the oratorio, Saul, Handel began the composition of a large-scale, choral epic called The Song of Moses, which Handel worked on until the death of Ananias or an anthem as a set of anthems. The text from Exodus 15th celebrates the deliverance of the people of Israel from the Egyptians by Pharaoh and the Egyptians by whom they had been enslaved. The sentiments of this text fit the contemporary political situation, with Spain and its allies against the oratorios, in which it was performed in the 19th century, and in which we present it today. In this form, Israel in Egypt began to be performed together with Messiah in the gigantic Handel Festivals held in the Sydenham Crystal Palace during the Victorian era, and it has remained a favorite with choral societies and their audiences ever since.

Part I of Israel in Egypt, called "Exodus," opens, not with a colossal choral as one might expect, but with a tenor recitative announcing that a new ruler has arisen in Egypt who afflicts the Israelites with grievous burdens. From this point on, the tenor speaks with incredible passion, with many remarkably graphic effects, the story of the ten plagues that befell the Israelites' oppressors and finally cause the Pharaoh to let Israelites go. As far as we know, the story of the ten plagues is not found in the Bible, but, as we shall see, it played a significant role in the composition of the oratorio. The Pharaoh was not the only one in this section of the oratorio, in "They loathed to drink of the river," arag, chromatic fugue subject conveys a feeling of thirst and, finally, the feeling of drinking the bloody waters of the Nile. The "Hailstone choral" pulsates with the story of the ten plagues, with each soloist representing one choral and then the other. The plague of darkness is depicted by means of a choral recitation featuring unsettling, ominous harmonies, the shadowy sounds of low strings and bassoons, and fragmented choral lines that wander and clutch at helplessness in the face of the absolute blackness. The chorus, "Egypt was glad when they departed," is an example of Handel's felicitous reworking of the biblical text. A section of the second act, sometimes referred to as almost "verbalm" from an archaic-sound- ing organ piece by a little-known German, Karl Anton Graun, makes a point about the conception of the Egyptians as dull, complacent, and apathetic even while the miraculous torments they suffer at the hands of Israel's God scarcely stir them from their torpor.
The solemn procession of the Israelites through the Red Sea's wild waves is well-illustrated by the term "deep" (note the plunging of the vocal lines at the word, "deep").

Three trombones, which reinforce the more commonly used trumpets and drums, often provide the orchestral sound with a wonderfuluter, Ravel in its tremulous soaring sonorities, and rejoices with the Children of Israel in their marvellous deliverance!

Indeed, Israel in Egypt remains one of the most incredible choral tours de force in music history. In its triumphant, sweeping sonorities, and rejoices with the Children of Israel in their marvellous deliverance!

Part II, "Moses" Song, celebrates the miraculous escape of the Israelites across the Red Sea. In this section, the solo voices play a more important role, with three arias and three duets, but the chorus remains dominant. A striking orchestral introduction, featuring unexpected changes of tonality is followed by the superhuman Handelian double chorus, "I will sing unto the Lord," in which galloping horses can be heard in the choral rhythms. Equally powerful is the double chorus, "The peoples shall hear," one of Handel's most exultant and dramatic. It builds successively to a sweeping chorale over a dotted rhythm that plunges into the concertante lines, which in turn rises melodically above sustained bass notes as the chorus describes the weary wanderings of the Israelites through a desert. In one instance, a passionate concertante is accompanied by its promised land. A particularly stunning effect is achieved at the close of the chorus, when the choral writing finally ceases for a moment to hear the blast of thy nostrils, where "the depths confound in the heart of the sea into single", stark notes in the bass. The section concludes with a splendid finale, considered by some to be unsurpassed in the entire corpus of Handel's work, in which the opening music of the work is heard, and the chorus returns to "triumphant glory" in glittering grandeur.

If Messiah is generally considered the greatest of Handel's oratorios, Israel in Egypt, which Jonathan Keates describes as "an oratorio of the descriptive--a vivid picture between man and God," ranks a very close second. Though it has no dramatic plot and no individual characters, every possible choral device is employed to express expressive choral pieces, including choral recitative and arioso, fugue and double fugue, and dramatic narrative. R.A.
LIBRETTO

PART 1: "EXODUS"

RECENTIVE: Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he set over his people to afflict them with burdens: and they made their lives bitter with works.

EXODUS II, 21

CHORUS: And the children of Israel cried in their bondage, and their cry came up unto God. And God heard their cry; and God remembered his covenant with Abraham, his servant, and with Isaac, and with Jacob.

EXODUS III, 7

RECENTIVE: The servent He Moses, His servant, and Aaron whom he had chosen; these spake they of him, and wondrous works in Egypt, and in the Red Sea.

EXODUS VII, 18

AIR: Their land brought forth four crops, even in the seven years of harvest; and there was food for the seven years following.

Psalms I, 30

CHORUS: He gave their cattle unto the pestilence; their flocks and their herds they wasted. And they came without number, and devoured all the fruits of the ground.

EXODUS IX, 34

CHORUS: He sent them plagues of hail, fire mingled with the hail, thunders, darkness, and a violent storm;

EXODUS IX, 23

CHORUS: He sent strong east winds, and they were sore vexed on every side; he smote the locusts without number, and the locusts came without number, and devoured all the trees of Egypt.

EXODUS X, 24

AIR: He sent strong east winds, and they were sore vexed on every side; he smote the locusts without number, and the locusts came without number, and devoured all the trees of Egypt.

EXODUS X, 24

CHORUS: But for his people, He led them forth like sheep; He brought them out with silver and gold; there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

Psalms XCVII, 33

CHORUS: He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up; Psalms CVII, 9

CHORUS: He led them through the deep as through a wilderness. Psalms CVII, 9

CHORUS: But the waters overwhelmed their enemies, there was not one of them left. Psalms CVII, 11

CHORUS: And Israel saw that great work that the Lord did upon the Egyptians; and the people feared the Lord, and believed the Lord and His servant Moses. Exodus X, 34

PART 2: "SONG OF MOSES"

CHORUS: Moses and the children of Israel sang this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying: I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

EXODUS XV, 1

Duet: The Lord is my strength and song; He is become my salvation. Exodus XV, 2

CHORUS: He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation; my father’s God, and I will exalt Him. Exodus XV, 2

Duet: The Lord is a man of war; the Lord is His name. Pharaoh’s chariots and his host He cast into the sea; His chosen captains also are drowned in the Red Sea. Exodus XV, 3

CHORUS: The depths have covered them; they sank into the bottom as a stone. Exodus XV, 5

CHORUS: The right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power; Thy right hand, O Lord, is lifted up, full of salvation. Exodus XV, 6

CHORUS: And in the greatness of Thine excellency Thou hast exalted them that rose up against Thee. Exodus XV, 7

CHORUS: Thou sendest forth Thy wrath, which consumeth them as stubble. Exodus XV, 7

CHORUS: And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea. Exodus XV, 8

AIR: The enemy said, I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil; my lust shall be satisfied upon them; I will draw my sword, my hand shall destroy them. Exodus XV, 9

AIR: Thou didst blow with the wind, the sea covered them; they sank as lead in the mighty waters. Exodus XV, 10

AIR: Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods? Who is like unto Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders? Thou stretchest out Thy right hand, the earth swallowed them. Exodus XV, 10

Duet: Thou in Thy mercy hast led forth Thy people which Thou hast redeemed; Thou hast guided them in Thy strength unto Thy holy habitation. Exodus XV, 13

CHORUS: The people shall hear, and be afraid; sorrow shall take hold on them: all the inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away: by the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone; till Thine people pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased. Exodus XV, 14,15,16

AIR: Thou shalt bring them in, and plant them in the mountain of Thine inheritance, in the place, O Lord, which Thou hast made for Thine to dwell in, in the sanctuary, O Lord, which Thy hands have established. Exodus XV, 17

CHORUS: The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Exodus XV, 18

RECENTIVE: For the horse fadeth, and even the chariot fadeth away; and the anger of the Lord fadeth not. Psalms XCI, 9

EXODUS XV, 19

CHORUS: The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. Exodus XV, 18

RECENTIVE: And Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances. And Miriam answered them. Exodus XV, 20, 21

SOLO & CH: Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. Exodus XV, 17, 18

George Frideric Handel’s

PROGRAM NOTES

By the time of his death in London in 1759, a German musician, who had been trained in Italy, had become England’s “national composer.” This remarkable man had come to be both a musical master and a “personality” regarded with special affection and attention throughout the musical world, and so he remains to this day, although the list of works for which he is famous is very short. It includes one complete oratorio, Messiah, (which we will present on December 20 and 21), a “funeral march” from another oratorio, Saul (which you will hear us perform on November 16), a chorus from a third oratorio, Judas Maccabaeus (which we performed last season), an air from the same, Water Music, and the Fireworks Music.

In this 1997-98 season, OSSCS takes great pleasure in presenting six of this composer’s powerful and moving works for orchestra, soloists, and chorus. Five of these are very rarely performed, and we thus offer you an unprecedented opportunity to become more deeply and widely acquainted with the breathtaking music of one of choral art’s greatest geniuses—George Frideric Handel.

Handel was born Georg Friedrich Händel in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685 to Georg, a surgeon, and his second wife, Dorothea, the daughter of a Lutheran pastor. As a young musician who played harpsichord, organ, violin, and clave, Handel traveled, studied, and composed in the very cosmopolitan Italy of the early 1700s, where he met with considerable success.