

Handel's hallelujah chorus

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The Hallelujah chorus is in the conclusion of the second part of the composition by the English composer Handel Georg Friedrich called Messiah. Originally, the Hallelujah chorus, as the rest of the pieces in Messiah, was composed by Handel in the year 1741.

The whole composition called Messiah and has three parts, but the Hallelujah chorus is possibly the most popular, as well as the most performed piece. In the modern times, this chorus is mostly associated with Christmas, the Christian celebration period for the birth of Christ, also known as the Son of God. A devoted Christian, Handel composed this work from a scriptural text made by the English composer Charles Jennens, drawn from the Psalms and King James Bible. This article will closely look into the Hallelujah chorus, including the composer, theme, contemporary reception and influence, and its state today[1]. Handel George Friedrich Handel George Friedrich was a German born British composer and musician, born on 23rd February, 1685 in Halle. His father was a prominent barber and surgeon, and forbid Handel to touch any musical instrument, intending for his son to study civil law.

From his early years, Handel had a strong passion for music and musical instruments, and was an avid player on the clavichord, pipe organ and the harpsichord. During visits with his father to Weissenfels, Handel took lessons from Friedrich Wilhelm Zachow, who was the organist at the Lutheran Marienkirche. He learnt to analyze music sheets, about harmony, fugue subjects, and music copying. His first major performance was in 1698 for Frederick I of Prussia. He studied law under Christian Thomasius, starting in 1702 at the University of Halle. In 1703, he was appointed as a violinist and a harpsichordist at an orchestra.

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He produced his first two operas, *Almira* and *Nero*, in 1705, followed by *Florindo* and *Dophne*, in 1708. In the years between 1704 and 1714, Handel travelled widely, composing a variety of cantatas, clergy music for the catholic states, and operas. When operas were temporarily banned in the Papal States, he moved to church music composition. Some famous works composed and performed during this period include *Dixit Dominus* (1707), *La Resurrezione* (1709) and *Il Trionfo del Tempo* (1710), *Rodrigo*- Florence (1707) and *Aggripina* (1709). In 1712, Handel moved to England, where he received payments from Queen Anne for composing the work *Utrecht Te Deum* and *Jubilate* in 1713.

Between 1717 and 1718, Handel performed at the Cannons, Middlesex. Between 1719 and 1734, Handel composed, directed and performed numerous compositions in England to varied congregations, including the famous King George II, the Queen, and Fredrick, the King of Wales. Some of his outstanding works at the time included *Giulio Cesare*, *Rodelinda* and *Tamerlano*. Others include *Scorpio*, *Zadok the Priest*, *Esther*, and *Deborah*. In the years that followed, Handel began to slowly shift from the operas in favor of the more profitable English oratorios.

Japheth, performed in 1752, was his last oratorio. Handel composed a 1749 work called the *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, an event attended by 12, 000 people. A performance of the *Messiah* was conducted in 1750 to aid the Foundling Hospital, the success of which led to his erection as a governor of the hospital. Concerts continued annually in his honor in the hospital. He suffered a carriage accident near Hague, Netherlands in 1750, and passed nine years later in 1759 in his home at Brook Street, at to public interest in <https://assignbuster.com/handels-hallelujah-chorus/>

the genre, and the corresponding public apathy regarding the operas. The structure of the Messiah is still similar to that of an opera.

It features minimal dramatic effects or personalization of characters, highlighting mainly the theme of the life and times of Christ as the Messiah. It focuses on the messianic incarnation, his passion, and also his resurrection. Messiah consisted of three parts, part I was about the prophet Isaiah's prophecies of salvation, the birth of a King, the shepherds as well as Christ's redemption and healing. Part II has the death of Christ, his resurrection, distracting a large number of mourners and a full state burial. His works composed of 42 operas, 120 cantatas, 29 oratorios, 16 organ concerti and numerous numbers of odes, serenatas and ecumenical pieces.

Messiah, with its Hallelujah chorus, has become a centre-piece of Christmas season, and is arguably his most famous work. A statue of Handel was erected in Vauxhall Gardens in 1738 while he was still alive, making him recognised among the contemporaries [2]. Messiah This work was written by Handel in 1746, comprising of text drawn from the Bible and the Psalms collected by Charles Jennens. In the second part, it contains the chorus called Hallelujah. Messiah was the sixth work in the oratorio genre, to which he returned in 1730 due ascension, reception in heaven, beginning of gospel preaching, world's rejection of the gospel and God's ultimate glory in which Hallelujah chorus is featured. Part III contains promise of eternal life, judgment, and conquest of sin and the acclamation of the Messiah (Burrows (1991), pp.

55-57). The following section will focus on the chorus Hallelujah[3].

Hallelujah Chorus lyrics Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Hallelujah! The kingdom of this world's become the kingdom of our Lord, And

of His Christ, and of His Christ; And He shall reign forever and ever, Forever and ever, forever and ever, King of kings, and Lord of lords, King of kings,

and Lord of lords, And Lord of lords, And He shall reign, And He shall reign

forever and ever, King of kings, forever and ever, And Lord of lords,

Hallelujah! Hallelujah! And He shall reign forever and ever, King of kings!

And Lord of lords! And He shall reign forever and ever, King of kings! And Lord

of lords! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah![4] Impact

of Religion on the Work and on Handel The Hallelujah chorus is a work

inspired almost entirely by the Bible. Most of the lines are drawn directly

from the King James version of the Bible, and especially from the book of

Psalms.

It depicts a belief in Messiah, or the Christ, who was also the Son of God. The

chorus opens with exaltations marked by the word 'Hallelujah', and

proceeds to acknowledge the eternal reign of the omnipotent Jehovah God. It

identifies Christ as belonging to God, and infers the authority that he has

been given to reign forever. It tells how his kingdom has been established on

Earth. Even though the work does not try to draw people into acceptance of

the doctrine, it does, however, proclaim the reign of the Christian God on

Earth, and praises the Messiah and God. It can, therefore, be stated that the

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chorus is totally a work of religious expression, and that listeners may be drawn to it only by its religious message.

This leaves little chance for non-Christians to enjoy the work, save on grounds of its compositional and vocal perfection. Handel was a stout Christian, and there is nothing in his biography that might have suggested otherwise. He, therefore, was inspired or, at least, influenced by his religious views in the composition. At the time of its performance, the chorus was performed largely to Christian audiences, including King George II; therefore, it may also have been set with that type of audience in consideration. How Handel Composed Messiah Handel was introduced to the words and concepts from which he composed Messiah by the British religious writer and music composer Charles Jennens. Handel received the text from Charles in July 1741, and began his work on it.

The rate at which the talented writer composed the work was astonishing, with many scholars believing that, just as he said, he was inspired by a divine presence, and that he saw open heavens radiating God's glory at the time. The autograph consisted of 259 pages, and was composed in only 24 days. Studies of the scripts show marks of haste in writing, and the ending bore the letters SDG in Handel's writing. The translation is Soli De Gloria or All Glory to God. Impact of the Chorus on the World The initial performance of Messiah was done in Dublin, in front of over 700 people.

Three charities were organized to benefit from the proceeds. Later, success of the works was so overwhelming that more performances were organized leading to the release of 142 prisoners. Again, the piece was performed for

the great King George II, where it is reported that he arose at the onset of the chorus, prompting all others to rise. Today, all over the world, many people still rise during the performance of Hallelujah. In London, a performance of the work for a hospital was so remarkable that Handel was made governor of the hospital, and annual performances of the same work continued annually.

Performance of the Messiah continued in the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries, mostly being performed in concerts and musicals, as well as religious gatherings[5]. Handel's composition Messiah, and especially the chorus Hallelujah, was a lifetime accomplishment that has been labeled one of the best compositions of all time. It greatly explored the genius of musical abilities as well as enhanced the Christian religion. Today, the work is performed to millions of people in churches and other gatherings, including the media. It is available in the internet for downloads and has inspired billions of people worldwide, especially due to its special place as a performance for the Christmas celebrations.