

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2019—4 PM

Westview Presbyterian Church, Longmont

Longmont Symphony Chamber Orchestra
Elliot Moore, conductor
Longmont Chorale's Viva Voce,
Scott Hamlin, artistic director

Ekaterina Kotcherguina, soprano
Claire McCahan, mezzo-soprano
Charles Moore, tenor
Joshua South, bass

Part I

Overture
Accompanied recitative: *Comfort ye, my people* (tenor)
Aria: *Every valley shall be exalted* (tenor)
Chorus: *And the glory of the Lord*
Accompanied recitative: *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts*
(bass)
Aria: *But who may abide the day of His coming*
(mezzo-soprano)
Chorus: *And He shall purify*
Recitative: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son*
(mezzo-soprano)
Aria and Chorus: *O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion*
(mezzo-soprano)
Accompanied recitative: *For behold, darkness shall*
cover the earth (bass)
Aria: *The people that walked in darkness* (bass)
Chorus: *For unto us a Child is born*
Pifa
Accompanied recitative: *There were shepherds abiding*
in the field (soprano)
Chorus: *Glory to God in the highest*
Aria: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion* (soprano)
Recitative: *Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened*
(mezzo-soprano)
Aria: *He shall feed His flock like a shepherd*
(mezzo-soprano, soprano)
Chorus: *His yoke is easy, His burthen is light*

~ INTERMISSION ~

Part II

Chorus: *Behold, the Lamb of God*
Aria: *He was despised and rejected of men*
(mezzo-soprano)
Chorus: *Surely He hath borne our griefs and carried*
our sorrows

Chorus: *And with His stripes we are healed*
Chorus: *All we like sheep have gone astray*
Accompanied recitative: *All they that see Him, laugh*
Him to scorn (tenor)
Chorus: *He trusted in God that He would deliver Him*
Accompanied recitative: *Thy rebuke hath broken His*
heart (tenor)
Aria: *Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto*
His sorrow (tenor)
Accompanied recitative: *He was cut off out of the land*
of the living (tenor)
Aria: *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* (tenor)
Chorus: *Lift up your heads, O ye gates*
Aria: *How beautiful are the feet of them that preach*
the gospel of peace (soprano)
Chorus: *Their sound is gone out into all lands*
Aria: *Why do the nations so furiously rage together*
(bass) (Version II)
Chorus: *Let us break their bonds asunder*
Recitative: *He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them*
to scorn (tenor)
Aria: *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron* (tenor)
Chorus: *Hallelujah*

Part III

Aria: *I know that my redeemer liveth* (soprano)
Chorus: *Since by man came death*
Accompanied recitative: *Behold, I tell you a mystery*
(bass)
Aria: *The trumpet shall sound* (bass)
Recitative: *Then shall be brought to pass the saying*
that is written (mezzo-soprano)
Duet: *O death, where is thy sting* (mezzo-soprano and
tenor)
Chorus: *But thanks be to God*
Aria: *If God is for us, who can be against us* (soprano)
Chorus: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain*

HANDEL'S MESSIAH PROGRAM NOTES

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759): *Oratorio, Messiah*

"A vain fool crazed by his wealth, who, were he in Heaven, would criticize the Lord Almighty" was Dr. Johnson's description of Charles Jennens, a London dilettante who had supplied the texts for Handel's *Saul* and *L'Allegro*. In July of 1741, Jennens mentioned "another Scripture collection," which he claimed to have assembled by himself, to be set to music by Handel.

"I hope he will lay out his whole Genius and Skill upon it," wrote Jennens, "that the Composition may excell all his former Compositions, as the Subject excels every other Subject. The Subject is *Messiah*."

Handel acknowledged receipt of "the Lines You was pleased to send me, in Order to be prefix'd to Your Oratorio *Messiah*," and set to work on August 22, 1741. Six days later, Part I was finished. Part II took nine days. After completing the "Hallelujah" Chorus, he is supposed to have said, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself." Another six days and Part III was done. Another three days for the orchestration, and by September 14, the entire oratorio was finished.

In the meantime, William Cavendish, Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, invited Handel to present a series of concerts in Dublin "for the relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay."

A genius at publicity, Handel saved *Messiah* until two series of concerts had proven successful. Then he staged an open rehearsal of the new work, so that word of mouth would promote advance ticket sales.

The first performance, on April 13, 1742 at the New Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, was sold out. The ladies were requested to "come without hoops" and the gentlemen to "come without their Swords," to make more room for the throng.

After another sold-out performance in Dublin, Handel departed on August 13, 1742, hoping to repeat his success in London. But an array of enemies, and a few friends, was all too ready to pounce on *Messiah*.

Some thought it blasphemous to perform a sacred work in a secular building. Four days before the first London performance, a blistering attack appeared in the paper: "How will this appear to After-Ages, when it shall be read in History, that in such an Age the People of England were arriv'd to such a Height of Impiety and Prophaneness, that most sacred Things were suffer'd to be us'd as public Diversions."

Messiah was introduced in London at Covent Garden Theatre on March 23, 1743 "for the Benefit and Increase of a Fund establish'd for the Support of Decay'd Musicians and their Families," according to the announcement. The reception by both audience and critics was cool. Not one review of the performance was printed in the papers. "I should be sorry if I only entertained them," remarked Handel. "I wish to make them better." It was King George II who began the tradition of standing during the "Hallelujah" Chorus.

Messiah never really caught on with London concertgoers until 1750, when Handel inaugurated annual charity performances for the Foundling Hospital. The Hospital had been established to aid the innocent victims of gin. According to one account, the popularity of gin-drinking produced children who were "starved and naked at home" and "either become a burthen to their parishes or...are forced to beg whilst they are children, and as they grow up learn to pilfer and steal."

Handel's last public appearance was on April 6, 1759, when he directed a performance of *Messiah* from the harpsichord. He died eight days later.

Messiah is in three parts. The first treats God's Prophecy of the coming Messiah. The second describes Christ's suffering and victory over death. The third part depicts the Redemption of mankind through Christ's Resurrection. "'Sacred' refers to the subject," writes Winton Dean, "not to the style of music or Handel's purpose in writing it."

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