

**Hailsham Choral Society
60th Anniversary Concert**

Messiah

by

**George Frideric
Handel**

Saturday 26th March 2022

7.30pm

**All Saints' Church
Eastbourne**

**Retiring Collection for British Red Cross
Ukraine Appeal**



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Messiah

Background



The German-born Handel first visited London for a few weeks in 1710-11 to promote his Italian opera, *Rinaldo*. Two years later he was back and the promotion of Italian opera remained his chief pre-occupation for the next thirty years. He wrote forty such works in his lifetime, but by the 1730s fashions were changing and the call for Italian opera was in decline. Handel responded by introducing English language oratorio as an occasional and popular alternative. When he finally abandoned Italian opera early in 1741, it was amid rumours that he despaired of the London public and had decided to leave the country. If this was so, two events changed his mind: an offer to collaborate on a new work and an invitation to visit Ireland.

In July 1741, Handel received a new oratorio wordbook, or libretto, from Charles Jennens, a wealthy landowner with literary and musical interests. Jennens, who had collaborated with Handel twice before, wrote to a friend:

I hope I shall perswade [Handel] to set another Scripture Collection I have made for him... I hope he will lay out his whole Genius & Skill upon it, that the Composition may excel all his former Compositions, as the Subject excels every other subject. The Subject is Messiah.



However attractive the subject, Handel never composed without a performance in mind and assurance for this came from an unexpected source.

William Cavendish, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, is one of the less memorable Dukes of Devonshire. He would be largely forgotten were it not for his invitation to Handel, on behalf of several local charities, to take part in a season of concerts in Dublin. The prospect of a new public, charitable

causes and a whole series of performances, galvanised Handel into planning a number of 'entertainments'. These included several of his recent secular successes, and for a sacred piece (to perform during Lent) he took up Jennens' new libretto and set to work.

Composition

Handel started composing *Messiah* on 22nd August 1741. The work has three parts, and Handel's records show he had outlined Part I by 28th August, Part II by 6th September and Part III by 12th September. Two days of filling-up inner parts saw the work finished by 14th September - 24 days in all. The turbulent state of the 259-page score, with its blots, scratchings-out, alterations, unfilled bars, uncorrected errors and general untidiness, is evidence of the speed with which he worked. However, the time-scale for the writing of *Messiah* was not unusual for Handel (nor for many of his contemporaries). His operas, for example, were written at a similar rate between theatrical seasons.

The image shows the title 'Messiah or Oratorio' written in a highly stylized, cursive hand. The word 'Messiah' is on the top line, and 'or Oratorio' is on the line below. The ink is dark and the background is white.

The speed of composition was helped by a number of 'conventions' which governed the writing of music at the time. For example, the harpsichord part was not written out in full, but would be improvised from a single bass line with numerals indicating the harmony. Another example is the use of oboes, which would often play the same notes as the upper voices or violins. Handel did not write oboe parts into the score, he would simply tell his copyist where they were wanted and the copyist would do the rest.

Another feature of the period is the way composers often 'recycled' music written by themselves or others, adapting it for the work in hand. Handel was no stranger to this practice and a number of well-known pieces in *Messiah* have their origins in such 'borrowings'. In particular, some of his own Italian Duets became choruses: *And He shall purify, For unto us a child is born, His yoke is easy* and *All we like sheep*. The relative lightness of these pieces betrays their origins, but they also provide valuable contrast to the more imposing sections of the work.

It must be stressed that 'conventions' and 'borrowings' such as those described above, do not take away one jot from Handel's genius in writing a work of such depth and quality. Credit must also go to Charles Jennens,

whose wordbook was so very well thought through that Handel was able to write the score more or less continuously, without time-wasting structural alterations. Jennens skilfully blended Old and New Testament sections of the Authorised Version of the Bible, adapting and compressing the text with great sensitivity. He also arranged the now familiar scheme of solos and choruses, and clearly laid out the Messiah's story, from Prophecy to Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension, and finally to the promise of Redemption (Part III is based largely on Bible verses from the Anglican Burial Service).

First Performance

When Handel arrived in Dublin on 18th November 1741, it was experiencing a 'golden age' as the second city of the British Isles and a centre for the arts. Right from the first concert on 23rd December, Handel's music played to enthusiastic audiences and packed houses, but *Messiah* was kept back until Lent of the following Spring, being announced in the *Dublin Journal* of 27th March 1742:

For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer's Hospital... and of the Charitable Infirmary... on Monday the 12th April, will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, call'd the MESSIAH, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of Both Cathedrals will assist, with some Concertoes on the Organ, by Mr. Handell.



The performance was actually put off 'At the desire of several persons of distinction' until 13th April, and a further notice appeared in the *Dublin Journal*:

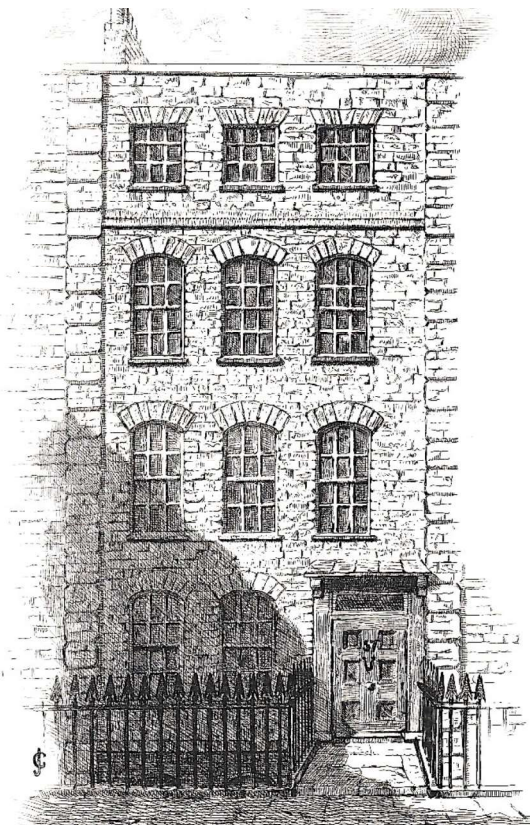
Many Ladies and Gentlemen who are well-wishers to this noble and Grand Charity for which this Oratorio was composed, request it as a Favour, that the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence would be pleased to come without Hoops and Gentlemen... without their Swords, as it will greatly encrease the Charity, by making room for more company.

This play enabled the promoters to pack an extra hundred people into the hall and the performance was very well received:

Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crouded Audience. 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. It is but Justice to Mr. Handel, that the world should know, he generously gave the money arising from this Grand Performance [£400] to be shared equally by... the three great and Pious Charities.

It is interesting that right from the very first performance of *Messiah*, Handel made alterations to suit local circumstances. In Dublin, some of the changes were to compensate for the shortcomings of the male soloists, while others were to allow a greater role for his 'find' of the Season, the contralto singer-actress, Susannah Cibber.¹ This process of alteration and adaptation continued over the years, and during Handel's lifetime the work was never performed exactly as originally composed.

Handel, London and the Foundling Hospital



Back in 1711, when Handel first arrived in London, there had been no native English composer of the first rank since the death of Henry Purcell in 1695. But music still flourished here and England was a rich country that could attract the best from abroad. In Handel, it attracted one of the greatest composers of all time. He decided to settle here and in July 1723 rented a newly-built house in Brook Street, Mayfair. This was to be his home for the rest of his life (he became a naturalised British citizen in 1727) and is where he composed such masterpieces as *Messiah*, *Zadok the Priest* and *Music for the Royal Fireworks*. The building now houses the 'Handel and Hendrix in London' museum and extends into the house next door, part of which was once the home of Jimi Hendrix, a fine musician from a very different age!

¹ Susannah Cibber was the sister of Thomas Arne, the composer of *Rule Britannia*. She made a very bad marriage and was used scandalously by her husband, from whom she eventually ran away. She was renowned as an actress as well as a singer and ended her working life as David Garrick's leading lady at Drury Lane Theatre. She became the highest paid actress in London and is buried in Westminster Abbey.

Handel was noted for his generosity, both in money and in kind, especially towards the Foundling Hospital, Britain's first home for abandoned children. This was founded in 1739 by Thomas Coram, a retired sea captain. In 1750, Handel gave a performance of *Messiah* in aid of the hospital. It was a great success and Handel was made a Governor shortly afterwards.



Such performances became an annual fund-raiser and did much to secure the popularity of *Messiah* with the concert-going public. In his will, Handel bequeathed a 'fair copy' of the full score of *Messiah* to the hospital; this can now be seen at the Foundling Museum in Brunswick Square, London.

Handel was a well-known and successful composer in his day, and despite the odd 'sticky patch' from his work as an opera impresario, he was financially successful. He was made 'Composer of Musick for the Chapel Royal' and received a pension from the Court of King George II. Later composers, including Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven, held him in the highest regard. In 1738, a carved marble statue of Handel was created by Louis François Roubilac and displayed in Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, a great honour for a living person. The statue can now be seen at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

When Handel died in 1759, he was given a State Funeral at Westminster Abbey attended by over 3000 people. The service was sung by choirs from the Abbey, St Paul's Cathedral and the Chapel Royal. He was buried at Poets' Corner in the south transept of the Abbey, where his tomb and memorial statue (also by Roubilac) may be seen. The music carved on the memorial is 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', from *Messiah*.



MESSIAH

PART ONE

- | | | |
|-----|--|------------------------|
| 1. | Sinfonia (Overture) | Orchestra |
| 2. | Comfort ye my people | Tenor |
| 3. | Every valley shall be exalted | Tenor |
| 4. | And the glory of the Lord | Chorus |
| 5. | Thus saith the Lord | Bass |
| 6. | But who may abide | Contralto |
| 7. | And He shall purify | Chorus |
| 8. | Behold, a virgin shall conceive | Contralto |
| 9. | O thou that tellest good tidings | Contralto
& Chorus |
| 10. | For behold, darkness shall cover | Bass |
| 11. | The people that walked in darkness | Bass |
| 12. | For unto us a child is born | Chorus |
| 13. | Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) | Orchestra |
| 14. | (a) There were shepherds abiding | Soprano |
| | (b) And lo, the angel of the Lord | Soprano |
| 15. | And the angel said unto them | Soprano |
| 16. | And suddenly, there was with the angel | Soprano |
| 17. | Glory to God | Chorus |
| 18. | Rejoice greatly | Soprano |
| 19. | Then shall the eyes of the blind | Contralto |
| 20. | He shall feed His flock | Contralto
& Soprano |
| 21. | His yoke is easy, His burthen light | Chorus |

INTERVAL

PART TWO

22.	Behold the Lamb of God	Chorus
23.	He was despised	Contralto
24.	Surely he hath borne our griefs	Chorus
25.	And with his stripes we are healed	Chorus
26.	All we like sheep have gone astray	Chorus
27.	All they that see Him	Tenor
28.	He trusted in God	Chorus
29.	Thy rebuke hath broken His heart	Tenor
30.	Behold, and see if there be any sorrow	Tenor
31.	He was cut off out of the land	Tenor
32.	But Thou didst not leave His soul	Tenor
33.	Lift up your heads, O ye gates	Chorus
36.	Thou art gone up on high	Contralto
37.	The Lord gave the word	Chorus
38.	How beautiful are the feet	Soprano
40.	Why do the nations so furiously rage	Bass
41.	Let us break their bonds asunder	Chorus
42.	He that dwelleth in heaven	Tenor
43.	Thou shalt break them	Tenor
44.	Hallelujah	Chorus

PART THREE

45.	I know that my redeemer liveth	Soprano
46.	Since by man came death	Chorus
47.	Behold, I tell you a mystery	Bass
48.	The trumpet shall sound	Bass
52.	If God be for us	Soprano
53.	Worthy is the Lamb that was slain	
	- Amen	Chorus

Hailsham Choral Society

Musical Director	Jozik Kotz
Assistant Musical Director	Barbara Edwards
Rehearsal Accompanist	Will Hancox
Chair	Sue Simpson
Secretary	Milly Clark



@ Hailsham Choral



Hailsham Choral Society

If you are interested in singing with the choir, or 'just looking', please contact our Membership Secretary, Julie Mitchell - hcsjoin@hailshamchoral.org

Rehearsals are held during 'term time' on Thursday evenings from 7.30-9.30 in the Community Hall, Hailsham. We normally perform four concerts a year.

Sopranos

Jane Allen
Christine Baelz
Trish Brown
Kathy Castell
Rachel Chilton
Pat Collingwood
Janet Cox
Carole Deschamps
Liz Furlong
Nancy Gillio-Terry
Hilary Hartley
Gillian Heasman
Val Hyland
Noa Lachman
Susan Lahache
Penny Livermore
Val McIntosh
Fiona Mansfield
Jennie Mansfield
Lynn Petit
Marion Ponting
Sue Simpson
Lis Turner
Ann Walker
Sue White
Nicola Williams

Altos

Milly Clark
Pam Cornish
Fiona Dundas
Barbara Edwards
Barbara Fry
Helen Kotz
Sarah Owen
Julie Mitchell
Wendy Pengelly
Rosalind Taylor-Byrne

Tenors

Nigel Baelz
Paul Carter
Nick Castell
Nick Gosman
Ben Hancox
Patrick Wenham

Basses

Ian Fry
Stan Gater
Peter Gilbert
Robin Hooper
Graham Keeley
Simon Lane
Simon Marsden
David Nunn
Tony Pittman
Steven Rolls-King
Chris Taylor
Terry Tozer

Jozik Kotz

Conductor and Musical Director

Jozik was born in Oxford of Polish-Australian parents. After reading music at the University of York and singing as a lay-clerk at York Minster, he won a post-graduate scholarship to the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, where he was a finalist in the Kathleen Ferrier, Royal Overseas league and Richard Tauber competitions. In 1993, he was winner of the South East Arts competition, which led to his debut at the Wigmore Hall.



Jozik subsequently performed operatic roles with English National Opera, Glyndebourne, Opera Factory, Garsington and Grange Park; and in Paris, Vienna, Zurich, Madrid, Aix-en-Provence and Lisbon. He has appeared as a soloist at the Proms and with the BBC Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia and English Chamber orchestras. His CD recordings include baroque cantatas for Hyperion, Turnage's *The Silver Tassie* and Gavin Bryar's *Dr Ox's Experiment* for Deutsche Grammophon, and Paray's *Mass* with the Scottish National Orchestra, which was nominated for a Grammy award.

Jozik has been our Musical Director since 2006. In 2019 he stepped down for two years to pursue other matters, but now has returned and we are delighted to welcome him back.

Will Hancox

Rehearsal and Concert Accompanist



We are very pleased to welcome Will Hancox, our accompanist for the past two years, to his first major concert with us. Will has performed as a soloist, chamber musician and accompanist throughout the UK and internationally. He has played in many major venues, broadcast for Classic FM and the BBC and made a number of CD recordings. He has held staff pianist positions at London's Guildhall School of Music and Drama, Trinity College of Music and the Britten-Pears School in Aldeburgh.

In Europe, Will has given concerts in Spain, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and Iceland. Several trips to China have involved masterclasses, song recitals, solo recitals and concerts in the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing. This evening, he is playing the keyboard continuo as part of the orchestra.

Soloists

Helen Bailey - Soprano

Helen Bailey was born in the North East of England and is a graduate of the Royal Academy of Music and Trinity College of Music, initially graduating from Liverpool John Moores University with a First in English Literature and Cultural History.

Helen has a busy concert schedule, performing regularly as a soloist for the Compton and Shawford, Dover, Ember, Folkestone, and Sutton Valence choral societies, Thanet Festival Choir, The Seventy Singers, Maidstone Wind Symphony, and Wrotham Music Festival. On the operatic stage, Helen has performed numerous principal roles for a variety of opera companies, including the prestigious Buxton International Festival where she was awarded the Young Artist's Bursary for 2016.

Helen lives in Kent with her husband and two children. She is an ardent bookworm and enjoys improving her personal best at the local Parkrun.



Rebecca Hughes – Mezzo Soprano



Rebecca achieved a Degree and Postgraduate Diploma in Vocal Performance and Opera at Birmingham Conservatoire. Whilst at the Conservatoire she won a Kathleen Ferrier Trust award and a Music Sound Fund award. She recently received a distinction for a Licentiate of Trinity College London Diploma.

Rebecca has performed with Grange Park Opera among other touring opera companies, playing roles such as Romeo from Bellini's *I Capuleti e i Montecchi*. As a soloist, she has performed in numerous major works, including Handel's *Messiah*, Bach's *St John's Passion*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Haydn's *Nelson Mass* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, with a number of choral societies. These include Shrewsbury, Norwich, The Royal College of Organists, The Royal Free Singers, Derby Cathedral Choir and the Choir of St John's. Recently, she performed with New Sussex Opera in Offenbach's *The Princess of Trebizond* and in May, will be playing the role of Mad Margaret in Eastbourne Gilbert and Sullivan Society's production of *Ruddigore*. Rebecca now spends most of her time singing, teaching and giving vocal workshops to choral societies in and around East Sussex.

Andrew Mackenzie-Wicks - Tenor

Andrew Wicks began singing as a chorister at Chichester Cathedral. He attended Eastbourne College and then Durham University, where he studied music and sang in the Cathedral choir. He studied singing and performance at the Royal Northern College of Music and began his career in the Glyndebourne chorus. After taking over the role of Ferrando in 1996 he sang with major UK opera companies including WNO, ENO, Scottish Opera, Grange Park and Buxton. He has been a member of the BBC Singers, The Monteverdi and Sixteen choirs and worked with leading early and contemporary music ensembles.



Andrew's concert career has taken him all over the world and in recent years he has enjoyed both singing on cruise liners, and in the extra chorus at the Royal Opera House. Recent projects include *The Golden Dragon* for Music Theatre Wales which performed in South Korea, the UK and on BBC radio. He repeated this role in Israel and Hungary in 2019.

Greg Skidmore - Baritone



Born in Canada, Greg Skidmore arrived in England as an undergraduate at Royal Holloway College, University of London. After graduating with First Class Honours in Music, his post-graduate Choral Scholarship at Wells Cathedral led to Lay Clerkships at Gloucester Cathedral and Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford. He now lives in London and pursues a varied career as a consort, choral and solo oratorio singer alongside his burgeoning work as a conductor and workshop leader.

Solo engagements have included work with prestigious choirs and orchestras both here and abroad. His travels have taken him as far as Washington National Cathedral in the USA and to European venues such as Scola Grande di san Roco in Venice. Greg is also comfortable in choral and consort singing, appearing with many respected ensembles, including The Tallis Scholars, The Sixteen, Tenebre, The Gabrielli Consort, Voces8 and Ex Cathedra. In addition to coaching projects in the UK, Greg has given workshops and masterclasses in France, Canada, New Zealand and Australia. He appears on a large number of Early Music recordings, often writing the CD liner notes in addition to performing.

Orchestra

Violins

Pam White (Leader)
Liz Bux
David Craddock
Yvonne Cane-Hardy
Brian Knights
Lisa Knights
Sarah Nolan
Jan White

Violas

Richard Holtum
Graham Caldwell

'Cellos

Sally Thorkildsen
Rachael Knights
Kate Mumford

Double Bass

Susan Denier

Oboes

Barbara Ashby
Gail Taylor

Trumpets

Andrew Baxter
Neil Bland

Timpani

Avril Vegh

Continuo

Will Hancox

Below is a flyer advertising the first London performance of *Messiah* at Covent Garden on 23rd March 1743

N B Every Ticket will admit either one Gentleman,
or Two Ladies.

COVENT-GARDEN.
By SUBSCRIPTION.
The Ninth Night.

AT the Theatre-Royal in Covent-Garden,
Wednesday next, will be perform'd
A NEW SACRED ORATORIO.
A CONCERTO on the ORGAN,
And a Solo on the Violin by Mr. DUBOURG.
Tickets will be deliver'd to Subscribers on Tuesday next, at Mr
Handel's House in Brook-street.
Pit and Boxes to be put together, and no Person to be admitted
without Tickets, which will be deliver'd that Day, at the Office in
Covent-Garden Theatre, at Half a Guinea each. First Gallery 5 s.
Upper Gallery 3 s. 6 d.
The Galleries will be open'd at Four o'Clock. Pit and Boxes at Five.

*For the Benefit and Increase of a FUND esta-
blish'd for the Support of Decay'd MUSICIANS, or their
Families.*

Odds and Ends

To stand or not to stand?

There is a time-honoured tradition of the audience standing for the *Hallelujah* chorus, supposedly because King George II did so when he attended the first London performance of *Messiah*. Scholars are divided on the issue: one side says the King **did** stand up for some reason or another, while the other side says there is **no** evidence that the King **ever** attended **any** performance of *Messiah*, let alone the first one in London! Whatever the truth, the tradition of standing has lasted for nearly 280 years. We leave it up to you whether or not you wish to stand this evening.

Messiah is unique

Messiah is unique among Handel's 29 oratorios. Unlike **all** the others, there are no characters in *Messiah* - no soloist 'plays' the part of Jesus, or Mary or Pilate, or anyone else. The soloists describe, comment, or meditate on the action, with the chorus acting in a similar way.

By contrast, *Samson*, the oratorio Handel wrote immediately after *Messiah*, is typical of all the rest. Samson himself is 'played' by a tenor, his father by a bass, Delilah by a soprano, and so on, while the chorus variously takes the roles of Israelites, Philistines and Virgins. Such consistent characterisation does not happen in *Messiah*.

Handel and Bach

Handel and Bach were born 80 miles apart in the same year, 1685. The two great composers knew of each other, but lived separate and very different lives. They never met, despite Bach trying to do so at least once. Bach famously said:

[Handel] is the only person I would wish to see before I die, and the only person I would wish to be, were I not Bach.

As they grew older, both Handel and Bach suffered from cataracts, and were operated upon by the same English 'quack' eye surgeon, Chevalier John Taylor. Sadly, neither operation was successful and both composers went blind.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "George Frideric Handel". The script is cursive and elegant, with a large initial 'G' and 'H'.

Forthcoming Events

Summer Concert

A Jubilee Tribute

- Music from the Last Seven Decades

Saturday 2nd July 2022

7.30pm

Hailsham Parish Church

Autumn Concert

To include Haydn's *Nelson Mass*

Saturday 12th November 2022

7.30pm

All Saints Church, Eastbourne

Christmas Concert

Thursday 17th December 2022

7.30pm

Hailsham Parish Church

Hailsham Choral Society: Registered Charity 1100408

Member of Making Music, and Eastbourne & District
Choirs Association

Website: www.hailshamchoral.org