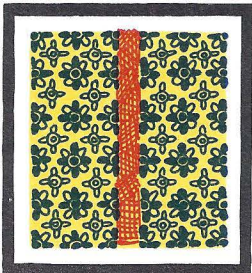




DAVID A MC DONALD 1988



December 3, 1988

**Willamette University
Smith Auditorium**



MESSIAH

by
G. F. Handel

Dr. Wallace Long, Jr., Conductor

Myra Brand, Soprano
Cynthia McGladrey, Alto
Dan Sachs, Tenor
David Jimmerson, Bass

Presented by
The
MESSIAH SING-TOGETHER
Committee

Britta Lion Franz

Jerry Berberet

Co-Chairs

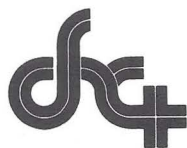
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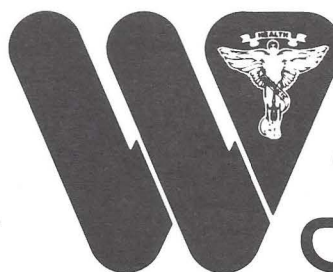
HANDEL'S MESSIAH

We are gathered here to participate in a popular holiday ritual, hearing and singing Handel's Messiah. At this time of year thousands of enthusiastic amateurs like us will be taxing their vocal powers in concert halls, churches and gymnasiums all over the English-speaking world by joining in on the beloved choruses of one of the great masterpieces of music. No other work of comparable scale or musical stature enjoys such popularity, and only a few hymns and national anthems inspire such a deeply felt desire to join in the singing. We might ask, what is it about Messiah that has made it so enormously popular? The obvious answer is the unsearchable mystery of Handel's genius, but other great composers have written magnificent music which has never achieved the popularity of Messiah. Are there, then, more mundane reasons for Messiah having become such an integral part of our celebration of the two great Christian festivals, Christmas and Easter?

Before we try to answer this question, it might be useful to glance briefly at Handel's career and accomplishments as a composer. German by birth and early training, and a distinguished composer and performer in his teens, Handel also lived and worked in Italy for five years before coming to England in 1710. He thus brought with him rich musical experience in both German and Italian traditions. In his long career he composed fifty operas, twenty oratorios, one hundred cantatas and "serenatas," fifty concerti for various instruments, some thirty anthems, two passions, incidental music to several plays, and much solo music for harpsichord, violin, flute and oboe. As a professional musician and impresario in an exuberant age of artistic factions and rivalries, Handel had to be sensitive to popular taste, so it should not be surprising to discover that he turned to oratorio writing in the 1740's when popular taste in England was shifting from rational Deism based on classical models, to the religious sublime, which found its inspiration in the Bible.

WISHING YOU AND YOURS

*A Blessed and Joyous
Holiday Season*



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This brings us to one of the reasons Messiah has enjoyed such popularity for nearly 250 years. It is not coincidental that oratorios came into their own at the same time that Methodism and evangelical revivalism swept over England, for both satisfied a need for emotional, Communal worship, as they do today. But Messiah was not well received in London until Handel found a suitable context for its performance, one that united dramatic religious music with the new spirit of evangelical Christianity. Originally it was presented in playhouses, as Handel's operas had been, but these were associated in the popular mind with immorality. Church authorities, on the other hand, deemed it too theatrical to be performed in a church, so it languished until 1750, when Handel performed it as charity benefit in the new Chapel of the Foundling Hospital, with which it has since been closely associated. From then on it was enormously popular among the middle-class latitudinarians and evangelicals, and the next two centuries saw their growing ascendancy throughout the English-speaking world. Handel's Messiah gave powerful expression to the essential theme of the new religious spirit of the age: "thanks be to God who giveth us the victory, through our Lord Jesus Christ." Its theology is simple and stirring: God is bountiful and accessible; His service is enjoyable; and only those who deny His existence will be destroyed.

This brings us to another reason for the popularity of Messiah - its exuberance. Handel was a master of dramatic and ceremonial music, music of strong contrasts, imitative effects, and easy accessibility, when, at the age of 55, he composed Messiah in 24 days in the autumn of 1741. Neither the text, which was compiled by Charles Jennens, an otherwise undistinguished versifier, nor the music is too sensitive, too subtle, too mystical. Everything is brought out into the light, strongly charged, clearly marked and firmly set. This is not to say that Messiah itself is philistine, but its apparently robust simplicity can appeal to the philistine nature in ways that we can hardly imagine Bach's B minor Mass doing.

It should also be noted that Messiah was originally composed and performed with great success for a charity benefit in Dublin. From the very beginning Messiah has been associated

with humanitarianism, with the belief that effectual faith entails kindness, and this association has probably done much to endear the work to that large majority of people who enjoy music not for itself alone but for its associations.

From the first Messiah seems to have inspired in its hearers a desire to join actively in the performance. As Handel said in a letter to Gluck, "What the English like is something they can beat time to." When King George II first heard the Hallelujah chorus, in 1743, he rose from his seat and stood through the whole chorus in rapt admiration, thus inaugurating a tradition which continues to our day. In recent years Messiah Sing-Togethers have become increasingly popular, reflecting the desire of audiences to join even more fully into the performance of this great oratorio. And this gives us our final clue to the secret of Messiah's wide appeal - the glorious choruses which express so movingly the communal spirit of both Christianity and mankind in general, our sense of a shared condition and destiny. Messiah is not, as, say, Bach's Passions are, a musical narrative of events from the life of Christ, but a lyrical epic on the theme of

man's redemption. Handel treated Christ's redemptive function metaphysically by focusing upon the great symbolic ideas of Prophecy, Advent, Nativity, Mission, Sacrifice, and Atonement, Resurrection, Spreading the Gospel, Faith and Hope, and Triumph over Death. Like the chorus in Greek drama, which expresses the feelings of people who are both observers of and participants in the great actions of the hero, the Messiah choruses draw us into both reflection on and involvement in the great divine comedy of redemption.

Handel took his epigraph for Messiah, *Majora Canamus* (let us sing of greater things), from the fourth Eclogue of Virgil, which suggests the generalized sense of exaltation conveyed by the oratorio as a whole. Messiah appeals to man's universal need to worship, and transcends the particular distinctions of individual creeds. In singing its choruses we all "sing of greater things," and absorbed thus in to the family of man we celebrate our good fortune as Handel depicts it in his musical epic of redemption.

Bill Braden - Willamette University

**What is it
about
Messiah
that has
made it so
enormously
popular?**

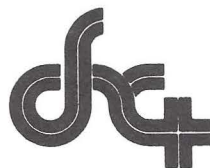
MESSIA

*Audience Please Stand ■ Page Number in Schirmer Edition ● Page Number in Novello Edition

	■	●		■	●
1. Sinfonia <i>Orchestra</i>	3	1	*12. For unto us a Child is born <i>Chorus</i>	66	55
2. Comfort ye my people	7	4	14. There were shepherds abiding in the fields	79	66
3. Every valley shall be exalted <i>Tenor solo</i>	10	6	14a. And lo! the angel of the Lord		
*4. And the glory of the Lord <i>Chorus</i>	16	11	15. And the angel said unto them		
5. Thus saith the Lord	24	19	16. And suddenly there was with the angel <i>Soprano solo</i>		
6. But who may abide <i>Bass solo</i>	27	21	*17. Glory to God <i>Chorus</i>	82	68
*7. And He shall purify <i>Chorus</i>	36	35	18. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion <i>Soprano solo</i>	87	73
8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive	47	41	19. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened <i>Alto solo</i>	94	80
9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion <i>Alto solo</i>			20. He shall feed His flock <i>Soprano solo</i>		
*9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion <i>Chorus</i>	54	46	*21. His yoke is easy, His burden is light <i>Chorus</i>	98	86

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H S I N G T O G E T H E R

*Audience Please Stand	■ Page Number in Schirmer Edition	● Page Number in Novello Edition
INTERMISSION	■ ●	■ ●
*22. Behold the Lamb of God <i>Chorus</i>	104 91	45. I know that my redeemer liveth <i>Soprano solo</i> 204 181
*24. Surely He hath borne our griefs <i>Chorus</i>	113 98	*46. Since by man came death 210 186 <i>Chorus</i>
*26. All we like sheep have gone astray <i>Chorus</i>	122 106	47. Behold, I tell you a mystery 214 189
*33. Lift up your heads <i>Chorus</i>	144 127	48. The trumpet shall sound <i>Bass solo</i>
40. Why do the nations so furiously rage together <i>Bass solo</i>	174 155	*53. Worthy is the Lamb. Amen 237 217 <i>Chorus</i>
*41. Let us break their bonds asunder <i>Chorus</i>	182 161	
*44. Hallelujah! <i>Chorus</i>	193 171	

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Diane McLin
Jo Moore
Steve Nelson
Victor Palmason
Douglas Vincent

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Marlene Hart
Gretchen Jensen
Phyllis Krueger
Laura Owens
Madison Vick

VIOLA

Karen Vincent, principal
Richard Bauer
Jeff Shippey

CELLO

Georgienne Lawry, principal
Mary Johnson
Rhonda Johnson

BASS

Curtis Daily, principal

OBOE

Mary Lott

TRUMPET

Raymond Krueger, principal
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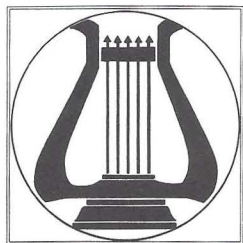
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Iltis, Deanna
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MESSIAH Sing-Together

The idea of the Messiah Sing-Together as a community-wide event was inaugurated in 1987 in association with the Mid-Valley Arts Council and in consultation with the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. The goal, both then and now, is to establish a traditional opportunity for the Salem/Keizer community to come together and celebrate the holiday season through mutual involvement in the performance of one of the great musical works of the English language. The substantial growth in interest in this second year would seem to indicate that this tradition is becoming a part of what makes up our community.

As with almost any worthwhile endeavor, this event has not come about without the hard work and cooperation of many individuals and organizations. In this program we have attempted to list as many as possible of those who have contributed to making this evening possible. However, some have probably been inadvertently overlooked and omitted. To them we here offer our apologies and express our gratitude to all who have shared in bringing about Messiah Sing-Together for 1988.

The Committee



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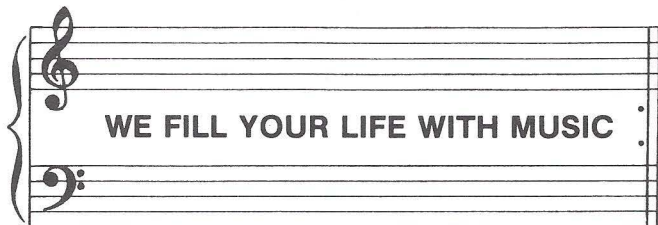
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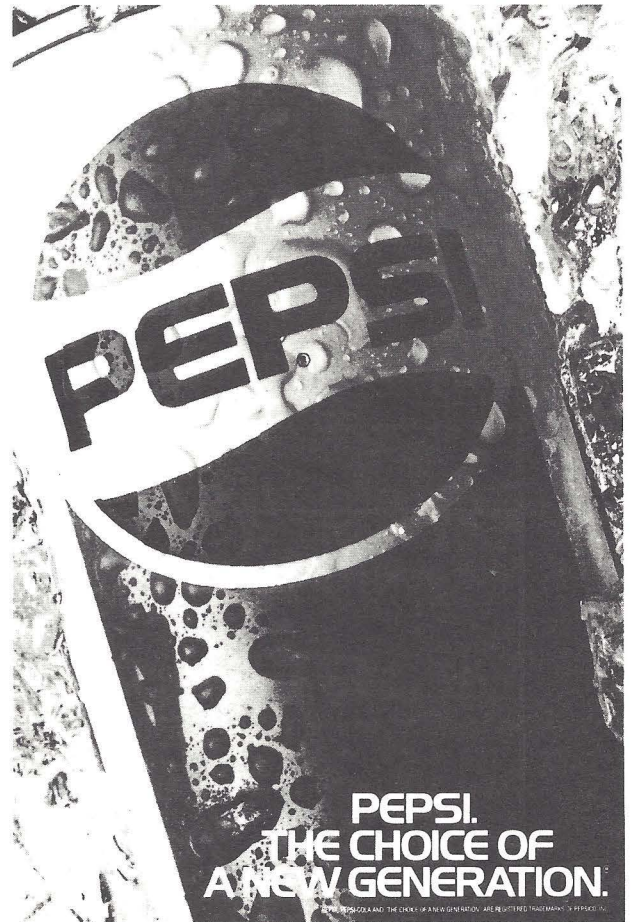
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