

**OLDHAM
CHORAL
SOCIETY**

**IN THE
RNCM
CONCERT
HALL**

**OXFORD
ROAD
MANCHESTER
M13 9RD**

**2nd APRIL
2017
7 p.m.**



Messiah

George Frideric Handel

NATASHA JOUHL

SOPRANO

LOUISE WINTER

MEZZO SOPRANO

AMAR MUCHALA

TENOR

HENRY WADDINGTON

BASS

EAST LANC'S SINFONIA

CONDUCTOR NIGEL P. WILKINSON

Programme

£2.00



OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

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A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

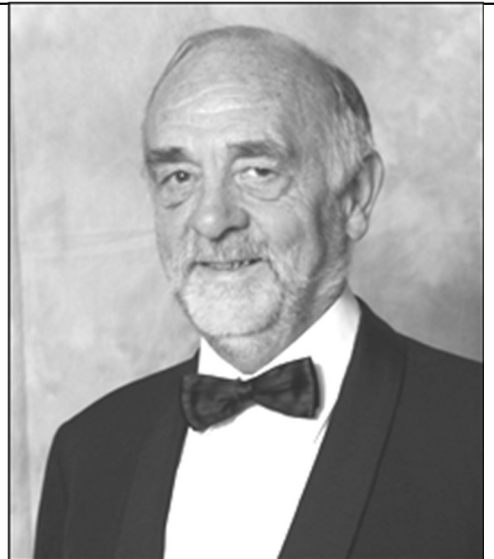
One of the joys of being in a choir is that from time to time you get to sing your favourite work. That is my pleasure this evening. I have loved the "Messiah" for many years (not saying how many!). To my mind it is a pity that it is usually confined to the busy period of Christmas, so I am particularly pleased to have a Lenten performance. The emotion and drama of the Easter story are something quite special, and deserve to be savoured. Our wonderful soloists and the East Lancs Sinfonia will, I am sure, join with the choir to produce a magical musical experience.

We will not be having our usual lighter-themed concert at Middleton Arena this year. Instead we will be holding a Choir "At Home" evening on Friday, 16th June in our regular rehearsal venue - the beautiful Ballroom of Chadderton Town Hall, from 7.30 to 10.30pm. You are invited to join us for a short concert, followed by some time for social and fund-raising activities. There will be a Bar and Food available. Watch for further details later.

Our first concert of the new Season happens to fall on Remembrance Sunday, and we will be presenting a programme entitled "War and Peace". This will consist of Jenkins' popular "The Armed Man" and a new work, "Requiem for the Living" by Dan Forrest. Both works, particularly the Requiem, will present the choir with new challenges, and expand the choir repertoire. Keep a watch on our website for further details.

We are always on the lookout for new members - both singers and helpers - so it could be your chance to join our lively and welcoming group. Don't be shy! Have a word with any member, visit our Website, or find us on Facebook.

Fred Jones.



OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY

Messiah

SOLOISTS

Natasha Youhl Louise Winter

Amar Mucchala Henry Waddington

The East Lancs Sinfonia

Leader: Sally Robinson

Continuo: Peter Collier (Harpsichord) Claire Babington (Cello)

Solo Trumpet: Jim Bulger

Cond: Nigel P Wilkinson

There will be 1 interval of 20 minutes between parts 1 and 2.
There will be a short pause after the Hallelujah Chorus before
continuing with Part 3.

We invite you to stand for the Hallelujah Chorus
Please ensure that all mobile devices are switched off or in SILENT MODE

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY ARE VERY GRATEFUL FOR A LEGACY THAT WE HAVE RECENTLY
RECEIVED FROM THE ESTATE OF A FORMER MEMBER
DORA WINFIELD.

THIS PERFORMANCE IS DEDICATED TO HER MEMORY ALONG WITH
FORMER MEMBERS **HILDA ROSEBURY** AND **THELMA JONES**
WHO BOTH SADLY PASSED AWAY RECENTLY.

WE ARE ALSO SORRY TO HAVE TO RECORD THE DEATH OF
HILDA'S HUSBAND **ALWYN ROSEBURY.**

HILDA WAS A LIFE MEMBER AND FOR MANY YEARS ALWYN SAT ON THE COMMITTEE
REPRESENTING THE ASSOCIATE MEMBERS.

WE ALSO REMEMBER **LIONEL DOSSETT**, WHO WAS OUR TICKET SECRETARY
UNTIL RECENTLY, AND SEND OUR CONDOLENCES TO HIS WIFE AND FAMILY.



NATASHA JOUHL - SOPRANO

London-born soprano Natasha Jouhl studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (where she won the prestigious Gold Medal) and at the National Opera Studio. The recipient of the Glyndebourne Festival Opera John Christie Award, and Glyndebourne on Tour Promise Award, Natasha has forged a close relationship with the company having performed many roles there in recent seasons including the title role in *Rusalka*, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*, Fiordiligi *Così fan tutte*, Musetta *La bohème* and Micaëla *Carmen*.

Further roles in the UK include Elisetta *The Secret Marriage*, Ilia *Idomeneo*, First Wood Nymph *Rusalka*, and Erste Dame *Die Zauberflöte* for Opera North, Donna Anna *Don Giovanni* and Tamiri *Il Re Pastore* for Garsington Opera), Erste Dame *Die Zauberflöte* for Opera Holland

Park, Emma *Khovanshchina* for WNO), the title role in *Alcina* for English Touring Opera, Donna Anna in Graham Vick's production of *Don Giovanni* for Birmingham Opera Company), and Micaëla *Carmen* at the Royal Albert Hall (Raymond Gubbay).

Further afield she has performed Kumadha in John Adam's *The Flowering Tree* for Chicago Opera Theater, Micaëla *Carmen* for The Royal Danish Opera, Donna Anna at the Birgitta Festival, Tallinn, Rosalinde *Die Fledermaus* for Wexford Festival, Bernadette in the world première of Andrew Schultz's *Going into Shadows* in Brisbane, Angelica *Orlando* and Romilda *Xerxes* for Opera Theatre, Dublin, and Nella in *Gianni Schicchi* for the William Walton Foundation in Ischia.

Other roles include Tatyana *Eugene Onegin*, Lia in Debussy's *L'enfant Prodigue*, and the title role in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Snowmaiden*.

Recent oratorio highlights have included Bach's *B Minor Mass* and Haydn's *Creation* at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, the *St. Matthew Passion* in Chelmsford Cathedral, Handel's *Samson, Acis and Galatea* and *Messiah* at Arundel Cathedral, Manchester's Bridgewater Hall and at the Waterfront Hall, Belfast with the Ulster Orchestra, *Carmina Burana* with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Pergolesi's *Missa Romana* with the Orchestre National de Lyon, and both the Fauré and Dvorak *Requiems* at Cadogan Hall,

Recent and future engagements include Violetta *La Traviata* for Glyndebourne on Tour, also returning to Glyndebourne Festival for Donna Anna *Don Giovanni*, Mia in the world première of Eric Sweeney's *The Invader* for Wexford Opera House and the Theatre Royal Waterford, the title role in *Rusalka* for Lyric Opera Dublin, and Cio-Cio San (cover) *Madama Butterfly* at the Albert Hall for Raymond Gubbay.

If you would like to sing with the choir please visit our website, or contact:

Fred Jones on 0161 205 4638

Rehearsals are held every Monday evening at Chadderton Town Hall

+ We aim to sing / promote quality choral music with first class soloists and professional orchestral accompaniment

+ Low annual membership fee

+ We are a very friendly and sociable organisation

FOR FULL DETAILS PLEASE VISIT OUR WEB SITE:

www.oldhamchoral.org.uk



Louise Winter

Mezzo soprano

Louise Winter was born in Preston, Lancashire, and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music. She made her début in 1982 with Glyndebourne Touring Opera as Dorabella *Così fan tutte* and subsequently sang Tisbe *La Cenerentola*, Zerlina *Don Giovanni*, and Rosina *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for the company. Her most recent roles include Marcellina (Royal Opera House), Madame Larina *Eugene Onegin* (Garsington Opera), Wife in Mark-Anthony Turnage's *Greek with Music* Theatre Wales at the Linbury Studio Theatre and on tour in the UK and Korea, Kabanicha *Katya Kabanova* (Longborough Festival) and Madame de

la Haltière *Cendrillon* and Ragonde *Le Comte Ory* (Blackheath Concert Halls). She created the role of Susan in Huw Watkins *In the Locked Room* (a co-production between Music Theatre Wales and Scottish Opera), and gave the world premiere of Charlotte Bray's *Out of the Ruins* for mezzo-soprano, youth chorus and orchestra at a Gala Concert for the Royal Opera House in February 2015.

Previously she has sung title role *Carmen* and Marguerite *La Damnation de Faust* (English National Opera), Olga *Eugene Onegin* (Royal Opera House/Canadian Opera Company/Glyndebourne Festival Opera), Sesto *La clemenza di Tito*, Edwige *Rodelinda*, Varvara *Katya Kabanova*, Pauline *Queen of Spades* (Glyndebourne Festival Opera), Brangäne *Tristan und Isolde*, Venus *Tannhäuser* and Lady Macbeth in Ernst Bloch's *Macbeth* (Frankfurt), Preziosilla *La Forza del Destino* (Rouen).

Louise Winter has sung with many of the world's leading orchestras and conductors including the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle, the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Andrew Davis, the Hallé Orchestra under Mark Elder, the Philharmonia Orchestra under Sir Charles Mackerras, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Carlo Rizzi. She has taken part in many of the BBC Proms over the last decade. As a recitalist she has appeared at the Wigmore Hall, St John's, Smith Square, the Théâtre du Châtelet, the Bath, Belfast and City of London Festivals and at the Amsterdam Concertgebouw.

Her recordings include the complete songs of Frank Bridge for Hyperion, and Haydn Masses under Richard Hickox for Chaconne. Performances on DVD include the Goddess Diana *La Calisto* conducted by René Jacobs.

Plans include Anaide in Leoncavallo's *Zazà* (Opera Holland Park), Gertrude in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* (Glyndebourne on Tour), and Pilar in David Sawer's *The Skating Rink* (Garsington).

Amar Muchhala – Tenor



Indian tenor Amar Muchhala made his Royal Opera House debut in 2013, singing Chulak - *The Firework-Maker's Daughter*, David Bruce, world premier, in the Linbury Studio Theater. He also covered the role of Essex in Richard Jones's production of *Gloriana*, Britten in 2013 at ROH, Covent Garden. In 2014/15 he returned to the Royal Opera House to sing the role of "Alex" in the world premier of *GLARE* by Søren Nils Eichberg. He went on to cover the role of Pasterz in the 2015 Royal Opera House, Covent Garden production by Kasper Holten of *Krol Roger*, Szymanowski, conducted by Antonio Pappano. More recently, Amar worked closely with director Graham Vick in the new production of *Morgen und Abend* by Georg Friedrich Haas, yet another world premier where he covered the lead tenor role of Peter.

Muchhala was born in Bombay and studied Business Management and French Literature at Franklin and Marshall College, Pennsylvania, only to pursue an operatic career after his opera studies on the world renowned opera course at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. He made his debut in Germany with Kammeroper Schloss Rheinsberg in their production of Boieldieu's *Die Weisse Dame*, (*La Dame Blanche*), singing the lead role of Georg.

He will make his debut at Hannover State Opera in April 2017 in the world premiere of "LOT" by Giorgio Battistelli. His past operatic engagements include "Mo" Barbur in *London* for The Opera Group, Ferrando *Così fan tutte* for Hamburg University of Music and Theatre, and Tamino *The Magic Flute* for British Youth Opera. Having naturally transitioned to lyric repertoire, he remains focused on a variety of Lyric roles from the Italian, German and Slavic repertory.

**For all the latest news, and gossip about Oldham Choral Society
please visit our FACEBOOK page.**

**If you have enjoyed our concert, why not leave feedback?
You can also make suggestions for future concerts.**



Henry Waddington – Bass

Born in Kent, Henry Waddington studied at the Royal Northern College of Music with Barbara Robotham.

He joined Glyndebourne Touring Opera in 1992, singing **The Madhouse Keeper** *The Rake's Progress*, a role he repeated with Glyndebourne Festival in 1994. On the 1994 GTO tour, he created the roles of **The Monstrous Messenger** and **Joe Shady** in Sir Harrison Birtwistle's *The Second Mrs Kong* for which he received the GTO/Eso Award for outstanding young singers, and he subsequently repeated the roles in the 1995 Glyndebourne Festival. Further Glyndebourne engagements have included **Stage Hand** *The Makropoulos Case*, (which was filmed for TV and video), and which he also sang at the BBC Proms and toured to New

York, **Antonio** *The Marriage of Figaro*, **Graf Lamoral** *Arabella*, **Major Domo** *Capriccio*, **Quince** *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, **Valens** *Theodora*, **Don Fernando** *Fidelio*, **Christus** *The St Matthew Passion* and **Kothner** *Die Meistersinger*. For Glyndebourne on Tour he has sung **Colline** *La Bohème*, **Publio** *La Clemenza di Tito*, **Valens**, **Don Magnifico** *Cenerentola* and **Don Alfonso** *Così fan tutte*.

For the Royal Opera: **Fiorello** *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, **Sacristan** *Tosca*, **Zuniga** *Carmen*, and **Spinellochio** *Gianni Schicci*. For Opera North he has sung the title role of **Falstaff**, **Colline**, **Sacristan**, **Police Commissar** *Der Rosenkavalier*, **First Workman** *Wozzeck*, **Geronimo** *The Secret Marriage*, **Cyrus** *Croesus* and **Frère Laurent** *Roméo et Juliette*, and for Welsh National Opera he has sung **Count Horn** *Un ballo in maschera*, **Don Basilio** *Il barbiere*, **Bartolo** *Le nozze di Figaro* and **First Nazarene** *Salome*.

In Europe he has sung **Soligni** *Three Sisters* (by Peter Eotvos), **Plutone** *Orfeo*, **Brander** *La damnation de Faust*, **Dieu infernale** and **Oracle** in *Alceste*, and **Quince** at La Monnaie Brussels and **Quince** for the Liceu in Barcelona and at the Teatro Real in Madrid.

Concert performances of operas have included Vaughan Williams' *Sir John in Love* with British Youth Opera, **Keeper of the Madhouse** *The Rake's Progress* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, and **Callestene** *Poliuto* and **Oroe** *Semiramide* for the Chelsea Opera Group.

Concert repertoire includes the *Mozart Mass in C* for the Salzburg Festival, **Brander** *La damnation de Faust* for the Philharmonia, Puccini *Messe di Gloria* and Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ* with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, a tour of Handel's *Solomon* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment under René Jacobs including concerts in London, Paris and New York, *Israel in Egypt* with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, *The Messiah* with the Philharmonia, the English Concert and the Huddersfield Choral Society, Haydn's *Seven Last Words* for the Edinburgh Festival and Haydn Arias at the Wigmore Hall.

Recent and future operatic engagements include **Man at window/Old man Youth/Beggar** in Martinu's *Julietta*, **Jupiter** *Castor and Pollux*, **Sacristan** *Tosca* and **Lt. Ratcliffe** *Billy Budd* for ENO, **Spinellochio** *Gianni Schicci* for Royal Opera House, **Bartolo** *Figaro* for WNO, **Lt. Ratcliffe** for Netherlands Opera, **Pallante** for the Gran Teatre del Liceu, Barcelona, **Pastor Oberlin** *Jakob Lenz* and **Bartolo** for Staatstheater Stuttgart, **Kothner** *Die Meistersinger*, **Don Pedro** *Beatrice and Benedict* and the title role in **Saul** for Glyndebourne, **Publio** *La clemenza di Tito*, **Lodovico** *Otello*, **Bottom** *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and **Bartolo** for Opera North, **Don Basilio** *Il barbiere di Siviglia* both for the Staatstheater Stuttgart, **Swallow** *Peter Grimes* for Aldeburgh Festival, **Alcindoro / Benoit** in *La bohème* at the Royal Albert Hall for Raymond Gubbay, **Quince** for the Aix en Provence Festival and concert performances of *Wozzeck* with the Philharmonia Orchestra under Esa-Pekka Salonen in Europe and the USA.

Handel in brief

- He was born in 1685, in Halle in Saxony, trained in Italy, and spent most of his life in England.
- He settled in England in 1712, becoming a naturalized subject of the British crown on 22 January 1727.
- In 1723 Handel moved into a newly built house at 25 Brook St, London, which he rented until his death.. You can now visit this as the Handel House Museum. Other owners of the house, (pictured below), have included Jimmy Hendrix.
- In 1726 Handel's opera *Scipio* was performed for the first time—the march from which remains the regimental march of the British Grenadier Guards
- In 1727 Handel was commissioned to write four anthems for the coronation ceremony of King George II. One of these, **Zadok the Priest**, has been played at every coronation ceremony since, and has been adapted as the theme for the Champions League.



- A carved marble statue of Handel, (pictured below left), was erected in the then popular Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens in 1738, and is now preserved in the Victoria and Albert Museum.



- He wrote the popular tunes for ***Joy to the world*** and ***Rejoice the Lord is King***.
- His march ***See the conquering hero comes*** from *Judas Maccabaeus* was used to celebrate the home-coming of the Duke of Cumberland after his slaughter of the Jacobites at Culloden.
- Handel had a long association with the King's Theatre on Haymarket, and also with the Royal Opera House Covent Garden, where many of his Italian operas were premiered. It was only after his operas had brought him financial ruin in 1740 that he began composing oratorios—which were much cheaper to put on.
- He is said to have composed the “Messiah” in 22 days at his Brook St. residence.
- His involvement with the Foundling Hospital is today commemorated with a permanent exhibition in the Foundling Museum London, which also holds the *Gerald Coke Handel Collection*
- For much of his life Handel was clearly obese. According to friends and admirers he “*paid more attention to [his food] than is becoming in any man*” and was “*corpulent and unwieldy in his motions*”. Others were less kind, making him the butt of jokes and mocking verses.
- When he died on April 14th 1759, more than three thousand mourners attended his funeral, which was given full state honours.
- He was buried in Westminster Abbey where his Coronation anthems had first been heard, and an impressive statue of him can be found in “Poet’s corner”. At his feet lies carved the opening bars of *I know that my Redeemer liveth*

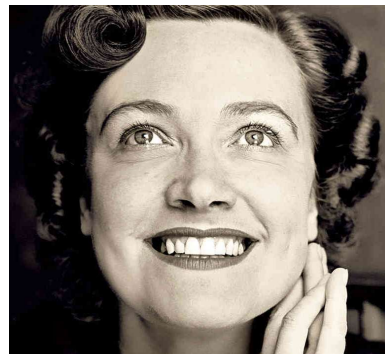


OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY PERFORM THE MESSIAH

– a totally incomplete history!

In common with most northern choral societies, there is long tradition of Oldham Choral Society performing "Messiah". Unfortunately we don't have any archive material relating to performances prior to 1900, but it was certainly performed regularly in the 20th century, and from the 1930s through until the mid-60s. It appears to have been sung at least every December. We know for sure that the society performed "Messiah" on Christmas Day 1909 at the Empire Theatre, with a choir of 110 and an orchestra of 30, but – to our knowledge, no programme exists for this or any earlier performances. The earliest performance for which we still have a programme was in 1913, and was held in the Co-operative Hall, Greenacres, conducted by Mr Harry Brookes. (The leader of the orchestra went by the name of Mr. J. Woof – Gaggs!)

According to the programme there were 150 in choir and orchestra, and the bass was Norman Allin, (possibly the greatest and best known British bass of the day).



Oldham Choral Society has, in fact, always been noted for its ability to engage world class soloists, often – arguably the best in the world in the "Messiah" solos.

Dame Isobel Baillie's interpretation, [left], of the soprano role was long regarded as the benchmark, and she sang it with the choir in December 1939 at the Empire, and returned the following year, along with two of the country's leading singers Frank Mullings (tenor) and Robert Easton (bass). Elsie Morrison, who gives an immaculate account of the soprano solos on the 1959 recording under Malcolm Sargent, sang them with the choir in 1952.

Other notable sopranos to sing "Messiah" with OCS include, Ada Alsop (1947 (2), 1951, 1953, and 1955), Joan Cross (1948), Honor Sheppard (1959, 1961 and 1965), Rae Woodland (1962 and 1976) and Marion Studholme (1968)

Turning to altos / mezzos: in 1944 the legendary Kathleen Ferrier, [top right], then at the peak of her short career, was engaged to sing the alto role for 2 performances, one at the Co-operative Hall,

(King St.) on December 10th, and then the following Sunday at the Carlton Theatre Stockport.

Marjorie Thomas sang several performances from March 1945 onwards, and then in 1961, Janet Baker, [right], was engaged for a performance at the Hill Stores, (by this time a regular venue for the choir). Another acclaimed interpreter of the role, Lancastrian Alfreda Hodgson sang "Messiah" for the choir for 3 consecutive seasons (1964 to 1966), whilst in the 1970s Norma Procter was a guest soloist.

The list of tenors is equally impressive. The legendary Heddle Nash was engaged for the choir's 50th anniversary performance at the Empire in 1934, alongside Stiles Allen, Edith Furnedged and



Tom Williams, with "choir and orchestra of over 200" conducted by Ernest Craig.

The famous Yorkshire tenor Walter Widdop joined us in in 1943 for a performance at the Co-operative Hall, King St, and then in 1946, having just created the role of "Peter Grimes", it was Peter Pears, [left].

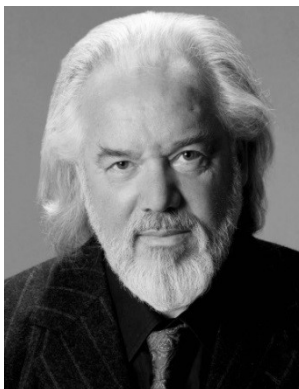
Richard Lewis [right] – arguably the foremost "Messiah tenor" of the post-war era, joined us in 1950 for a performance at the Gaumont Cinema.

Other notable tenors include: Parry Jones (1942), Thomas Round (1955) John Mitchinson (1957, 1959, 1960, 1963 and 1964), Dennis O'Neill (1974) and Anthony Rolfe Johnson (1976).



Our bass this evening, Henry Waddington was one of 6 nominees for Best Male Singer at the International Opera Awards for his performance in Handel's "Saul" at Glyndebourne in 2015. He joins a distinguished list of bass-baritones who have sung the role with choir. In chronological order these include: Norman Allin, Robert Easton, and Tom Williams (as already mentioned), George Walker and George Allen, (throughout much of the 1950s and early 60s), the great Polish bass Marian Nowakowski, (1958) and Sir John Tomlinson - [right] (1972 and 1975).

NW March 2017



As current MD for the choir, I am delighted that we continue to be able to engage soloists of the highest calibre, but if I had to go for my "dream cast", it would include Elsie Morrison, (with apologies to Baillie fans), Richard Lewis and Sir John . I could not choose between the very different interpretations of Kathleen Ferrier and Alfreda Hodgson, so, following Handel's practice, I would split the role between alto and mezzo.

Handel: “Messiah”

MAJORA CANAMUS (Virgil, Eclogue IV)

And without controversy: Great is the mystery of Godliness:

God was manifested in the Flesh, justified by the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in Glory.

In whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge.

(1 Timothy iii, 16; Colossians ii, 3)

Selected by Jennens and printed as a preface to the word book,
at the first performance in Dublin in April 1742.

PART ONE

1. **Overture**
2. **Tenor recitative** Comfort ye, comfort ye my people
3. **Tenor aria** Ev'ry valley shall be exalted
4. **Chorus** And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed
5. **Bass recitative** Thus saith the Lord of hosts
6. **Aria** But who may abide the day of his coming? *
7. **Chorus** And He shall purify the sons of Levi
8. **Contralto recitative** Behold a virgin shall conceive,
9. **Contralto aria and Chorus** O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
10. **Bass recitative** For behold, darkness shall cover the earth
11. **Bass aria** The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light
12. **Chorus** For unto us a child is born
13. **Pifa** (Pastoral Symphony)
14. **Soprano recitative** There were shepherds, abiding in the field
15. **Soprano recitative** And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them
16. **Soprano recitative** And the angel said unto them, fear not
17. **Soprano recitative** And suddenly there was with the angel
18. **Chorus** Glory to God in the Highest
19. **Soprano aria** Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion +
20. **Contralto recitative** Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened ++
21. **Contralto / soprano aria** He shall feed His flock like a shepherd / Come unto him ++
22. **Chorus** His yoke is easy and his burden is light

* This is the 1st version to be written and was intended to be sung by a counter-tenor. There is a 2nd version in higher key for soprano. There is no evidence anywhere that Handel ever intended or sanctioned it to be sung by a bass, as was the fashion in Victorian England and for the first half of the 20th century.

+ The original version in 4/4 time not the later 12/8 version

++ This is the 2nd version to be written. The original was for soprano only. This has an undesirable effect on the structure of the work since it places 2 long soprano solos one after the other.

INTERVAL

Refreshments and licensed bar available

PART TWO

1. **Chorus** Behold the Lamb of God
2. **Contralto aria** He was despised and rejected of men ? He gave his back to the smiters
3. **Chorus** Surely He hath borne our griefs
4. **Chorus** And with His stripes we are healed
5. **Chorus** All we like sheep have gone astray
6. **Tenor recitative** All they that see him laugh him to scorn
7. **Chorus** He trusted in God that he would deliver him
8. **Tenor recitative** Thy rebuke hath broken his heart
9. **Tenor aria** Behold and see if there be any sorrow
10. **Soprano recitative** He was cut out of the land of the living
11. **Soprano aria** But thou didst not leave his soul in hell
12. **Chorus** Lift up your heads, O ye gates
13. *Tenor recitative Unto which of the angels said he at any time? **
14. *Chorus Let all the angels of God worship him **
15. *Countertenor aria Thou art gone up on high **
16. *Chorus The Lord gave the word **
17. **Soprano aria** How beautiful are the feet of them that preach
18. **Chorus** Their sound is gone out into all lands
19. **Bass aria** Why do the nations so furiously rage together?
20. **Chorus** Let us break their bonds asunder
21. **Tenor recitative** He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn
22. **Tenor aria** Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron
- Following a tradition of over 250 years we all stand for the **Hallelujah chorus***
23. **Chorus** Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth, and he shall reign for ever and ever

SHORT PAUSE

PART THREE

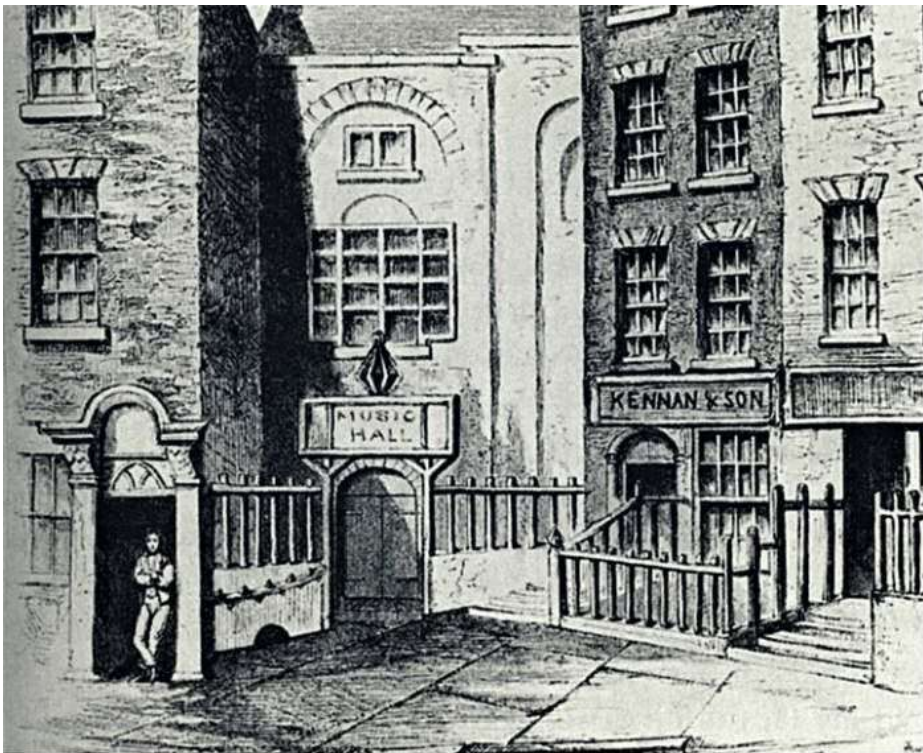
24. **Soprano aria** I know that my Redeemer liveth
25. **Chorus** Since by man came death
26. **Bass recitative** Behold, I tell you a mystery
27. **Bass aria** The trumpet shall sound
28. *Countertenor recitative Then shall be brought to pass **
29. *Countertenor/tenor duet O death, where is thy sting? **
30. *Chorus But thanks be to God who giveth us the victory **
31. **Soprano aria** If God be for us, who can be against us?
32. **Chorus** Worthy is the Lamb that was slain
33. **Chorus** Amen

**Omitted in this performance*



A Brief History of Handel's "Messiah"

'*Messiah*' was written in anticipation of a visit to Dublin in 1741, at the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. During the winter season Handel organized two series of six subscription concerts at the New Music Hall, Fishamble Street. The concerts featured some of his most popular works (including '*Acis and Galatea*' and '*Esther*'), but the new oratorio '*Messiah*' was reserved until the end of the season when it was performed in aid of three Dublin charities on 13 April 1742.



In order to squeeze in as many people as possible the Stewards of the Charitable Musical Society requested '*the Favour of the Ladies not to come with Hoops*' and the Gentlemen '*to come without their Swords*'. The precaution paid off, and the papers reported that '*There were about 700 People in the Room, and the Sum collected ... amounted to about £400*'.

As for the music, the Dublin Journal was eloquent in its praise:

'Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear.'



By popular demand *'Messiah'* was repeated at Handel's farewell concert on 3 June, and, as at the premiere, it was interspersed with organ concertos played by the composer, as was his usual practice in oratorios. *'Messiah'* was introduced to London audiences the following year, at the end of Handel's Lenten oratorio season at Covent Garden Theatre. There it met with a distinctly hostile reception. As one press article put it:

'An Oratorio either is an Act of Religion, or it is not; if it is, I ask if the Playhouse is a fit Temple to perform it in, or a Company of Players fit Ministers of God's Word.'

Added to this, the public apparently preferred Handel's other new oratorio, *'Samson'*, which was heard nine times that season compared with only three performances of *'Messiah'*.

Although Handel made a number of attempts to revive his *'Sacred Oratorio'* in 1745 and 1749, it was not until 1750 that regular performances of the work became an established feature of his Lenten oratorio season at Covent Garden. It was in this year too that Handel judiciously renewed the connection between *'Messiah'* and charity, by establishing the tradition of performing it in April or May for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, of which he was a governor.



The Foundling Hospital

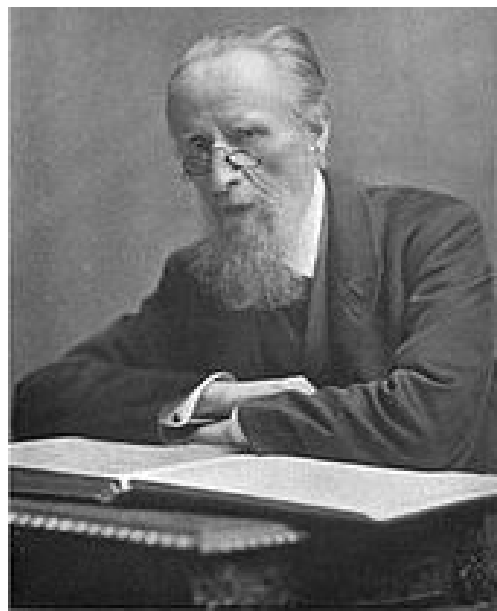
Till the end of his life Handel continued to make revisions and indeed re-wrote some numbers following criticism of his work by his librettist Jennens, who did not consider that the oratorio represented Handel at anywhere near his best!

Handel also made many amendments to suit the singers available for, and the circumstances of, a particular performance. In total there are no fewer than 11 movements that were significantly re-written or re-shaped, whilst the original versions were not

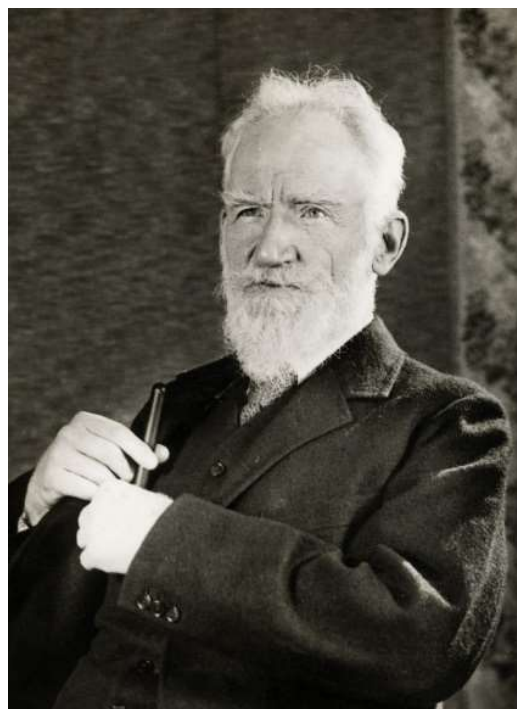
discarded. There are therefore many variants that can be selected for performance, and no performance can really be described as definitive. There are however, some variants that are rarely included except for novelty value, and it is fair to say that by the time of Handel's death certain variants had been pretty much discarded and the oratorio had taken the shape that is generally familiar today. There still exist, however, multiple versions of some numbers, and the particular circumstances of performance and the soloists available can inform our choice of version.

The earliest provincial performance of *'Messiah'* was given at Oxford in 1749 by *'about forty voices and fifty instruments'*. By all accounts it was an overwhelming success, and the *'crowded audience'* received it with *'great applause'*. The following year William Boyce introduced the work to the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford, and it was soon taken up by musical societies in Salisbury, Bath, Bristol, Gloucester and Worcester.

"Tinkering" with *'Messiah'* continued long after Handel's death. Mozart's celebrated re-orchestration opened the floodgates to many well-intentioned but –arguably – misdirected attempts to elaborate the calculated sobriety of Handel's orchestration. Men such as Ebenezer Prout, Sir Hamilton Harty, Sir Malcolm Sargent and even Sir Thomas Beecham all sincerely believed that they were reinforcing Handel's message by thickening the orchestral texture by adding extra woodwind, brass and percussion, (inc. harps in the spectacular arrangement by Goosens).



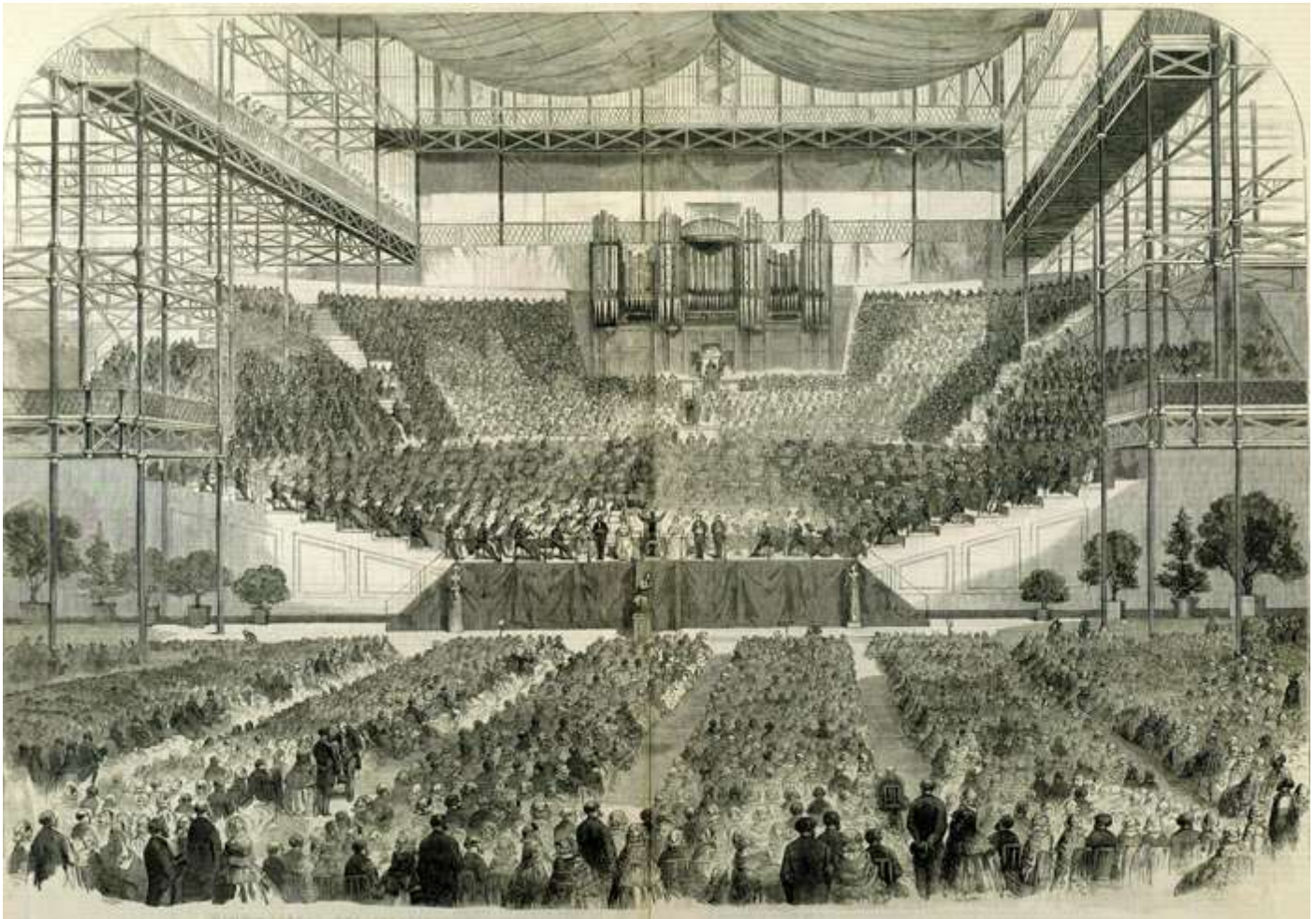
Ebenezer Prout.



In the nineteenth century *'Messiah'* almost approached the status of a national institution. It was increasingly performed with mammoth forces (choirs of 2,500 singers were by no means exceptional), as a potent form of imperial propaganda and as a convenient mouthpiece for the Victorian doctrines of progress and social amelioration. George Bernard Shaw who was not afraid to court controversy wrote:

"The stale wonderment which the great chorus never fails to elicit has already been exhausted. Why, instead of wasting huge sums on the multitudinous dullness of a Handel Festival does not somebody set up a thoroughly rehearsed and exhaustively studied performance of the Messiah in St James's Hall with a chorus of twenty capable artists? Most of us would be glad to hear the work seriously performed once before we die." In the last sixty years or so there has been a vital reassessment of the authentic performance of Baroque music, and *'Messiah'*,

has been at its very forefront. But ultimately, however performed and by whoever, *'Messiah'* is never likely to relinquish its position as the most popular and enduring work in the English choral repertoire.



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PERFORMING THE MESSIAH IN 2017

For this performance we have elected to perform the popular version edited by Watkins Shaw in 1959, and subsequently revised and refined by him in 1991.

It is a slim version of "*Messiah*" that aims to replicate performance practice of Handel's time by facilitating lighter, clearer textures, neater articulations and quicker tempos than had become customary over the previous two centuries.

For the original performance Handel had at his disposal the choirs of St Patrick's and Christchurch Cathedral Dublin. This amounted to 32 voices in total, (16 boys and 16 men). The accompaniment was provided by a small group of strings, 2 trumpets and harpsichord continuo. This would have resulted in a lightness and clarity of texture that we seek to achieve in this evening's performance.

Watkins Shaw also includes the optional oboe parts that Handel added later which generally double the soprano and alto choral parts, but we have decided to omit these and keep to Handel's original intention. This is partly because our choral sopranos and altos do not need the support of doubling instruments, partly to keep the orchestra texture as light as possible, and partly to replicate the original Dublin performances of 1742.

Obviously our choir is significantly larger than at the first performance, but two points should be borne in mind.

Firstly Handel had 32 trained singers at his disposal, (presumably amongst the best singers available in Dublin), and also the string instruments of the time were far less resonant and bright in tone, so hopefully we will achieve the sort of balance that Handel intended, without some of the "heaviness" that was traditionally associated with '*Messiah*' for many decades.

The following decisions about performing variants have been taken:

Part 1

No. 6 *But who may abide* originally written for countertenor, but also transposed for soprano by Handel, was allocated to the bass in the famous Prout edition, but will be sung tonight by the mezzo.

The Pifa – sometimes referred to as "The Pastoral Symphony" will be performed in its shorter form.

Nos. 19 and 20 – following long established tradition will be sung in the duet version, first mezzo and then soprano. The original version was for soprano only, but after the first series of performances, Handel decided to involve the theatre singer Mrs. (Susannah) Cibber into the second series. She was a mezzo so he transposed these 2 items down to "F" for her.

Part 2

No. 23 *He was despised* will be sung in the mezzo version adapted for Mrs. Cibber, and will include the dramatic "middle section", followed by an abridged version of the "A" section. The sequence of numbers 29 to 32, are allocated entirely to the tenor soloist. There is a very strong case for 31 and 32 being sung by the soprano, (reflecting the change of mood), but having decided to cut 33 to 37, this would then mean that the soprano aria (32) would be directly followed by another (38), which would have gone against the musical logic of Handel's original plan.

No. 39 *Their sound is gone out* was originally set as a tenor solo by Handel, but later written for 4 part choir. It is totally omitted this evening.

The bass aria *Why do the nations* (No. 40) is sung in its well-known and popular longer form.

Part 3

The duet for alto and tenor (No.49 /50), "O death where is thy sting" and the short chorus that follows it are both omitted. (These are generally considered to be amongst the weaker numbers in the oratorio).

Only the "A" section of No. 52 *The trumpet shall sound* is being performed. It is a very long aria if performed in its entirety.

In preparing this performance I have been guided by certain principles that I consider to be important.

Firstly that the text must be considered paramount, and the way each movement is to performed seems to be clearer if we study carefully the meaning of the text and the manner in which Handel set it. Handel clearly understood the Biblical text and its sub-text, and it is also clear that he fully understood the spoken English language, for his musical setting of the text is unerringly accurate and effective.

Secondly, I consider it important to bear in mind that Handel was at heart an opera composer, and he wrote the piece for the theatre. He only began composing oratorios because he found staging operas to be prohibitively expensive, and even though there is no actual narrative to '*Messiah*', it is nonetheless a dramatic work, with many different moods and colours highlighted in his setting.

And finally, it should be noted that much of the music has a dance-like quality, (indeed many of the movements were recycled from dance music that he had previously composed). The performance therefore should be characterised by lightness, clean crisp articulation and rhythmic vitality, especially in the polyphonic choral singing and the manner of the string playing.

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY – "AT HOME"

*There will be no summer concert this year, but we invite you to join us
for an end of season celebration on*

Friday June 16th at 7.30, Chadderton Town Hall

The choir will be singing a variety of (mainly light-hearted) choruses, and there will also be miscellaneous items by members of the choir. There will be a licensed bar, raffle, tombola etc., and a "light" buffet, provided by members of the choir.

[Full details on our website soon]

Admission is restricted to 120 guests and will be by ticket only on a first come first served basis.

There will be no charge, but it is hoped that all guests will make a generous donation.

*To apply for tickets please contact our ticket secretary - Margaret Hallam -
margaretandles21@btinternet.com*

or speak to any choir member who can arrange this for you.

Tickets available from May 1st.

OLDHAM CHORAL SOCIETY 2017

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SUNDAY NOV 12th 2017 7.00pm Here at the RNCM

“WAR & PEACE”

A REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY REFLECTION

“THE ARMED MAN” (KARL JENKINS)

“REQUIEM FOR THE LIVING” (DAN FORREST)

Karl Jenkins' Mass for Peace *"The Armed Man"* is now firmly established as a favourite with both choirs and audiences alike, and it is in fact the most frequently performed 21st century choral work. It was commissioned by The Royal Armouries for the Millennium and was dedicated to victims of the Kosovo crisis.

By contrast, Dan Forrest's *"Requiem for the Living"* [2013], has had relatively few UK performances, but has already been performed over 100 times world-wide, including performances in Canada, South America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and multiple performances at the Carnegie Hall. It is a 40 minute 5 movement work, for choir 2 soloists and orchestra in a modern but very tuneful and approachable style. *"Highly accessible, with soaring melodies and luminous harmony".*

SUNDAY APRIL 29th 7.30pm 2018 at the RNCM

ELGAR: THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS



Elgar

The Dream of Gerontius

To mark
Nigel Wilkinson's 20th
Season as Music Director

Tenor: Benjamin Hulett

Mezzo-soprano:

Kathleen Wilkinson

Bass: tbc

The East Lancs Sinfonia

The *"Dream of Gerontius"* is one of the great choral masterpieces, and arguably the greatest English choral work of all time. John Henry Newman's famous text follows Gerontius' journey from his deathbed, [where he is mourned by his friends], beyond death, through the trials of purgatory [where he is tormented by demons], and, finally, guided by Angels, through the gates of Heaven to eternal salvation. It inspired Elgar to write some of his most thrilling and moving music, reaching sublime heights in the "hymn" *"Praise to the Holiest"* and culminating in the tranquil, consoling serenity of the Angel's farewell.



**"I
think
I
did
see
all
heaven
before
me,
and
the
great
God
himself"**

***G.F. Handel
on
completion of
the
Hallelujah
Chorus***