

# The Shepherd Society

presents  
the Third Annual

## MESSIAH SING-ALONG

December 13, 1982  
Rice University  
Hamman Hall  
8:00 P.M.

*Mark Janas, conductor*  
*Shepherd School Student Soloists*

RICE UNIVERSITY

the  
Shepherd  
School  
of Music





## NOTES

The story that Handel's *Messiah* was written in a blaze of divine inspiration, in 24 days, from August 22 to September 14, 1741, as program notes frequently have it, is a pious distortion of the truth. One likes to think of *Messiah* as having been dictated by the angels, but the fact of the matter is that several of its most famous choruses ("And he shall purify," "For unto us a child is born" and "His yoke is easy" among them) derive from earlier works set to secular Italian texts. Moreover, Handel wrote his Italian operas in equally short spans of time, using the same methods he employed in *Messiah* – frequently borrowing from other sources and the "inspiration" of an inflexible deadline.

Had the angels actually dictated the oratorio, they might have been more specific about what they wanted. *Messiah* went through many changes and revisions after the Dublin premiere in 1741. Some of the changes were suggested by the librettist, Charles Jennens. Other changes were made to suit individual singers or the varying conditions of performance. By the mid-1750's the oratorio had settled down to something resembling the "standard" version of Victorian vocal scores – meaning that Handel, at least, was satisfied with it. When Handel ceased tinkering, other hands – all far from angelic – added their "improvements." Among the first meddlers was Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who in 1789 arranged *Messiah* (in German) to suit the taste of the Baron Gottfried van Swieten. During the Victorian vogue for oratorio societies both amateur and professional, *Messiah* began to assume the grandiose proportions of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, despite evidence that Handel's own performances had employed fewer than 25 choristers and no more than 40 players in the orchestra. The Victorian tradition, still to be encountered in the performances of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, reaches its apogee in Sir Thomas Beecham's RCA recording, which included heavyweight brass, a full compliment of strings and elaborate percussion, including cymbals and anvil. (One critic dubbed it "*Messiah* – *daemmerung*.") Since Beecham's day, the pendulum has swung back in the direction of authentic baroque style, and several performances and recordings have attempted to recreate *Messiah* as Handel's contemporaries must have heard it.

The sequence of music in *Messiah* reflects an underlying continuity of thought which Handel reinforces through a carefully planned tonal structure. Each of the more substantial numbers marks a step in the tonal progression. Although *Messiah* is not "in" a particular key, an aspiration towards D major, with its associations of glory and light is apparent and helps provide a sense of dramatic movement, even though there is no "plot" in the quasi-operatic manner of Solomon or Saul. Although Handel worked within the musical conventions of his time – the bass aria "why do the nations," for instance, is a "rage" aria typical of baroque opera – formally *Messiah*, together with the earlier *Israel in Egypt*, represents the beginning of a true English oratorio tradition, as distinct from opera as from the liturgical music intended for church use.

THE SHEPHERD SOCIETY was inaugurated December 1, 1977 "... for the purposes of supporting the Shepherd School of Music in the achievements of its goals, of providing scholarship support to the talented students of the Shepherd School, of contributing to the insights and pleasures of our members, of honoring worthy practitioners and students of the art of music, its teaching or performance, and of undertaking such other action as we may deem desirable in supporting the cause of music at Rice University and in Houston."

The Shepherd Society's next public presentation is their annual Young People's Concert. This concert begins at 11:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 29, 1983 in Hamman Hall. If you desire further information on the Shepherd Society, please call 527-4837.



PART II (selections)

*Chorus: Behold the lamb of God*

*Air for Alto: He was despised*

Laurie Rutherford

*Chorus: Surely he hath borne our griefs*

*Chorus: He trusted in God*

*Chorus: Lift up your heads*

*Chorus: Hallelujah*

PART III (selections)

*Air for Soprano: I know that my Redeemer liveth*

Jeanette Thompson

*Chorus: Since by man came death*

*Recitative for Bass: Behold I tell you a mystery*

*Air for Bass: The trumpet shall sound*

Mark Kelley

*Duet for Alto and Tenor: O Death, where is thy sting?*

Laurie Rutherford

Randolph A. Lacy

*Chorus: But thanks be to God*

*Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb*

*The Messiah Sing-Along Orchestra is composed of students, alumni, faculty and friends of the Shepherd School of Music.*

*Conductor Mark Janas is a graduate of the Master's Conducting program of the Shepherd School of Music.*

# PROGRAM

Messiah

George Friedrich Handel  
(1685-1759)

## PART I

*Recitative for Tenor: Comfort ye my People*

*Air for Tenor: Every valley shall be exalted*

Randolph A. Lacy

*Chorus: And the glory of the Lord*

*Recitative for Bass: Thus saith the Lord*

*Air for Bass: But who may abide the day of his coming?*

Russell Jones

*Chorus: And he shall purify*

*Recitative for Alto: Behold, a virgin shall conceive*

*Air for Alto: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion*

Laura Overstreet

*Recitative for Bass: For behold darkness shall cover the earth*

*Air for Bass: The people that walked in darkness*

Roman Rebilas

*Chorus: For unto us a child is born*

*Recitative for Soprano: There were shepherds abiding in the field*

*Recitative for Soprano: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them*

*Recitative for Soprano: And the angel said unto them*

*Recitative for Soprano: And suddenly there was with the angel*

Cathy Guajardo

*Chorus: Glory to God*

*Air for Soprano: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion*

Cathy Guajardo

*Recitative for Alto: Then shall the eyes of the blind*

*Air for Alto: He shall feed his flock*

Johanna Thompson

*Air for Soprano: Come unto him*

Claire DeStefano

*Chorus: His yoke is easy, and his burden is light*