

MR HANDEL'S CHRISTMAS STORY

A 'new' Christmas oratorio, created by Paul McCreesh, retelling the story of the Nativity with music from *Messiah* and reworkings of arias, choruses and hymns from Handel's greatest works.

Vocal Score with Notes – Main Choir



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Characters

Angel – soprano
Rachel – soprano
Mary – [mezzo] soprano
Prophet – tenor
Narrator – tenor
Joseph – bass
Herod – bass
Roles can be doubled

Chorus

S(S)ATB
Optional unison chorus for young singers

Orchestra

Strings
2 flutes
2 oboes (doubling advantageous with larger choirs)
bassoon (doubling advantageous with larger choirs)
2 horns
4 trumpets (third and fourth probably optional)
serpent (optional)
harpsichord
organ (ideally chamber organ and large organ)

Duration

Part One (Scenes I-III) c. 45 minutes
Part Two (Scenes IV & V) c. 40 minutes

Introduction

Much as we all love *Messiah*, I have never entirely understood why a work with barely ten minutes of Christmas music has become quite so firmly established in our seasonal musical traditions, at least in the English-speaking world.

Over the years, two conversations came up rather frequently...

From orchestral managers, 'Please come and conduct *Messiah* for us, but it must be cut to two hours maximum, including interval' - or even worse, 'we never play anything after the *Hallelujah* chorus'. The former impossible, the latter unspeakable!

From choir leaders, after many Gabrieli Roar projects, 'Wouldn't it be great if our young people might sing *Messiah*'. Which it would be, if only there were fewer choruses and the music was a little less demanding!

And so the idea of *Mr Handel's Christmas Story* came to be born. A new Christmas oratorio by Handel, incorporating the Prophecy and Christmas music from *Messiah*, and then using the eighteenth-century traditions of *pasticcio* to rework many of his songs and choruses to retell the remainder of the Christmas story.

The work is in five compact scenes, so as to be shamelessly user-friendly, especially for young people, as an introduction to Handel. All the same, there is a fantastic variety of music, including many of George Frideric's greatest hits, and with a series of Handel hymns interwoven, to enable youth or audience participation. It's been a huge challenge - almost like a 3D crossword puzzle - to rewrite texts in 18th-century English, making sure they relate to the *affekt* of Handel's music, all the while preserving the natural stresses of the vocal lines.

The project will be premiered late in 2026 in a large-scale tour of UK cathedrals with Gabrieli Roar. Performances are currently scheduled in Valencia and Montréal in 2027.

Paul McCreesh

Recitatives: nos 12, 19, 21 and 26 newly composed by Matthew Martin and Paul McCreesh, and are notated in modern style, with beaming and printed-out appoggiaturas. The piano realisation is by Jan Waterfield.

Hymn arrangements: Paul McCreesh. Text reworkings: Paul McCreesh, with grateful thanks to Ruth Smith. Listening notes for students: Paul McCreesh and Emily Dickens.

Movements of *Messiah* are from the traditional Novello edition of 1902, edited by Prout. New arrangements are set by Sarah Lofthouse. Recitatives by Ralph Woodward.

This is a practical vocal score, not an Urtext edition!

Running Order (Main Choir sing numbers in bold)

Scene I - The Prophecy

1. Symphony: Overture [*Messiah*] 5
2. Accompagnato, Tenor: *Comfort ye* [*Messiah*] 8
3. Song, Tenor: *Ev'ry valley* [*Messiah*] 10
- 4. Chorus: *And the glory of the Lord* [*Messiah*] 14**
5. Hymn: *Lo! He comes with clouds descending* [Madan/Cennick & Wesley] 22

Scene II - The Angels & the Shepherds

6. Symphony: Pifa [*Messiah*] 23
7. Recitative/Accompagnato, Soprano: *There were shepherds* [*Messiah*] 24
- 8. Chorus: *Glory to God* [*Messiah*] 26**
- 9a/b. Song, Soprano: *Rejoice greatly* [*Messiah*] 30/37
- 10. Hymn: *Shepherds rejoice* [Saul/Watts] 43**

Scene III - The Manger

- 11 a/b. Symphony: [*Ariodante/Jephtha*] 44
12. Recitative, Tenor: *And the angels went away* [newly composed] 45
13. Duet, Mezzo Soprano & Bass: *Rest my child/Doubt no longer* [Brockes Passion] 46
14. Song, Bass: *Tears, shed with tender father's care* [Deborah] 48
15. Song, Mezzo Soprano: *Sleep, darling boy* [Serse] 50
- 16. Chorus: *May no rash intruder* [Solomon] 52**
- 17. Hymn: *Hark! How all the welkin rings* [Joshua & Judas Maccabeus/Wesley] 60**

Scene IV - Herod, the Wise Men & the Holy Innocents

- 18. Chorus: *For unto us a child is born* [*Messiah*] 61**
19. Recitative, Tenor: *Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem* [newly composed] 71
20. Song, Bass: *Rage, terror, sword and knife* [Theodora] 73
21. Recitative, Tenor: *Then was fulfilled* [newly composed] 78
22. Song, Soprano: *Angels, ever bright and fair* [Theodora] 79
- 23. Chorus: *Mourn, Israel* [Saul] 81**
- 24. Hymn: *Unveil thy bosom, ever faithful tomb* [Saul & Samson/Watts] 85**

Scene V - The Heavenly Rejoicing

25. Symphony: Battaglia [*Rinaldo*] 86
26. Recitative, Tenor: *And I saw an angel* [newly composed] 87
27. Song, Soprano: *Diabolical demons infernal* [La Resurrezione] 88
- 28. Hymn: *Rejoice, the Lord is King* [Handel original/Wesley] 94**
- 29. Chorus: *Hallelujah* [*Messiah*] 95**

Listening notes for students 104

1. Symphony †

*Grave.** (♩ = 80 / ♩ = 40)

5

9

13

Allegro moderato. (♩ = 92)

18

23

† *Messiah*, part 1, 1742

* originally ♩ - play inégale

28

Measures 28-31: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

32

Measures 32-36: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

37

Measures 37-41: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

42

Measures 42-46: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

47

Measures 47-51: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

52

Measures 52-56: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

57

Measures 57-61: Treble clef contains a melodic line with eighth notes and chords. Bass clef contains a supporting bass line with eighth notes and chords.

62

67

72

77

82

87

92

2. Accompagnato, tenor: Comfort ye, my people †

Larghetto e piano. (♩ = 44)

4 PROPHET

Comfort ye, com - - fort ye . . My people,

8 *ad lib.* *a tempo.* com - fort ye, com - - fort ye My people,

12 saith your God, saith your God. Speak ye

16 com-fort-a-bly to Je - ru - salem, speak ye com-fort-a-bly to Je - ru - salem, and

p *simili.* *[mf]* *simili.* *p*

20

cry un - to her, that her war - fare, her war - fare is ac -

23

- complish'd, that her in - i - qui - ty is par-don'd, that her in -

26

- i - qui - ty is par - don'd.

30

The voice of him that cri-eth in the wil - derness, "Pre-pare ye the way of the

34

Lord, make straight in the des-ert a high-way for our God."

3. Song, tenor: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted †

Andante (♩ = 104)

f

tr tr tr

p *f* *p* *f*

9 **PROPHET**

Ev - 'ry val - ley, ev - 'ry val - ley . .

tr *f* *p*

13 . . . shall be ex - alt - ed, shall be . . . ex - alt -

16

19
 - - ed, shall be ex - alt - - ed, shall be ex - alt

22
 ed, and ev-'ry

25
 moun-tain and hill . . made low, the crook-ed straight,

29
 and the rough places plain, the crook-ed

34
 straight, the crook - ed straight, and rough places plain,

cres. *p* *simili.*

38

and the rough places plain.

p *f*

43

Ev-'ry val-ley, ev-'ry val-ley . . shall be ex-alt . .

[p] *f* *[p]*

48

51

ed, ev-'ry val-ley, ev-'ry val-ley . .

[f] *[p]* *[f]* *p*

56

. . shall be ex-alt ed, and ev-'ry mountain and

60

hill made low, the crook-ed straight, the

64

crook-ed straight, the crook-ed straight, and the rough pla-ces plain,

68

and the rough places plain, and the rough places plain,

72

ad lib.
the crook-ed straight, and the rough pla-ces plain.

colla voce. *f a tempo.*

77

p

81

f *p* *f* *tr*

4. Chorus: And the glory of the Lord †

Allegro. (♩ = 144)

f

7

SOPRANO.

ALTO.

TENOR.

BASS.

And the glo - ry, the

13

And the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord

glo - ry of the Lord, the glo - ry of the Lord

And the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord shall be re -

And the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord

19

shall be re-veal-ed, veal-ed, and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the shall be re-veal-ed, shall be re-

25

and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord shall be re-veal-ed, be re-veal Lord shall be re-veal-veal-ed,

31

shall be re-veal'd, and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord shall be ed, and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord shall be ed, and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord shall be and the glo-ry, the glo-ry of the Lord shall be

37

re - veal - ed,

re - veal - ed,

re - veal - ed,

re - veal - ed,

43

and all flesh . . shall see it to - ge - ther,

and all flesh . . shall

49

and all flesh . . shall

and all flesh . . shall

see it to - ge - ther, for the mouth of the

for the mouth of the

see it to - ge - ther, for the mouth

see it to - ge - ther, and all

Lord hath spo - ken it, and all

Lord hath spo - ken it, and all

of the Lord hath spo - ken it,

flesh shall see it to - ge - ther, and all flesh, . . .

flesh . . . shall see it to - ge - ther, and all

flesh . . . shall see it to - ge - ther, and all

and all flesh . . . shall

and all flesh . . . shall see it to - ge - ther, and all flesh . . . shall

flesh . . . shall see it to - ge - ther, the mouth of the

for the mouth of the

71

see it to - ge - ther, and the
 see it to - ge - ther, and the
 Lord hath spo - ken it, and the
 Lord hath spo - ken it, and the

77

glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord, and all flesh . . shall
 glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord, and all flesh . . shall see
 glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord, and all flesh . . shall see it, shall
 glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord, and all flesh . . shall

82

see it to - ge - ther, the mouth of the Lord hath
 it to - ge - ther, and the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the
 see it to - ge - ther,
 see it to - ge - ther,
 see it to - ge - ther,

87

spo - ken it,
 Lord shall be re - veal - ed, and all
 and all flesh . .
 and all flesh . .

92

for the mouth of the Lord hath spo - ken
 flesh . . shall see it to - ge - ther, for the mouth
 shall see it to - ge - ther, the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord shall
 shall see it to - ge - ther, and the

98

it, hath spo - ken it,
 of the Lord . . . hath spo - ken it, and all flesh . .
 be re - veal - ed, and all
 glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord shall be re - veal - ed,

and the glo - ry, the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the
shall see it to - ge - ther,
flesh . . shall see it to - ge - ther,
and all flesh . . shall see it to - ge - ther,

Lord shall be re - veal - ed,
and the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord shall be re - veal - ed,
and the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord
and the glo - ry, the glo - ry of the Lord shall be re - veal - ed,

and all flesh . . shall see it to -
ed, re - veal - ed, and all flesh . . shall see it to -
shall be re - veal - ed, and all flesh . . shall see it to -
veal - ed, re - veal - ed, for the mouth of the

ge - ther, to - ge - ther, for the mouth of the Lord . . .

ge - ther, to - ge - ther; for the mouth of the Lord

ge - ther, to - ge - ther; for the mouth of the Lord . . .

Lord hath spo - ken it, for the mouth of the Lord

hath spo - ken it, for the mouth of the

hath spo - ken it, for the mouth of the

hath spo - ken it, for the mouth of the Lord, . . the

hath spo - ken it, for the mouth of the Lord, . . the

Adagio.

Lord . . . hath spo - - ken it.

Lord . . . hath spo - - ken it.

mouth of the Lord . . hath spo - - ken it.

mouth of the Lord . . hath spo - - ken it.

Adagio.

5. Hymn: Lo! He comes with clouds descending †

SOPRANO
ALTO

1. Lo! He comes with clouds des - cen - ding, Once for fa - vour'd
 2. Mount - ains, vales and seas un - bound - ed At His word shall
 3. Yea, a - men! Let all a - dore Thee, High on Thy e -

TENOR
BASS

4

sin - ners slain; Thou - sand, thou - sand saints at - ten - ding,
 pass a - way; Ev' - ry mor - tal shall, con - foun - ded,
 ter - nal throne; Sa - vi - our, take the pow'r and glo - ry,

7

Swell the tri - umph of His train: Hal - le - lu - jah,
 Hear the trump pro - claim His sway. Hal - le - lu - jah,
 Claim the king - dom for Thine own. Hal - le - lu - jah,

10

hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah! God ap - pears on earth to reign.
 hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah! Has - ten then to Judge - ment Day.
 hal - le - lu - jah, hal - le - lu - jah! Ev - er - last - ing God, come down!

† Melody: Martin Madan *A Collection of psalm and hymn tunes...* 1769. Text: John Cennick and Charles Wesley, adapted.

6. Symphony: Pifa †

Larghetto e mezzo piano (♩. = 66)

PIANO *mp*

* *tr*

4 *tr*

7 *tr*

11 *tr* **Fine**

15

19 **D.C. al Fine**

† *Messiah*, part 1, 1742

* It seems Handel usually chose to shorten this, playing only bars 1–11.

7. Recitative & accompagnato, soprano: There were shepherds †

ANGEL*

There were shepherds a - bidding in the field, keeping watch o - ver their flocks by night.

5 *Andante. (♩ = 92)*

Then I, an an - gel of the

7 Lord, came up - on them, and the glo - ry of the

9 Lord shone round a - bout them, and they were sore a - fraid.

† *Messiah*, part 1, 1742

*some amendments to the original text have been made to enable the soprano to sing 'in character'

12

and with glad-ness said I un - to Them, Fear not; for, be - hold, I bring you good

15

ti-dings of great joy, which shall be to all peo - ple. For un - to you is born this

18

day, in the ci - ty of Da - vid, a Sa - viour, which is Christ the Lord.

21 *Allegro. (♩ = 112)*

23

And sud - den-ly ap - pear'd from the heav-ens a mul - ti-tude

26

of th'an - gel - ic host, prais-ing God, and say - ing,

8. Chorus: Glory to God †

Allegro. (♩ = 116)

SOPRANO.
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - - -

ALTO.
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - - -

TENOR.
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God in the high - - -

BASS.

Allegro. (♩ = 116)

est,
est,
est,
and peace on earth,
and peace on earth,

Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God,
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God,
Glo - ry to God, glo - ry to God,

p

f

glo - ry to God in the high - est,

glo - ry to God in the high - est,

glo - ry to God in the high - est, and peace on

and peace on

earth, good-will to-wards men, good-will to-wards
 earth, good-will to-wards men,

p *[f]*

good-will to - wards men, towards men, good - will . . to - wards men, . .

men, towards men, good-will to - wards men, to - wards men, good - will . .

to - wards men, good - will to - wards men, good - will . . to - wards men, good - will . .

good - will . . to - wards men, good - will . .

24

to - wards men. Glo - ry to God,

to - wards men. Glo - ry to God,

will . . to - wards men. Glo - ry to God,

to - wards men. Glo - ry to God,

[f]

27

glo - ry to God in the high - - est, and

glo - ry to God in the high - - est, and

glo - ry to God in the high - - est, and

glo - ry to God in the high - - est, and

[f]

30

peace on earth, good-will to - wards men, to - - wards

peace on earth, good - will . . to - wards men, to-wards

peace on earth,

peace on earth,

p f

good-will, good-will, good-will, good-will to - wards men, . . .

men, good-will, good-will, good-will, good - will towards men, good -

men, good-will, good-will, good-will, good - will towards men, . .

good-will, good-will, good-will good - will . . to - wards men, . .

good - will . . to - wards men.

. . will . . . to - wards men.

. . good - will . . to - wards men.

. . . good - will to - wards men.

p *pp* *tr* *tr*

9a. Song, soprano: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion †

Allegro (♩ = 120)

PIANO

f

4

7 ANGEL

Re-joyce, re-

p *f*

10

- joyce, re-joyce great - ly, re-joyce

13

great - ly, O daugh - ter of Zi - on,

† *Messiah*, part 1, 1742 (early version c. 1742–43)

16

O daugh - ter of Zi - on, re - joice, re - joice,

19

22

25

O daugh - ter of Zi - on, re - joice great - ly;

28

shout, O daugh - ter of Je - ru - sa - lem: be-

31

-hold, thy King com-eth un - to thee, be-hold, thy King cometh *

35

un - to thee, com - eth un - to thee: [tr]

38

41

44

** right - eous Sa - viour,
he is the right - eous Sa - - - viour,

* ossia

** ossia – from 4/4 version

47

and he shall speak peace un-to the hea -

50

-then, he shall speak peace, he shall speak peace,

53

peace, he shall speak peace un-to the hea - - then,

56

**right* - - eous Sa - viour;

he is the right - eous Sa - - viour, and he shall

59

speak, he shall speak peace, peace,

* ossia – from 4/4 version

62 *Adagio* * *a tempo*

he shall speak peace un-to the hea - - then.

66

Re-joyce, re-joyce, re-joyce

69

great - ly, re-joyce

72

75

great - ly, O daugh - ter of Zi - on;

* as autograph, but better?

78

shout, O daugh-ter of Je - ru - sa-lem: be-hold, thy

81

King com - eth un - to thee, re - joice,

84

re - joice, and shout,

87

shout, shout, shout, re - joice

90

great - ly, re - joice

[tr] *sim.*

tr tr tr tr

93

great - ly, O daugh - ter of Zi - on; shout, O daugh-ter of Je-

96

-ru - sa-lem: be-hold, thy King cometh un - to thee, be-hold, thy

99 *Adagio* [tr] *a tempo*

King com-eth un - to thee.

102

105

9b. Song, soprano: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion †

Allegro. (♩ = 120)

f

5

tr *tr* *tr* *tr*

p *f*

9

ANGEL

Re-joyce, re-joyce, re-joyce . . . greatly, re-joyce, . . .

p *f* *p etc.*

13

. . . O daugh-ter of Zi-on!

16

O daughter of Zi-on! re-joyce, . . . re-joyce, . . .

† *Messiah*, part 1, 1742 (final version c. 1749)

20

re-joyce,

23

O

26

daugh-ter of Zi-on! re-joyce . . . great-ly! Shout, . . . O

29

daughter of Je-ru-sa-lem! Be-hold, thy King com-eth

Handel's MS. reads—

32

be-hold, thy King cometh un-to . . . thee,
un-to thee, be-hold, thy King cometh un-to thee, cometh

36

un - to thee!

[f]

39

42

He is the right - - eous

p *f* *p*

46

Sa - viour, and He shall speak peace un-to the hea -

50

- then, He shall speak peace, He shall speak peace, peace, He shall speak

54

peace un-to the hea - - then, He is . . the right - - eous

58

Sa - viour, and He shall speak, He shall speak peace, peace, . . .

62

[Adagio] *[tr]* *[A tempo]*

He shall speak peace . . un - to the hea - - then.

66

Re-joyce, re-joyce, re-joyce . . . greatly,

70

re-joyce . . .

73

great - ly,

76

O daugh - ter of Zi-on! Shout, O daugh-ter of Je -

79

- ru - sa-lem! Be - hold, thy King com - eth un - to

82

thee! re-joice, . . . re-joice . . .

85

and shout, shout, shout,

88

shout, re-joice . . . great-ly,

91

re-joice . . . greatly, O daughter of Zi-on! Shout, . .

95

O daugh-ter of Je-ru-sa-lem! Be-hold, thy King cometh un-to

98

thee! be-hold thy King com-eth un-to thee!

[Adagio] [A tempo*] [Adagio]

101

104

tr tr tr

p f

* or b. 100

10. Hymn: Shepherds, rejoice †

SOPRANO
ALTO

1. Shep - herds, re - joice, lift up your eyes, And cast down your
 2. Je - sus, the God whom an - gels fear, Comes down to
 3. No gold, nor pur - ple swad - dling bands, Nor roy - al
 4. Seek, shep - herds, where the in - fant lies, Ac - claim the

TENOR
BASS

(Instru)

6

fears a - way; News from the re - gions of the
 dwell with you; This day he makes his en - trance
 shin - ing things; A man - ger for his cra - dle
 bles - sed boy; With grate - ful won - der in your

11

skies, Our Sav - iour's born to - day.
 here, But not as mon - archs do.
 stands And holds the King of Kings.
 eyes, Now kiss the child with joy.

15

(1-4.) Let us with joy - ful an - gels sing, Wor - ship the new - born King!

† Original: *Sin not, O king – Saul*, part 2, 1739. Text: Isaac Watts, adapted.

11a. Symphony †

Larghetto (♩ = 56)

PIANO

† *Ariodante*, act 1, 1735.

11b. Symphony †

Andante (♩ = 60)

PIANO

† *Jephtha*, part 2, 1752.
* Original G major.

12. Recitative, tenor: And the angels went away †

NARRATOR

And the an - gels went a - way from them in - to hea - ven; the

PIANO

3

shep - herds said to one an - o - ther: Let us go now un - to Beth - le - hem and

5

see that which the Lord hath made known un - to us. And they went with haste, and found

8

Ma - ry and Jo - seph, and the babe ly - ing in a man - ger.

† Luke 2: 15-16 – set by MM/PMcC

13. Duet, mezzo soprano & bass: Rest my child/Doubt no longer †

Adagio (♩ = 69)

PIANO

8 MARY

Rest my child, my heart's dear glad - ness, though thy des - ti - ny I

15

fear.

JOSEPH

Doubt no long - er, God is near, Ba - nish ev - 'ry care

21

Rest my child, my heart's dear glad - ness

and sad - ness. Doubt no long - er, God is

† Original: *Soll mein kind/Ja, ich sterbe* – *Passion nach Brockes* 1711.

*ossia ♩ ♩ ♩ ♩

27

though thy des - ti - ny I fear. Rest my child my
near, Ban - ish ev - 'ry care and sad - ness, doubt no long - er, God is

34

heart's dear glad - ness, Though thy des - ti - ny I fear, though my
near, Ban - ish ev - 'ry care and sad - ness, ev - 'ry care

41

des - ti - ny I fear.
and sad - ness, Ban - ish ev - 'ry care and sad - ness.

48

14. Song, bass: Tears, shed with tender father's care †

Largo e pianissimo (♩ = 72)

PIANO *pp*

3 JOSEPH

Tears, tears, shed with ten - der fa - ther's

5

care, Warm from my joy - ful eyes de -

7

- scend, Warm from my joy - - - ful eyes de -

† Original: *Tears, such as tender fathers shed* – Deborah, part 3, 1733.

9

-scend. The grace of God my son will share

12

And all man-kind with love be - friend. The grace,

14

the grace of God my son will share and all man - kind with love be -

17

- friend.

15. Song, mezzo soprano: Sleep, darling boy †

Larghetto (♩ = 63)

PIANO

p

f

8 *tr*

15 MARY

Sleep, darl - ing boy

p

21

Child ev - er trea - sur-able! God's love im - mea - sur-able Be-stows all joy. Sleep,

† Original: *Ombra mai fu* – *Serse*, act 1, 1738.

27

darl - ing boy Child ev - er - trea - sur-able! God's love im -

32

- mea - sur - able Be-stows all joy. Child ev - er trea - sur-able! Sleep

37

darl - ing boy Child ev - er - trea - sur-able! God's love im -

42

- mea - sur-able Be - stows all joy. Sleep darl - ing boy.

47

16. Chorus: May no rash intruder †

Allegro (♩ = 76)

PIANO *f*

4

p *pp* *p*

7

10

p

13

16

mf

† Original: *May no rash intruder* – Solomon, part 1, 1749.

20

1st & 2nd SOPRANOS

May no rash in-trud-er dis-turb their soft hours; As

May no rash in-trud-er dis-turb their soft hours; As

May no rash in-trud-er dis-turb their soft hours; As

May no rash in-trud-er dis-turb their soft hours; As

f *p* *f*

23

an-gels watch o'er them from hea-ven-ly bow'rs. Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their

an-gels watch o'er them from hea-ven-ly bow'rs. Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their

an-gels watch o'er them from hea-ven-ly bow'rs. Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their

an-gels watch o'er them from hea-ven-ly bow'rs. Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their

f *p* *f*

26

slum - bers pro-long, while night - in - gales lull them to sleep with their song

slum - bers pro-long, while night - in - gales lull them to sleep with their song

slum - bers pro-long, while night - in - gales lull them to sleep with their song

slum - bers pro-long, while night - in - gales lull them to sleep with their song

29

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

p

32 SOPRANO 1

p while night-in - gales_ lull them to

SOPRANO 2

p while

slum - bers pro - long, while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep,_ to sleep,_ to

slum - bers pro - long,

slum - bers pro - long,

35

f sleep_ with their song, while night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song.

f night-in - gales_ lull them, while night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song.

f sleep with their song. while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song.

f while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song.

f while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song.

38

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

p
Ye ze - phyr, soft breath - ing, their

41

p
while night - in - gales lull_ them to sleep with their song,

p
while night - in - gales lull_ them to

p
slum - bers pro - long, while

slum - bers pro - long,

slum - bers pro - long,

44

while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep_ with their song,_ while

sleep with their song, while night-in - gales_ lull them, while

night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep,_ to sleep,_ to sleep with their song, while

while

while

47

night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song,

night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song,

night-in - gales_ lull_ them to sleep with their song,

night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song, while

night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song, while night-in - gales_ lull them to

51

while night-in - gales_ lull them, while
 while night-in - gales_ lull them, while
 while night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song, while
 night-in - gales_ lull them, lull_ them to_ sleep with their song, while
 sleep_ with their song,_ while night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song, while

54

night-in - gales_ lull_ them to sleep with their song, Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their
 night-in - gales_ lull_ them to sleep with their song, Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their
 night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song, Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their
 night-in - gales_ lull_ them to sleep with their song, Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their
 night-in - gales_ lull them to sleep with their song, Ye ze-phyr, soft breath-ing, their

57

slum-bers pro-long, while

slum-bers pro-long, while

slum-bers pro-long, while

slum-bers pro-long, while

slum-bers pro-long, while

60

night-in - gales. lull them to sleep, to sleep with their song.

night-in - gales. lull them to sleep, to sleep with their song.

night-in - gales. lull them to sleep, to sleep with their song.

night-in - gales. lull them to sleep, to sleep with their song.

night-in - gales. lull them to sleep, to sleep with their song.

64

rit.

pp

17. Hymn: Hark! How all the welkin rings †

SOPRANO
ALTO

1. Hark! How all the wel - kin rings, Hail th'al -
 2. Veiled in flesh, the God - head see, Hail th'in -
 3. Hail, the heav'n - ly Prince of Peace! Hail the
 4. Mild, he lays his glo - ry by, Born that

TENOR
BASS

6

-migh - ty King of Kings. Peace on earth, and mer - cy
 -car - nate de - i - ty, Pleased as man on earth t'ap -
 Sun of Right - eous - ness! Light and life to all he
 man no more may die, Born to raise the sons of

12

-mild, God and sin - ners re - - con - ciled.
 Je - sus, our Em - man - - u el here.
 brings, with heal - ing in his wings.
 earth, Born to give them sec - ond birth.

17

Hark! How all the wel - - kin rings,

21

Hail th'al - migh - ty King of Kings!

† Original: *See the conqu'ring hero comes* – *Joshua*, part 3, 1748 and *Judas Maccabeus*, part 3, 1748. Text: Charles Wesley, adapted.

* The voice parts here are as set in Handel's chorus. The bass line can be doubled at the lower octave.

18. Chorus: For unto us a child is born †

Andante Allegro. (♩ = 112)

4

7 SOPRANO.
For un-to us a Child is born, un-to us a Son is giv-en, unto

11
us a Son is given, for unto us a Child is born : . . .
ALTO.
TENOR.
BASS.
For unto us a Child is born, un-to

15

us a Son is giv-en, un-to us a Son is

18

For un-to us a Child is born, un-to
giv-en : For un-to us a Child is born,

21

us a Son is giv-en, un-to us a Son is

24

giv-en, un-to us a Son is giv-en:
and the gov-ernment shall
un-to us a Son is giv-en.

27

and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul
be up-on His shoul der;

30

der, up-on His shoulder; and His Name shall be call-ed
and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoulder; and His Name shall be call-ed
and His Name shall be call-ed
and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoulder; and His Name shall be call-ed

33 *

Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor, The Mighty God, The

Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor, The Mighty God, The

Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor, The Mighty God, The

Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor, The Mighty God, The

36

Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace. Un - to us a Child is born, For un - to

Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace. Un - to us a Child is born, For un - to

Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace. Un - to us a Child is born, For un - to

Ev - er - last - ing Fa - ther, The Prince of Peace. Un - to us a Child is born, For un - to

39

Un - to us a Child is un - to us a Son is giv - en : us a Child is born,

Un - to us a Child is un - to us a Son is giv - en : us a Child is born,

Un - to us a Child is un - to us a Son is giv - en : us a Child is born,

Un - to us a Child is un - to us a Son is giv - en : us a Child is born,

*add ripieno ad. lib.

42

born,
and the gov - ernment shall be up-on His shoul - -
un - to us a Son is giv - en :

45

and His Name
der ; and His
and His Name
and the gov - ernment shall be up-on His shoul - - der ; and His

48

shall be call - ed Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor,
Name shall be call - ed Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor,
shall be call - ed Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor,
Name shall be call - ed Won - der - ful, Coun - sel - lor,

51

The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace. Un-to

54

For un-to us a Child is born, For un-to us a Child is born, For un-to us a Child is born,

57

un-to us a Child is born, un-to us a Son is giv-en:

us a Son is giv-en :

us a Son is giv-en : and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul

and the government shall be up-on His shoul - - - der ;

and the gov-ernment shall

der ;

and the gov-ernment shall

and His Name shall be call - ed Won - der-ful,

be up-on His shoulder : and His Name shall be call - ed Won - der-ful,

and His Name shall be call - ed Won - der-ful,

be up-on His shoulder ; and His Name shall be call - ed Won - der-ful,



Coun - sel-lor, The Mighty God, The Ev - er - last-ing Fa - ther,

Coun - sel-lor, The Mighty God, The Ev - er - last-ing Fa - ther,

Coun - sel-lor, The Mighty God, The Ev - er - last-ing Fa - ther,

Coun - sel-lor, The Mighty God, The Ev - er - last-ing Fa - ther,

72

Prince of Peace. For un - to us a Child is born, . . .

Prince of Peace. For un - to us a Child is born, . . .

Prince of Peace. For un - to us a Child is born, un - to

Prince of Peace. Un - to us a Child is born, un - to us a Child is born, un - to

75

us a Son is giv - en, un - to us a Son is

us a Son is giv - en, un - to us a Son is

un-to us a Son is giv-en: and the gov-ernment, the gov-ernment shall

un-to us a Son is giv-en: and the gov-ernment shall

giv-en, un-to us a Son is giv-en:

giv-en, un-to us a Son is giv-en:

be up-on His shoul-der, and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul-der; and His

be up-on His shoul-der, and the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul-der; and His

and the gov-ernment, the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul-der; and His

and the gov-ernment, the gov-ernment shall be up-on His shoul-der; and His

Name shall be call-ed Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-lor,

Name shall be call-ed Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-lor,

Name shall be call-ed Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-lor,

Name shall be call-ed Won-der-ful, Coun-sel-lor,

87

Four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts are in G major and 4/4 time. The lyrics are: "The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace, The". The piano accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes in the right hand and a steady bass line in the left hand.

The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace, The

The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace, The

The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace, The

The Mighty God, The Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace, The

90

Four vocal staves and a piano accompaniment. The vocal parts continue the lyrics: "Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace." The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic pattern.

Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace.

Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace.

Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace.

Ev-er-last-ing Fa-ther, The Prince of Peace.

93

Piano accompaniment for measures 93-95. The right hand features a complex rhythmic pattern with many sixteenth and thirty-second notes, while the left hand provides a steady bass line.

96

Piano accompaniment for measures 96-98. The right hand continues with a complex rhythmic pattern, and the left hand provides a steady bass line.

19. Recitative, tenor: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem †

NARRATOR

Now when Je - sus was born in Beth - le - hem in the days of He - rod the

PIANO

6

3

king, Be - hold there came three wise men from the east to Je - ru - sa - lem.

6

And lo, a star which they saw in the east went be - fore them, and it came and stood o - ver the

9

place where the young child lay. Re - joic - ing with ex - ceed - ing great

† Matthew 2: 1, 9–11, 16 – set by MM/PMcC

11

joy, they fell down and wor-shipped him, and o - pen-ing their trea-sures pre -

14

espr.

- sent - ed un - to him gifts: gold, frank-in-cense and myrrh.

17

When He-rod had heard these things he was sore-ly troub-led. He sought the child to de-stroy him, and

20

slew all young boys a - round the town of Beth - le-hem.

20. Song, bass: Rage, terror, sword and knife †

Allegro (♩ = 116)

PIANO *f*

3

6

9 * § HEROD

Rage, ter-ror, sword and knife Shall smite all

p

12

in - fant life. Shall smite all in - fant life.

† Original: *Racks, gibbets, sword and fire* – *Theodora*, part 1, 1750.

* Handel originally marked the D.S. at bar 9, changed sometime later to bar 22.

15

that threat - ens ma - jes - ty, that threat - ens,

18

threat - ens ma - jes - ty, that threat - ens, threat - ens ma - jes -

21



- ty.

24

Rage, ter - ror, sword and knife, rage, ter - ror, sword,

27

rage, sword and knife, shall smite all life, all in - fant life,

30

shall smite all life, all in - fant life that threat - ens

33

ma - jes - ty, ma - jes - ty,

36

that threat - ens, threat - ens ma - jes - ty. Shall

39

smite, shall smite all in - fant life that threat-ens ma - jes -

L.H. L.H. L.H. L.H.

p

42

- ty, that threat-ens ma - jes - ty, all in - fant life that threat-ens

p

45

ma - jes - ty.

f

48

51 **Fine**

No gush - ing tears, nor ar - dent pray'rs shall

54

thwart my firm de - cree, no gush - ing tears, no gush -

L.H. | L.H. | L.H. | L.H. |

57

- - - ing tears nor ar - dent pray'rs, shall thwart my firm de -

60 **D.S. al Fine**

- cree, no tears nor ar-dent pray'rs shall thwart my firm de-cree.

21. Recitative, tenor: Then was fulfilled †

NARRATOR

Then was ful-filled that which was spo - ken by Je - re - mi - ah the Pro - phet,

PIANO

say - ing: In Ra - ma was heard la - men - ta - tion, wail - ing and great

mourn - ing. *espr.* Ra - chel weep - ing for her chil - dren would not be

com - fort-ed, as _____ they were _____ no more.

ossia

com - fort-ed, as _____ they were _____ no more.

† Matthew 2: 17-18 – set by MM/PMcC

22. Song, soprano: Angels, ever bright and fair †

Larghetto (♩ = 48)

PIANO

f *p* *f*

tr *tr* *tr* *tr*

4 RACHEL

An - gels, ev - er bright and fair,

p *pp*

7

an - gels, ev - er bright and fair, take, o take them, take, o take them to your

p

10

care, take them, take, o take them, an - gels

† Original: *Angels, ever bright and fair* – Theodora, part 1, 1750.

* Original F major.

13

ev - er bright and fair, take, o take them to your care, take, o take them to your

16

care.

f *p* *tr*

18 **Fine**

Speed to your own courts their flight, clad in robes of vir - gin

p

20 **D.S. al Fine**

white, clad in robes of vir - gin white, clad in robes of vir - gin white! Take them,

23. Chorus: Mourn, Israel †

** Largo e staccato* (♩ = 50)

PIANO

Largo assai (♩ = 50)

mp

3

8

SOPRANO

Mourn, Is - ra-el,

ALTO

Mourn,

TENOR

Mourn, Is - ra-el,

BASS

Mourn, Is - ra-el,

† Original: *Mourn, Israel – Saul*, part 3, 1739.

* Introduction is optional; probably omitted by Handel.

13

mourn thy chil-dren lost, mourn, mourn.

Is - ra - el, mourn thy chil-dren lost, Thy fair - est

mourn thy chil-dren lost, mourn, mourn, mourn thy chil-dren lost, mourn,

17

Thy fair - est slain, thy fair - est slain by im - pious hand.

slain, thy fair - est slain, by im - pious hand.

Thy fair - est slain, thy fair - est slain by im - pious hand.

thy fair - est slain by im - pious hand.

21

mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn, mourn,

mourn, mourn, How have thy bright-est hopes been

mourn, mourn, mourn,

25

Thy sons lie slaugh - ter'd,
 Thy sons, Thy sons lie slaugh - ter'd,
 crossed! Thy sons lie slaugh - ter'd,
 Thy sons lie slaugh - ter'd,

29

scat - - ter'd. o'er the land. Mourn, Is - rael,
 scat - - ter'd o'er the land. Mourn, Is - rael,
 scat - - ter'd. o'er the land. Mourn, Is - rael,
 scat - - ter'd o'er the land. Mourn, Is - rael,

34

mourn thy chil - dren lost, thy fair - est slain, thy fair - est
 mourn thy chil-dren lost, thy fair - est slain, thy fair - est slain,
 mourn thy chil-dren lost, thy fair - est slain, thy fair - est
 mourn thy chil - dren lost, thy fair - est

38

slain by im - pious hand.

by im - pious hand.

slain by im - pious hand.

slain by im - pious hand.

Mourn,

Mourn,

p

p

43

Mourn,

Mourn,

mourn,

mourn,

thy fair - est slain by

thy fair - est slain by

thy fair - est slain by

thy fair - est slain by

p

p

p

p

più p

49

im - pious hand.

im - pious hand.

im - pious hand.

im - pious hand.

p [org.]

24. Hymn: Unveil thy bosom, ever faithful tomb †

SOPRANO
ALTO

TENOR
BASS

1. Un-veil thy bo-som, ev-er faith-ful tomb, Em-brace these trea-sures kind-ly to thy trust. And
2. No pain nor grief, no tears nor anx-ious fear In-vade thy bounds; no cares nor mor-tal woes Can

5

give these bless'd and sa-cred re-lics room To slum-ber, si-lent, in the gloom and dust.
reach the love-ly sleep-ers cra-dled here, As shelt-ring an-gels guard their soft re-pose.

9

Or shake
And bid

Why do we mourn our dear de-part-ing friends Or shake in doubt and fear at death's a-larms? 'Tis
Then shall the last and dread-ful trum-pet sound And bid our kin-dred breth-ren swift-ly rise. A-

13

but the call our lov-ing Sav-iour sends To draw His chil-dren to His ten-der arms.
wake ye saints now slumb-ring un-der ground, As-cend in glo-ry to the a-zure skies!

† Original: *Dead March – Saul*, part 3, 1739 and *Samson*, part 3, 1743. Text: Isaac Watts, much adapted.

* *Saul* in C major, *Samson* in D major.

25. Symphony: Battaglia †

Allegro (♩ = 132)

PIANO

4

7

10

13

16

20

24

Fine

D.C. al Fine

† *Rinaldo*, act 3, 1711.

26. Recitative, tenor: And I saw an angel †

NARRATOR

PIANO

And I saw an an - gel come down from hea - ven, bear - ing the key to the bot - tom-less

pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold of the dra - gon, that old

ser - pent, which is Sa - tan the de - vil, and bound him for a thou - sand years and cast him in - to the

bot - tom-less pit that he should de - ceive the na - tions no more. For this pur - pose was the

Son of God made ma - ni - fest, that he might de - stroy the works of the de - vil.

* F#? on 'Ser' against the chord, for effect.
 † Revelation 20: 1-3, and John 3: 8 – set by MM/PMcC

27. Song, soprano: Diabolical demons infernal †

(Allegro ♩ = 120)

PIANO *f*

4

7

11

15

ANGEL

Di-a-bo-li-cal de-mons in - fer-nal, Di-a-bo-li-cal de-mons in -

† Original: *Disseratevi, O porte d'Averno - La Resurrezione*, part 1, 1708.

19

- fer - - - - - nal, See the

p

22

ra - di-ant light of th'E - ter - - - - -

25

- - - - -

28

*see the light - - - - -

- nal ba - nish dark - - - - -

32

- - - - - of th'E-

* Ossia

36 - ter - nal *[bright-en the

- ness, ba-nish dark - ness and bright-en the earth,

39 earth.]

Di - a - bo - - -

42

45

48

li-cal de - mons in -

* ossia

51

-fer - nal, see the ra - dant light of th'E - ter - nal ban-ish

p

55

dark

58

62

ness and bright-en the

66

earth, ban - ish dark - ness and bright-en the earth.

69

73

78

Fine

83

Re -

87

- joyce ye le - gions of an - gels, re - joyce ye, re -

p

90

- joice ye le-gions of an-gels, re-joice ye, re-joice ye. Be-hold the king most glo-ri-us, tri-

93

-um-phant and vic-to-ri-ous, and hail the Sa-viour's birth. Re -

96

-joice ye, re-joice ye, be-hold the King most glo-ri-ous, tri-um-phant and vic-to-ri-ous, and

99

hail the Sav-iour's birth and hail the Sav-iour's birth,

101

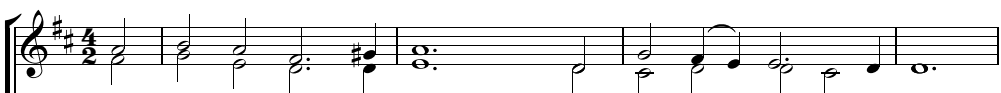
D.C. al Fine

and hail the Sav-iour's birth.

* alternative $\text{♩} \text{D}$

28. Hymn: Rejoice, the Lord is King! †

SOPRANO
ALTO



1. Re - joice, the Lord is King! This new - born babe a - dore.
 2. Re - joice, the Sav - iour reigns, The God of truth and love.
 3. Re - joice, the Lord shall quell Our foes, and sins des - troy,
 4. Re - joice, all praise be giv'n, Our song shall pierce the skies

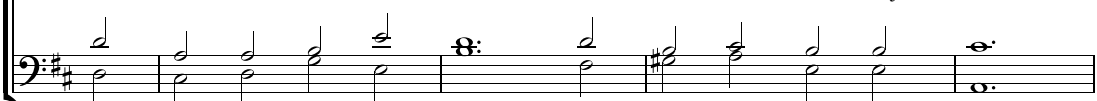
TENOR
BASS



5



All mor - tals praise and sing, And tri - umph e - ver - more.
 This child shall purge our stains, That we might dwell a - bove.
 And ev' - ry bo - som swell With pure se - ra - phic joy.
 And rend the vaults of heav'n As Hal - le - lu - jahs rise.

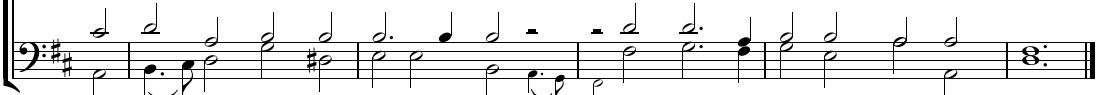


9



(1-3.) Lift up—your hearts, lift up your voice, Re - joice, a - gain I say, re - joice!
 (4.) Let mor - tals join the an - gel's voice, Sound, bra - zen trum - pets, sound re - joice!

(orch.)



† Original: Handel c.1752. Text: Charles Wesley, 1744, much adapted.

29. Chorus: Hallelujah †

Allegro. (♩ = 112)

SOPRANO. Hal - le-lu-jah,

ALTO. Hal - le-lu-jah,

TENOR. Hal - le-lu-jah,

BASS. Hal - le-lu-jah,

Allegro. (♩ = 112)

[f]

5 Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah,

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah,

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah,

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah,

8 Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah!

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah!

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah!

Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le-lu-jah!

for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le -
for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le -
for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le -
for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le -

16

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah! Hal-le-

- lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah! for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal-le -

- lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah! for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal-le -

- lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah! for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal-le -

20

20.

The musical score consists of five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts, each with lyrics underneath. The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#), and the time signature is common time (C). The lyrics are: "lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah ! for the Lord".

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah ! for the Lord

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah !

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah ! Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le -

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah !

God Om - ni - po - tent reign * eth, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lujah, Halle-lu-

Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Halle-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu -

- lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Halle-lu-jah ! for the Lord

Hal-le-lu-jah ! for the Lord

jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Halle-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,

- jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah !

God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Halle-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah !

God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah,

Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal -

for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hallelujah,

for the Lord God Om - ni - po - tent reign - eth, Hal -

Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le-lu-jah, Hal-le -

32

le - lu - jah ! The king - dom of this world

Hal - le - lu - jah ! The king - dom of this world

le - lu - jah ! The king - dom of this world

lu-jah, Hal-le - lu - jah ! The king - dom of this world

[mf]

36

is be - come the King-dom of our Lord and of His Christ, and of His

is be - come the King-dom of our Lord and of His Christ, and of His

is be - come the King-dom of our Lord and of His Christ, and of His

is be - come the King-dom of our Lord and of His Christ, and of His

[f]

41

Christ ;

Christ ;

Christ ; and He shall reign for

Christ ; and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and

f

45

f and

and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er

ev - er and ev - er, and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er,

ev - er, and He shall reign, and He shall reign for ev - er, for ev - er, for ev - er, for

49

He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er. King of

and ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er. King of

and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er,

ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er,

52

Kings, and Lord of

Kings, and Lord of

for ev - er and ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah!

for ev - er and ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah!

55

Lords, King of
Lords,
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!

58

Kings, and Lord of
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!

61

Lords, King of
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!
for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah!

Kings, and Lord of Lords,
 for ev - er and ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah! King of
 for ev - er and ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah! King of
 for ev - er and ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah! King of

[illegible]

72

He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and
reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings, for ev - er and
and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings,
and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings, for ev - er and

The musical score is for a hymn in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features five staves. The first four staves are vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass) with lyrics underneath. The fifth staff is a piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings, for ev - er and and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings, and He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of Kings, for ev - er and". The score includes dynamic markings such as *[ff]* and *[f]***, and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The piano part consists of chords and moving lines in the right and left hands.

* original:

** + baritones to bar 78

ev - er, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah ! and He shall

ev - er, and Lord of Lords, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah ! and

and Lord of Lords, and He shall

ev - er, and Lord of Lords, Hal - le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah ! and He shall

reign for ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, King of

He shall reign for ev - er and ev - er, King of . .

reign for ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, King of . .

reign for ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, King of

[illegible]

85

Lords, and He shall reign for ev - er and ev -

Lords, and He shall reign for ev - er and ev -

Lords, and He shall reign for ev - er and ev -

Lords, and He shall reign for ev - er, for ev - er and ev -

88

er, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le -

er, for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le -

er, for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le -

er, for ev - er and ev - er, for ev - er and ev - er, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le -

91

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah !

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah !

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah !

lu - jah, Hal-le-lu - jah, Hal-le - lu - jah, Hal - le - lu - jah !

Listening notes for students.

Welcome to *Mr Handel's Christmas Story*!

This is a new work put together by tonight's conductor, Paul McCreesh. It celebrates the story of Christmas with music by George Frideric Handel (1685–1759). Born in Germany, Handel spent the greater part of his working life in London and is therefore widely regarded as a British composer. With Johann Sebastian Bach, born in the same year, he is one of the most renowned composers of the first half of the 18th century – the *baroque* period in music history.

This piece is in the form of an *oratorio* – a work which tells a story, usually on a religious or moral subject, with solo singers, chorus and instrument ensemble. The form is closely related to opera, but oratorios are not staged. Handel wrote about thirty oratorios, mostly in English, the most famous of which, *Messiah*, describes the life of Christ and the principles of Christian belief. *Mr Handel's Christmas Story* starts with a selection of music from *Messiah* – the parts which concern the prophecy and the birth of Christ. Elsewhere, this new oratorio draws from Handel's most famous pieces, which have been re-worded to tell the story of the Nativity.

Oratorios present the narrative of a story through a variety of musical forms.

The soloists have a variety of songs - *arias* - which reflect the emotions of the characters at various points in the story. Here we have brilliant music for a soprano *Angel*, more delicate music for a mezzo-soprano *Mary* and bass *Joseph*, a beautiful lament for another soprano *Rachel*, and a fiery rage aria for *Herod*. The tenor sings the roles of the *Prophet* and the *Narrator*. Many of these arias are short, but some are more elaborate, known as *da capo* arias – arias in three sections, ABA form, where the first A section is repeated, often with extra improvised ornamentation. *Da capo* simply means 'go back to the beginning'.

You will also hear *recitative*, usually accompanied by a solo cello and the harpsichord. This is music very close to speech – the singer recites the text, one note for each syllable. The *Narrator* sings in recitative – it's a very good way of advancing the dramatic action quickly. *Accompagnato* – orchestrally accompanied recitative – is halfway between song and recitative.

There is only rarely a chorus in baroque opera, but in oratorio the chorus plays a very important part, sometimes taking a role (angels, a mourning nation) or amplifying emotions at various points on the story. Handel wrote the most magnificent choruses, sometimes in grand ceremonial style, but also choruses of great delicacy and poignancy, with brilliant use of the accompanying orchestra. *Mr Handel's Christmas Story* contains some of his finest choruses.

The orchestra is the 'standard' orchestra at this time: strings (first and second violins, violas, cellos and double basses) with a harpsichord, and often with additional oboes and bassoons. Horns, trumpets, drums, flutes and recorders also appear in baroque orchestras, but these instruments are generally used more for special effects and to add colour at special moments. The organ usually plays in choruses to support the choir. We have also added a serpent, an instrument found in military bands, which Handel used occasionally in the bass section.

Five hymns are included, one at the end of each scene. Although English oratorios didn't include hymns, they were certainly part of the German oratorio tradition. Handel himself wrote only three original hymns, composed after meeting hymn-writer Charles Wesley. We will sing a version of their most famous hymn, *Rejoice, the Lord is King*, in the final scene. There are, however, many examples of Handel's most popular melodies being adapted for sacred use.

Scene One – The Prophecy

The birth of a Saviour who would come to save the world was long foretold by prophets and sages in the Old Testament of the Bible. All the music here, apart from the final hymn, is taken from the opening of *Messiah*.

1. Overture

An orchestral introduction - an *overture* - sets the scene. It is in two parts: a stately slow section *grave* followed by a livelier *allegro moderato* all in the solemn key of E minor. Notice how the main theme of the fast section is passed around the orchestra, sometimes in the higher instruments, sometimes in the lower. This type of writing is known as a *fugue*.

2. Accompagnato: Comfort ye – Prophet

The tenor soloist sings the famous opening of *Messiah*. After the overture, the key changes to a warm and glowing E major, as the prophet promises that the coming of Christ will be of comfort to mankind and bring peace to warring nations. The singer stops immediately after the first two words *Comfort ye*, inviting the audience to reflect on the importance of these words.

Comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, 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.

3. Song: Ev'ry valley – Prophet

This lively song which follows allows the tenor to show off his skills in long passages of fast notes. This is known as *coloratura* – colouring – and this form of vocal gymnastics is an important part of baroque singing. Listen to how the music paints the words – *crooked* has wide-leaping intervals and *straight* has long sustained notes. This is called *word painting* and you'll hear many examples of this throughout the oratorio.

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain.

4. Chorus: And the glory of the Lord

This is the first chorus of *Messiah* and is in a cheerful triple time - three beats in a bar - which exudes real confidence and joy. The musical phrases are in constant dialogue between the voices. The words of God, *for the mouth of the Lord*, are announced as sustained unison long notes to represent the idea of truth.

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

5. Hymn: Lo! He comes with clouds descending

This is a famous hymn for the season of Advent, the period before Christmas, and it is still sung in churches today. This is the only music which is not by Handel, as the tune was written by Martin Madan, who Handel almost certainly knew. The words are by John Cennick and Charles Wesley, a prominent leader of the Methodist movement and, apparently, the writer of over 6,000 hymns!

Scene Two – The Angels and the Shepherds

This scene tells the story of the angels appearing to the shepherds and all the music, again with the exception of the final hymn, is taken from *Messiah*.

6. Symphony: Pifa

This short instrumental piece sets a pastoral scene as the shepherds are guarding the sheep in the fields at night. It is in the style of a simple rustic dance which Handel asks to be played quite softly. The sustained bass notes evoke the sound of a bagpipe or musette, instruments traditionally played by shepherds. The title *Pifa* comes from the Italian word *pifferari* – folk musicians who still play in the villages of Italy and who often come to big cities at Christmas.

7. Recitative and *accompagnato*: There were shepherds – Angel

An angel appears to the shepherds singing initially in *recitative* – music that follows the shape of speech, usually accompanied by a single cello and harpsichord. This allows the text to be heard very clearly. Then Handel adds the string instruments – known as *accompagnato* – to create more energy. After another section of *recitative* the strings suddenly return at a much faster tempo as the host of angels breaks forth in the sky. This leads straight into the next chorus.

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. Then I, an angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid. And with gladness said I 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 Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And suddenly appeared in the heavens, a multitude of th'angelic host, praising God and saying,

8. Chorus: Glory to God

You might expect a big lively chorus with loud instruments, but Handel creates a much more exciting picture; the angels appear first from afar and then approach the shepherds. This is the first time you will hear the trumpets play, but Handel asks them to play softly, off-stage, as if from a distance. Listen for the brilliance of the fast violin passages, which really sound like the fluttering of angels' wings. The music changes at *and peace on earth*, with long notes at a low pitch painting the meaning of the words. At the end of the chorus the music fades away, ever higher, as the angels fly back to heaven, leaving the shepherds gazing upwards in awe.

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

9. Song: Rejoice greatly – Angel

This famous song celebrates the world's joy at the birth of Jesus. It's characterised by a fast tempo, lively rhythms, a great sense of energy, and many opportunities for the singer to show off skill in *coloratura* singing, with long lines of fast notes to one syllable. The music winds down as the text describes the Saviour bringing peace to the world. Handel wrote two versions of this song: the early version is in 12/8 time, in a style of a jig, which would be danced at weddings. A later version is in 4/4 with more elaborate ornamentation. Which do you prefer?

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Sion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem; behold thy King cometh unto thee: He is the righteous Saviour and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

10. Hymn: Shepherds, rejoice

This hymn, which celebrates the rejoicing of the shepherds, reworks a beautiful solo song from another Handel oratorio *Saul*.

Scene Three – The Manger

This scene imagines Mary and Joseph and the newborn child Jesus in the stable at Bethlehem, surrounded by animals – the picture on a thousand Christmas cards!

11. Symphony

A gently rocking orchestral movement paints a pastoral scene as Mary and Joseph rest in the stable. Much like the *Pifa* in Scene Two, this music evokes the folk music of country people.

12. Recitative: And the angels went away – Narrator

This recitative is newly-composed, in the style of Handel. The words tell the story directly and the harmonic chords are used to punctuate and support the singer's narration.

As the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another; let us go now unto Bethlehem and see that which the Lord hath made known unto us. And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

13. Duet: Rest my child / Doubt no longer – Mary and Joseph

This beautiful duet is a dialogue, where each singer sings a different text. Mary is anxious as she looks lovingly at her newborn child; Joseph reassures her, telling her to trust in God.

*Mary: Rest my child, my heart's dear gladness, though thy destiny I fear.
Joseph: Doubt no longer, God is near, banish ev'ry care and sadness.*

14. Song: Tears, shed with tender father's care – Joseph

Joseph was by tradition an older man. In this song he sheds tears of love and joy, as he looks at the Christ-child, knowing that the boy is the Saviour of the world. The gentle rocking figures in this slow song are given to violins and flutes, which add warmth to the orchestral sound, while the smooth vocal line exudes calm and tenderness. Notice how Handel creates an amazing atmosphere in such a very short song, marked *Largo e pianissimo* – broadly and very softly.

*Tears, shed with tender father's care, warm from my joyful eyes descend.
The grace of God my son will share and all mankind with love befriend.*

15. Song: Sleep, darling boy - Mary

Absolutely one of Handel's most famous songs, *Ombra mai fu*, which opens the opera *Serse*, became known simply as *Handel's Largo*. It's another very short song, with a glorious melody and a gentle, pulsating accompaniment for strings, in triple time. Here it's sung as a lullaby:

Sleep, darling boy, child ever-treasurable! God's love immeasurable bestows all joy.

16. Chorus: May no rash intruder

This chorus is from the oratorio *Solomon* and is another brilliant example of Handel's genius in using musical figures to paint a vivid and poetic picture. Flutes imitate the actual song of the nightingale, while *zephyrs* - warm breezes from the west – are represented by a gentle, oscillating figure in the strings. The chorus parts are often used in groups – sometimes upper voices, sometimes lower voices – and two soprano parts give a richer texture. Finally, the music fades away as Mary, Joseph and the child are lulled to sleep.

May no rash intruder disturb their soft hours, as angels watch o'er them from heav'nly bow'rs. Ye zephyrs, soft breathing, their slumbers prolong, while nightingales lull them to sleep with their song.

17. Hymn: Hark! How all the welkin rings

This well-known tune was originally a song of triumph after a battle. It was hugely popular in Handel's day and was soon paired with Charles Wesley's joyful Nativity hymn, inspired by bells ringing on Christmas morning. *Welkin* is an old poetic word for the skies or the heavens above. The slightly wild sound of natural horns adds a thrilling colour to the orchestra.

Scene Four – Herod, the Wise Men and the Holy Innocents

This scene includes the arrival of the wise men with their gifts, and then one of the more surprising elements of the Christmas story, King Herod and the 'slaughtering of the innocents'.

18. Chorus: For unto us a child is born

This chorus is from *Messiah* and celebrates the birth of Jesus as the Son of God and Prince of Peace. Handel arranged it from an earlier Italian duet, which partly explains the rather fast-moving vocal parts and the dialogue between different vocal parts. The bouncy rhythms and bright major key create a feeling of excitement and celebration.

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.

19. Recitative: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem – Narrator

Another new recitative, describing the arrival of the wise men at the stable bearing gifts, and the incipient jealousy of King Herod.

Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came three wise men from the east to Jerusalem. And lo, a star, which they saw in the east, went before them, and it came and stood over the place where the young child lay. Rejoicing with exceeding great joy, they fell down and worshipped him, and opening their treasures, presented unto him gifts: gold, frankincense and myrrh. When Herod had heard these things, he was sorely troubled. He sought the child to destroy him and slew all young boys around the town of Bethlehem.

20. Song: Rage, terror, sword and knife – Herod

The *rage aria* was popular in baroque opera and oratorio, very often sung by basses. Here King Herod sings of his plans to slaughter all young boys, lest this 'new-born King' grow up to challenge his authority. The vocal line is vigorous and intimidating, and the accompaniment has many notes marked with strong accents, to represent the thrusts of a sword or knife.

*Rage, terror, sword and knife shall smite all infant life that threatens majesty.
No gushing tears, nor ardent pray'rs, shall thwart my firm decree.*

21. Recitative: Then was fulfilled – Narrator

The narrator tells us that this episode of slaughter was foretold by the prophet Jeremiah. The vocal line becomes more lyrical and expressive when recalling the grief of Rachel, a mother whose children were murdered by Herod's henchmen.

*Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying,
'In Rama was heard lamentation, wailing and great mourning; Rachel weeping for her children
would not be comforted, as they were no more.'*

22. Song: Angels, ever bright and fair – Rachel

Rachel laments the loss of her children and prays that angels will carry them heaven. The simplicity of this song, with the repetition of the phrase *take them*, makes it especially moving.

*Angels, ever bright and fair, take, O take them to your care.
Speed to your own courts their flight, clad in robes of virgin white.*

23. Chorus: Mourn, Israel

This chorus, from the oratorio *Saul*, expresses the grief of a nation confronting the loss of its youth. The bassline moves continuously, while long notes on each repetition of *mourn* sound just like a cry or moan. The ending gets quieter and quieter, as if the chorus, overwhelmed by sadness, can sing no more; the last phrase is left to the organ alone.

*Mourn, Israel, mourn thy children lost. Thy fairest slain by impious hand.
How have thy brightest hopes been crossed. Thy sons lie slaughter'd, scatter'd o'er the land.*

24. Hymn: Unveil thy bosom, ever faithful tomb

This hymn is a version of Handel's *Dead March*. Sad music is almost always written in a minor key, but Handel breaks the rules and writes in C major, theoretically the brightest key of them all. He achieves a feeling of solemnity with a slow tempo and a skilful use of the orchestra, contrasting low brass and strings with ghostly flutes, organ, and funereal, off-beat drums. The text is a careful reworking of two eighteenth century funeral hymns by Isaac Watts (another famous hymn-writer), expressing the Christian belief that the grave is the start of a new life in the arms of God.

Scene Five – The Heavenly Rejoicing

The final book of the Bible - the 'Book of Revelation' – relates the birth of Jesus Christ as part of the cosmic battle between good and evil. The Devil's dragon is at last slayed by the might of an all-powerful and benevolent God. Imagine a great triumphant celebration in heaven – an excuse for a real angelic party!

25. Symphony: Battaglia

This brilliant orchestral movement calls for four trumpets, evoking the world of the battle.

26. Recitative: And I saw an angel – Narrator

A recitative describing the triumph of the Angel over the Devil, with much word painting.

And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key to the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is Satan, the Devil. He bound him for a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive nations no more. For this purpose was the Son of God made manifest, that He might destroy the works of the Devil.

27. Song: Diabolical demons infernal – Angel

This is a truly spectacular song, fast and furious, with elaborate *coloratura* ornamentation for the singer who sings over a wide range. It is scored for a full orchestra, including trumpets, and a solo oboe frequently joins the soprano in duet. This is the opening aria to an Easter oratorio which Handel wrote in 1708 as a young man in Rome and it's full of Italianate brilliance. It is in the traditional *da capo* form, ABA, where the opening section returns after a contrasting middle section; the singer would embellish the repeat with further ornamentation. We use the term *virtuoso* to describe music like this - music which needs extreme skill to perform.

Diabolical demons infernal, see the radiant light of th'Eternal, banish darkness and brighten the earth. Rejoice ye legions of angels. Behold the King most glorious, triumphant and victorious, and hail the Saviour's birth.

28. Hymn: Rejoice, the Lord is King

This hymn was actually written as such by Handel. It is still popular today, with a strong, uplifting melody and slightly martial rhythm. The text is again by Charles Wesley, who Handel met. There are several versions of the words and further changes have been made to make it appropriate for Christmastide. The original last line makes the perfect link to the final chorus.

29. Chorus: Hallelujah

The *Hallelujah* chorus from *Messiah* is one of the most famous pieces in music. The choral and orchestral writing are as brilliant and exciting as you will ever hear; long vocal lines contrast with a short insistent rhythmic figure to the word *Hallelujah*, and there are many sections of fugal writing. The formal structure is particularly thrilling; notice how Handel uses the brass instruments to punctuate the chorus at climaxes, and the long lines of the soprano part, getting ever higher. A particularly wonderful moment occurs towards the end, when all the violins go slightly crazy, playing runs of semiquavers for the sheer joy of making noise! According to legend, after composing this chorus, Handel said 'I think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself seated upon his throne, with a great company of angels'.

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 forever and ever, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!