



Messiah from Scratch® – Chorus notes for Singers (revised 2024)

Updates are in italics and underlined. Please note any new information carefully.

DRESS is smart. Tenors/basses: dinner jacket or dark suit; sopranos/altos: skirt, dress or smart trousers (sopranos feature something blue, altos red). *See FAQs on our website for full details.*

DRESSING ROOM ARRANGEMENTS. Men should use Chorus Room A which is in the West corridor under the Arena, and this is unlikely to change. *At this stage, we cannot predict what the DR arrangements will be for women – apologies, but this is under discussion with the RAH event management team. As there is no rehearsal, we recommend that you come ready dressed for the concert, and with as few personal possessions as you can manage.*

SCORES. Bring your own score for Handel's *Messiah* (English text). We use and recommend the 'old' Novello edition (ed. Prout). It is widely available and cheaper/lighter than other editions; movement numbers and letters below refer to this edition. *The New Novello edition, if you already own one, has the same numbering and is compatible; other editions may vary.*

TIMES. The Hall opens at 18:15 (6.15 pm). Please allow plenty of time for bag searches, etc., and be in your seats by 18:50 (6.50 pm) ready for a prompt start at 19:00 (7 pm). Handel's *Messiah* will be performed without rehearsal. After the *25-minute interval, we will be auctioning the opportunity to conduct an additional performance of the Hallelujah Chorus: more details on page 2. The performance will therefore end later than usual, probably just after 10 pm.*

MUSICAL INSTRUCTIONS

The following numbers will be omitted altogether: 10, 11, 30, 34–37, 39, 41, 49–52.

NB: as from 2010, Nos 21 'His yoke is easy' and 46 'Since by man' ARE sung by the chorus.

1. Singers should stand at the beginning of each chorus and sit at the end – with the following exceptions: **STAND** 8 bars before the end of **No. 6 'But who may abide'** (Version I, but sung by the Bass soloist) ready for **No. 7**; 5 bars before letter H in **No. 9 'O Thou'**, ready for quick chorus entry overleaf; and at the beginning of **No. 16 'And suddenly'**, ready for **No. 17**.

REMAIN STANDING throughout **Nos 24, 25 and 26** (sung one after the other with no break); through the tenor recit **No. 27 'All they that see Him'**, until the end of **No. 28 'He trusted'**.

2. **No. 9 'O Thou that tellest'**. There will be no break either at the double bar at H, nor at the end of **No. 16 'And suddenly'**. At both places the chorus takes over directly from the soloist, at the same tempo.

3. **No. 9**. As we omit Nos 10 and 11, remain standing after **No. 9** ready for **No. 12 'For unto us'**.

4. **No. 12 'For unto us'**. Watch carefully in the last choral phrase, since there will be no *rallentando*. Singers using editions other than Prout may need to amend bars 63 (Tenors) and 65 (Sopranos) to read:



more overleaf

5. **No. 20 'He shall feed'** (solo aria) is the one in F major for Alto/Soprano soloists.
6. **No. 21 'His yoke is easy'**, omitted prior to 2010, WILL be sung.
7. **No. 22 'Behold'**. The upbeat quaver ('*be*-hold') should be sung as a semiquaver each time.
8. **No. 33 'Lift up your heads'**. Sopranos in Stalls G and the front two rows of the Circle should sing the first soprano part; Sopranos elsewhere should sing the lower part. The text for the question 'Who is...?' should be 'Who is *THIS* King of Glory?' (the answer is always 'He is *THE* King of Glory').
9. **No. 40 'Why do the nations'** (solo Bass). We use the Version I ending (no additional recit).
10. **No. 53 'Worthy is the Lamb'**. Bars 7 and 19 will start at the new (faster) tempo from the beginning of the bar. The beats will still be crotchets. Special care is needed at letter L, where a gradual *rallentando* will begin.

HALLELUJAH CHORUS AUCTION

As on previous special occasions, we will be holding an auction immediately after the interval, giving the opportunity for the winner to conduct an extra performance of the *Hallelujah Chorus* there and then, before the second half of the performance officially starts.

We have engaged an auctioneer from Bonhams to rack up the bidding, and we hope to raise a considerable extra sum of money (a 4-figure sum) for the British Heart Foundation.

Bids will be accepted only from people present in the Hall – singers or audience – and we hope you will join in the fun, perhaps by persuading friends, family and choir colleagues to sponsor you or your own choir conductor up to a certain sum of money so that you can bid. Tell others about it: musically-minded philanthropists especially need to know about this!

