

HANDEL'S CHRISTMAS MESSIAH: A CANTATA

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CONTENTS

I.	Sinfonia	2
II.	First Reading	3
	<i>(Isaiah 40: 1-3)</i>	
III.	Every Valley Shall Be Exalted (<i>Tenor Solo</i>)	3
	<i>(Isaiah 40: 4)</i>	
IV.	And the Glory of the Lord (<i>Chorus</i>)	8
	<i>(Isaiah 40: 5)</i>	
V.	Second Reading	16
	<i>(Haggai 2: 6-7; Malachi 3: 1-3; Isaiah 7: 14/Matthew 1: 23)</i>	
VI.	O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion (<i>Alto Solo and Chorus</i>)	16
	<i>(Isaiah 40: 9, 60: 1)</i>	
VII.	For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth (<i>Bass Solo</i>)	25
	<i>(Isaiah 60: 2-3)</i>	
VIII.	Third Reading	26
	<i>(Isaiah 9: 2, 60: 20)</i>	
IX.	For Unto Us a Child Is Born (<i>Chorus</i>)	27
	<i>(Isaiah 9: 6)</i>	
X.	Fourth Reading	37
	<i>(Luke 2: 8-13)</i>	
XI.	Glory to God (<i>Chorus</i>)	37
	<i>(Luke 2: 14)</i>	
XII.	Fifth Reading	42
	<i>(Zechariah 9: 9-10; Isaiah 35: 5-6, 40: 11)</i>	
XIII.	Come Unto Him (<i>Soprano Solo</i>)	42
	<i>(Matthew 11: 28-29)</i>	
XIV.	Sixth Reading	44
	<i>(Romans 10: 15, 18; Revelation 5: 13)</i>	
XV.	Hallelujah! (<i>Chorus</i>)	45
	<i>(Revelation 19: 6, 11: 15, 19: 16)</i>	
XVI.	Endnotes	56

As a complement to this edition of **Handel's Christmas Messiah: A Cantata**, the publisher offers a set of parts for chamber orchestra called InstruPax (please see Endnotes for more information). This choral score, with convenient InstruPax instrumental cues, may serve as the conductor's score for performances with choir and chamber orchestra.

II. FIRST READING

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.”

III. EVERY VALLEY SHALL BE EXALTED

for Tenor soloist

Isaiah 40: 4

Andante (♩ = ca. 96-100)

ACCOMP.

(f)

(KBD., STRINGS)

5

tr *tr* *tr*

p *f* *p* *f*

9

TENOR

(A)

(f)

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

tr

f *p*

13

(mf)

— shall be ex - alt - ed, shall be — ex - alt -

p (cresc. poco a poco)

ENDNOTES

This cantata edition of the Christmas portion (plus the chorus *Hallelujah!*) of Handel's **Messiah** is designed to provide both worship services and school concerts with a very practical yet scholarly version of this popular work. **Handel's Christmas Messiah: A Cantata** includes the following unique characteristics:

- A practical length (approximately 30 minutes) that provides an opportunity for performances within a church service or school concert of modest length.
- Five choruses, complete and in their original keys, selected for their accessibility and for their roles in the unfolding drama.
- Four solos, one each for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass.
- The substitution of spoken narration for recitative, providing the pastor, lay reader, or school administrator the opportunity to partner with the musicians in conveying the Christmas story.
- A carefully revised keyboard accompaniment.
- An optional chamber orchestra accompaniment that is appropriate to the acoustic and resources of most sanctuaries and schools, including string quartet and bass, C-Instrument (oboe or flute), two B \flat trumpets, timpani, and a continuo keyboard for organ, harpsichord, or piano.
- A newly engraved score that complies with modern notational practices.

In preparing this edition, an attempt has been made to incorporate the best of various historical editions as well as the most current music scholarship. To this end the editor has included in the score the notation of common Baroque performance practices, such as the double-dotting in the opening Sinfonia and some ornamentation. In shaping the narration and defining the appropriate performance length of this work, the editor has omitted most of the solos and all of the recitatives, with the exception of the famous bass recitative *For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth*. To this recitative the editor has added a five measure coda consisting of a repeat of the introduction. Appearing in unaltered form are the tenor air *Every Valley Shall Be Exalted* and the alto air (with chorus) *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion*. The soprano solo *Come Unto Him* appears in Handel's original score as the second half of the alto/soprano duet *He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd*. Borrowing the duet's coda, the editor has fashioned a four measure introduction for this solo. Two of the Christmas choruses are omitted: *And He Shall Purify* and *His Yoke Is Easy, His Burthen Is Light*. The *Pifa* ("Pastoral Symphony") is omitted, and the opening *Sinfonia* is abbreviated, presenting only the opening *Grave* section, to which an appropriate cadence has been added utilizing the final three measures of Handel's original. The parenthetical dynamic markings and all metronome markings are the editor's. The vocal lines of the five choruses appear as Handel wrote them so that singers may benefit from the experience of singing these inspiring choruses in their authentic forms, beloved throughout the centuries.

Available separately:

Full Performance Cassette, No. 4007

Preview Pack (Choral Score & Full Performance Cassette), No. 4279

INSTRUPAX (2 Violins, Viola, Cello, Bass, 2 B-flat Trumpets,

C-Instrument, Timpani, Continuo Keyboard), No. 7279