

ST GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE

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LONDON CONCORD SINGERS
AND ORCHESTRA

Musical Director Malcolm Cottle

Assistant Musical Director Graham Owen

Elizabeth Harrison, soprano

Lesley Reid, contralto

Peter Jeffes, tenor

Geoffrey Shaw, bass

'THE MESSIAH'

by G F Handel

Thursday 8 December, 1977 at 7.30pm

MESSIAH

HANDEL
(1685-1759)

Handel's *Messiah* was first performed in Neal's Music Hall in Dublin on April 30th, 1742. Early London performances were at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in March 1743, and the King's Theatre, Haymarket in April 1745. The fact that none of these happened in churches gives us something of a clue to the nature of the work and its performance. In common with most of the oratorios of the period, *Messiah* was composed as an opera substitute. The performance of operas was forbidden during Lent, so, in order to keep the theatres open and the singers in work, performances of sacred oratorios were given in their place. *Messiah* was, however, not universally approved when it came to London. One lady is reported to have said, 'to be sure, the playhouse is an unfit place for such a solemn performance.'

Messiah is set out in the form of a three-act opera using words from the Bible, arranged and occasionally edited for better service of the music by playwright Charles Jenner and Handel himself.

Part I deals with the expectation and the coming of Christ. Part II tells of the suffering and sacrifice of Christ, culminating in 'Hallelujah' showing the triumphant victory of the sacrifice. Part III is a summary of Christian faith and hope.

In his edition, Watkins Shaw has used three main sources — the manuscript score in the British Museum and that of the library of St Michael's College, Tenbury being the principal ones, the third being the score and orchestral parts bequeathed by Handel to the Foundling Hospital. These manuscripts contain different versions of some of the recitatives and arias, all used by Handel at some time. In tonight's performance we shall, for the most part, be using the more familiar versions, the principal exceptions being the 12/8 version of 'Rejoice greatly' and that for Tenor solo of 'Their sound is gone out'.

PART I

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|-----|---------------------------------|--|
| 1 | <i>Sinfonia (Overture)</i> | |
| 2 | <i>Recit</i> – Tenor | Comfort ye my people |
| 3 | <i>Air</i> – Tenor | Every valley shall be exalted |
| 4 | Chorus | And the glory of the Lord |
| 8 | <i>Recit</i> – Alto | Behold, a virgin shall conceive |
| 9 | <i>Air</i> – Alto and Chorus | O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion. |
| 10 | <i>Recit</i> – Bass | For behold, darkness shall cover the earth |
| 11 | <i>Air</i> – Bass | The people that walked in Darkness |
| 12 | Chorus | For unto us a child is born |
| 13 | <i>Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)</i> | |
| 14a | <i>Recit</i> – Soprano | There were shepherds abiding in the field |
| | b <i>Recit</i> – Soprano | And lo, the angel of the Lord |
| 15 | <i>Recit</i> – Soprano | And the angel said unto them |
| 16 | <i>Recit</i> – Soprano | And suddenly there was with the angel |
| 17 | Chorus | Glory to God |
| 18 | <i>Air</i> – Soprano | Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion |
| 19 | <i>Recit</i> – Alto | Then shall the eyes of the blind |
| 20 | <i>Air</i> – Alto and Soprano | He shall feed his flock |
| 21 | Chorus | His yoke is easy |

INTERVAL 15 mins.

PART II

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|----|----------------------|--|
| 22 | Chorus | Behold the Lamb of God |
| 23 | <i>Air</i> – Alto | He was despised |
| 24 | Chorus | Surely he hath borne our griefs |
| 25 | Chorus | And with his stripes we are healed |
| 26 | Chorus | All we like sheep have gone astray |
| 27 | <i>Recit</i> – Tenor | All they that see him |
| 28 | Chorus | He trusted in God |
| 29 | <i>Recit</i> – Tenor | Thy rebuke hath broken his heart |
| 30 | <i>Air</i> – Tenor | Behold and see if there be any sorrow |
| 31 | <i>Recit</i> – Tenor | He was cut off |
| 32 | <i>Air</i> – Tenor | But thou didst not leave his soul in hell |
| 33 | Chorus | Lift up your heads O ye gates |
| 38 | <i>Air</i> – Soprano | How beautiful are the feet |
| 39 | <i>Air</i> – Tenor | Their sound is gone out |
| 40 | <i>Air</i> – Bass | Why do the nations so furiously rage together? |
| 41 | Chorus | Let us break their bonds asunder |
| 42 | <i>Recit</i> – Tenor | He that dwelleth in Heaven |
| 43 | <i>Air</i> – Tenor | Thou shalt break them |
| 44 | Chorus | Hallelujah |

INTERVAL 10 mins.

PART III

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|----|------------------------------|--|
| 45 | <i>Air</i> – Soprano | I know that my redeemer liveth |
| 46 | Chorus | Since by man came death |
| 47 | <i>Recit</i> – Bass | Behold, I tell you a mystery |
| 48 | <i>Air</i> – Bass | The trumpet shall sound |
| | | (<i>Trumpet solo</i> – David Godfrey) |
| 49 | <i>Recit</i> – Alto | Then shall be brought to pass |
| 50 | <i>Duet</i> – Alto and Tenor | O death, where is thy sting? |
| 51 | Chorus and Quartet | But thanks be to God |
| 53 | Chorus | Worthy is the Lamb – Amen |

ELIZABETH HARRISON

Studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music where she graduated with distinction in both piano and singing.

In 1966 she became the youngest singer to be appointed to the BBC Chorus. On leaving she became a member of the small professional groups of London, notably the Linden Singers and the Monteverdi Choir, with whom she has since appeared frequently as soloist in concerts and BBC recordings.

LESLEY REID

Studied at the Royal College of Music with Gordon Clinton. From the time of leaving college until 1973 she was a member of the BBC Singers, and since then has sung all over Britain and Europe, including four tours in France singing contemporary music with Pierre Boulez. Her frequent record appearances include that of the recent release of Charpentier's opera *Louise*.

PETER JEFFES

Awarded a scholarship to the Royal College of Music, after which he sang with Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Handel Opera. Last year he won the Royal Society of Arts scholarship to study with Paolo Silveri in Rome.

He has recently sung Ferrando in *Così fan Tutte*, and is soon to sing Count Almaviva in the *Barber of Seville* for English National Opera, with whom he made his debut earlier this year.

As well as broadcasting for the BBC and Hessischer Rundfunk (Frankfurt Radio) he has recorded for CBS, Arion and Pye Records. His television appearances include singing 'Che gelida Manina' from *La Bohème* in Holland.

GEOFFREY SHAW

A late entrant into professional music proper, having been a music librarian and church organist for some years previously. He won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music and while a student was appointed bass vicar choral at St Paul's Cathedral. He is now well known as a recital and oratorio singer in the country and has toured the continents of North America and Australia, the sub-continent of India and the Iron Curtain countries, both as soloist and as consort singer with, amongst others, the Early Music Consort. He has made about 30 records, including much Early Music. In addition to teaching at the Guildhall School of Music, he has conducted choirs in Nottinghamshire and London, and regularly adjudicates both vocal and choral classes.

LONDON CONCORD SINGERS

The choir was started in its present form in 1966. It seeks to maintain a small, well-knit group of some thirty voices, practising and performing a wide range of choral music. Its members come from a great variety of backgrounds, though few of them are full-time musicians. The choir's range of activities is equally varied; it has accepted cabaret engagements at many functions, as well as promoting very successful concerts in and around London. In 1974 the choir sang in all three South Bank concert halls, and in St John's, Smith Square, SW1. The group is also much travelled, and has won competitive prizes at home and abroad. It has visited Richmond, Surrey; Walkern in Hertfordshire; Buxton; Castle Howard near York; Chester Cathedral and the Teesside International Festival. Other festival appearances have included Montreux and Dubrovnik. The choir has enjoyed an enthusiastic reception from audiences and from the Press.

In recognition of their continuing support of Contemporary Music, particularly British compositions of the last 25 years, the London Concord Singers have this year been honoured to receive a Jubilee Award from the Performing Rights Society.

MALCOLM COTTLE

The conductor sang for many years as a boy with the choir of St Paul's Cathedral, during which time he sang at the Coronation of the Queen. He also, with the Cathedral choir, toured the United States of America. More recently, as well as conducting the London Concord Singers, he has worked as repetiteur with the New Opera Company at Sadlers Wells Theatre, and toured as Musical Director with the show *Close the coalhouse Door*. He has appeared as Musical Director at the Sheffield Playhouse, the Swan Theatre, Worcester and at the Nottingham Playhouse in *The Canterbury Tales*.

The National Federation of Music Societies, to whom this society is affiliated, supports these concerts with funds made available by the Arts Council of Great Britain.

London Concord Singers would welcome friends wishing to subscribe to increase the activities of the group. Anyone requiring further details or wishing to be placed on the mailing list please contact:

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84 Birch Tree Avenue,
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