



GUERRERO CONDUCTS MESSIAH

THURSDAY, APRIL 14, AT 7 PM

FRIDAY & SATURDAY, APRIL 15 & 16, AT 8 PM

NASHVILLE SYMPHONY & CHORUS

GIANCARLO GUERRERO, *conductor*

TUCKER BIDDLECOMBE, *chorus director*

MARY WILSON, *soprano*

PATRICK DAILEY, *countertenor*

GARRETT SORENSON, *tenor*

REGINALD SMITH, JR., *baritone*

GEORGE FREDERIC HANDEL

2 hours, 40 minutes

Messiah

Sinfonia

PART I

Accompagnato: Comfort ye, my people

Air: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted

Chorus: And the Glory of the Lord

Accompagnato: Thus saith the Lord

Air: But who may abide the day of His coming

Chorus: And He shall purify

Accompagnato: Behold, a virgin shall conceive

Air and Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion

Accompagnato: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth.

Air: The people that walked in darkness

Chorus: For unto us a Child is Born

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field

Accompagnato: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them

Recitative: And the angel said unto them

Accompagnato: And suddenly, there was with the angel

Chorus: Glory to God in the Highest

Air: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion

Recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd

Duet: He shall feed His flock like a shepherd

Chorus: His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light

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Mary C. Ragland Foundation.

Maestro Thomas Wilkins'
appearance is underwritten
in part by Drs. Nancy and
Mark Peacock.



GUERRERO CONDUCTS MESSIAH

INTERMISSION

20 minutes

PART II

Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God

Air: He was despised

Chorus: Surely He hath borne our griefs

Chorus: And with His stripes we are healed

Chorus: All we like sheep have gone astray

Accompagnato: All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn

Chorus: He trusted in God

Accompagnato: Thy rebuke hath broken His heart

Arioso: Behold and see if there be if there be any sorrow

Accompagnato: He was cut off out of the land of the living

Air: But Thou didst not leave His soul in Hell

Chorus: Lift up your heads

Chorus: The Lord gave the word

Air: How beautiful are the feet of them

Air: Why do the nations so furiously rage together

Chorus: Let us break their bonds asunder

Recitative: He that dwelleth in Heaven

Air: Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron

Chorus: Hallelujah

PART III

Air: I know that my Redeemer liveth

Chorus: Since by man came death

Accompagnato: Behold, I tell you a mystery

Air: The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd

Recitative: Then shall be brought to pass

Duet: O death, where is thy sting?

Chorus: But thanks be to God

Air: If God be for us

Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

Chorus: Blessing and honor

Chorus: Amen

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Messiah

Born on February 23, 1685,
in Halle, Germany

Died on April 14, 1759,
in London, England

Composed:

Handel composed the first version of *Messiah* in just a little over three weeks, between August 22 and September 14, 1741, but continued to make revisions to the score — in some cases adding new arias — for subsequent revivals of the work.



Estimated length:

2 hours and 40 minutes

First performance:

April 13, 1742, in the Great Music Hall in Dublin, with the composer conducting.

First Nashville Symphony performance:

December 15, 1963, with Music Director Willis Page.

Although he became known as George Frideric Handel after settling in London in 1712, the composer Georg Friedrich Händel grew up in Halle in present-day central Germany (just a couple hours' drive from Johann Sebastian Bach's birthplace in Eisenach), the son of a barber-surgeon. But he adopted England as his home. Handel attracted admiring royal and aristocratic patrons but also enjoyed success as a musical entrepreneur, managing the production of a prolific series of Italian operas he wrote for the London stage.

His reputation and fortune soared, but fashions changed, and Handel was compelled to reinvent himself by shifting his focus to the English oratorio — essentially, opera in disguise, without the costumes. Even though he still had a few more operatic projects up his sleeve, by the time he composed *Messiah* in 1741, Handel had ceased writing Italian operas altogether. He continued to compose oratorios through the next decade until blindness overtook him.

Messiah thus belongs to a pivotal turning point in Handel's career, when he was shifting his focus away from the genre of tragic opera that had initially made him a sensation in London (with *Rinaldo*, in 1711). Handel's Italian operas typically retold stories from

mythology or history. A genre calculated to showcase the star singers of the era, it involved spectacular (and spectacularly expensive) special effects as part of the staging. By the late 1730s, the high costs of production were making opera an unsustainable business model, and the English public's musical taste had changed.

In Handel's English variation on the older oratorio format, a sense of moral uplift is juiced along by the entertainment value of opera, but without the expense, costumes — and fussy, overpaid egos. *Messiah's* success over the ensuing centuries caused it to eclipse Handel's other works of music drama and even gave it a reputation as the quintessential English oratorio.

Yet Handel and his librettist, Charles Jennens, took a risk by shaping *Messiah* as they did. In many ways, it swerves from the norm. Indeed, the oratorio initially touched off a controversy that raged for several years back in London, despite the acclaim *Messiah* received when it was first introduced to Dublin audiences at the conclusion of the 1741–42 season.

Messiah's method of setting actual scriptural texts and its evocation of Jesus within a secular genre that could be performed “for diversion and amusement” even triggered charges of blasphemy, although these were

leveled against the secular context of the presentation (at London's Covent Garden) rather than Handel's music itself. But when the composer led performances near the end of his life at a newly established charity in London, the Foundling Hospital, the success was so overwhelming that it helped secure *Messiah's* enduring reputation.

The earlier disapproval turned out to be a short-lived cultural skirmish. The tradition began of annual performances of *Messiah* which were associated with benevolent intentions, raising considerable sums for the charity. (In his will, Handel donated the original score to the Foundling Hospital.) These always took place in the spring, at Eastertide — just as we encounter in these Nashville Symphony and Chorus performances, which present a fuller rendition of the complete score. It was only after Handel's death that the association of *Messiah* with the Christmas season became firmly embedded.

Handel also introduced changes at several of these revivals. For the most part, these involved substitutions or rewrites of arias. They reflected practical performance conditions and took into account the limitations or strengths of the particular soloists on hand. In fact, even the Dublin premiere varied somewhat from the score Handel had written out beforehand. For the revival of 1750, for example, since the castrato Gaetano Guadagni was available (he later created the role of Orfeo in Gluck's famous opera), Handel recast the bass aria "But who may abide the day of his coming" to include a dizzyingly virtuosic setting of the phrase "a refiner's fire."

Charles Jennens had collaborated previously with Handel and likely compiled the book for *Israel in Egypt* (first presented in 1739), which anticipates the method of construction of *Messiah*, arranging actual texts from the bible. But the process is less straightforward in *Messiah*. Jennens — a wealthy patron who was nevertheless an outsider, disaffected with contemporary English politics — juxtaposes

extracts from both the Old and the New Testaments to represent the basic narrative of Christian redemption. Rather than a biographical sketch of the life of Jesus, *Messiah* concerns the very idea of divinity becoming manifest in human history (hence the lack of the definite article — "the *Messiah*" — in its title).

There is very little dramatic impersonation of characters. The narrative is indirect and suggestive, and, as has been often noted, downright confusing to anyone not familiar with the implied events involving the life of Jesus. Jennens divides the libretto into three acts (although he calls them "parts"), much like the organization of a baroque opera. Part One centers around prophecy and the nativity of Jesus, ending with his miracles (this is the part of the oratorio that is most closely tied to the Christmas season). Following its evocation of hope comes a condensed version of the Passion story of sacrifice in Part Two. Part Three concludes with the implications of Christ's redemption of humanity from the fall of Adam.

WHAT TO LISTEN FOR

Handel's musical expression homes in on the universal emotions that underlie each stage of the Christian redemption narrative. Handel was above all a man of the theater, and his operatic genius for establishing the mood to suit a given situation is everywhere apparent. But in opera, Handel typically accomplishes this through a lengthy chain of arias. The centrality of the chorus in *Messiah* allows for greater diversity. Part One establishes a pattern of recitative, aria, and chorus, which then allows for further variation in the other two parts.

Handel moreover draws on the gamut of international styles of his era, mixing thrillingly complex Northern European counterpoint

alongside straightforward, Italianate lyricism, majestic French rhythms, and homophonic choruses. He avails himself as well of an astonishing range of colors in the accompanying textures, though with a remarkable economy of instrumentation. Notice, for example, how the trumpets remain silent in Part One until “Glory to God,” and are subsequently kept in the wings until the “Hallelujah!” chorus at the end of Part Two. (Incidentally, the glory this chorus depicts refers not to the moment of Christ’s resurrection but to the triumph of redemption).

Consider, too, the compelling psychological range Handel explores, encompassing in Part One alone the fathomless darkness associated with the period of universal waiting for a savior; the oasis-like calm of the purely instrumental “Pastoral Symphony,” with its evocation of the music of shepherds; and the dancing exuberance of “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion.” Handel continually finds freshly inventive ways to “paint” the words through music (witness the “straying” lines of “All we like sheep”) but subtler surprises are often hidden within his settings as well. In that

same chorus, Handel engineers a detour from the cheerful mood that predominates into the tragic minor when the consequences of human failure are suggested.

Amid all this variety, by the end of Part Three Handel has taken us on a journey that will later become familiar in the symphonies of Beethoven — the passage from darkness to enlightenment and final victory. The “Hallelujah!” chorus may seem unbeatable, yet somehow Handel manages to follow it with still more glorious music: the soaring certainty of “The trumpet shall sound” and the progression of the choral finale, with its fugal setting of “Amen.” As the voices weave their threads together, that final word becomes a serene chant, all-encompassing in its resonance.

In addition to four vocal soloists and four-part chorus, the version of Handel’s scoring for Messiah used in these performances call for an orchestra of 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, strings, harpsichord and organ.

— *Thomas May is the Nashville Symphony’s program annotator.*

SINFONIA

PART ONE

ACCOMPAGNATO: *Comfort ye, my people (Tenor)*
Comfort ye, comfort ye My people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem; and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish’d, that her iniquity is pardon’d. The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness: Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God.

AIR: *Ev’ry valley shall be exalted (Tenor)*
Every valley shall be exalted, and ev’ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

CHORUS: *And the glory of the Lord*

And the glory, the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *Thus saith the Lord (Bass)*

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav’ns and the earth, the sea and the dry land; and I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, ev’n the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

AIR: *But who may abide the day of His Coming
(Countertenor)*

But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

CHORUS: *And He shall purify*

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *Behold, a virgin shall conceive
(Countertenor)*

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us."

AIR AND CHORUS: *O thou that tellest good tidings
to Zion (Countertenor)*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *For behold, darkness shall
cover the earth (Bass)*

For Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

AIR: *The people that walked in darkness (Bass)*

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light. And they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

CHORUS: *For unto us a Child is born*

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given, and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His Name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace!

PIFA (PASTORAL SYMPHONY)

RECITATIVE: *There were shepherds abiding in the
field (Soprano)*

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *And lo, the angel of the Lord
came upon them (Soprano)*

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.

RECITATIVE: *And the angel said unto them (Soprano)*

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *And suddenly there was with
the angel (Soprano)*

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heav'nly host, praising God, and saying:

CHORUS: *Glory to God in the highest*

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill towards men.

AIR: *Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion (Soprano)*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: He is the righteous Savior, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

RECITATIVE: *Then shall the eyes of the blind
be open'd (Countertenor)*

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

DUET: *He shall feed His flock like a shepherd
(Soprano & Countertenor)*

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.

CHORUS: *His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light
His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.*

PART TWO

CHORUS: *Behold the Lamb of God*

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world.

AIR: *He was despised (Countertenor)*

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

CHORUS: *Surely, He hath borne our griefs*

Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

CHORUS: *And with His stripes we are healed*

And with His stripes we are healed.

CHORUS: *All we like sheep have gone astray*

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn (Tenor)*

All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

CHORUS: *He trusted in God*

He trusted in God that He would deliver Him, let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *Thy rebuke hath broken His heart (Tenor)*

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness: He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

ARIOSO: *Behold, and see if there be any sorrow (Tenor)*

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow!

ACCOMPAGNATO: *He was cut off out of the land of the living (Tenor)*

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

AIR: *But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell (Tenor)*

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

CHORUS: *Lift up your heads*

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle. Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

CHORUS: *The Lord gave the word*

The Lord gave the word: Great was the company of the preachers.

AIR: *How beautiful are the feet of them (Soprano)*

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

AIR: *Why do the nations so furiously rage together (Bass)*

Why do the nations so furiously rage together: why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

CHORUS: *Let us break their bonds asunder*

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

RECITATIVE: *He that dwelleth in heaven (Tenor)*

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.

AIR: *Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron (Tenor)*

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

CHORUS: *Hallelujah*

Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

PART THREE**AIR:** *I know that my Redeemer liveth (Soprano)*

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And tho' worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

CHORUS: *Since by man came death*

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

ACCOMPAGNATO: *Behold, I tell you a mystery (Bass)*

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

AIR: *The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd (Bass)*

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd.

RECITATIVE: *Then shall be brought to pass*

(Countertenor)

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

DUET: *O death, where is thy sting?*

(Countertenor & Tenor)

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

CHORUS: *But thanks be to God*

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

AIR: *If God be for us (soprano)*

If God be for us, who can be against us? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

CHORUS: *Worthy is the Lamb that was slain*

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

CHORUS: *Blessing and honour*

Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

CHORUS: *Amen*

Amen.



NASHVILLE SYMPHONY CHORUS

TUCKER BIDDLECOMBE, *Chorus Director*

SOPRANO

Lucy Alegria	Julia Damore	Adreanna Hernandez	Nicole Rivera
Beverly Anderson	Katie Doyle	Vanesa Jackson	Renita Smith-Crittendon
Katie Arata	Kacie Dunham	Emily Kivi	Ashlinn Snyder
Esther Bae	Amy Frogge	Katherine Lawrence	Paige Stinnett
Amie Bates	Kelli Gauthier	Kirsten McGlone	Clair Susong
Grace Brega	Rebecca Greer	Alisha Menard	Marva Swann
Stephanie Breiwa	Grace Guill	Jean Miller	Marjorie Taggart
Christine Brosend	Ally Hard	Jennifer Ondrey	Cassidy Van Amburg
Daphne Bugelli	Rose Hellmers	Angela Pasquini	Jan Volk
Sara Curtiss	Christina Hemsath	Anna Kristine Phillips	Sylvia Wynn

ALTO

Carol Armes	Carla Davis	Stephanie Kraft	Anna Lea Ritchie
Kathy Bearden	Amanda Dier	Shelly McCormack	Anjali Sivaaikaran
Tessa Berger	Bethany DiSantis	Sharon McDonough	Madalynne Skelton
MJ Britton	Elizabeth Gilliam	Asha Moody	Deanna Talbert
Sarah Bronchetti	Bevin Gregory	Jessica Moore	Sue Veith
Vineecia Buchanan	Judith Griffin	Shelia Mullican	Clara Warford
Mary Callahan	Elizabeth Grossman	Lisa Pellegrin	Kathryn Whitaker
Cathi Carmack	Leah Handelsman	Annette Phillips	
Kelsey Christian	Sidney Hyde	Stacy Reed	
Lisa Cooper	Leah Koesten	Deborah Reyland	

TENOR

Robert Bennett	Carl Hellmers	Keith Ramsey	Nathan Stroud
Daniel Capparella	Kory Henkel	David Satterfield	Joel Tellinghuisen
Brett Cartwright	Rye Jackson	AJ Sermarini	Tristan Tournaud
Taylor Chadwick	Ron Jensen	Zach Shrout	Matthew Tuggle
Elijah Culley	Devin Mueller	Daniel Sissom	Richard Wineland
Christopher Elliott	Ryan Norris	Eddie Smith	Scott Wolfe
Joe Fitzpatrick	John Perry	Stephen Sparks	Jonathan Yeaworth

BASS

Gilbert Aldridge	Tim Goodenough	Mark Morrell	Merv Snider
James Cortner	Duane Hamilton	Steve Myers	Larry Strachan
Nicholas Davidson	Andrew Hard	Steven Nicodemo	Zachary Swafford
Dustin Derryberry	Carl Johnson	Alec Oziminski	David Talbert
Mark Filosa	Bill Loyd	Steve Prichard	David Thomas
Ian Frazier	Rob Mahurin	Michael Rahimzadeh	Nic Townsend
Stuart Garber	Andrew Miller	Max Randal	Brian Warford
George Goetschel	Christopher Mixon	Daniel Silva	

Sara Crigger, *librarian*

Jeff Burnham, *accompanist*