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**Messiah**

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Messiah

George Frideric Handel

CANNON MEMORIAL CHAPEL
UNIVERSITY OF RICHMOND
8:00 P.M.
DECEMBER 9, 1984
George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) composed Messiah, the eleventh of his twenty-three oratorios, in only three weeks of the year 1741, to a text selected and arranged from Scripture by Charles Jennens. The First Part was completed on August 28, the Second Part nine days later, and the Third Part followed six days after the second. The orchestration was finished by September 14.

Messiah was first performed on April 13, 1742, in Dublin, Ireland, as a benefit for charity. It premiered in London in 1743 and was repeated in 1745, both times under the title “A Sacred Oratorio,” the original title being considered improper for an entertainment. With the original title restored it was revived in 1749 at Covent Garden, the hall where the blind and aging Handel conducted the work in his final public appearance on April 6, 1759.

Messiah was known in the United States only through excerpts until December 25, 1818, when Boston’s Handel and Haydn Society presented it in the first complete rendition of an oratorio in America. The first unabridged American performance probably did not take place until 1831.

Unlike most oratorios, Messiah has no “story line” describing a series of events. Instead, its three parts deal broadly with the prophecy and coming of a savior (Part One); His ministry and persecution (Part Two); and His promise of eternal life (Part Three). Our performance includes all of the First Part. The majority of the numbers of the Second and Third Parts are combined into the portion performed after the intermission.
PROGRAM

PART THE FIRST

SINFONIA (OVERTURE)

RECITATIVE (Tenor)
Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortingly to Jerusalem; and
cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. 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.  
Isaiah 40:1-3

AIR (Tenor)
Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and
the rough places plain.  
Isaiah 40:4

CHORUS
And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth
of the Lord hath spoken it.  
Isaiah 40:5

RECITATIVE (Bass)
Thus saith the Lord of hosts: Yet once a little while and
I
will shake the heavens and the
earth,
the sea and the dry land; and
I
will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come.
The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to this temple, even the messenger of the
covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts.  
Haggai 2:6, 7; Malachi 3:1

AIR (Alto)
But who may abide the day of His coming, and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is
like a refiner's fire.  
Malachi 3:2

CHORUS
And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in
righteousness.  
Malachi 3:3

RECITATIVE (Alto)
Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with
us.  
Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

AIR (Alto) AND CHORUS
O thou that last tellst good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that
tellst good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto
the cities of Judah: Behold your God! Arise, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is
risen upon thee.  
Isaiah 40:9, 60:1

RECITATIVE (Bass)
For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall
arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee, and the Gentiles shall come to thy
light and kings to the brightness of thy rising.  
Isaiah 60:2, 3

AIR (Bass)
The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwell in the land of
the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.  
Isaiah 9:2

CHORUS
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.  
Isaiah 9:6

PIFA (PASTORAL SYMPHONY)

RECITATIVE (Soprano)
There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.  
Luke 2:8
And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about
them, and they were sore afraid.  
Luke 2:9

RECITATIVE (Soprano)
And the angel said unto them: Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which
shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ
the Lord.  
Luke 2:10, 11

RECITATIVE (Soprano)
And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and
saying:  
Luke 2:13

CHORUS
Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.  
Luke 2:14

AIR (Soprano)
Rejoice greatly, 0 daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh
unto thee! He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.  
Zechariah 9:9, 10

RECITATIVE (Alto)
Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstoppted; then shall the
lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.  
Isaiah 35:5, 6

AIR (Alto)
He shall feed His flock like a shepherd; and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry
them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.  
Isaiah 40:11

AIR (Soprano)
Come unto Him, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take His
yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto
your souls.  
Matthew 11:28, 29

CHORUS
His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.  
Matthew 11:30

INTERMISSION

PART THE SECOND

CHORUS
Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.  
John 1:29
Air (Alto)
He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave
His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair. He hid not His face
from shame and spitting.  
Isaiah 53:3, 5

Chorus
Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our
transgressions; He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon
Him.  
Isaiah 53:4, 5

Chorus
And with His stripes we are healed.  
Isaiah 53:5

Chorus
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord
hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.  
Isaiah 53:6

Recitative (Tenor)
All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips and shake their heads,
saying:  
Psalm 22:7

Chorus
He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him; if He delight in Him.  
Psalm 22:8

Recitative
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on
Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.  
Psalm 69:20

Air (Tenor)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.  
Lamentations 1:12

Recitative (Soprano)
He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of Thy people was He
stricken.  
Isaiah 53:8

Air (Soprano)
But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see
corruption.  
Psalm 16:10

Chorus
Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of glory
shall come in. Who is this King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in
battle. The Lord of hosts, He is the King of glory.  
Psalm 24:7-10

Air (Bass)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together, why do the people imagine a vain thing? The
kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and His
anointed.  
Psalm 2:1, 2

Chorus
Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.  
Psalm 2:3

Recitative (Tenor)
He that dwelleth in Heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.  
Psalm 2:4

Air (Tenor)
Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter’s
vessel.  
Psalm 2:9

Chorus
Hallelujah! For the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the
kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever, King of Kings,
and Lord of Lords, Hallelujah!  
Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16

Part the third
Air (Soprano)
I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: and
though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from
the dead, the first-fruits of them that sleep.  
Job 19:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 15:20

Chorus
Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all
die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.  
1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

Recitative (Bass)
Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment,
in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.  
1 Corinthians 15:51, 52

Air (Bass)
The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be
changed; for this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on
immortality.  
1 Corinthians 15:52, 53

Chorus
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive
power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing
and honour, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb,
for ever and ever. Amen.  
Revelation 5:12, 9, 13
We wish to thank Lynda Brooks and members of the American Federation of Musicians, Local 123, for their participation in this concert.

We are grateful to the University of Richmond Chapel Guild whose generous support has made this concert possible.