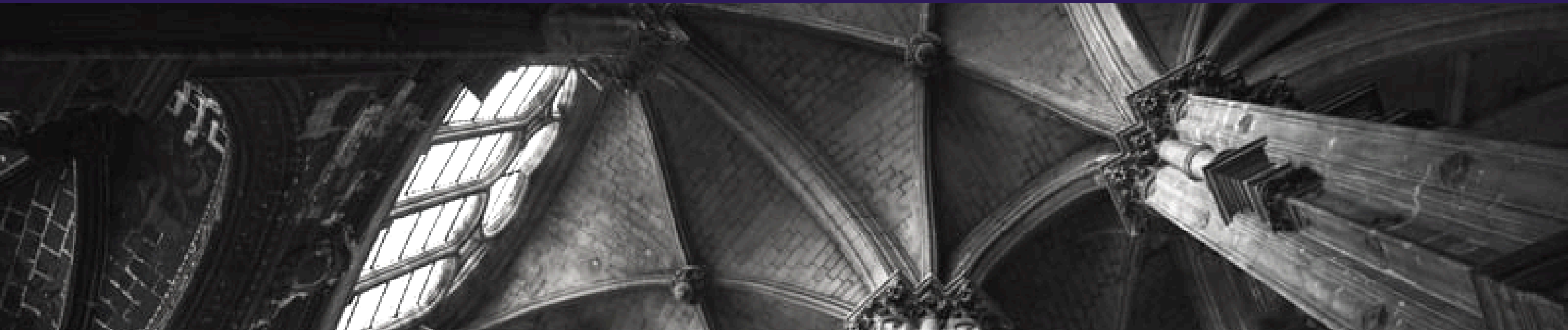


WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM

HANDEL'S "MESSIAH"

AN ORATORIO FOR OUR TIME

Presented by Rev. Dr. Justin L. Addington





HANDEL QUICK FACTS

- Born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685
- Father was a lawyer and did not want him to be a musician
- Mother is rumored to have snuck a clavichord into the attic for him
- Became an organist at a young age - studied with Zachow
- Enrolled in university at 17 to study law
- Moved to Italy in 1707 to study opera
- Appointed court musician to the Elector of Hanover in 1710
- Asked to go to England twice - never returned
- Composer of the Chapel Royal and founder of Royal Academy of Music
- Became a naturalized citizen and the nation's composer
- Never mastered the English language
- His coronation anthems are still used today
- Had several strokes and eventually went blind
- Died on Good Friday, April 13, 1759
- Funeral and Burial in Westminster Abbey

WHAT IS AN ORATORIO?

Key Features

- Like an opera
- Contains arias, choruses, and orchestra
- Often tells a story
- Broken into scenes and acts
- Usually religious in nature
- Not staged
- Initially performed during Lent

Handel Oratorios

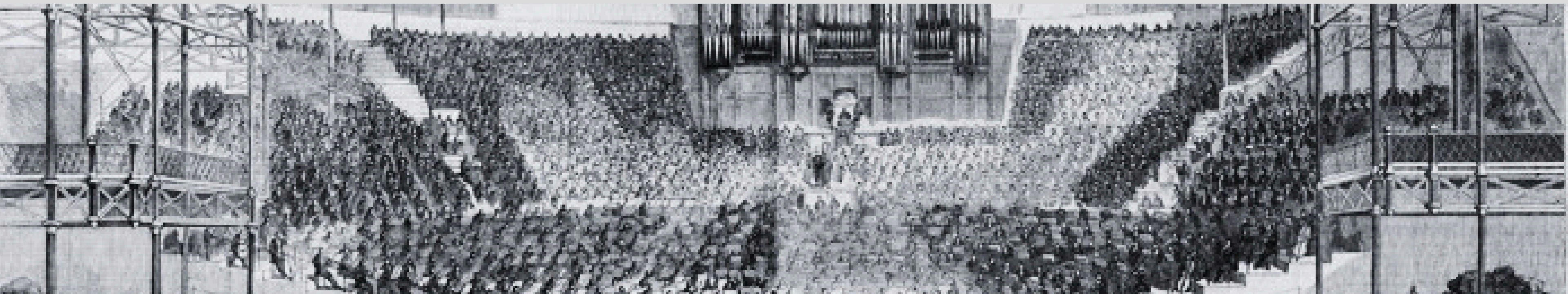
- “Israel in Egypt”
- “Judas Maccabaeus”
- “Ester” (cir. 1720)
- “Saul”
- “Messiah”



WHAT MAKES “MESSIAH” UNIQUE?

Notable Differences

- Uses Old and New Testaments from KJV
- Incorporates Church of England liturgy
- Does NOT tell a story
- There are no characters
- It does not rhyme
- Contains borrowed material
- No authentic version
- Received MAJOR push-back
- Is an Easter work



“MESSIAH” TIMELINE

Important Dates & Performances

- *Composed in the span of 24 days in 1741*
- *Premiered in Dublin on April 13, 1742*
- *Premiered in London at Covent Garden on March 23, 1743*
- *First Foundling Hospital performance in 1750*
- *Benjamin Franklin heard it in 1757*
- *John Wesley heard it in Bristol in 1758*
- *First American performance in NYC in 1770*
- *Last performance at FBC was in 1985*

MAJORA CANAMUS

Inspired by “Every Valley: the Desperate Lives and Troubled Times that Made Handel’s ‘Messiah’” by Charles King

18TH CENTURY CULTURAL LANDSCAPE

- St. Paul's had just been completed
- Newly unified parliament
- Royal line was in question (Jacobites & Divine Pretender)
- Glorious Revolution (MEGA)
- Global empire with naval power
- Political pandemonium ("Paradise Lost")
- Tracts, Cartoons, and Papers (Social Media)
- Term "politician" came into use
- Conflicts in Europe were arising
- Deportations to the colonies and from Africa
- Slave trade by Royal Charter and Biblical authority
- Protests and brawls erupted everywhere
- Oxford Movement
- Enlightenment
 - Science, philosophy, government,
 - War human bondage, marginalized women, grinding poverty, neglected children.



KEY FIGURES IN OUR STORY

The people surrounding the composition of "Messiah"



William Sloper



James Oglethorpe



Ayuba Diallo

CHARLES JENNINGS

(1700-1773)

- Librettist for “Messiah”
- Edited the works of Shakespeare
- Was troubled by the state of the world
- Believed religion and politics were local interpretations of ordering the cosmic
- Saw art and music as a push back in times of crisis
- “Messiah” was his meditation on the human condition
- Three Parts: Prophecy, Suffering, Salvation
- Found in ancient prophecies a way forward
- Believed you had to create the world you wanted
- Offered “Messiah” as a means of hope so that people would write the story in reverse



MEMORABLE QUOTES

BY CHARLES KING

“Messiah” is an archive in song handed down from a period of profound anxiety about improving the world...something we can still relate to today. We must remember that the things we live through are part of figuring out what we are living for”

“Fixing the world would require reimagining the moral order, the text seems to suggest. What seemed normal in everyday life - everyday pain, the cause of suffering - was in fact the opposite of justice and right. A correct universe would be an upended one.”

“The government will be on his shoulders. He will carry it, not win it. He will be King of Kings. Who is the King of glory? Why do the nations rage? Why are the people so vain? These are contemporary questions. But, I tell you a mystery: we will be changed.”

“There is no sorrow like this sorrow. Darkness really does cover the earth. We have gone astray. But do not be afraid. Dwell among your enemies and fears long enough for them to lose their sting. Take captivity captive. When all seems lost - arise and shine.”

“Messiah went from selling children to rescuing them.”

“Messiah has done more to feed the poor, cloth the naked, and foster the orphan, than any other piece of music in history.”





LEGACY OF “MESSIAH”

Real-life Examples

- Still performed all over the world
- New types of performances
 - Sing-a-longs
 - “Mess-Cider”
 - Drunk “Messiah”
 - Rock “Messiah”
 - “Messiah - a Soulful Celebration”
 - Drag “Messiah”
- Martin Luther King used in his speeches
- Today we find meaning in the story of suffering and redemption
- Studying the problems of the past gives us hope for the problems we face today
- The message of redemption contained in “Messiah” is timeless



Messiah

by George Frederic Handel

April 13, 2025
at 5:00 pm

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH
223 Bull Street | Savannah, GA

A large crowd of people at a protest, with various signs visible. The signs include "TRUMP IS A FASCIST", "LIBERTY AND JUSTICE FOR ALL", "STOP TRUMP'S AB ON SCIENCE", "WE NEED FEDERAL WORKERS", "STAND", "STOP DIVIDING PEOPLE", "So many issues so little respect", "STOP talking about Jesus", "IS THIS WHAT GREAT LOOKS LIKE", and "Protest March Protesting RFP".

COMFORT YE