

PERFORMANCE NOTES FROM HANDEL'S MESSIAH

George Frederic Handel (1685-1759)
Words compiled from the Holy Scriptures by Charles Jennens (1700-1773)

Overture

Comfort ye my people *Tenor Recitative.* **Isaiah 40:1-3**

Comfort ye, 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 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.

Every valley shall be exalted *Tenor solo* **Isaiah 40:4**

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

And the glory of the Lord *Chorus* **Isaiah 40:5**

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.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive *Alto Recitative* **Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23**

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

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion *Alto Air and Chorus* **Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1**

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, and be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

For unto us a Child is born *Chorus* **Isaiah 9:6**

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.

Pastoral Symphony

There were shepherds abiding in the Field *Soprano recitative* **Luke 2: 8**

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

And lo! The angel of the Lord came upon them **Luke 2:9**

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.

And the angel said unto them **Luke 2:10,11**

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.

And suddenly there was with the angel **Luke 2:13**

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying,

Glory to God *chorus* **Luke 2:14**

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will toward men.

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd *Alto Air and Soprano air* **Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28, 29**

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.

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, that are heavy laden, and He shall 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.

Surely He hath borne our griefs *Quartet* **Isaiah 53:4,5**

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.

Behold the Lamb of God *Quartet* **John 1:29**

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

How beautiful are the feet of them *Soprano Air* **Isaiah 52:7, 9**

How beautiful are the feet of him that bringeth glad tidings of salvation; that saith unto Sion, Thy God reigneth! Break forth into joy, glad tidings. Thy God reigneth!

I know that my Redeemer liveth *Soprano Air* **Job 19:25, 26; 1 Corinthians 15:20**

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 firstfruits of them that sleep.

Hallelujah! *Chorus* **Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16**

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, Lord of lords.

The trumpet shall sound *Bass Air with Trumpet Air* **1 Corinthians 15:52, 53**

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.

Worthy is the Lamb *Chorus* **Revelation 5:12, 13**

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 to be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.