



The Shenandoah Valley Choral Society and Orchestra

Gretchen W. Welch, Conductor

Present

G.F. Handel's

MESSIAH

Parts II and III

With

Brenda K. Witmer, Soprano

Susan Gutshall, Alto

Les Helmuth, Tenor

Lawrence Evans, Baritone

Handel's Masterpiece

April 13, 1742. Dublin bustled with excitement. Sedan chairs and carriages thronged around the new music hall in Fishamble Street as patrons arrived to hear George Frideric Handel's new sacred oratorio.

More than one woman in the crowd commiserated with her neighbor about the inconvenience of leaving her dress hoops at home, as a newspaper notice had requested. Men had left off their swords, too, all in the interest of seating more people in the hall for this performance, which was to benefit several charities.

The two performances of *Messiah* that day, a dress rehearsal and an evening concert, were sung by a choir of fourteen men and six boys, plus half a dozen male and female soloists, accompanied by a thirty piece orchestra. At the harpsichord, commanding singers and instrumentalists, sat the composer.

Fashionable Dublin loved *Messiah*. Its approval was echoed in the newspaper review: "The Sublime, the Grand and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear."

And because seven hundred people had been able to squeeze into the hall, a sum of four hundred pounds sterling was raised and one hundred forty-two debtors were released from prison. This set a pattern: during Handel's lifetime his greatest oratorio would be performed to benefit a charity more often than its composer. A contemporary English writer said, "It fed the hungry, clothed the naked, fostered the orphan."

Messiah became a favorite in London, Dublin and other parts of the British Isles. It crossed the ocean to the New World before the colonies became the United States.

Through the years strange things have been done to *Messiah*. Mozart arranged the work according to his own style. In Victorian times it was often sung by massive choirs of a thousand or more voices, accompanied by huge orchestras.

Messiah survived it all. And through its many versions its magic has continued to shine. The perennial appeal of *Messiah* is as fresh today as when it was first heard, more than two hundred years ago.

From the article "Handel's Masterpiece" by Elizabeth G. Benton,
published in the Presbyterian Survey magazine, December 1986.

MESSIAH

Music by George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Libretto by Charles Jennens (1700-1773)

PART II

Chorus

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

John 1:29

Air (Alto)

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

Isaiah 53:3

Chorus

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.

Isaiah 53:4-5

Chorus

And with his stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

Chorus

All we, like sheep, have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:6

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Psalms 22:7

Chorus

He trusted in God, that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he delight in him.

Psalms 22:8

Recitative (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.

Psalms 69:21

Air (Tenor)

Behold, and see, if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow.

Lamentations 1:12

Recitative (Tenor)

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken.

Isaiah 53:8

Air (Tenor)

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy holy one to see corruption.

Psalm 16:10

Chorus

Lift up your hearts, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the king of glory shall come in. Who is the king of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle. Who is the king of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the king of glory.

Psalm 24:7-10

Recitative (Tenor)

Unto which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?

Hebrews 1:5

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship him.

Hebrews 1:6

Air (Alto)

Thou art gone up on high; thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

Psalm 68:19

Chorus

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers.

Psalm 68:11

Air (Soprano)

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

Romans 10:15

Chorus

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Romans 10:18

Air (Bass)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and 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.

Psalm 2:1-2

Chorus

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

Psalm 2:3

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Psalm 2:4

Air (Tenor)

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

Psalm 2:9

Chorus

Hallelujah! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah! 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!

INTERMISSION (15 minutes)**PART III****Air (Soprano)**

I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth, and though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Job 19:25-26

For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

I Corinthians 15:20

Chorus

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.

I Corinthians 15:21-22

Recitative (Bass)

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

I Corinthians 15:51-52

Air (Bass)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

I Corinthians 15:52-53

Recitative (Alto)

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

I Corinthians 15:54

Duet (Alto and 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.

I Corinthians 15:55-56

Chorus

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

I Corinthians 15:57

Air (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?

Romans 8:31

It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again; who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

Romans 8:33-34

Chorus

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

Revelation 5:12-14

Thank you for attending our concert.

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