

And the Glory of the Lord

G. F. Handel

George Frideric Handel

- Born in 1685 in Germany.
- Wrote his first serious opera 'Rodrigo' in 1707.
- Became 'Kappellmeister' (director of music) to George, Elector of Hanover (who became George I).
- Visited England on a year's leave, then stayed for the rest of his life, writing instrumental works.
- Became Royal Composer to George I when he became king, writing music to accompany the king (Water Music- 1717).
- Died in 1759, buried in Westminster Abbey.

Baroque era

- Started in 1600, ended in 1750.
- When innovation in the arts, literature and philosophy exploded.
- Italy was the centre of this new culture.
- 'Baroque' means 'pearl' in Portuguese, in reference to the ornate architecture and art of the time.
- This is reflected in the heavily ornamented melodies used in Baroque music.
- Other common techniques were:
 - A major/minor key system (instead of modes, which preceded Baroque music)
 - Basso Continuo
 - Terraced dynamics
 - Smaller orchestras, with little percussion and woodwind
 - Different musical textures (polyphonic, monophonic etc.)
 - Use of diatonic chords I, IV, V, II and VI.
 - One main mood/affection

Baroque

Composer
Antonio L. Vivaldi
Johann S. Bach
Henry Purcell

Messiah

- 'Messiah' is an Oratorio (*A musical work based on texts from the Bible*).
- It tells the story of the birth, death and resurrection of Jesus, in the following parts:
 1. Prophecies foretell the coming of the Messiah, using text from the Old and New Testaments.
 2. Passionate music about the suffering of Jesus, using the Old Testament.
 3. The story of Jesus' resurrection.
- Scored for an SATB choir

Oratorio

ORATORIOS CONSIST OF THREE MAIN MUSICAL FORMS:

- Recitative- Narration, with minimal use of music, so frequently spoken instead of sung.
e.g. "prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God"
- Aria- A solo performance reflecting on a mood/emotion, with elaborate melodies for a virtuosic performer.
e.g. "Ev'ry valley shall be exalted"
- Chorus- Sums up the action of the story so far, to contribute to the drama. Written for large groups, as Handel was inspired by German Lutheran and English choral tradition.

And the Glory of the Lord

- A chorus, the fourth movement in the whole work.
- First performed in Dublin, in 1742.
- Intended for performance in a concert hall, despite the religious message, as the Church forbade biblical stories being acted out in English.
- Composed in 24 days.

Key Musical Elements

- Imitation
- Polyphony
- Terraced dynamics
- Uses lots of ornamentation

Instrumentation

- Originally written for the choir with only strings and a continuo, with trumpets and timpani used for excitement, yet oboes and bassoon were added later, doubling string parts.
- Uses an SATB choir
- Basso continuo is played by the organ, cello and double bass.

Structure and Melody

- Four main musical ideas:

1. "And the Glory of the Lord"- Mostly syllabic, starting with the triad of A major, ending with a stepwise scale. First sung by altos.
2. "Shall be revealed"- Melismatic, built using two descending sequences. First sung by tenors.
3. "And all flesh..."- Repetitive idea, consisting of three statements. Melismatic. Repeated twice by altos.
4. "For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it"- Syllabic, on a tonic pedal. Doubled in tenors and basses.

Texture

- Features a mixture of polyphony and homophony
- 4 part homophony is often used, e.g. 33-38
- Uses counterpoint (e.g. bar 22)
- Constant basso continuo accompaniment
- Strings accompany vocals
- Texture builds up over the course of the piece, but motifs are occasionally fragmented, briefly reducing texture.

Harmony and Tonality

- In A major, but modulates to E major (the dominant key) twice and B major once (the dominant of E)
- Diatonic
- Uses mainly perfect cadences (e.g. bar 13)
- Ends on a plagal cadence

Rhythm, Metre and Tempo

- In $\frac{3}{4}$ time, and marked Allegro (fast)
- Uses hemiolas before cadences, and suspension
- Adagio at the end
- Longer, dotted note values in “for the mouth...” to add gravitas