CHORAL PROBLEMS IN HANDEL'S MESSIAH

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF MUSIC

By

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Denton, Texas
May, 1968
Music of the Baroque era can be best perceived through a detailed study of the elements with which it is constructed. Through the analysis of melodic characteristics, rhythmic characteristics, harmonic characteristics, textural characteristics, and formal characteristics, many choral problems related directly to performance practices in the Baroque era may be solved.

It certainly cannot be denied that there is a wealth of information written about Handel's Messiah and that readers glancing at this subject might ask, "What is there new to say about Messiah?" or possibly, "I've conducted Messiah so many times that there is absolutely nothing I don't know about it." Familiarity with the work is not sufficient to produce a performance, for when it is executed in this fashion, it becomes merely a convention rather than a carefully prepared piece of music.

Although the oratorio has retained its popularity for over a hundred years, it is rarely heard as Handel himself performed it. Several editions of the score exist, with changes made by the composer to suit individual soloists or performance conditions.
The edition chosen for analysis in this study is the one which Handel directed at the Foundling Hospital in London on May 15, 1754. It is version number four of the vocal score published in 1959 by Novello and Company, Limited, London, as edited by Watkins Shaw, based on sets of parts belonging to the Thomas Coram Foundation (The Foundling Hospital). Watkins Shaw is Honorary Librarian of St. Michael's College, Tenbury Wells, Worcestershire, where one of the two unimpeachable autograph scores of Messiah are housed. The other is located in the British Museum, and Shaw has obviously given most intensive study to both (1, p. 57).

Recently there has been a considerable revival of interest in the works of Baroque composers with particular emphasis on the so-called "authentic" performance. Much of this is a direct result of new musicologically oriented editions that have achieved popularity for their scholarly commentary.

Robert Shaw, the noted choral conductor, has this to say concerning authenticity in the performance of Messiah:

I believe uncompromisingly that we cannot expect to discover Handel's spirit without recreating insofar as possible the number, nature and disposition of his musical forces. This is precisely the opposite of basing a performance on the proposal of "what he might have written had he today's grand symphonic and vocal forces." A composer's meaning is not to be separated from the sound he "heard" in his inner ear and prescribed. If our labor is valid--the result should be that Messiah sheds its ponderous, sanctimonious, morbid musical and religious pomposity, and becomes
again what Handel certainly intended it to be, a light, bright, chamber oratorio, celebrating with a secular deftness a remote but responsive religious mystery (2, p. 4).
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CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate, through stylistic analysis, the choral problems in twelve selected choruses from George Frederick Handel's oratorio, Messiah.

Sub-problems

Analysis of the problem led to subordinate questions, which may be stated as follows:

1. What choral problems will be discovered through an analysis of the melodic characteristics in the music?

2. What choral problems will be discovered through an analysis of the rhythmic characteristics in the music?

3. What choral problems will be discovered through an analysis of the harmonic characteristics in the music?

4. What choral problems will be discovered through an analysis of the textural characteristics in the music?

5. What choral problems will be discovered through an analysis of the formal characteristics in the music?
Definitions of Terms

1. The term "stylistic analysis" refers to a systematic investigation of the basic elements of musical composition including melody, rhythm, harmony, texture and form.

2. The term "choral problems" refers to difficulties encountered in a vocal composition to be sung by a chorus. These difficulties include

   a) "range" - the distance between the extreme outer pitches of a vocal or instrumental part.

   b) "tessitura" - the prevailing compass of a vocal or instrumental part in relation to the total range of that voice or instrument (1, p. 299).

   c) "tempo" - the rate of speed of a composition as indicated by tempo markings or by metronomic indications (1, p. 297).

   d) "meter" - in a musical composition, meter refers to the basic groupings of beats and accents as found in each measure and as indicated by the time signature (1, p. 176).

   e) "rhythm" - in choral music, rhythm evolves from either 1) the natural cadence or inflection of the words, 2) the absolute quality of the music or 3) the blending or fusing of these two (4, p. 58).
f) "dynamics" - words or symbols used to indicate degrees or changes in loudness, e.g., piano, forte, crescendo, diminuendo (1, p. 88).

g) "intonation" - the degree of adherence to correct pitch. Good intonation implies close approximation of the pitch; poor intonation implies deviation from the pitch (1, pp. 142-143).

h) "interpretation" - interpretation of music is the revealing of its expressive qualities through performance (4, p. 38).

i) "balance" - the equalization of the quantity of tone within and between voice sections (4, p. 223).

j) "blend" - "the perfect fusion of the tone of a number of different voices, whose various characteristics mix so as to result in one beautiful sound" (2, p. 223).

k) "diction" - "the use, choice, and arrangement of words and the manner of expressing these words in speech or song" (4, p. 122).

3. The term "twelve selected choruses" refers to specific choral compositions from Messiah.

These choruses are

No. 4: "And the Glory of the Lord"
No. 9: "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion"
No.12: "For Unto Us A Child Is Born"
No.17: "Glory to God in the Highest"
No.22: "Behold The Lamb of God"
No.24: "Surely, He Hath Borne Our Griefs"
No.25: "And With His Stripes"
No.26: "All We Like Sheep"
No.28: "He Trusted in God"
No.33: "Lift Up Your Heads"
No.44: "Hallelujah"
No.53: "Worthy is the Lamb"

4. The term "oratorio" refers to the composition of an extended libretto of religious or contemplative character performed in a concert hall or church, without scenery, costumes or action, by solo voices, chorus and orchestra (1, p. 202).

5. The name "George Frederick Handel" (1685-1759) refers to a composer of the Baroque era who was born in Germany, but became a naturalized British subject in 1726.

6. The musical composition Messiah is an English oratorio written by Handel in the year 1742.
7. The term "melodic characteristics" refers to the distinct qualities in the linear or horizontal arrangement of pitch and duration.

8. The term "rhythmic characteristics" refers to the temporal qualities found in music.

9. The term "harmonic characteristics" refers to the combination of sounds found in the vertical organization of music.

10. The term "textural characteristics" refers to the distinctive qualities resulting from the fact that music is two-dimensional in character, consisting of horizontal as well as vertical elements. The horizontal elements include (a) imitation or complementary polyphony, (b) motive transformation, and (c) fugal treatment. The vertical elements include (a) the number of voices, (b) range and tessitura of voices and (c) homophony.

11. The term "formal characteristics" refers to the basic internal structure(s). These structures may be sectional, through-composed, or fugue.

Delimitations

1. This study included only twelve of the choruses from Handel's Messiah because they contain problems which are representative of those found in the remaining choruses.
2. This study was concerned with the discovery of choral problems in *Messiah* and was not concerned with the discovery of orchestral problems or problems found in solo or duet passages.

**Basic Hypothesis**

The basic hypothesis of this study is that a new and unique system of analysis might increase understanding of the choral problems in Handel's *Messiah*.

**Basic Assumptions**

1. It is assumed that a stylistic analysis of the music will lead to a better understanding of all the choral problems encountered in *Messiah*.

2. The Novello edition of *Messiah*, prepared by Watkins Shaw is probably the most suitable edition and has been chosen for this study because it adheres to Handel's original autograph, "and on that authoritative basis this edition rests" (3, p. iii).

**Methodology**

The twelve choruses were selected for analysis in this study after consultation with several authorities in the field of choral music and on the basis that they are representative of problems encountered in the remaining choruses. Each of the twelve choruses was analyzed individually.
Choral problems were discovered through an analysis of the following melodic characteristics: (1) scale basis employed, (2) important leaps and their treatment, (3) accidentals employed and their theoretical implications, (4) expressive devices such as melismas and changes in dynamic levels, (5) motive or theme transformation, (6) phrase structure, (7) melody based on text or other extra-musical considerations.

Choral problems were discovered through an analysis of the following rhythmic characteristics: (1) meter, (2) tempo and tempo changes, (3) prominent rhythmic patterns, (4) rhythmic devices such as syncopation and hemiola.

Choral problems were discovered through an analysis of the following harmonic characteristics: (1) kinds of sonorities employed, (2) harmonic dissonances employed, (3) non-harmonic tones and their treatment, (4) chromatic or altered chords and their function, (5) harmonic sequences employed, (6) repeated cadential progressions.

Choral problems were discovered through an analysis of the following textural characteristics: (1) number of parts or voices, (2) range and tessitura of voices, (3) predominating type of texture employed, (4) changes of texture, (5) fugal treatment.
Choral problems were discovered through an analysis of the following forms: (1) sectional, (2) through-composed, (3) fugue.

Plan For This Report

Chapter I of this study presents the purpose of the study, the sub-problems involved, definitions of terms, delimitations, the basic hypothesis of the study, the basic assumptions of the study, methodology and the plan of the report.

Chapter II of this study contains a brief biographical sketch of Handel, a discussion of the circumstances surrounding the composition of Messiah, and a survey of the Handelian oratorio Chorus.

Chapter III presents the results of the analysis relevant to a discussion of each of the twelve choruses followed by a sectional presentation of the choral problems.

In Chapter IV, a summary, some conclusions and recommendations are offered.

Appendices A and B present reviews of selected recordings and vocal-piano editions of Messiah respectively.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND FOR THE STUDY

George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)

Unlike Bach, George Frederick Handel was born into a family which was unconcerned about music and consequently he chose his musical career against the wishes of his father, a surgeon and barber who wanted his son to become a lawyer. "Like Bach, the young Handel has acquired solid craftsmanship through diligent copying of compositions of German cantors and Italian masters" (19, pp. 22-24).

The creative career of Handel, like that of Bach, may be divided into several periods that correspond more or less closely to the phases of his life. "In the case of Handel, we can distinguish three periods which may be named after the successive stages that a guild craftsman traditionally went through" (3, p. 315). The first, the German apprentice period, ended in 1706. During this period, Handel, at the age of eighteen, was appointed organist at the Cathedral of Moritzburg, and after a year at this post he chose to move on to Hamburg where he took a position as second violinist in the orchestra at the opera house. When he was only nineteen
he wrote a major work, *The Passion According to St. John*. At twenty, he had composed the opera *Almira*. Handel's immediate success with almost every musical undertaking created personal problems. He was constantly troubled by attacks from other musicians and composers who, though of greater stature in the public's mind at the moment, could not contain their jealousy for the younger man (14, p. 1).

For some time in 1706 until 1710, the end of the Italian journeyman period, Handel was in Italy, where he was recognized as one of the more promising composers. It was here that he associated with the leading patrons and musicians of Rome, Florence, Naples, and Venice. In Italy he made the acquaintance of Corelli and the two Scarlattis. Domenico, Alessandro Scarlatti's son, was exactly Handel's age. Handel's most important compositions of this period were several Latin motets and oratorios, a large number of Italian cantatas, and the opera *Agrippina*, which proved to be a tremendous success at Venice in 1709. The foundations of Handel's style, as we know it today, were completed by the time he left Italy, at the age of twenty-five, to become music director at the Electoral Court of Hanover (7, p. 702).

Handel's English master period extended from 1711 to 1759. It involves two distinct, though actually overlapping
phases: the opera period (1711-1737), which ended with Handel's physical breakdown, and the oratorio period, which began as early as 1720, but which was not fully established until 1738. Almost immediately upon beginning his new activities in Hanover, Handel desired and received a leave of absence. Late in 1710 he arrived in London and started work preparing his Italian operas for production. The first, Rinaldo, established him as a prominent musical figure in England (14, p. 1).

In the autumn of 1712 he was granted a second permission to go to London, on condition that he return "within a reasonable time." He had still not returned two years later when his master, the Elector of Hanover, was proclaimed King George of England. It would not have been a surprise if Handel had been ignored completely for his lack of respect for the King's position, but his musical output was so impressive that the new King of England hired Handel as musical master for the royal family. Enjoying the patronage of the royal family, and other influential individuals, Handel settled down to a long and prosperous career in London (7, p. 402).

Although Handel became a naturalized British subject, none of his contemporaries would ever have dreamed of regarding him as an Englishman or as a composer of English
music. Handel's music certainly expressed the English temperament but it can never be regarded as English in the sense of style (6, p. 131). The true foundation of his musical style was Italian, and it was only natural that this should be, for during the time that he produced his most profound music, Italy dominated European music as she did European architecture (6, pp. 132-133).

It is quite ironic that the composer who left the deepest impression on English music was a German who came to England as an upholder of a purely Italian art; and yet even if his influence had not been as powerful, it would be difficult to rank him as other than an English musician. Few ever hear a note of music that he wrote either in Germany or in Italy and it was exclusively for English audiences that he wrote his most memorable and lasting music (17, p. 217).

On April 6th, 1759, Messiah was performed as had become customary at the Foundling Hospital. Handel was seated at his customary place, the harpsichord. This was his last public appearance for on April 14th, which was the Saturday before Easter, he died (19, p. 87).

Origin and Early Performances of Messiah

The definition of "oratorio" found in Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians is "a dramatic poem, usually of a sacred but not liturgical character, sung throughout by solo voices and chorus, to the accompaniment of a full orchestra, but--at least in modern times--without the assistance of
scenery, dresses or action" (§, pp. 247-248). This definition along with the definition given earlier in Chapter One should be understood as general descriptions rather than definitions which would explain every example. For instance, the Christmas Oratorio of Bach and Handel's Occasional Oratorio are in no sense dramatic. Haydn's The Seasons is not sacred, Handel's Israel in Egypt is almost entirely choral while his Trionfo del Tempo and La Resurrezione have no chorus at all. "Full orchestra" can only be considered a relative term, and in all periods (except perhaps the nineteenth century) some oratorios have been staged and others have not. "A definition with no more positive conclusion is that an oratorio is a fairly serious work of fairly large proportions for voices and instruments." "Oratorio" is a term that has meant different things at different times and places and different things at the same time and place" (5, p. 3).

Messiah can be defined as being "an oratorical epic devoid of outward dramatic action and dedicated entirely to devotional contemplation" (3, p. 337). Messiah and Israel in Egypt both rely on Sacred Scripture for their text source. Israel in Egypt relies on its Scriptural text to relate the story of the exodus of the Israelites. Messiah is the least typical of all Handelian oratorio because it relates no story;
"it is a series of contemplations of the Christian idea of redemption, starting with the Old Testament prophecies and going through the life of Christ to His final triumph" (7, p. 408).

Messiah came into existence through a strange series of events. From the year 1711, when Handel finally established himself in England, he made an unstable living by providing London with Italian operas. Assuming a dual role as composer and producer of the operas, Handel realized that his kind of opera could no longer provide competition for the more popular Ballad Opera in English. John Gay's The Beggar's Opera, performed in 1728, was one of the highly successful Ballad Operas of the time (2, p. 7).

In 1720, Handel was appointed chapel-master to the Duke of Chandos, and a short while after, he composed the biblical opera Esther. In 1732 some unscrupulous individuals staged Esther without Handel's permission and immediately won the disfavor of the Bishop of London, who considered action and scenery in any work dealing with a biblical personage as being sacrilegious. As a result of this action, Handel revised the opera and performed it in a theatre, but without action and scenery (2, p. 7). This new type of composition, the oratorio, was a tremendous success, for production was inexpensive
since there were no costumes and scenery to purchase; there was no acting and there were fewer rehearsals (2, p. 8).

During the following years, Handel began to produce a series of these musical forms including Saul, and Israel in Egypt. He then leased a theatre for annual Lenten oratorio performances, at which the composer, as an added attraction, improvised at the organ during intermissions (7, p. 403).

The performances of Handel's oratorios were generally given in theatres, not in churches. There is an exception here, for some late performances of Messiah were given at the Foundling Hospital chapel in London (9, pp. 147-148). These concerts laid the foundation for Handel's tremendous popularity with the English people, a popularity which made his music the prevailing influence in British musical life for nearly a century. Of the twenty-six English oratorios, the best known, in addition to those already mentioned, were Semele (1744) and the Biblical oratorios Judas Maccabaeus (1746) and Jephtha (1751) (7, p. 403).

The incentive to compose such a special work came directly from Dublin and was commissioned by the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, the Duke of Devonshire, on behalf of three of the Dublin charity organizations. Handel's works were often performed for charity benefits and since he had a reputation
as a composer of church music, Messiah was to become the end-product of the "charitable" request (10, pp. 332-333).

When Handel returned to London after the great success of Messiah in Dublin, he at first refrained from presenting the oratorio to the London public. When it was presented, Handel carefully avoided mentioning the title, Messiah, and referred to the work as a "Grand Sacred Oratorio." The London public would have never considered attending the performance of a musical composition which utilized direct quotations from scripture to relate the life of Christ. An earlier oratorio, Israel in Egypt, deeply shocked many Englishmen when it was premiered and proved to be a dismal failure in London although it merely offered selected passages from Exodus (10, p. 334). Handel certainly was not going to allow Messiah to be disposed of so easily and frequently reiterated that the original purpose of Messiah was to aid charity. The oratorio eventually became acceptable to London audiences.

The history of Messiah following its successful reception in Dublin is rather unusual. London heard the work three times in 1743 and twice in 1745, but not again until 1749. After the yearly Foundling Hospital performances, it gradually gained esteem, but even at the end of the century there were still individuals denouncing Messiah as blasphemous. In the
second third of the nineteenth century, a distant successor of the Bishop of London would not permit Messiah to be performed in Westminster Abbey, though by that time the oratorio had become a religious landmark in the English-speaking world (10, p. 355).

Ever since Handel's death in 1759 the work has been "updated," "improved," "enhanced," "refurbished," or otherwise altered to conform to the fashion of the day. What we usually hear at Christmas and Easter is a truncated version shorn of embellishments, appoggiaturas, double-dotting, cadenzas, and other Baroque performance practices, and presented by a full symphony orchestra and chorus in an atmosphere of solemn reverence.

In the light of everything we have learned about Handel and Baroque music, the "standard" Messiah is as remote from the original as are the overblown orchestral transcriptions of Bach's Chorale Preludes. How did it get this way?

The tampering began soon after Handel died. Johann Adam Hiller prepared "an entirely new score, as far as may be what Handel himself would have written at the present day." He slashed and revised at will, substituted a crude solo for bassoon in place of the original violin part in "If God be for us," and made "many improvements in Handel's composition by the employment of wind instruments." Other composers reworked Messiah to make it more palatable to local audiences throughout the Continent.

In 1798 Mozart himself re-orchestrated Messiah, and it was his version for years to come. Nothing Mozart wrote was in poor taste, but the end result of his filling-in of harmonies and winds was to soften the impact of the music and rob it of its freshness and Baroque flavor. Organ and harpsichord, for example, were "harmonized" into the orchestral fabric, thus depriving the choruses and recitatives of their characteristic accompanying colors.
What Hiller, Mozart and others did to alter the shape and harmonies of Messiah, nineteenth-century England did for its scale. At the Handel Commemoration of 1834, held in Westminster Abbey, Messiah was performed by an orchestra of 80 violins, 20 violas, 18 cellos, 18 double basses, 8 flutes, 2 piccolos, 12 oboes, 8 clarinets, 12 bassoons, 8 trumpets, 8 trombones, 2 ophicleides, (similar to the modern day tuba) two serpents, (bass wind instrument) snare drum, two kettle-drums, and two tower drums. In those days, the Establishment believed in bigness. Things reached a Gargantuan climax at the Crystal Palace Commemoration of 1859 where Messiah was given by a chorus of 2,765 singers and an orchestra of four hundred, bolstered by a mammoth organ with four keyboards and 4,510 pipes. Twenty-eight thousand attended the final performance (12, p. 7).

Massive performances of Handel's Alexander's Feast and Samson followed, rendered by 287 singers and an orchestra of 300, including two double bassoons and nine trombones (5, p. 48).

Two factors are characteristic concerning these and other Victorian Handel festivals: the narrow range of the works chosen, and the dreadful quality of the performances.

The multitudinous dullness of the performances with their dragged tempos, clumsy dynamics, flaccid rhythms, and the "insufferable lumbering which is the curse of English Handelian choral singing"—not to mention the wholesale corruption of texts—has been vividly described by Bernard Shaw (5, p. 130).

Handel intentionally composed Messiah for a small choir primarily because large choirs were unknown in his time and furthermore, additional chorus members would have increased the performance budget. Since he wrote for a small chorus,
he would invariably introduce fine points of detail into one voice or another. These details would go unnoticed if and when they were performed by a large group (4, p. 408).

When Messiah was performed at the Foundling Hospital in 1754, Handel utilized an orchestra of thirty-eight (and probably two continuo players), five solo singers, and a choir of eighteen or nineteen; in 1758, an orchestra of thirty-three, six solo singers, and a chorus of seventeen (5, p. 47). Messiah was first performed by the combined choirs of the Dublin cathedrals, twenty and twenty-one voices respectively. Actually only thirty members performed due to the fact that a number of men sang in both choirs (4, p. 409).

The flexibility of a small choir enabled the members to sing at the tempos Handel desired without sounding rushed and breathless.

Dr. Percy Young suggests fifty singers as the maximum for a choir to sing Handel and says very truly "a chorus of more than fifty singers inevitably loses character, each part becoming tonally impersonal." He could have added that the more the multiplication of the singers the greater the risk of blurring the melodic lines (4, p. 409).

Messiah was composed between August 22 and September 14, 1791. "Handel's habit of rapid construction came less from the supposed mystery of 'inspiration' than from the fluency of technique: with him a set piece was accomplished in the
shortest possible time so that other aspects of life could be accommodated" (19, p. 102).

The original score comprises approximately 250 pages of manuscript; this means that Handel wrote on the average, a little more than ten pages a day. The autograph copy of the score is evidence of a very rapid period of composition. It must be taken into consideration that Handel had a good amount of the score previously written. The choruses "And He Shall Purify," "For Unto Us A Child Is Born," "His Yoke Is Easy," and "All We Like Sheep" are remodeled Italian duets; "And with His Stripes" is a conventional fugue on an already familiar subject, and it is probable that many other sketches, either actual or mental, were only awaiting transcription (19, p. 102).

Large portions of Messiah were constantly being altered and even recomposed to suit local conditions and performers. These many changes led to the belief that a "definitive" version of the score would be impossible to produce, but during the previous decade, scholars such as Prout, Coopersmith, Larsen, Mann, and Shaw have proven that the many versions and variants of individual numbers often represented changes that Handel considered permanent (10, pp. 353-354).
These scholars and conductors have prepared new performing editions of Messiah, bringing to their work a deep awareness of 18th-century musical practices. The Baroque Messiah, however, is still outnumbered by the "retouched" versions. The late Sir Thomas Beecham spoke out for revision when he said that "the whole business of reducing Handel's orchestra is a modern heresy and a very dangerous one, indeed, and should be extirpated root and branch . . . It is a physical and acoustical fallacy of the highest order. . . . Suppose Handel were living today and saw our large halls and had full acquaintance with the resources of the modern orchestra, what would he have done? He would have used every confounded instrument there was that he could lay his hands on and a few he couldn't."

Beecham's Handel is probably the most flamboyant example of the "contemporary" approach to older music. Nowadays it's going out of fashion, even though many conductors still agree privately with the late maestro's opinions. What is taking place is the belief that a restored Messiah can generate far more excitement and color than any streamlined symphonic version (12, pp. 7, 100).


Messiah is not as it is often popularly supposed, a number of scenes from the Life of Jesus linked together to form a certain dramatic whole, but a representation of the fulfillment of Redemption through the Redeemer, Messiah. It is "the first instance in the history of music of an attempt to view the mighty drama of human redemption from an artistic standpoint" (Streatfield). Like the other oratorios, Messiah is divided into three parts, the content of which can be summarized as follows:

I. The prophecy and realization of God's plan to redeem mankind by the coming of the Messiah;
II. The accomplishment of redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus, mankind's rejection of God's offer and mankind's utter defeat when trying to oppose the power of the Almighty;
III. A Hymn of Thanksgiving for the final overthrow of death (11, p. 97).

A little less than 28 years after Handel's initial production of Messiah in Dublin, large parts of the work could be heard for the first time in America. The New York Journal announced on January 4, 1770: "A Sacred Oratorio, on the Prophecies concerning Christ, and his Coming; being an extract from the late Mr. Handel's Grand Oratorio, called the Messiah consisting of the Overture, and sixteen other Pieces, viz. Airs, Recitatives, and Choruses. Never performed in America" (15, p. 2).

After Messiah was premiered in America, the oratorio spread through several of the Middle Atlantic and Southern States. Charleston, Norfolk, Baltimore, Bethlehem, Philadelphia, and Boston were among those towns which performed Messiah during the late decades of the eighteenth century (14, p. 2).

The Handelian Oratorio Chorus

Classification of Text Materials

The oratorios of Handel may be divided into three distinct classes: the choral opera, the choral cantata, and the choral drama. The group of oratorios classified as "choral operas" includes those works in which the similarity
to opera is most obvious. Oratorios belonging to this category are *Susanna*, *Theodora*, *Alexander Balus*, *Joseph and his Brethren*, and *Semele*. Among these "choral operas", *Semele* (1743) is actually based on an opera libretto (3, p. 335).

The "choral cantatas" forming the second group closely resemble English Odes and deal with allegorical subjects without dramatic action. This group includes such distinguished works as *Alexander's Feast*, *Ode for St. Cecilia's Day*, *L'Allegro*, and the *Occasional Oratorio*.

The majority of Handelian oratorios belong to the third class, the "choral drama." "The Old Testament was the ideal source for the 'choral drama' because it provided Handel with exactly what he needed: monumental characters in a monumental setting"(3, p. 336). The following oratorios belong in the category of "choral dramas": *Saul* (1738), *Israel In Egypt* (1738), *Samson* (1743), *Judas Maccabaeus* (1747), *Joshua* (1748), and *Jephtha* (1751) (3, p. 336).

*Messiah* (1741) does not belong to any one of these three categories. It is a unique work among Handel's oratorios for it is the only biblical oratorio that employs the New Testament for its text source. *Messiah* is not typical of the Handelian oratorio because, unlike the others, it is not dramatic (10, p. 332). The libretto was more than a compiling of scriptural
excerpts for it had a subtle plan behind it: the sequence of Promise, Incarnation, Passion and Resurrection provides an epic unity that dispenses with a dramatic plot. Winton Dean, a noted authority on Handel, states that "'Sacred' refers to the subject, not to the style of music or Handel's purpose in writing it" (10, p. 342).

**Characteristics of Choral Style**

The monumental character of Handel's choral style was particularly appropriate to oratorios in which importance is placed on group rather than individual expression as in the opera aria. A chorus was often substituted for an aria when the composer felt a need for an impersonal commentary or reflection on a situation that had occurred in the course of action (7, p. 408).

Pictoral musical symbolism is one of the most noticeable features of Handel's choral writing. His style is simpler than Bach's and consistently less contrapuntal. Handel often alternates passages in fugal texture with contrasting homophonic sections (Figure 1) and just as frequently, he will
set a melodic line in sustained notes against a faster one in augmentation (Figure 2).

Handel's choral writing is planned so that all four parts will lie easily within the most effective range of the voices; at points where is desired the maximum fullness of choral
sound, Handel brings the four parts tightly together, the basses and tenors high, the sopranos and altos in the middle register. This grouping of voices is often used in the characteristically Handelian closing cadences: an allegro chorus climaxing on an inconclusive chord; a brief moment of silence; three or four cadential adagio chords in which the chorus, "in one great outburst of sound, gathers up the whole meaning of everything that has come before" (Figure 3) (7, pp. 409-410).

![Adagio](image)

Fig. 3—"He Trusted In God", measures 59-63

It was in Italy that Handel really began to acquire his mastery of choral composition. The significant works from Handel's Italian journeyman period from the point of a new approach to the chorus, would appear to be the two psalms, *Laudate Pueri* (Psalm 107) and *Dixit Dominus* (Psalm 112). Many believe that it was not until Handel came to England
that his abilities as a choral composer were developed. This is not an entirely valid statement, though it cannot be denied that the Handelian oratorio chorus as we know it today did rise to prominence in later compositions written in England. If the choruses from the early Hamburg St. John Passion are compared to the two Italian psalm-settings, a great diversity in choral writing will be noticed. "The simple choral declamation and linearly constructed fugal development of the Hamburg Passion are replaced by the broadly-conceived concerted choruses of the Italian psalm-settings..." (11, p. 43). The following examples will illustrate the close similarity between the Italian "psalm chorus" and the "Hallelujah Chorus" which was composed approximately thirty-three years later (Figures 4 and 5).

Fig. 4--Handel, introductory chorus of Psalm 109
Fig. 5—"Hallelujah," measures 28-30.

The development of Handel's choral style from the Passion to the Italian Psalms may be summed up in this manner.

"Handel's choral style has changed considerably and has become much more varied. The simple chordal movement has developed into a powerful sound-conscious, harmonically-governed texture; and the linear counterpoint has become saturated by harmony" (11, p. 47).

In Messiah there is an increased variety in choral style as compared with the earlier oratorios. This variation of the choral style is one of the factors contributing most influentially to Messiah's unique position among Handel's oratorios. Annie W. Patterson, in her book, The Story of Oratorio, states that most theorists speak of the rigorous and free forms of choral composition. "The rigorous forms depend upon fugue, canon, or counterpoint or all three for their construction."
Synonymous with the term 'free forms' are those choruses of a melodic, anthem-like, dramatic or descriptive nature" (15, p. 202).

There are actually five types of choruses found in Messiah: 1) anthem choruses, 2) chamber choruses which are extensions of duets written earlier, 3) crowd choruses, 4) contemplative choruses which are a particular feature of the second part; and in addition, 5) there is one chorus which continues the melodic substance of the preceding area.

In Messiah, the only true anthem choruses are found in the third part, the song of the Resurrection: Worthy is the Lamb and the final Amen (11, p. 81).

There can be no question that the unparalleled popularity of Messiah is partially due to its anthem-like choruses. "It is not the subtle idea of Redemption that captivates the listeners but the rousing choruses that are first cousins to the sumptuous ceremonial anthems" (10, p. 343). The "Hallelujah" chorus of the Second Part comes relatively close to being considered as an anthem chorus for its purpose is not only to provide a general conclusion to Part Two, but also as a link in the work without which the development would be incomplete (11, p. 85). "The Hallelujah chorus actually fulfills two functions: as an integrating part of a greater
whole and as a relatively self-contained, anthemlike final reflection" (11, p. 168). It must be understood as a conclusion and also as a settlement of the conflict between God and man expressed in the preceding recitative and aria. The three-part choral finale in Messiah, "Worthy is the Lamb," "Blessing and Honour," "Amen," is also representative of the true anthem chorus effect.

Four chamber or duet choruses may be found in Messiah: "And He Shall Purify," "For Unto Us A Child Is Born," "His Yolk Is Easy," and "All We Like Sheep." These choruses have been transformed into four-part choruses from earlier chamber duets in an attempt to create a buoyant choral style in which the delicacy of chamber music is maintained as much as possible; "at the same time, new possibilities of contrast arise from the opposition of duet and choral effects" (11, p. 72).

The basic form of the duet choruses found in Messiah are identical: a duet between two of the four voices, a duet between the other two, a finale for all four. "In the duet sections, both voices were melody voices, and the theme itself was a long melodic period in the typical baroque sequential manner" (11, p. 81). "And He Shall Purify" is the first of the four duet choruses and its distinctive feature
is a very lucid and rather free polyphony. A regular four-part setting is found only in the two short passages built upon the chorus' concluding sentence, "That they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness." This concluding sentence was added after the duet was transformed into a chorus. This chorus is based on the Italian duet, L'occaso ha nell aurora" and the Italian text may be translated, "Life too is a flower; it comes with the morning and dies with the spring of a single day." The coloratura passage on "purify" is explained by the original word "primavera" and the shortage of syllables in the English text (1, p. 96).

The second duet chorus, "For unto Us a Child Is Born" was originally written by Handel to Italian words about the deceitfulness of the blind god of love. It is chamber duet "No, di voi non vo fidarmi." ("No, I will not trust you blind Love, cruel Beauty! You are too treacherous, too charming a deity!") (13, p. 71) After reading this translation of the Italian text, it seems strange that Handel would have selected exactly the same music to express both a heavenly hymn and distrust of the false god of love. The following two factors will help justify Handel's dual use of the theme. "First, this is music of a relatively objective,
universal character (as opposed to the expressive, individualized melody of the classic-romantic period), motives which still belong to the linear classicism of the great Italian vocal tradition" (11, p. 125). Secondly, we must take into consideration that the text's relationship to musical expression is very superficial, a characteristic of many other chamber duets, cantatas and madrigals (11, p. 125). In this particular chorus, Handel chose to add additional homophonic passages at cadence points. Whenever the duet portion expands after the development of the second motive, "And the government shall be upon His shoulders," all voices join in declaring the names of the Messiah: "Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

The duet chorus "All We Like Sheep" is derived from the final section of the duet "No, di voi non vo fidarmi," the first part of which provided the basis for "For Unto Us A Child Is Born." The beginning of the original duet's motive has been altered to suit the text "All We Like Sheep" but the other motives, both the one for "Have gone astray" and the two for "We have turned" have been transferred directly from the duet (11, p. 144). Meyers, in his book Handel's Messiah, justifies the composer's text setting by stating that "His
lost sheep meander hopelessly through a wealth of intricate semiquavers (sixteenth notes), stumbling over decorous roulades and falling into mazes of counterpoint that prove inextricable" (13, p. 72).

In complete opposition to Meyers' interpretation, J. A. Westrup states that "the fact that humanity has gone astray like sheep does not call for these jolly strains. The simple phrase suits well enough the words "due tiranni" (two tyrants); it does not suit "we have turned," which is not a subject for trumpeting. No method of interpretation—whether sober dignity or impetuous haste—will remove the incompatibility of the words and music in this chorus" (18, pp. 294-295). In complete contrast with the chorus' opening tempo, allegro moderato, Handel has constructed a solemn adagio sequence upon the words "The Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

The choruses, "He Trusted in God" and "Lift Up Your Heads" depict the convictions of an angry mob and therefore assume classification as crowd choruses. In the monothematic chorus, "He Trusted in God," the choir is representative of the crowd mocking Christ on the cross and the constant
reiterations of the fugue theme serve to create an impression of crowd activity (11, p. 146).

The Italian term "cori spezzati" or separated choruses can be applied to the antiphonal style of choral writing employed by Handel in the crowd chorus "Lift up your Heads." During the 1740's, Handel himself adapted this chorus to form an orchestral "Concerto a due cori" for oboes, bassoons, strings, and continuo (16, p. 127). This chorus is the only instance where Handel employs five-part (SSATB) choral writing as opposed to the usual four part (SATB). The antiphonal use of the chorus is primarily due to the "question and answer" possibilities of the text. Male voices ask the question, "Who is this King of Glory?" and the female voices reply, "The Lord strong and mighty" and "The Lord of Hosts." These words are suggestions of special homage and not of an ordinary hymn of praise to the Almighty; and therefore the impression conveyed is that of a crowd-chorus rather than of a genuine anthem chorus (11, p. 84).

The contemplative choruses often closely resemble anthem choruses but in comparison they have a stronger inclination to follow a simple homophonic design throughout.

In Messiah, the choruses of the second Part, "Behold the Lamb of God," "Surely," and "And with His Stripes" are
contemplative choruses. In complete contrast to the two predominantly homophonic choruses, "Behold the Lamb of God" and "Surely," "And With His Stripes" is "a conventional fugue on a stock subject" (18, p. 294). The fugue's character of absolute music is obvious. Expressive factors are restricted to quite general basic features—the interval of the diminished seventh in the opening motive, the key of F minor which Handel associated with profound despair, and the choruses' uniform, almost monotonous, rhythmic texture (11, p. 143).

The effect of the fugue is also quite general, through its constant repetition of one short Biblical quotation 'And with His stripes we are healed' these words are hammered into the listener as the essential point of the matter (11, p. 143).

The chorus "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion" continues the melodic substance of the preceding contralto aria of the same name. Both the aria and chorus are in the key of D major which is to predominate the oratorio.

This type of setting—solo leading to chorus—which in Handel's earlier works can only be traced perhaps in the two four-part ensembles of La Resurrezione, is directly derived from Purcell, and indirectly from the strong French influence on English music of the Restoration period (11, p. 48).

Two choruses from the oratorio defy classification into one of the previously mentioned categories. "And the Glory of the Lord" and "Glory to God" present a "more spontaneous
choral effect" and should be recognized as being triumphal hymns of praise to God rather than a descriptive uniting of text and music (11, p. 83).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

CHORAL PROBLEMS IN HANDEL'S MESSIAH

In this chapter, material concerning the twelve choruses will be presented. The results of the analysis will acquaint the reader with information concerning tonality, meter and suggested tempo markings, range, tessitura and aspects of form. These results are followed by a section which identifies choral problems and proposes possible solutions. A brief summary follows each discussion.

Chorus No. 4: "And The Glory of the Lord"

Results of the Analysis

The chorus, "And The Glory of the Lord," in the key of A major, is in itself a climax preceded by the overture in E minor and the first recitative and aria in the dominant tonality of E major.

The chorus is written in triple-simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Richard Graves suggests $\dot{\text{j}} = 138$ to $\dot{\text{j}} = 160$ as the proper tempo for this chorus. It must be understood that all tempo markings found in various vocal scores have been supplied by the editors. The practice of
placing metronomic markings was unknown to Handel (8, p. 84). The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

Soprano  Contralto  Tenor  Bass
Range     Tessitura  R  T  R  T  R  T
$e^4$-a$^2$  a$^1$-e$^2$  a-b$^1$  c$^\#$-a$^1$  e-g$^\#$  g$^\#$-e$^1$  G$^\#$-e$^1$  e-c$^\#$

*"This is a system in which identical pitch names in various octave positions may be differentiated from the other (12, p. 3). For example, $e^1$ refers to the note "e" directly above middle "c" on the piano keyboard.

Fig. 6--"And The Glory of the Lord": range and tessitura of vocal parts.

The following figure will be helpful in determining the exact location of the pitch designations in relation to the piano keyboard (6, p. 6).

Fig. 7--The piano keyboard and pitch designations
The chorus, constructed from the following four basic motives, exhibits Handel's mastery of choral composition. Throughout the discussion, these motives will be referred to as motives A, B, C, and D. A direct contrast may be noticed between motives A, B, and C, which are essentially rhythmic in character and motive D which is related to Gregorian psalmody (11, p. 108). Dualism of motives is a frequent device employed by Handel in his oratorio choruses. Particularly characteristic in this chorus is the contrast between motives
C and D. "Each of them gains its full significance only in the light thrown upon it by the other" (12, p. 108).

The chorus has been constructed from these four motives based on the following plan.

Motives:  
A-------B  C-------D  A----D----B  C----A----B----D  

Measures:  
1-------43  44-------73  74-------102  103-------138

Fig. 9--"And The Glory of the Lord," motive structure

In various editions, there is a considerable difference in the way motive A is printed. Handel wrote:

And the glory, the glory of the Lord,

Fig.10--"And The Glory of the Lord," motive A, measures 11-14.

Handel's placing of the words was done according to the Italian method and does not suit the English language.

And the glory, the glory of the Lord,

Fig.11--"And The Glory of the Lord," motive A, measures 11-14.
Editors have also provided these alternates:

![Musical notation image]

Fig. 12—"And The Glory of the Lord," portion of motive A, measures 13-14.

The following solution would be more practical for it closely resembles, more so than others, our actual speech rhythm. This interpretation avoids the stiffness of the two eighth notes and is probably what was intended by Handel (2, pp. 31-32).

![Musical notation image]

Fig. 13—"And The Glory of the Lord," portion of motive A, measures 13-14.

**Identification of Choral Problems**

The opening contralto statement, "And The Glory of the Lord" has an unusually low tessitura. Directors of small or inexperienced choirs may find it necessary to employ second
sopranos at this point to add strength and definition to this important phrase (4, p. 203).

A device, frequently employed in Handel's oratorio choruses is the use of one or two voices quietly for some measures and then suddenly employing the entire chorus and orchestra. When these "tutti" passages occur throughout the chorus, the dominating motive is always found in the bass voice (1, p. 19).

The short eighth-note runs on the word "revealed" must be smooth and flowing. The tendency will be to accentuate the first and highest eighth-note of measure eighteen and similar places (8, p. 84).

The first extended contrapuntal section is begun by the tenors on the third beat of measure seventeen. These contrapuntal passages should enter gently and without effort, giving the effect of interweaving rather than providing harsh staccato attacks (7, p. 32).
It has been suggested that Handel's extensive use of hemiola is due to English influence. While this is a prominent feature of English music from Byrd to Purcell, it was also popular with Lully and other seventeenth century composers (5, p. 66). The term "hemiola" is applied to time values which are in the relationship of 3:2. Three half-notes instead of two dotted half-notes: \( \frac{3}{4} \) or \( \frac{3}{4} \) are examples of hemiola (9, p. 329). "And The Glory" contains examples of hemiola at measures 36-37, 100-101 and 127-128. Measures 99-102, incorporating hemiola, should be sung in this manner, completely ignoring the dotted bar line, as illustrated in Figure 15. This is simply Handel's way of telling us to avoid accenting the first beat of every measure. The hemiola figure is part of the intrinsic rhythm of this chorus and if it fails to be detected, Handel's intention is missed completely (16, p. 9).

Fig. 15—"And The Glory of the Lord," hemiola, measures 99-102.
Motive C, "And All Flesh Shall See It Together" is first introduced by the contraltos in measures 43 through 46. In this phrase the word "all" deserves clarification. A brief pause between "and" and "all" will alleviate the possibility of singing "an doll."

At measures 51 through 57, tenors and basses should introduce motive D, "For The Mouth of the Lord Hath Spoken It" mezzo forte and build, by means of a controlled crescendo to the climax of the phrase (19, p. 23).

Fig. 16--"And The Glory of the Lord," measures 51-57

Full advantage must always be taken of all points of imitation, therefore at measures 96 through 102, the contraltos

Fig. 17--"And The Glory of the Lord," measures 93-102
may again be reinforced by second sopranos to allow the preceding phrase to dominate the four-voice texture (4, p. 207).

There is no indication given by the composer for an extended rallentando to be taken on the words "For the mouth of the Lord" at measures 129 through 134. "A strict rhythmical ending retains the brightness and confidence of the prophecy" (7, p. 133). The men's voices, beginning at measure 130, should be restrained, for their moving parts will predominate the stationary dotted half-notes of the soprano and contralto.

In measure 137, the last syllable of "spoken" should be stressed very lightly to avoid a misplaced accent.

Closing Statements

The range and tessitura of this chorus are not extreme and there are no harmonic difficulties. Second sopranos may be used to reinforce the opening contralto statement since it has an unusually low tessitura. There are frequent occurrences of hemiola and imitation in all voices and rhythmic vitality is the essence of this chorus. The text dictates the manner in which the melodic line should be sung in order to achieve a convincing performance.
Results of the Analysis

The chorus, "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion," is written in the key of D major, which will predominate the oratorio.

Hugo Leichtentritt has written of the care with which Handel, having in mind the particular character of a key, chose for example the appropriate tonality for his opera arias. How far Handel observed the effective nature of the different keys in setting his choruses I cannot say, but Handel being Handel, I suspect that his choice was dictated mainly by choral considerations.

In any case, the diversity of keys is notably larger in Messiah than it is in either the B minor Mass or the Magnificat. In Messiah, D is the tonality for six of the twenty-one choruses; but in Bach's B minor Mass the proportion is greater, being nine out of fifteen; and in the Magnificat of the five choruses, four are in D (17, pp. 118-119).

Rudolf Steglich insists that D major is the "Messiah key," citing as proof the act-ending choruses, all of which are in D. But that would make Bach's B minor Mass, most of which is in D, or almost any other major Baroque work calling on trumpets, a kindred work; for all the composers did was to accommodate those instruments, which were tuned in D (10, p. 354).

"O Thou That Tellest" is written in duple-compound meter and the basic beat is a dotted-quarter note. Benson suggest a tempo between $J. = 120$ and $J. = 162$. $J. = 138$ seems to be a suitable tempo (2, p. 34).
The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
<th>Contralto</th>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Tessitura</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e¹-g²</td>
<td>a¹-d²</td>
<td>b-b¹</td>
<td>d¹-a¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f¹-g¹</td>
<td>b-e¹</td>
<td>G#-e¹</td>
<td>d-b</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 18--"O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

The form of this chorus depends for its effect, on the recurrence of a refrain similar to the rondo movement in a sonata (1, p. 48). The refrain is first heard in the aria immediately preceding the chorus and since the chorus is a continuation of the aria, there should be no break between the two. This type of setting-solo leading to chorus-found in Handel's earlier works is derived directly from Purcell and indirectly from the strong French influence on English music of the Restoration period (11, p. 115).

**Identification of Choral Problems**

The sopranos, basses and tenors each enter forte and then in turn, each must diminish after the first five notes to allow the succeeding entries to be clearly heard. Contraltos enter mezzo-forte and the soprano and tenor should assume this volume until measure 155 when all four voices sing the word "arise" fortissimo.
At measure 114, the sopranos must be instructed to sing with precise rhythm on the first syllable of "arise." At this point, the tendency will be to sing sixteenth-note triplets which are, of course, out of style and incorrect.

Fig. 19—"O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion," measures 9-10.

This rhythmic motive, which also appears in the other voices, demands accurate articulation and would therefore justify singing the chorus at the slower tempo that was suggested.

The homophonic setting the words "say unto the cities of Judah" should be sung *mezzo-forte* and a short but definite

Fig. 20—"O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion," measures 122-124.
break should be inserted at measure 118, after "Judah" to highlight the forte declamation "Behold your God!" The forte should be maintained until measure 122 and here, sopranos, tenors and basses must sing mezzo-forte to allow the rhythmical contralto phrase to stand out prominently (4, p. 209).

The last eighth-note of measure 124 to the sixth beat of measure 128 should be sung mezzo-forte and as before, "behold" is sung forte.

"The Glory of the Lord" at measure 131 should be sung mezzo-piano by all voices while at measures 134 through 136, the contralto phrase must predominate. It is important that the sopranos, tenors and basses sustain their dotted-half notes for the full value at measure 133. The uplifting words of the text "is risen upon thee" dictates a molto crescendo which reaches a forte climax at measure 138.

**Closing Statements**

There should be no pause between the preceding aria and the sopranos initial entrance in this chorus. The contraltos should be particularly strong throughout, giving precedence to the moving parts. The chief points of contrast are pianissimo phrases and descresendi. The suggested tempo, \( \frac{4}{4} = 138 \), will allow the rhythmic motives to receive the accurate articulation necessary for their execution.
Chorus No. 12: "For Unto Us A Child Is Born"

Results of the Analysis

There is no doubt that some keys held strong associations for Handel. He often considered G major as "an open-air pastoral key, used for pictorial scenes showing man and nature in happy communion" (5, p. 60).

The chorus is written in quadruple simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Benson suggests between $J = 66$ and $J = 92$ for a tempo marking and then chooses $J = 76$ as the most suitable tempo (2, p. 37). "Andante-allegro prescribed by the composer is usually misunderstood . . . a madrigal must never be sung at breakneck speed" (10, p. 346).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
<th>Contralto</th>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Tessitura</td>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e¹-a²</td>
<td>g¹-d²</td>
<td>a-c²</td>
<td>d¹-a¹</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G-e¹</td>
<td>d-d¹</td>
<td>e-g¹</td>
<td>a-g¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 21-"For Unto Us A Child is Born," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

Unlike Bach's choral movements, Handel's are almost never constructed on a ritornello or on a strictly fugal plan. They rely mainly on the contrapuntal development of one or more principal motives after the acknowledged laws of fugue.
composition (13, p. 202). On the contrary, Handel's oratorio choruses display the greatest freedom of form, and adhere faithfully to the sense of the text. A characteristic feature of Handel's choral writing is prominently exhibited in this chorus. This feature is the employment of polyphonic and chordal textures in rapid alternation.

The introductory period in this chorus consists of a very transparent two-part setting of motive A, "For unto us a Child is Born, unto us a Child is given" combined with a sixteenth-note coloratura motive as obbligato counterpoint. Measures eighteen through twenty-five constitute a duet between contralto and bass in which motive A is expanded and developed. At measure twenty-six, the tenor introduces motive B, "And the government shall be upon his shoulder" which is immediately imitated in the soprano voice and then simultaneously in the contralto and bass.

All entries have been subdued up to this point, but now a homophonic forte entrance by all four voices proclaim the hymn of praise, "Wonderful, counsellor, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." It should be observed that the four voices are never allowed to sing the same words simultaneously, except for the aforementioned passage "Wonderful, Counsellor" and in these measures, the rhythmic element is maintained by the sixteenth-note figurations of the violins (1, p. 23).
There are four entries by the chorus with these words; the first is in the key of D major, the second in G major, the third in C major and the fourth returns to G major.

Immediately after this climax, beginning with the fourth beat of measure thirty-seven, Motive A is developed briefly by all four voices. Motive B, stated by the contraltos and imitated by the basses, again leads to the second statement of "Wonderful, Counsellor." A third and fourth development of motives A and A follow, always reaching a forte climax at the words "Wonderful, Counsellor."

**Identification of Choral Problems**

In the chorus, "For Unto Us A Child Is Born," Handel utilized portions of an earlier Italian chamber duet, No, I

![Musical notation image]
will not trust you, blind love. It is obvious that Handel was not concerned with changed accents; the "No" in the duet chorus was set in the following way while in Messiah, the conjunction "For" assumes the first beat emphasis (18, p. 248).

Fig. 23--"No, I will not trust you, blind love," measures 1-2.

The choir must be discouraged from over accenting the first beat of this measure and any that does not call for an accent. The choral outbursts "Wonderful, Counsellor" are the only exceptions and they do require accents on the first beat. The "u" vowel sound must be clearly articulated in this opening phrase to avoid singing "For runto wus."

In rehearsal, unison singing of the long coloratura motive, first exposed by the sopranos, is helpful if only to correct the tendency to sing half-steps instead of whole-steps on the lower neighboring tones (4, p. 212). If taken at the suggested metronomic speed, this entire phrase, which is the equivalent of nineteen quarter-notes in length, should be possible to sing in one breath.
Basses should be restrained from making too forceful a close at their coloratura passage commencing on the third beat of measure nineteen. The note in question, E above the staff, should be sung at the volume of the coloratura passage.

Motive B, "And the government shall be upon his shoulder," is first introduced by the tenors and subsequently exposed by the remaining voices at a mezzo-forte dynamic level. The rhythm of the motive must be absolutely accurate, but not pedantic to this degree (19, p. 27).

![Motive B](image)

and the government shall

Fig.24--"For Unto Us A Child Is Born," portion of motive B, measure 26.

The tenor and soprano whole notes at measures twenty-eight and thirty respectively, will benefit from a crescendo on the first two beats and a decrescendo on the last two (19, p. 28).

The gradual crescendo of motive B culminates in the forte declarations, "Wonderful, Counsellor." All four voices must observe the syncopation on the third and fourth beats.
of measure ninety by sustaining the quarter note on the last syllable of "Father" for one full count. If this is not observed, an unwanted gap will occur since there is also no motion in the orchestra at this point.

Closing Statements

The rapid alternation of polyphonic and chordal textures demand utmost precision in diction since the four voices never sing the same words simultaneously, except at "Wonder-ful, Counsellor." As in "And The Glory of the Lord," rhythm is the essential element of this chorus. A tempo that is too fast tends to obscure the clarity of the contrapuntal sections and should therefore be kept moderate.

Chorus No. 17: "Glory to God"

Results of the Analysis

The chorus, "Glory to God," in the key of D major, is the continuation of the preceding soprano recitative. It is written in quadruple-simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Benson suggests that a suitable tempo for this chorus is between $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{e}} = 72$ and $\frac{\text{d}}{\text{e}} = 88$ (2, p. 40).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.
"Glory to God" has been constructed from three motives which will be referred to as motives A, B and C. Each of these vocal motives has a corresponding orchestral motive. Motive A, "Glory To God In The Highest," is stated twice by the soprano, contralto and tenor voices while the third exposition utilizes all four voices. Motive A is always accompanied by an orchestral figuration of sixteenth-notes which emphasize the joyfulness of the text.

Fig. 25--"Glory to God in the Highest," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

Fig. 26--"Glory to God in the Highest," motive A, measure 1.
Motive, B "And Peace On Earth," is sung twice by the men in unison.

Fig. 27--"Glory to God," motive B, measures 5-7

At the motive's third exposition, sopranos and contraltos join the men in a chordal setting of the same text, always followed by a pianissimo homophonic accompaniment over a one measure pedal point.

Fig. 28--"Glory to God in the Highest," chordal setting of motive B, measures 29-32.
Motive C, "Good Will Towards Men," is a typical stretto motive, first stated by the basses on the first beat of measure eighteen.

```
good-will to ward men,
```

Fig. 29--"Glory to God," motive C, measures 18-19

Tenors interrupt the bass entrance with their statement on the third beat of the same measure and contraltos enter on the first beat of measure nineteen. Sopranos have a one-measure delayed entrance on the first beat of measure twenty. Immediately following the soprano statement, another stretto reaches a climax with a cadence in D major, succeeded by sixteenth-note orchestral figurations which lead to a final repetition of motives A and B. Motive C appears as a two-part stretto at measure thirty-eight, cadencing again in D major.

A very characteristic "dying-away" orchestral postlude with uncharacteristic dynamic markings of piano and pianissimo bring the chorus to its conclusion (11, p. 130).

**Identification of Choral Problems**

In many piano-vocal scores, the direction da lontano e un poco piano (from a distance and rather softly) is placed
above the vocal parts. This direction was placed by Handel, in the autograph score, to refer, without any ambiguity, to the trumpets only (14, p. 166). Consequently, the voices should always state motive A at a *forte* dynamic level.

The tenors should be allowed special prominence at measures one, two, three, ten, eleven and twelve for the following reasons. First, the tenor is actually singing the melody while sopranos and contraltos merely supply the remaining chord tones. Secondly, the soprano and contralto parts will sound an octave higher than the tenor and if all three sing at the same dynamic level, the tenor "melody" will be concealed.

At the third recurrence of Motive B (measures 29-31) the three top voices should remain subordinate to the bass which states the motive in its original form. Motive B should be sung at the same dynamic level as motive A. The tranquility of "And Peace On Earth" is not expressed by the chorus, but rather by the "piano" orchestral phrase which immediately follows (1, p. 25).

Measures twenty-seven and twenty-eight should be sung in one breath. A break after "God" would destroy the sense of the text.

Sequences in measures thirty-five through thirty-eight may be intensified with a crescendo. The quarter-notes on
"good will" certainly do deserve emphasis but they should not be sung staccato.

A final soprano and bass stretto of motive C, accompanied by contraltos and tenors, precedes a brief orchestral postlude which gradually brings the chorus to a close.

**Closing Statements**

The tessitura for the tenor in this chorus is extremely high but moderate for the other voices. The chorus should be sung **forte** throughout and all points of imitation must be clearly defined.

**Chorus No. 22: "Behold the Lamb of God"**

**Results of the Analysis**

The introductory chorus of Part II, "Behold the Lamb of God" in the key of G minor, immediately sets the passion mood of the entire following section.

The chorus is written in quadruple simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. The tempo of this chorus according to various editors ranges between $\mathbf{\frac{4}{4}} = 72$ and $\mathbf{\frac{4}{4}} = 108$; it should not be much slower than the last tempo mentioned (2, p. 47).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.
Soprano  Contralto  Tenor  Bass
Range   Tessitura  R  T  R  T  R  T
\text{d}^1-\text{g}^2  \quad \text{g}^1-f^2  \quad \text{g}-\text{c}^2  \quad \text{b}^b-\text{b}^b_1  \quad \text{e}-\text{g}^1  \quad \text{g}-\text{g}^1  \quad \text{g}-\text{d}^1  \quad \text{b}^b-b^b

Fig. 30 -- "Behold the Lamb of God," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

Rhythmic unity prevails throughout the textual dualism of the two melodically contrasting motives. Motive A exhibits a characteristic descending movement after an introductory upward octave leap, while motive B has an ascending tendency.

Fig. 31 -- "Behold the Lamb of God," motive A, measure 4

\text{that ta-keth a-way}

Fig. 32 -- "Behold the Lamb of God," motive B, measures 12-15.

In "Behold the Lamb of God" the feeling of unity is obtained to a considerable extent by the consistent dotted rhythm used throughout the chorus. Handel's use of consistent dotted rhythms becomes the characteristic feature of the following two movements, the contralto aria, "He was despised"
Dotted rhythms are frequently employed by Handel as a device to depict passionate pathetic expression. Dotted motive B in "For Unto Us a Child is Born," "And the Government shall be upon His Shoulder," also has the effect of intensifying the expression by comparison with the pastoral motive A. In "Behold the Lamb of God," "a basic dotted rhythm, not merely a dotted theme is found only here just where the stressing of suffering comes to the fore" (11, pp. 137-138).

**Identification of Choral Problems**

This chorus and the three following which are concerned with the Passion of our Lord, will provide examples illustrating that a crescendo is the basis of all emotional expression.

Motive A "Behold the Lamb of God" should be sung as a descrescendo phrase with great emphasis placed on the vowel "o" in "Behold."

Motive B, "that taketh away the sin of the world" must always be sung in one breath.

At measure nine, a crescendo should be made to measure ten and the descrescendo to measure twelve. Basses will have a tendency to misinterpret the E natural in the eleventh measure and sing E flat.
The words "That taketh away" at measure thirteen should be sung softly and followed by a crescendo ending with "of the world" at measure fifteen.

At measures twenty-two through twenty-six, the sopranos must sing firmly, but at a dynamic level that will allow the principal theme in the contralto voice and other moving parts to predominate.

A slight crescendo is quite effective when a dominant ninth chord occurs on the third beat of measure twenty-seven.

Fig. 33—"Behold the Lamb of God," measure 27

Closing Statements

The long sustained lines and frequent octave leaps in all voices are the most difficult aspects of this chorus.
During rehearsals, repetition of the octave leaps will help to insure intonation and uniform tone quality. The tessitura is high for tenors but poses no problem for the other voices. The consistent dotted rhythm of this chorus must not be allowed to destroy the legato feeling of the entire selection. Dynamic contrasts should be emphasized as well as the excitement effected by these dotted rhythms.

Chorus No. 24: "Surely, He Hath Borne Our Griefs"

Results of the Analysis

The chorus, "Surely, He Hath Borne our Griefs" begins the key of F minor, which was often used by Handel to express the emotion of profound sadness (5, p. 60).

At measure twenty-two, a common chord modulation to the relative major takes place and the chorus ends in the key of A flat major. In the autograph score, the key signature contained three flats; Handel used accidentals for D flats (14, p. 102).

The chorus is written in quadruple simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Benson suggests between $\text{P} = 66$ and $\text{P} = 92$ as appropriate tempos with $\text{P} = 76$ being the most suitable (2, p. 46).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.
The homophonic statement "Surely, He Hath Borne our Griefs" is set over an instrumental accompaniment characterized by persistent rhythmic movement in dotted sixteenth notes. This rhythm is very similar to the rhythm of "Behold the Lamb of God" and the middle section of the preceding contralto aria, "He was despised."

The chorus contains two distinct motives. "Surely" (measures six and nine) and "the chastisement" (measures nineteen and twenty). The impressive contrast between these two motives arises from the fact that a temporary suspension of the accompaniments fixed rhythm extends from the last note of measure twelve to measure nineteen.
The six and one-half measure suspension of the dotted rhythm accompaniment serves both as an effective divider of the bars and a negative accentuation of Motive B. The subdivided accompaniment of this contrasting section makes the approaching choral declamation more prominent.

"Surely" is entirely harmonic in structure and excepting the short choruses of number forty-six, it is the only example of harmonic choral writing in Messiah (1, p. 31).

Identification of Choral Problems

The first word of the chorus is always difficult to understand and therefore it is suggested that the chorus sing the word as the written notes indicate and give prominence to the sibilant. In setting the word "Surely" to music, Handel thought it was a trisyllabic word, but the inflection expresses the idea so perfectly and is so English in tone, that we have no reason to avoid the metric slip (11, p. 348).

Fig. 36--"Surely," trisyllabic setting of the word surely, measure 6.
In the recent recordings of *Messiah* by the Robert Shaw Chorale and Orchestra and the London Symphony and Chorus conducted by Colin Davis, the word "Surely" is sung as a tri-syllabic word. In these recordings, the middle syllable is performed without exaggeration and the effect is quite emphatic. This is one example that exhibits "Handel's supposed lack of understanding of the English language; he does occasionally mishandle the tonic accent and meter but not the spirit of the language" (11, p. 348).

The opening words "Surely, Surely" should be sung *forte* while the words "he hath" should commence *mezzo-forte* with a *crescendo* that will reach *fortissimo* at measure eight. The *fortissimo* will be sustained until the second eight note of measure ten and the descrescendo to *mezzo-forte* at the word "sorrows." This descending cadence provides an appropriate contrast to the ascending cadence on the identical words at measure eight (4, p. 224).

Tenors at measure thirteen should make a slight *crescendo* on their D's reaching a climax on the first beat of measure fourteen. This *crescendo* will emphasize the suspension that occurs between the soprano and tenor voices at this point. Another suspension involving soprano and tenor occurs on the
fourth beat of measure sixteen to the first beat of measure seventeen. It should be treated exactly as the previous one.

In measure fourteen, basses should sing the top C very softly. A crescendo by all voices should reach forte at measures eighteen and nineteen. It would be wise for tenors to phrase measures twenty-two and twenty-three in the following manner.
A final word concerning this chorus is that there is no need for a rallentando as the vocal section comes to an end.

Closing Statements

This chorus has a more moderate tessitura than any of the others but its difficulties lie in the frequent suspensions and the reiterated dotted rhythms. Diction problems are confined to the suggested trisyllabic pronunciation of "surely." Unique to this chorus is the common chord modulation from F minor to A flat major.

Chorus No. 25: "And With His Stripes"

Results of the Analysis

The fugue chorus, "And With His Stripes," in the key of F minor, should commence immediately after the conclusion of "Surely."
In the Baroque era, the highest and most complex type of musical composition was the fugue. It was to Baroque composers what the sonata form was to composers of the Classic era. The interpolation of a fugue chorus in an oratorio was a common Handelian practice "which allowed time for emotional and philosophic reflection (19, p. 34).

To simplify phrasing, Watkins Shaw has chosen a $\frac{3}{2}$ meter signature. Handel's original meter signature was C with measures of varying length (14, p. 102). Benson suggests between $\frac{d}{69}$ and $\frac{d}{100}$; most authorities suggest $\frac{d}{88}$, which is satisfactory (2, p. 47).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

<table>
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<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Range</td>
<td>R</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tessitura</td>
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<tr>
<td>e-$a^2$</td>
<td>f-$f^2$</td>
<td>$c^2$</td>
<td>$c^1$</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>e-$g^1$</td>
<td>f-$f^1$</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$a^b-d^b1$</td>
<td>$B^b-c^1$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 39--"And With His Stripes," range and tessitura of the vocal parts.

"And With His Stripes" is characterized throughout by two motives. Motive A, the fugue subject, "belongs to what may be called the common coin of the Baroque period, used by many different composers without there necessarily being any question of influence of plagiarism on that account" (11, p.143).
It is also found in Handel's keyboard music, Bach's Well Tempered Clavier (Book I, fugue in F minor and Book 2, fugue in A minor) and the "kyrie" of the Mozart Requiem.

![Motive A, measures 1-2.](image1)

Motive B, the countersubject, is constructed primarily on a diatonic scale. The countersubject is used exclusively "to maintain an almost unbroken stream of quarter-notes throughout most of the fugue" (11, p. 143).

![Motive B, measures 4-6.](image2)

Since there are few choral problems in "And With His Stripes," the following comments will concentrate primarily on the qualities of fugue style and interpretation.
The fugue subject should be stated forcefully at every entrance but not necessarily at a *forte* dynamic level.

Since the chorus contains numerous accidentals, it is suggested that during rehearsals, each part is sung individually and in its entirety. It will also be profitable to sing every possible combination of two parts; soprano and contralto, soprano and tenor, soprano and bass, alto and tenor, alto and bass and tenor and bass (8, p. 206).

A guide to the required breadth of phrasing comes from Handel himself who wrote the chorus in measures of varying length (19, p. 34). For our purposes, breath marks will be required in all long phrases; for example, measures sixteen through twenty-eight for tenor, measures twenty-eight through thirty-five for soprano, measures thirty-five through forty-one for contralto and measures thirty-four through forty for bass. Punctuation in the text dictates where a breath should be taken in three of the four extended phrases. Half of the contraltos may choose to take a breath after the first quarter-note of measure thirty-eight and the other half, somewhere immediately after.

A *decrescendo* should begin on the first half-note of measure forty-three and the chorus will end *mezzo-piano*. There are greater climaxes to follow so there is no reason to end the chorus at a greater dynamic level. The final *Adagio*
measures may be taken exactly in tempo but with the note values doubled in length. Do not add an additional rallen-
tando (19, p. 34).

**Closing Statements**

Fugue style dictates the necessity for having the subject dominate the choral texture. The range and tessitura is conservative but frequently it is rather high for the tenor. As in "Behold the Lamb of God," the long sustained phrases present the most difficult obstacle in the chorus.

**Chorus No. 26: "All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray"**

**Results of the Analysis**

The chorus, "All We Like Sheep," in the key of F major is derived from the last part of the Italian duet, No, di voi non vo fidarmi (11, p. 144). The first section of this Italian duet chorus provided the basis for "For Unto Us A Child is Born."

The chorus is written in quadruple-simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. A suitable tempo for the allegro-moderato section would be $\text{\lowercase{allegro} = \text{\lowercase{moderato}}} = \text{\lowercase{between}} 100 \text{ and } 112$. The suggested speed of the adagio is $\text{\lowercase{d}} = 76$ or between $\text{\lowercase{d}} = 50$ and $\text{\lowercase{d}} = 88$ (2, p. 47).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.
Soprano  |  Contralto  |  Tenor  |  Bass
--|--|--|--|
Range  |  Tessitura  |  R  |  T  |  R  |  T  |  R  |  T
\text{c}^1-\text{a}^2  |  \text{f}^1-\text{g}^2  |  \text{a}-\text{c}^2  |  \text{b}^b-\text{b}^\text{b}  |  \text{c}-\text{g}^\text{l}  |  \text{f}-\text{f}^1  |  \text{A}^\text{b}-\text{e}^\text{b}  |  \text{c}-\text{d}^\text{l}

Fig. 42—"All We Like Sheep," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

The Italian duet's original motive has been altered to accommodate the text "All We Like Sheep" but the other motives are transferred directly from the original duet. Concerning form, the chorus follows the duet closely. The chorus is divided into the same four sections as the duet and presents all four motives in each section.

Identification of Choral Problems

The opening phrase should be sung emphasizing the punctuation, "All we, like sheep, have gone astray." Unless the
commas are distinctly felt, the simile, "like sheep," will be meaningless (8, p. 206).

At the words, "we have turned," the second syllable "ed" should be sung softly to allow the interjectory words at these points of imitation to be heard distinctly. These points of imitation occur at measures twenty-nine through thirty-one, forty-five and forty-six and fifty-nine through sixty-three (8, p. 226).

A complete change of mood as well as tempo occurs at measure seventy-six. Here the music calls for "flowing lines of sustained tones: and all notes must receive their full value (9, p. 206).

At measure seventy-eight, the contraltos and tenors should enter mezzo-forte and all parts will crescendo slightly on the word "Him" at measure eighty-seven (9, p. 206).

Seven measures from the end of the chorus, the dominant seventh and its resolution must be executed in one breath. A breath taken by the basses after their long B-flat will not be noticed provided the upper voices sustain (19, p. 36).

Closing Statements

Motive A should be sung emphasizing the simile, "like sheep." If this punctuation is not observed, the simile will be meaningless. The most unique characteristic of this chorus
is the sudden change from the fast-moving tempo of the colora-
tura section to the sustained adagio conclusion.

Chorus No. 28: "He Trusted In God"

Results of the Analysis

The fugue chorus, "He Trusted In God," in the key of C minor, is monothematic since it does not possess a counter-
subject.

The chorus is written in quadruple-simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. A tempo of $\frac{4}{4} = 120$ is suggested if the ironical spirit of the chorus is to be made prominent.

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
<th>Contralto</th>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Tessitura</td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$d^1-a_b2$</td>
<td>$g^1-g^2$</td>
<td>$b_b-c^2$</td>
<td>$b_b-b_b_b$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$e_b-g^1$</td>
<td>$g-g^1$</td>
<td>$G-e_b$</td>
<td>$c-c^1$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 44—"He Trusted In God," range and tessitura of the vocal parts.

The awkward fugue subject, constructed from an ascending and descending diatonic scale is characterized by this repeated rhythmic motive. This motive reveals the "boorish insensitivity of the populace" and the constant reiterations of the subject create an impression of crowd activity (11, p. 146).
Identification of Choral Problems

Farmer offers the following phrasing for the fugue subject (7, p. 190).

This initial bass entrance must be stated at a mezzo-forte dynamic level to allow for a gradual crescendo which will reach "fortissimo" at the Adagio.

The entries of the fugue subject must always be heard above the other voices, consequently, the accompanying polyphony must be subdued at these entries. The bass motive at measures forty-one through forty-six is an excellent example of the need for subduing the complementary voices (8, p. 206).
Fig. 46—"He Trusted In God," fugue subject in bass voice, measures 41-46.

At the interjectory phrases, "Let Him deliver Him" commencing at measure nineteen, a strong accent should be placed on the syllable "li." In this melodic fragment, the syllable "li" always appears on the third of a descending five-note scale passage. The vocalist should be aware of the accidentals that appear in this passage. For examples, tenors, must sing an E natural instead of E flat at measure nineteen and basses, an A flat instead of A natural at measure forty-eight.

The tenor passage at measures forty-four and forty-five must be "tinged with the sense of cruelest mob hysteria for it is here that all who see Him are laughing Him to scorn" (8, p. 206).

There is no need for a rallentando at the chorus' conclusion. A characteristic rest precedes the Adagio which should be sung in a strict but slower tempo.
Closing Statements

This is the only fugue in the oratorio that has no counter-subject. As in all fugal movements, the subject must dominate the choral texture. Special attention should be given to the descending five-note passage on the words "Him deliver Him," making certain that the third note be correctly sung, major or minor as indicated.

Chorus No. 33: "Lift Up Your Heads"

Results of the Analysis

The chorus, "Lift up your Heads," in the key of F major obtains its special character from the fact that the psalm text used demands antiphonal composition. This is the only chorus in the entire oratorio that exhibits a true double chorus effect and it accomplishes this by utilizing five voices instead of four. The additional soprano part is employed to complete the harmony for the upper voices in the opening antiphonal section (11, p. 150).

The chorus is written in quadruple simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Benson suggests tempos ranging from $\text{J} = 76$ to $\text{J} = 92$ and then chooses $\text{J} = 84$ as the most suitable (2, p. 58).

The range and tessitura of the five parts is shown in the following figure.
The suggested division into two semi-choruses is entirely editorial. The question and answer of the scriptural text are allotted by the composer to two trios of high and low voices respectively" (15, p. 175). It seems unsatisfactory that all altos should have to sing in both of these trios and to supply at times the answer to their own question. The subdivision of the altos call for one half to be the lowest voice of the soprano I, soprano II, alto trio; the other to be the highest voice of the alto, tenor, bass trio (15, 175). "Since only half the total chorus sopranos are found in each of the two sopranos parts and similarly, half the chorus altos in the two editorial alto parts, it may be thought suitable, as far as measure thirty-two, for only half the tenors and basses to sing" (15, p. 175).

After the last semi-chorus statements at measures twenty-nine and thirty, four part writing begins an extended homophonic and imitative development of the complete phrase "The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory."
Identification of Choral Problems

Motive A is stated in piano by the women's voices and this dynamic level is maintained for four measures after which a slight crescendo is made beginning on the last beat of measure eight. The tenors and basses ask inquiringly at a mezzo-forte level: "Who is this King of Glory" (Motive B), increasing the tone at each repetition. The answer "The Lord strong and mighty" (Motive C) is stated mezzo-forte by the women's voices. At measure nineteen, Motive A is repeated. The first portion of the motive is sung by the tenors, while the latter part is sung by the contraltos. Therefore, it should be sung boldly by the tenors for one measure while the other parts sing piano after which the first contraltos take precedence. Watkins Shaw suggests that at this point, the first alto part should include any male singers that are available.

A particular passage requiring skill in phrasing occurs at measures twenty-three through twenty-five where there is frequently an unwanted break after "King." The phrase must be sung in one breath. The three repetitions of the question at measures twenty-six through twenty-nine should achieve a gradual increase in tone, with each question becoming more urgent (8, p. 207). There is really no point in reiterating
the same identical pattern two or more times in exactly the same manner.

Handel's characteristic climax does not call for a decrease in tempo. The climax is inherent and requires no rallentando to emphasize it.

**Closing Statements**

The clue to the general interpretation of this chorus is the antiphony between the two semi-choruses. This effect was practiced early in the seventeenth century by many Venetian companies and has been constantly imitated since (18, p. 295).

The chorus is lengthy but not particularly demanding vocally; the range and tessitura are moderate for all voices.

If the oratorio is performed in two parts instead of three, there is usually a pause at the conclusion of this chorus (17, p. 74).

**Chorus No. 44: "Hallelujah"**

**Results of the Analysis**

The "Hallelujah" chorus, in the key of D major, is the perfect model of simplicity. Handel uses only the most elementary melodic and harmonic material and his use of counterpoint is confined to a few basic principles of imitation. The "Hallelujah Chorus" furnishes the best known example of
Handel's technique in combining two distinct melodic ideas. The first is stated alone and then combined with the second in a "contrapuntal cell." This ingenious application of "contrapuntal cells" accounts for the amazing flexibility of the choral texture and explains, at the same time, Handel's liking for the improvisation of "double fugues," based invariably on countersubjects (3, p. 340).

The chorus is written in quadruple simple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note. Benson suggests $\frac{J}{4} = 84$ as a suitable tempo (2, p. 58).

The range and tessitura of the four voices is shown in the following figure.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
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<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Tessitura</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>$a^1-g^2$</td>
<td>$g-d^2$</td>
<td>$d^1-b^1$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 48--"Hallelujah," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

The chorus is composed of five sections and primarily uses material derived from five principle motives. Motive A

Fig. 49--"Hallelujah," motive A, measure 4
is a simple, but impressive statement of tonic, and subdominant chords.

Even though the texture of the chorus constantly changes, the rhythmically-accentuated "Hallelujah" motive \( (\text{\#}) \) establishes a feeling of unbroken continuity. It provides a firm foundation similar to an ostinato bass; and only against the background of this basic motive do the other motives obtain their full effect (11, p. 169).

Measures twelve through twenty-one find the "Hallelujah" motive alternating with Motive B, first at the dominant and then at the tonic.

This is succeeded by the contrapuntal development of the two combined motives (measures 22-23). After a one-measure transition, Motive C is stated in measures thirty-three through thirty-five.

It is interesting to note that Handel altered the third note of the motive sung by the contraltos at measure thirty-eight. This alteration avoids parallel fifths which would have occurred between soprano and contralto.
At measures forty-one through fifty-one, motive D, characterized by sequential progressions if the perfect fourth, constructs a fugal exposition. The countersubject "for ever" is closely related to the "Hallelujah" motive and very similar in function.

The third beat of measure fifty-one commences a broadly conceived expansion of the countersubject "for ever" and
motive A opposed by the soprano's repetition of motive E, "King of Kings" at higher pitch levels.

The usual function of the cadence is to close a section of music, but in these measures, it is used simply as a means of emphasizing the repetitions "King of Kings."

Throughout this chorus, only once does Handel wander from the tonic, D and the dominant A. It appears immediately before the central climax (measures 64-66). While the sopranos sustain an F#, the remaining voices state the "for ever" and "Hallelujah" motives on the dominant and tonic of b minor.

Handel's use here "involves a weakening of the basic function of the cadence" for it is not until measures sixty-seven through sixty-nine that he employs a full half-cadence. The effect of this cadence is greatly enhanced, first by the aforementioned eight note cadencing and secondly by the deliberate sustaining of the dominant seventh (G) in measure sixty-eight (11, p. 171).

Beginning at measure sixty-nine, the chorus' remaining measures construct a broad coda recalling motives D, E and A.

At measure eighty-five a fragment of motive D is stated at the tonic by the basses and strettoed by the sopranos.

The concluding measures of the chorus recall the "King of Kings" motive which is sung by the sopranos as an inverted
pedal. A final plagal cadence, at the words "Hallelujah" closes the chorus.

Identification of Choral Problems

Handel indicated precisely the dynamics he desired at the beginning of this chorus by instructing the orchestra to play "senza ripieni" which of course cannot mean fortissimo. A confident entry is necessary, but forte is suggested rather than fortissimo (10, p. 351).

Young suggests this phrasing for the unison statement of motive B (19, p. 42).

![Musical notation: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth]

Fig. 53—"Hallelujah," Motive B, measures 12-14

There should be absolutely no reduction of tempo at "The Kingdom of the World." A strong entrance by trumpets and timpani on the fourth beat of measure thirty-seven will give unnecessary emphasis to a weak beat.

It is advisable to ask both instrumentalists and vocalists to enter mezzo-forte at this point so that an effective crescendo can be made over the following four measures, ending forte at measure forty-one. A forte reserved until
the end will provide the basses with a suitable dynamic introduction for their fugal subject stated at measure forty-one (19, p. 42).

It is wise to instruct the chorus to mark one, two, three and four over the four "Hallelujahs" beginning at measure ninety to insure that none will enter after the final statement (8, p. 325).

This final thought concerns the widely accepted tradition of standing during the "Hallelujah" chorus. Standing during the chorus seriously destroys the continuity of the music. Young claims that "the gesture has arisen more out of habit than respect and it cannot be justified on any grounds of artistry or common sense" (18, p. 295).

Though it is an extraordinary fine and rousing composition, The "Hallelujah Chorus" should not be considered the summit of Handel's choral art. It is one of the finest of the anthem choruses, but among the dramatic choruses, there are many that are superior works of art; Handel himself declared the final chorus in the second act of Theodora far superior (10, p. 351).

Closing Statements

This chorus possesses an extremely high tessitura for soprano and tenor. Care should be taken to maintain a steady tempo throughout. This is especially true of the demanding fugal section beginning at measure forty-one where a great amount of vocal endurance is required.
The "Hallelujah" chorus is often included as the final number in special editions of part one for performances at Christmas, and also has been used as the concluding chorus to the complete work, replacing the "Amen" chorus.

Chorus No. 53 "Worthy is the Lamb"

Results of the Analysis

The final chorus "Worthy is the Lamb," is written in the key of D major which has predominated in the oratorio.

The chorus is written in quadruple meter and the basic beat is a quarter note, Benson suggests between $\frac{30}{4}$ and $\frac{66}{4}$ as a tempo marking for measures one through seven and then chooses $\frac{66}{4}$ as the most suitable tempo. An acceptable tempo for the Andante would be $\frac{84}{4}$. Benson also suggests $\frac{76}{4}$ as the proper tempo for "Blessing and Honour" (2, p. 63).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Soprano</th>
<th>Contralto</th>
<th>Tenor</th>
<th>Bass</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>Tessitura</td>
<td>R</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d¹-a²</td>
<td>a¹-g²</td>
<td>f#-b¹</td>
<td>b-b¹</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 54--"Worthy is the Lamb," range and tessitura of vocal parts.

The "elementary impressiveness" of the Largo portions (measures 1-7; 12-19) depends primarily on the strength of
simple harmonic progressions which rest on a half-cadence in B minor (measure 7) and on the tonic of F# minor (measure 19) (ll, p. 183).

The transition from Largo to Andante at measure seven should not require a drastic change in absolute speed. The definitions of these two tempo markings should provide a clue to proper interpretation; Largo (broad) and Andante (slow, but slowing) (7, p. 191).

The Andante portions (measures 7-11; 19-23) are characterized primarily by an ascending diatonic scale passage in the bass voice opposed by a descending sixteenth-note motive in the violins. An obvious linear tendency is noticeable at the second Andante statement where the ascent in the bass is completely diatonic.

Fig. 55—"Worthy Is The Lamb," diatonic statement of Andante motive, measures 19-22.

This linear rise leads directly to the Larghetto section where a free-fugal chorus is introduced. The melodic tension
of the theme created by sustaining the high note (D) is resolved in two ways: first by a brief descent to the lower octave, and then by a return to the theme's opening note. "There is about the theme both a certain chantlike character and a suggestion of classical German organ fugue traditions" (11, p. 184).

Fig. 56 -- "Worthy Is The Lamb," measures 24-28

The theme is partially stated by the sopranos at the tonic (A) and by the contraltos at the dominant (E) in measures thirty-two through thirty-four. Thematic expansion commences in all voices climaxing with a subdominant, dominant, tonic cadence in A-major at measure thirty-nine.

In the autograph, Handel with a couple of pencil strokes down through all the staves in b. (bar) 39 and 53 has suggested the possibility of an abbreviation of the "Blessing and honour" section. We know nothing
of how, when and where this abbreviation may have been used. There seems no strong reason for omitting these 14 bars. An intended concentration of the ending must presumably be considered the most obvious reason, and a hint of another shortening may point in the same direction. In the Ouseley copy, a couple of notes have been added in the bass at the end which suggest a full close on D instead of the original half-close on A.

An alteration of the text is furthermore being replaced by "For ever and ever, Amen, Amen." The idea is clearly that the more complicated "Amen Chorus" is to be omitted altogether, but whether this radical shortening was really carried out, or whether Handel merely had it in mind as an emergency measure, we again do not know (11, pp. 184-185).

Three adagio measures lead to a half-cadence on A major which is the preparation for the tonic D major of the Amen."

Identification of Choral Problems

Coward suggests that the theme in the chorus' opening measures is not in the soprano voice, as popularly supposed, but rather is divided between the tenor and contraltos. In order to strengthen this theme, the second contraltos and second sopranos are asked to sing the first four notes of

![Fig. 5 - "Worthy Is The Lamb," measures 1-3](image-url)
the tenor part and the tenors and second sopranos to sing the last four notes of the contralto part to the words "Lamb that was slain" (4, pp. 240-241).

There should be no suggestion of a breath during this opening phrase. A crescendo on "Lamb" will insure a carry over to "that" (8, p. 325).

If the Andante is to flow, any semblance of staccato singing must be excluded. "This, in turn, means a careful allocation of note and rest values and a conscious striving to obtain smooth phrases" (8, p. 192).

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{and wise dom and strength and hon-our and glo-ry and bless-ing} \\
\text{and wise dom and strength and hon-our and glo-ry and bless-ing}
\end{align*}
\]

Fig. 58—"Worthy is the Lamb," stress marks as opposed to staccato dots, measures 8-11.

Often the true climax of the phrase commencing at measure twenty-four is often lost because it is sung too loudly. These dynamic markings may prove helpful. This phrasing should be identical each time it is sung. The chorus must never exaggerate the crescendo, rather it should become "a natural growth of feeling (emotion) towards the most important word,
Fig. 59--"Worthy is the Lamb," measures 24-26

'Him'" (17, p. 78). The unison octave occurring at measure twenty-seven in the tenor and bass voices should be sung legato.

The first syllables of "Blessing, honour, glory" at measures fifty-six and fifty-seven should be strongly accented while clearly observing the quarter note rests (8, p. 325).

The tendency to sing "for rever and dever" can be overcome if the first eighth note of this repeated motive is sung staccato (17, p. 78).

The Adagio does not require an additional rallentando and there should be no pause between the Adagio and the beginning of the "Amen" chorus.

Closing Statements

This chorus employs three different tempo markings; Largo, Andante and Larghetto. The transition from Largo to Andante at measure seven does not require a major change in absolute speed. The Larghetto section combines all of Handel's
previously used compositional devices: fugal writing, contrapuntal technique of the duet-choruses, and elementary chordal declamations. It is extremely important to obtain a legato effect in the first phrase of the Larghetto since nine words are sung on the same note.

The final chord of the Adagio should receive its full value and then proceed directly to the "Amen."
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this report was to investigate, through stylistic analysis, the choral problems in twelve selected choruses from George Frederick Handel's oratorio, Messiah.

The investigation of the choral problems was accomplished through a stylistic analysis of five closely related areas of musical composition. These areas included: (a) melodic characteristics, (b) rhythmic characteristics, (c) harmonic characteristics, (d) textural characteristics, (e) formal characteristics.

Chapter I of this report presents the purpose of the report, the sub-problems involved, definitions of terms, delimitations, the basic hypothesis of the report, the basic assumptions of the report, methodology and the plan of the report.

Chapter II of this report contains a brief biographical sketch of Handel, a discussion of the circumstances surrounding the composition of Messiah, and a survey of the Handelian oratorio chorus.
Chapter III presents the results of the musical analysis immediately followed by a sectional presentation of the choral problems.

Appendices A and B will present reviews of selected recordings and vocal-piano editions of Messiah respectively.

The frequent and ever-popular performances of Messiah have given rise to a multitude of poor performance practices. This study has isolated many of these problems and proposed solutions that should be practicable for any performing group, including high school.

Based on the results of the musical analysis and the identification of choral problems, the following conclusions are drawn: (1) four part choral writing dominates the oratorio except for the chorus "Lift Up Your Heads" which utilizes an additional soprano part; (2) the voice ranges and tessituras are usually extreme for tenors and sopranos but moderate for contraltos and basses; (3) melody is based primarily on purely musical considerations with several instances of "word painting"; (4) there is a preference for simple rather than compound meters; (5) rhythmic devices such as hemiola and syncopation occur frequently throughout the choruses; (6) an additional rallentando should not be inserted at the conclusion of a chorus; (7) harmonic dissonances are freely
utilized; (8) the predominating type of texture employed is contrapuntal with numerous instances of imitation and complementary polyphony; and (9) the forms of the choruses are either sectional, through-composed, or fugal.

Recommendations

Based on this study of Handel's *Messiah*, the following recommendations are submitted to directors and performers.

1. It is recommended that the following choruses be sung by community choral organizations, church choirs and high school voices because of the moderate voice flexibility and endurance needed for performance: "And the Glory of the Lord," "O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion," "Glory to God," "Behold the Lamb of God," "Surely, He Hath Borne Our Griefs," "Lift Up Your Heads," and "Hallelujah."

2. It is recommended that the following choruses should not be sung by community choral organizations, church choirs, and high school voices because of the extreme vocal flexibility and endurance needed for performance: "For Unto Us A Child is Born," "All We Like Sheep," "And With His Stripes," "He Trusted In God," and "Worthy Is The Lamb."

3. It is recommended that the sense of the text be kept intact if excisions are made in the score (2, p. iii). If
omissions are to be made in the work, the following are recom-
mended. The enumeration used refers to the Schirmer and
Novello editions. The latter part of numbers twenty-three
and forty-eight and the whole of numbers thirty-four, thirty-
five, thirty-six, forty-nine, fifty, fifty-one, and fifty-two
are customarily omitted (4, p. ix). "Only for the most ur-
gent considerations of time should the further excision of
numbers twenty-one and twenty-two occur. It should be em-
phasized that it is far better to perform one part in its
entirety than to present a distorted conception of the whole
work" (2, p. iii).

4. It is recommended that numbers one through twenty-
one, with the addition of forty-four be performed at Christmas
(4, p. ix).

5. It is recommended that numbers twenty-two through
forty-four, with the addition of fifty-three be performed
at Easter.

6. It is recommended that a request be made, before the
oratorio begins, asking the audience to remain seated during
the "Hallelujah" chorus. The request may also be printed in
the program.

7. It is recommended that the Novello score, edited
by Watkins Shaw be used if an authentic performance is desired.
MacMillan states that the Shaw edition "is not only scholarly but also practical and can be warmly recommended to any conductor who wishes to perform the work as originally conceived" (3, p. 60).

8. It is recommended that two recent phonograph recordings of Messiah be studied before a performance is attempted.

Both amount to major restorations of Handel's intentions, with Charles Mackerras (Angel S3705, 3705) scoring higher for historical and stylistic accuracy, Colin Davis (Phillips PHS 3-992, PHM 3-592) for recorded sound and choice of vocal soloists. Neither version is yet available on tape though chances are that the Mackerras soon will be (1, p. 52).
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

REVIEWS OF AVAILABLE PHONOGRAPH RECORDINGS OF MESSIAH

There are eleven currently available recordings of Messiah that merit the designation "complete". Two listed as complete by the Schwann Catalog: Bernstein's and Ormandy's, the former Columbia M2L242 (Monural) and M2S603 (Stereo), the latter Columbia M2L263 (Monural) and M2S607 (Stereo)--are so heavily cut that "Highlights from Messiah" would have been a more appropriate title. The Deutsche Grammophon Archive performance conducted by Karl Richter, 138951/2/3 (Monural) and 18951/2/3 (Stereo) is the only available recording that is sung in German.

There are, therefore, seven complete stereo-mono recordings of Messiah for consideration, and two other pre-stereo re-issues currently available as budget-priced alternatives.
TABLE I
AVAILABLE PHONOGRAPH RECORDINGS OF MESSIAH

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BOULT I

The Boult Messiah re-issued on the budget-priced Richmond label is the more consistently satisfying of the two mono recordings and its nominal price may be the deciding factor in choosing this recording.

BEECHAM

The Beecham performance is the conductor's third recording of the score during a period of twenty-five years. This is probably the most controversial recording he ever made (1, p. 60).
Beecham rightly rebelled against the sentimental religiosity of the nineteenth-century English attitude to Messiah, but at heart he was himself a nineteenth-century Englishman—only a very secular one (6, p. 57).

Beecham argued for the use of expanded orchestral and choral forces on the basis of the growth in the size of concert halls since Handel’s time. But in the context of a recording this argument is totally irrelevant. Whatever the merits of the case in relation to concert performance, there can be no doubt that the phonograph offers conductors the opportunity to approximate the actual sound of a Handel performance by working with the same number of performers that he was accustomed to use (6, p. 57).

Employing a new orchestration made for the occasion by Sir Eugene Goossens at Beecham’s request, this version introduces such non-Handelian instruments as clarinet, triangle, and cymbals, and in general clothes the score in the garments of Late Romanticism (1, p. 60).

SARGENT-KLEMPERER-BOULT II

The Sargent, Klemperer and stereo Boult performances all employ rather large choral and instrumental groups. "Sargent’s is somewhat routine with little enlivening spirit" (1, p. 60).

The other two readings are more stimulating. Klemperer makes much of the drama to be found in Messiah, particularly in the choral sections. Boult almost succeeds in duplicating the success of his earlier version. Mention must be made of
Joan Sutherland's contribution to this Boult recording. In keeping with Baroque traditions, she considerably ornaments her solo line and her effortless vocal production is extremely satisfying.

Her enterprise, however, is vitiated by several factors: firstly, it makes a disturbing contrast with the contributions of the three other soloists, who do not decorate; secondly, many of her ornaments are stylistically unsuitable in themselves; and thirdly, her bad intonation and worse rhythm negate the intended demonstration of vocal accomplishment (6, p. 58).

SHAW-DAVIS-MACKERRAS

One of the most dramatic recording developments in recent months has been the appearance of three extraordinary performances of Messiah, one conducted by Robert Shaw, one by Colin Davis and the other by Charles Mackerras.

SHAW

Robert Shaw has used the Novello addition by Watkins Shaw as the basis for his performance. Shaw's version certainly has its advantages.

His observation of Handel's distinction between 'con ripieno' and 'senza ripieno' passages is more effective than Davis'; and he has done wisely in opting for the short version of the "Pifa" or "Pastoral Symphony", and for the alto version of "Thou art gone up on high", both of which probably represent Handel's final intentions (6, p. 58).
Concerning eighteenth-century performance practices, Goodfiend finds the following things wrong with Shaw's performance:

the application of ornaments is not consistent enough; double-dotting is not used in all appropriate places; trills are usually incorrectly played and not always present where they should be; some traditional, but to my ears harmonically incorrect, appoggiaturas are retained; there are dull and un-inventive harpsichoral realization, anachronistic orchestral "crescendos", "diminuendos", and "rallentandos" (5, p. 97).

In the matter of vocal performance, Shaw's chorus and soloists are equally excellent.

From a technical standpoint, RCA overbalances in favor of the vocalists. The Shaw recording also has the following specific flaws:

the female voices sound off-microphone in at least two choruses; the timpani do not come through as clearly as they should; and there is an exceptionally bad tape cut-off at the end of "Thou shalt break them" and a rough lead into the following Hallelujah" (5, p. 97).

Shaw employs a chorus of thirty-one and an orchestra of thirty-five.

DAVIS

In compiling this "authentic" recording, Colin Davis uses several editions and takes from each what he desires. Deither claims that "this (recording) is far and away the
most vocally ornamental Messiah I have heard, and literally the only one instrumentally ornamented in the authentic Handelian style" (3, p. 92).

Using the same criteria for the Shaw recording, Goodfriend lists the defects of Davis' performance:

Ornaments are not consistently applied with an understanding of their harmonic implications, their textual references, and their function to enhance expressivity, nor are cadential figures used all the time where they should be; most vocal cadenzas used are unimaginative; the traditional wrong appoggiaturas are used in the first tenor recitative, and Handel's music has been rewritten to place the orchestral chords after the appoggiaturas rather than with them; there is a general anachronistic fussiness of orchestral dynamics; the string texture is not always transparent and leans less on the bass than it should (5, p. 97).

The London Symphony Choir is excellent and the lyrical tone of Davis' tenors is especially notable. Davis employs thirty-six chorus members and an orchestra of forty.

In summing up the Davis performance, the "big advance here is the consistent use of Baroque ornamentation," for the most part "knowledgeably applied and integrated into a strong and vital interpretation (3, p. 99).

MACKERRAS

Charles Mackerras has chosen Basil Lam's recent edition of Messiah for his performance.
Mackerras has used Lam's compilation of known Handelian vocal and instrumental Messiah embellishments as the basic text, and then inviting the soloists--five here, rather than the customary four--to improvise cadenzas and spontaneously add, to the written Lam decorations, whatever they felt moved to contribute during a particular take in the recording session (4, p. 630).

In this recording the choral and instrumental forces have again been reduced: compared with the 36-40 ratio of Colin Davis and the 31-35 of Robert Shaw, we now have 38-43.

Mackerras is not inclined to duplicate the rapid tempi which characterized the Shaw recording. "His tempi are very moderate, sometimes to a degree that, with larger and stiffer forces, would soon decline into stodginess" (4, p. 631).

Mackerras's solo five are as much or more a team than Davis's four, both of these quite surpassing the stubbornly un-baroque Shaw group. The fifth solo voice in this recording is a counter-tenor who sings the well-known "But who may abide". We further hear the almost invariably preferred alto-modulating to soprano version of "He shall feed His flock", the alto version of "Thou art gone up", again sung by the counter-tenor; and the correct bipartite but "da-capo"-less form of "Why do the nations".

The recitative "Then shall be brought to pass" is taken by the counter-tenor, and the following "O Death" is shared by the counter-tenor and tenor (4, p. 632).

The choral spread of the Angel recording sits fair to permeate your listening room, like RCA Victor's, instead of withdrawing slightly, as in Philip's. The continuo part
sounds like a continuo, since harpsichord and strings are at last ideally balanced" (4, p. 633).

Mackerras' performance is "assuredly the most liberally and stylishly ornamented Messiah yet captured on records" (4, p. 630).
APPENDIX B

REVIEWS OF SELECTED PIANO-VOCAL SCORES

During the past three decades, several respectable editions of Messiah have appeared. In 1912, the Schirmer edition by Max Spicker was published; in 1939 came the Peters edition of Arnold Schering and Kurt Soldan, who built on the pioneer work of Friedrich Chrysander and Max Seiffert around the turn of the century; in 1946, the Fischer edition of J. M. Coopersmith was published; in 1958, Novello published an important new edition by Watkins Shaw; and in 1963, Brian Priestman revised the Schering-Soldan version for Eulenberg (6, p. 56). Following is a brief abstract of each of the most accessible piano-vocal scores.

Schirmer (Max Spicker, ed.)

Spicker claims that his edition:

agrees at every point with Handel's original score, as it follows the fascimile edition of the latter with most careful exactitude. Slight deviations from the original, which in the course of many years have obtained almost traditional authority, are inserted in small notes in every case, the professional artist being left free to employ them or not at his discretion (9, p. iii).
Novello (Watkins Shaw, ed.)

In the Preface to Shaw's edition, he states that

this is a practical edition, and the notation used by Handel has therefore been interpreted for use in performance today. But in every instance the user of this edition will be able at a glance to distinguish between Handel's autograph text and the editor's suggestions and thus know exactly where he stands (8, p. iii).

In view of the mass of traditions, adaptations, additional accompaniments and the like which have, in the course of two centuries, accumulated like barnacles about this much-adored and much-abused masterpiece, this is of the greatest value. We are also provided with an illuminating table showing to what voices the various solo numbers were allotted in various performances under Handel's direction—often these are at variance with modern practice.

Handel himself made many changes and alterations in his scores and the various versions have been meticulously noted by the editor. It would be refreshing to hear "Rejoice greatly" in the twelve-eight rhythm which the composer adopted for his second version and which also appears in the Handel Gesellschaft score. No less intriguing is the duet form of "How beautiful are the feet," written for two altos and leading into an exhilarating chorus, "Break forth into joy". These and other alternatives are given in an appendix (7, p. 57).

In the main body of the vocal score the accompaniment (designed primarily for organ but readily playable on the piano) gives in bold type the original instrumentation as closely as performance by two hands will allow, together with a simple filling up of the continuo in smaller notes. All "additional accompaniments" such as those of Mozart, Costa, Prout and others, have been discarded, and full score and parts to accompany this edition are available from the publisher.
The text throughout is so edited as to leave no doubt about what appears in the manuscripts. This is given in bold type, whereas the simple filling-up of the continuo is shown in smaller notes. Handel's few appoggiature and other ornaments are carefully differentiated from those conjectured by the editor as being in keeping with eighteenth century practice (7, p. 58).

"Shaw's edition provides the conductor with alternatives regarding the use of ornaments, instrumentation and alterations of note values in accordance with eighteenth century practice. The extent that these alterations may be employed must be left to the discretion of the individual conductor" (7, p. 57).

A book has been issued as A Textual Companion to this edition in which full details of sources and discussion of alternative readings and editorial problems will be found.

Fischer (J. M. Coopersmith, ed.)

Coopersmith states that "no apology is needed for a new edition of Messiah at this time (1946)" (2, p. iii).

Indeed, the newly added material of the present edition would in itself justify its publication. But far outweighing the need for completeness was the problem of presenting Handel's music as he wrote it.

The frequency of performance during Handel's own lifetime necessitated alterations in the work, which in some instances were merely transpositions for new singers; while, in others, they represent a reworking of the musical structure to accommodate a redisposition of the voices. To meet the needs
of certain other performances, Handel made several excisions which called for a new setting of the text. The present edition contains not only the work as it is usually performed, but also every known variant of the separate excerpts. The latter appear as supplementary material in the appendix and are numbered to correspond with the versions in the body of the work.

To ascertain Handel's intentions, the collation of a large group of original sources was required. Doubtful readings have been resolved by reference to the original autograph at the British Museum and the autograph sketches and fragments at the Fitzwilliam Museum. Also examined were the Smith transcript used as a conducting score by Handel at the first performance, which contains important autograph corrections and additions, and several transcripts prepared for later performances, which contain variant versions. Of the latter transcripts, the most significant are the two full-scores at the British Museum, the manuscript at the Hamburg Stadtbibliothek, the Newman Flower version, which contains some autograph text variants in "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and, finally, the most interesting and complete transcript, owned by the Rosenbach Co. of New York, formerly in the collection of Otto Goldschmidt, Jenny Lind's husband (2, p. iii).

This edition includes four facsimiles from an autograph score. The first facsimile shows the date on which the oratorio was begun. The remaining three facsimiles show the dates of completion for each of the oratorio's three parts.
APPENDIX BIBLIOGRAPHY


BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books


**Articles**


Encyclopedia Articles


Discography

Musical Heritage Society, Handel's Messiah, MHS 582, 583, 584, unsigned leaflet accompanying recordings.

Piano-Vocal Scores