

HANDEL



Congregational Concert Series
presents
ISRAEL IN EGYPT
George Frederick Handel
(1685-1759)

Oratorio Society and Orchestra
Peninsula Master Chorale
Sandra Hart, soprano
Kathy Wait, soprano
Michele Miland, mezzo-soprano
George Shepherd, tenor
Gregory Wait, conductor

Sunday, March 22, 1992

4:00 p.m.

Handel began work on Israel in Egypt on October 1, 1738, just four days after completing Saul, finishing this unique choral saga one month later. This choral aspect of the work bears noting, being as Israel in Egypt represents a remarkable change with respect to Handel's other oratorios. None other is so predominately choral; one commentator speculates that Handel was consciously eliminating the dominant aria style and assigning the main dramatic impulse to the chorus - a much more inward designation. (It should be said that the composer was experiencing more than a few artistic and fiscal setbacks in the operatic theater!)

Unusual to modern contemplation is the extensive (even extreme) use of borrowed musical material throughout this work. Handel was only recently recovered from serious bodily and mental disorders, and sought almost desperately for ideas to finish the work. The fact of the matter is that 16 of the movements owe something, and occasionally practically everything, to the work of other composers - principally the Neapolitan Alessandro Stradella, and two more obscure Italians, Erba and Urlo. It should be asserted, however, that Handel even borrowed liberally from his own writings! It is clear that whether he took his lead from a contemporary or himself, he was able to transform the material in a most remarkable way. As the composer William Boyce wrote: "he takes pebbles and converts them into diamonds."

Overture: O Sing Unto the Lord a New Song

Part One: Exodus

Now there arose a new king over Egypt, which knew not Joseph; and he set over Israel task-masters to afflict them with burdens; and they made them serve with rigor.

2. And the children of Israel sigh'd by reason of the bondage: and their cry came up unto God. They oppress'd them with burdens; and made them serve with rigor.

3. Then sent He Moses, His servant, and Aaron, whom He had chosen; these shew'd His signs among them, and wonders in the land of Ham. - He turned their waters into blood.

4. They loathed to drink of the river: He turned their waters into blood.

5. Their land brought forth frogs, yea, even in the king's chambers. He gave their cattle over to the pestilence. Blotches and blains broke forth on man and beast.

6. He spake the word: and there came all manner of flies and lice in all their quarters. He spake: and the locusts came without number and devour'd the fruits of the land.

7. He gave them hailstones for rain; fire, mingled with the hail, ran along upon the ground.

8. He sent a thick darkness over all the land, even darkness, which might be felt.

9. He smote all the first-born of Egypt, the chief of all their strength.

10. But as for His people, He led them forth like sheep. He brought them out with silver and gold: there was not one feeble person among their tribes.

11. He rebuked the Red Sea, and it was dried up.

12. He led them through the deep as through a wilderness.

13. But the waters overwhelmed their enemies, there was not one of them left.

14. The depths have covered them, they sank into the bottom as a stone.

INTERMISSION

Part Two: Moses' Song

15. Moses and the children of Israel sung this song unto the Lord, and spake, saying:

16. I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

17. The Lord is my strength and my song. He is become my salvation.

18. He is my God, and I will prepare Him an habitation: my father's God.

19. Thou sentest forth Thy wrath, which consumed them as stubble.

20. And with the blast of Thy nostrils the waters were gathered together, the floods stood upright as an heap, the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea.

21. The enemy said: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil: my lust shall be satisfied upon them. I will draw my sword: my hand shall destroy them."

22. Who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the Gods? Who is like Thee, glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders! Thou stretchest out Thy right hand:

23. The people shall hear and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on them; all th'inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away by the greatness of Thy arm. They shall be as still as a stone, till Thy people pass over, O Lord, which Thou hast purchased.

24. The Lord shall reign forever and ever!

25. For the horse of Pharoah went in with his chariots and with his horsemen into the sea, and the Lord brought again the waters of the sea upon them: but the children of Israel went on dry land in the midst of the sea.

26. The Lord shall reign forever and ever!

27. And Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timbrel in her hand, and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances, and Miriam answered them:

28. Sing ye to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously! The Lord shall reign for ever and ever. The horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea. The Lord shall reign forever and ever: I will sing unto the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider hath He thrown into the sea.

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Carl Sitton, Music Director-Janice LaBorde, Accompanist

Soprano

Helen Caplan
Barbara Caulfield
Valerie Flatt
Sheri M. Kalman
Virginia Lapé
Kathleen Lindgren
Margaret Pinkard
Barbara Scott
Mary Shields
Ruth Sitton
Irene Sohm
Judith Tauber-Lovik
Ruth Vines
Caryn White

Alto

Lois Drieslein
Marjorie Grimm
Rosi Kurt
Angela Ludé
Mary Belle Nolan
Pamela Schwarz
Brenda Siddall
Barbara Sloss
Ruth Stroshane
Paula Van Buskirk

Tenor

Adrian Boyer
Max Capestany
Emery Gordon
Gerard Hranek
Joseph Kresse
Reuben Moulton
Scott Pierce
Gary Soals
Jack Wilkinson

Bass

Joe Boyes
Robert Brauns
Ronald Clazie
Ronald Hodges
David Maurice
Dick Poage
Stephen Pursell
Douglas Stobie
Jim White