44810

National Library of Canada
Bibliothèque nationale du Canada

Canadian Theses Division
Division des thèses canadiennes

Ottawa, Canada
K1A 0N4

PERMISSION TO MICROFILM — AUTORISATION DE MICROFILMER

• Please print or type — Écrire en lettres moulées ou dactylographier

Full Name of Author — Nom complet de l'auteur

DAVID WILLIAM RUSHTON

Date of Birth — Date de naissance	Country of Birth — Lieu de naissance
MAY 7, 1945.	CANADA

Permanent Address — Résidence fixe

3160 CONSORT COURT
CLEARBROOK, BRITISH COLUMBIA V2T 4J5

Title of Thesis — Titre de la thèse

HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT: A DRAMATIC ORATORIO

University — Université

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

MASTER OF MUSIC

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
SPRING 1980	DR. MANUS SASONKIN

Permission is hereby granted to the NATIONAL LIBRARY OF CANADA to microfilm this thesis and to lend or sell copies of the film.

The author reserves other publication rights, and neither the thesis nor extensive extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's written permission.

L'autorisation est, par la présente, accordée à la BIBLIOTHÈQUE NATIONALE DU CANADA de microfilmer cette thèse et de prêter ou de vendre des exemplaires du film.

L'auteur se réserve les autres droits de publication; ni la thèse ni de longs extraits de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans l'autorisation écrite de l'auteur.

Date	Signature
APRIL 22, 1980	David William Rushton

NOTICE

The quality of this microfiche is heavily dependent upon the quality of the original thesis submitted for microfilming. Every effort has been made to ensure the highest quality of reproduction possible.

If pages are missing, contact the university which granted the degree.

Some pages may have indistinct print especially if the original pages were typed with a poor typewriter ribbon or if the university sent us a poor photocopy.

Previously copyrighted materials (journal articles, published tests, etc.) are not filmed.

Reproduction in full or in part of this film is governed by the Canadian Copyright Act, R.S.C. 1970, c. C-30. Please read the authorization forms which accompany this thesis.

THIS DISSERTATION
HAS BEEN MICROFILMED
EXACTLY AS RECEIVED

AVIS

La qualité de cette microfiche dépend grandement de la qualité de la thèse soumise au microfilmage. Nous avons tout fait pour assurer une qualité supérieure de reproduction.

S'il manque des pages, veuillez communiquer avec l'université qui a conféré le grade.

La qualité d'impression de certaines pages peut laisser à désirer, surtout si les pages originales ont été dactylographiées à l'aide d'un ruban usé ou si l'université nous a fait parvenir une photocopie de mauvaise qualité.

Les documents qui font déjà l'objet d'un droit d'auteur (articles de revue, examens publiés, etc.) ne sont pas microfilmés.

La reproduction, même partielle, de ce microfilm est soumise à la Loi canadienne sur le droit d'auteur, SRC 1970, c. C-30. Veuillez prendre connaissance des formules d'autorisation qui accompagnent cette thèse.

LA THÈSE A ÉTÉ
MICROFILMÉE TELLE QUE
NOUS L'AVONS REÇUE

Microfilm

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT: A DRAMATIC ORATORIO

by

(C) DAVID WILLIAM RUSHTON

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF MUSIC

IN

MUSIC THEORY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

SPRING, 1980

T H E U N I V E R S I T Y O F A L B E R T A

RELEASE FORM

NAME OF AUTHOR DAVID WILLIAM RUSHTON

TITLE OF THESIS HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT:
A DRAMATIC ORATORIO

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED MASTER OF MUSIC

YEAR THIS DEGREE GRANTED SPRING, 1980

(Signed) David W. Rushton

PERMANENT ADDRESS:

3160 Consort Court
Clearbrook, British Columbia
CANADA V2T 4J5

DATED 18 April 1980

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled HANDEL'S ISRAEL IN EGYPT: A DRAMATIC ORATORIO submitted by David William Rushton in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Music in Music Theory.

Supervisor

Date 18 April 1980

ABSTRACT

Handel's cultivation of the English oratorio represents the pinnacle of his creative achievements. From among Handel's eighteen English oratorios, Israel in Egypt for several reasons is a unique work: it is in two parts rather than the customary three; it consists of an almost unbroken chain of choruses--its preponderance of choruses is unparalleled in any of the other oratorios--and, it represents the most extreme application of Handel's practice of appropriating earlier works--his own as well as other composers--as the basis for new pieces.

Unlike most of Handel's oratorios, Israel in Egypt possesses a non-dramatic libretto; it is, rather, an epic work, in which the chorus narrates the series of events connected with the suffering of the Israelites under bondage to their Egyptian oppressors, the plagues brought to bear upon the Egyptains, and the ultimate deliverance of the Israelites from their servitude. In the literature surveyed on Handel's oratorios, Israel in Egypt is, however, frequently referred to variously as a dramatic work, a piece which possesses dramatic qualities, or a work which carries a tremendous dramatic impact. The central purpose of this study is to examine these claims. On the basis of my

analysis of the oratorio I have concluded that Israel in Egypt does possess dramatic qualities and that it can indeed be called a dramatic oratorio.

Several items of background material will be considered before proceeding with the analysis of the oratorio: an overview, both historical and conceptual, of Handel's development of the English oratorio; general stylistic considerations; influences affecting the stylistic characteristics; and Handel's practice of appropriation. This material is presented in the first five chapters, which constitute Part One. Part Two consists of an analysis of Israel in Egypt. Chapter VI presents historical background to the oratorio as well as two tables which provide details on the sources of the appropriations. Chapter VII deals with the recitatives, arias, and duets, and Chapters VIII, IX, and X constitute a discussion of homophonic choruses, vocal preludes and fugues, and contrapuntal choruses, respectively.

T' BLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

To a great majority of people, the term oratorio is synonymous with the name George Frideric Handel.[1] It is, however, somewhat paradoxical that Handel's significance as a composer rests primarily on a musical genre he never originally intended to create or pursue, a genre which finally resulted in his abandoning a lengthy operatic career, and a genre which became eminently popular during Handel's day. In spite of more than forty operas which Handel wrote and produced over a thirty-six year period (1704-40),[2] it is his cultivation of the English oratorio which represents the apex of his illustrious career.

Several works[3] frequently designated in the literature on Handel as oratorios were never referred to as such by the composer. Julian Herbage has used the term "secular oratorio"

---

[1]The Anglicized spelling which Handel adopted in England will be used in this paper. The original spelling of his name was Georg Friedrich Händel.

[2]Winton Dean, Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques (London: Oxford University Press, 1959), p. 24.

[3]Acis and Galatea, Alexander's Feast, Semele, Hercules, Ode for St. Cecilia's Day, L'Allegro, and The Choice of Hercules.

in his discussion of these works;[4] during Handel's lifetime, however, they were usually referred to variously as masques, serenatas, odes, or music dramas. Although these compositions were presented "in the manner of an oratorio"[5] they should not be included in the oratorio category of Handel's output, because they contradict both the generally accepted concept of the genre in the Baroque period and Handel's application of the term. Howard E. Smither, in his recently published volumes dealing with the history of the oratorio, has suggested that "the oratorio [throughout the Baroque period] is nearly always a sacred, unstaged work with a text that is either dramatic or narrative-dramatic;"[6] moreover, Smither knows of "no . . . application by any composer in the entire Baroque era" of the term oratorio to unstaged secular dramatic works.[7] Smither has, I believe, clarified and defined the genre known as oratorio as it applies to Handel's works:

> For Handel in England the word oratorio normally designated a musical entertainment that used a three-act dramatic text based on a sacred subject; the musical setting employed the styles and forms of Italian opera

---

[4] Julian Herbage, "The Secular Oratorios and Cantatas," in Handel, A Symposium, ed. by Gerald Abraham (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), pp. 132-55. Cf. Jens Peter Larsen, Handel's "Messiah,": Origins, Compositions, Sources, 2nd ed. (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1972), pp. 21-22.

[5] Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 39.

[6] Howard E. Smither, A History of the Oratorio, vol. 1: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 3-4. See also pp. 5-9.

[7] Ibid., p. 8.

> and English sacred choral music, although at times modified in their new context; the chorus was considered essential and was usually prominent; and the manner of performance was that of a concert, usually at a theater or concert hall, often with concertos performed between the acts. The greater prominence of the chorus and the division into three acts (Handel usually used act, rather than part, for an oratorio's structural divisions) are among the features that distinguish the Handelian English oratorio from the characteristic Italian oratorio. Among Handel's exceptions to his usual meaning of the word oratorio are its use for Israel in Egypt, Messiah, and the Occasional Oratorio, all of which have non-dramatic librettos; another exception is his benefit concert in 1738, announced as "Mr. Handel's Oratorio," a miscellaneous program with no unifying plan. The Triumph and Time of Truth (1757), a revision of an Italian work, might also be considered an exception, since it is more ethical and moral than religious, even though act 3 includes an anthem of petition to the Lord and closes with a "Hallelujah" chorus.[8]

According to the criteria articulated by Smither, the eighteen works listed below constitute Handel's English oratorios (the year of composition is shown in parenthesis): Esther (1718, revised 1732), Deborah (1733), Athalia (1733), Saul (1738), Israel in Egypt (1738), Messiah (1741), Samson (1741), Joseph and His Brethren (1743), Belshazzar (1744), Occasional Oratorio (1746), Judas Maccabaeus (1746), Alexander Balus (1747), Joshua (1747), Solomon (1748), Susanna (1748), Theodora (1749), Jeptha (1751), The Triumph of Time and Truth (1757).

Apart from the fact that the oratorios were unstaged works, the single, most important feature which distinguishes

---

[8]Howard E. Smither, A History of the Oratorio, vol. 2: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), pp. 349-350.

Handel's English oratorios both from his earlier Italian oratorios and from his Italian operas is the dominating position of the chorus, both musically and dramatically. The prominent position of the chorus is never more evident than in Israel in Egypt; twenty-eight of the thirty-nine movements in this oratorio involve the chorus.

Although most of Handel's oratorios are dramatic works involving human conflicts centred around a plot which unfolds and develops by means of recitative (dialogue) among the various characters, Israel in Egypt is not a dramatic piece in this sense. It is, rather, an epic work in which the chorus, functioning as a narrator, describes a series of events; nevertheless, Israel in Egypt has been referred to as "an intensely dramatic oratorio."[9] Webster's New World Dictionary suggests that a drama is, among other things, "a series of events so interesting, vivid, etc., as to resemble those of a play."[10] Something which is dramatic is described in the same source as being "filled with action, emotion, or exciting qualities; vivid, striking, etc.," while to dramatize is "to regard or present (actions, oneself); give dramatic quality to." One writer has commented that "though the texts . . . chosen [for Part One of the oratorio] constitute a narrative, Handel has treated them

---

[9]Manfred F. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1947), p. 336.

[10]Webster's New World Dictionary, 2nd college ed. (Toronto: Nelson, Foster, & Scott, Ltd., 1970), p. 424.

dramatically. . . ."[11] It has also been stated that Israel in Egypt "contains some of the most magnificent music ever written and carries a tremendous dramatic impact."[12] It is my intention in the present study to attempt to show, by means of an analysis of the oratorio, that Israel in Egypt does indeed possess dramatic qualities, and that its musical style creates a dramatic impact.

---

[11]Georg Friedrich Handel, "Israel in Egypt"; an Oratorio [the libretto] with an Analysis of the Oratorio written expressly for the Sacred Harmonic Society, by G. A. Macfarren (London, 1857), p. 7. All subsequent references to this source will be cited as Macfarren, Analysis.

[12]Richard Strunsky, Record jacket notes to the Handel Society Recording of Israel in Egypt, conducted by Walter Goehr (Record No. HDL-1, no date given).

PART ONE

BACKGROUND TO HANDEL'S ENGLISH ORATORIOS

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL AND CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW

Handel's career as a composer of oratorios belongs to what Bukofzer calls "the English master period"[1] which dates from 1711 to his death in 1759. The first twenty-five to thirty years of this English master period were not, however, devoted to the production of English oratorio; rather, Handel's intention was to produce Italian opera, the popular musical entertainment in vogue at the time. Undoubtedly the experiences of the years spent in Italy (1707-1710) exerted a profound influence on the direction of Handel's musical career. The German-born Handel first set foot on English soil in the autumn of 1710, having been granted a one-year leave of absence from his recent appointment--16 June 1710--as court conductor to the Elector of Hanover. During this first visit to London, Handel composed--in fourteen days--the opera Rinaldo which was produced on 24 February 1711 at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket with considerable success.[2] When Handel took up permanent residence in London

---

[1]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 315.

[2]Eric Blom, ed. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 5th ed. (London: MacMillan and Co., 1954), 4:39,40 and 7:179.

in 1712 he became actively involved in composing and producing Italian opera. The various successes and failures associated with the production of Handel's operas, which concluded in 1741 with Deidamia, have been well documented elsewhere,[3] and need not be dealt with here in any detail.

Although most of Handel's oratorios belong to the last twenty-one years of his life (1738-1759), the embryonic stage of his English oratorios dates from 1718. Esther is the first work referred to as an oratorio: "The Oratorium Composed by George Frederick Handel Esquire in London, 1718."[4] Esther was first presented in 1720 for the Duke of Chandos at Cannons where it was produced as a masque with the title Haman and Mordecai.

Twelve years later (1732) three private performances of Haman and Mordecai were given, one of which was in honour of Handel's birthday. Although these performances were well received, and Handel was delighted with their success, he still had no intention of abandoning Italian opera.[5] "So far as he was concerned, Esther could again slumber for another twelve years. . . ."[6] Little did Handel realize that two

---

[3]The Handel bibliography is extensive, and perhaps two sources will suffice here. For a discussion of the operas see the account by Winton Dean, Handel and the Opera Seria (London: Oxford University Press, 1970). The most recent and extensive account of Handel's life and work is by Paul Henry Lang, George Frideric Handel (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1966).

[4]Cited by Smither, History, 2:189.

[5]Handel composed twelve operas subsequent to the successful performances of Esther.

[6]Lang, Handel, p. 278.

months later he would be revising Haman and Mordecai in retaliation against an unidentified pirate who somehow procured the work and presented an unauthorized performance on 20 April 1732. Handel was not one to allow his authority and independence to be challenged. Sir John Hawkins reported that Handel "had a fixed resolution never to admit a rival."[7] Twelve days after the pirate performance, Handel's new and renamed version (it was called Esther rather than Haman and Mordecai) was produced at the King's Theatre in the Haymarket, not, however, without some opposition from Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London. The Bishop forbade the theatrical representation of a Biblical story, considering such presentations to be sacrilegious. Newman Flower's report concerning the Bishop's edict and Handel's response is worth quoting here:

> Dr. Gibson, Bishop of London, forbade the performance [of Haman and Mordecai], and, since he was Dean of the Chapel Royal, the children there [who participated in the performance on Handel's birthday] were put out of Handel's reach. The obstacle only stiffened Handel's resistance. He acknowledged no Bishop as he acknowledged no King, as dictator of his performances. Nevertheless, the Bishop's edict originated the oratorio. Finding it impossible to produce Haman with dramatic representation, Handel made Samuel Humphreys write some additional words, . . . and instead of the masque in six scenes crowded into one act, it became a full-length work, which Handel renamed Esther. Esther was the first [English] oratorio, and the Bishop had caused it. On 2 May 1732 it was performed, but without costumes, scenery, or action.[8]

---

[7]Quoted in Lang, Handel, p. 278.

[8]Newman Flower, George Frideric Handel: His Personality and His Times, rev. ed. (London: Cassell & Co., 1959; Panther Books, 1972), pp. 199, 201.

From all accounts, Esther was a success: the public received the work favourably (four additional performances were given within a three-week period), and Handel profited financially from the production. In addition to the performances of the revised Esther, Handel also presented in June of the same year a revised version of Acis and Galatea (1718). As with the Esther performances, Acis and Galatea was produced in retaliation against an unauthorized production of the work. The revised Acis and Galatea was also well received. "Thus was born the English oratorio, a piece de circonstance compounded of homage, piracy, retaliation, and ecclesiastical fiat."[9]

The successful performance of the revived works prompted the composition, in 1733, of the oratorios Deborah and Athalia; but Handel did not yet appear ready to abandon Italian opera. Indeed, during the years from 1734 until his final opera of 1741, eleven new operas were produced.

The decade of the 1730's was, in many respects, a difficult period in Handel's life. His operas failed more often than they succeeded, he experienced a number of financial crises associated with the management of various theatres, and finally, in April of 1737, he suffered from a physical and emotional breakdown. The depressing circumstances stemming from the chronic failure of the operas were major factors in Handel's turning from opera to oratorio. The failure of the operas resulted not from inherent musical

---

[9]Lang, Handel, p. 280.

weaknesses ("his operas contain an abundance of superb melodic and harmonic writing, of brilliant orchestration and of sharp character delineation"[10]) but from the diminishing interest in a foreign art on the part of the London public. Winton Dean has pointed out that "Italian 'opera seria' was an aristocratic luxury; it was the English oratorio . . . that captured the rising London middle class."[11] Bukofzer suggests that Handel's turning to oratorio from opera should not be construed as "a tacit admission on his part that the opera was an artistically deficient form. Rather does it represent a change in the social background to Handel's art: he turned from the nobility to the middle class, the class from which Handel himself had sprung."[12]

Apart from any musical considerations, the fact that Handel employed the English language in his oratorios and that most of these oratorios were based on Biblical stories, accounted for their popularity among the London middle class [illegible] That the Biblical Dramas of the Old Testament were well known to the British people has been alluded to by [illegible]ers when he suggests that "perhaps Handel's

---

[10]E[illegible]. Paugerstrom, "The Dramatic Function of the Chorus in En[illegible]sh [illegible]atorio from 1880 to the Present" (Ph.D. dissertation, [illegible] and Literature, Northwestern University, 196[illegible]), p[illegible].

[11]Quoted in Roger W. Ardrey, "The Influences of the Extended Latin Sacred Works of Giacomo Carissimi on the Biblical Oratorios of George Frederic Handel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Musicology, Catholic University, 1964), pp. 14-15.

[12]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 331.

principal reason for turning to oratorio was his astute observation that the British public was better acquainted with the English Bible than with Tasso and Homer and Virgil."[13]

The Biblically-based oratorios should not, however, be regarded as some sanctimonious form of music intended for church use. Lang has pointed out that

> the biblical texts and the frequent mentioning of the Lord do not change the preoccupation with human matters and sentiments. . . . The art of the Handelian oratorio is an eminently theatrical one. . . . Like Shakespeare and other great dramatists, Handel took any known story and plot in which a usable idea was present and worked it out for the theatre.[14]

Winton Dean sheds additional light on the theatrical concept of the oratorios. The evidence, he asserts, is clear from the autograph scores as well as other contemporary evidence.

> Except for those taken verbatim from Milton, Dryden, and the Bible, the librettos are cast in the form of actable dramas. Most of them proclaim the fact in their titles ('oratorio or sacred drama', 'sacred drama', 'musical drama', etc.). . . . Several are based directly on plays. Even when there appears to be no intermediate step between scripture and oratorio, love stories and other theatrical materials are imported. In setting them to music Handel often shortened or omitted passages that contributed nothing to the development of the plot. Furthermore, he filled his autographs with elaborate stage directions. . . . We know that after 1732 he had no stage performances in view. He therefore had no need to copy stage directions, still less to amend or add to them, unless he found the act of visualizing a performance in the ideal theatre of the mind a valuable accessary to the process of composition. The evidence strongly suggests that in the heat of creation Handel saw Saul, Hercules, Belshazzar, and the rest striding the boards, and that

---

[13]Robert M. Myers, Early Moral Criticism of Handelian Oratorio (Williamsburg, Virginia: Manton Park Press, 1947), p. 14.

[14]Lang, Handel, pp. 360-62.

such a vision controlled the form and gestures of the music itself.[15]

It is worth noting here that, with one exception (apart from the commencement in 1750 of annual charity performances of Messiah in the chapel of the Foundling hospital), the nearly six hundred oratorio performances given before Handel died took place in the theatre.[16]

Jens Peter Larsen, in his study of Messiah, has classified the oratorios according to type: heroic, anthem, a d narrative.

> In the [heroic type]. . . , the fate of the Israelites is placed to the fore; the guidance of the individual is viewed in the light of the guidance of his nation, the hero being seen less as a hero per se than as a champion of his people. In a few oratorios [the anthem category]. . . the efforts of a human being are not the theme; the oratorio's subject is the relation between God and Man--mankind. In some others [the narrative type] the fate of the individual--or of some individuals--becomes the central figure. . . .[17]

The following table shows the oratorios in relation to one of the three types (see page 14).[18]

Jephtha (1751) is actually Handel's last new oratorio. The Triumph of Time and Truth (1757) is an English version of the earlier Italian work Il Trionfo del Tempo e della Verita (1737), this latter being a revision of a 1707 score

---

[15]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 36.

[16]Ibid., p. 41. The "one exception" was the performance of Messiah in Bristol Cathedral in 1758, a performance, however, with which Handel was not involved.

[17]Larsen, Handel's "Messiah", p. 21.

[18]The table is adapted from that shown in Larsen, Handel's "Messiah", pp. 21-22.

Table 1.

HANDEL'S ENGLISH ORATORIOS

Year Composed	Heroic	Anthem	Narrative
1718/32	Esther		
1733	Deborah, Athaliah		
1738	Saul	Israel in Egypt	
1741		Messiah	
1741/42	Samson		
1743			Joseph
1744	Belshazzar		
1746	Judas Maccabaeus	Occasional Oratorio	
1747	Joshua, Alexander Balus		
1748			Solomon, Susanna
1749			Theodora
1751			Jephtha

known as Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno. The 1757 version does not, according to Dean, contain any new music except for the overture (Dean suggests that even this is doubtful) and possibly some recitatives.[19] The absence of any new works following Jephtha was the result of Handel's blindness, the onset of which he experienced while composing this work. In spite of his blindness, Handel continued to conduct his oratorios and perform at the organ. His last appearance in public was on 6 April 1759 to conduct a performance of Messiah at Covent Garden. He died at his home eight days later, Saturday, 14 April 1759.[20]

---

[19]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 589.

[20]Otto Erich Deutsch, Handel, A Documentary Biography (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1955), pp. 813, 816.

CHAPTER III

GENERAL STYLISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

The vital factor in the distinction between Handel's oratorios and his operas is the greater significance of the chorus, both musically and dramatically, in the oratorios. Handel's operas consist primarily of solo singing: recitative and aria. Ensembles and choruses are rare; in fact, with the exception of the last three operas (Jupiter in Argos, Imeneo, and Deidamia), "the 'choruses' in . . . Handel's operas were actually ensembles of the soloists."[1] These so-called operatic choruses usually serve as conclusions to the acts of an opera, and they do not carry any significant dramatic weight.

It was in the three oratorios of 1732-33, Esther, Deborah, and Athalia, that Handel laid the foundation for the chorus to serve as a functional dramatic and musical device.

> The two important functions of the chorus were now first, to serve as a massive frame for each of the three parts of the oratorio, and then to animate the dramatic and musical development by taking part in the action.[2]

Faugerstrom has listed fourteen dramatic functions given to the chorus in Handel's oratorios:

---

[1]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," p. 28.

[2]Larsen, Handel's "Messiah", p. 66.

1. It brings to the drama a set of beliefs shared by the audience.
2. It represents the feelings and reactions of the spectator.
3. It brings a religious tone to the drama.
4. It furnishes the historical background for the plot.
5. It forms the structural framework for the drama.
6. It sets the scene and describes the scene of action.
7. It initiates or triggers the action of the plot.
8. It takes a specific role as a collective character.
9. It narrates,
   a. describing the events of the plot as they occur;
   b. reporting action which has taken place between acts;
   c. telling about events which are happening elsewhere.
10. It comments on the action.
11. It serves as a moral and religious instructor.
12. It speaks for the author,
   a. to emphasize the main point of the drama;
   b. to warn the listener to reserve judgment until all the information is known;
   c. to express reactions he considers appropriate.
13. It identifies itself with one of the leading characters as supporter or antagonist.
14. It takes the place of the stage curtain or instrumental interlude and suspends or passes time.[3]

Although the above-listed dramatic functions of the chorus comprise a significant feature of oratorio libretti, the animating force which brings the characters and dramatic situations to life resides in the actual music. Bukofzer attributes "the drastic dramatic impact of [Handel's] choruses . . . to the unique flexibility of his choral style, achieved primarily by the interpenetration of polyphonic and chordal textures."[4] In addition to the choruses in which Handel juxtaposes homophonic and polyphonic textures, choruses which are strictly contrapuntal do exist (e.g., "They loathed

---

[3]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," pp. 295-96.

[4]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 339.

to drink" in Israel in Egypt). Bukofzer has pointed out, however, that "consistently polyphonic choruses are comparatively rare in the oratorios."[5] The choruses, encompassing a wide range of moods and dramatic situations, illustrate Handel as a master of choral styles. Indeed, a considerable number of stylistic types can be distinguished:

> the richly worked canto fermo, a product of Handel's German heritage ('Your harps and cymbals sound' in Solomon), the vocal prelude and fugue (carried to its highest elaboration in Belshazzar), the motet-madrigal, often with unaccompanied sections and incorporating the Venetian double chorus ('Immortal Lord' in Deborah, 'Recall, O King' in Belshazzar), the short angular contrapuntal chorus of Carissimi ('Awake the trumpets lofty sound' in Samson), the dramatic ensemble ('All your boast' in Deborah, 'Fix'd in his everlasting seat' in Samson), the Purcellian action piece ('Cease your vows' in Semele, 'Mistaken Queen' in Alexander Balus), the Choral da capo aria ('Love and Hymen' in Hercules), the melodic and homophonic choral dance, generally reserved for pagans (Athalia, Semele, Theodora), the choral recitative, sometimes in eight parts (Athalia, Israel in Egypt), the concerto grosso extension with vocal and/or instrumental concertino ('Glory to God' in Joshua), the massive chaconne, generally enforcing a moral truth ('Envy, eldest born of hell' in Saul), and--in Bukofzer's words--'the airy texture of the continuo madrigal, paralleled only by works of Fux and Caldara in the Viennese oratorio' ('Wanton god of amorous fires' in Hercules).[6]

While the chorus rose to a preeminent position in Handel's English oratorios, we must not overlook the significance of the orchestra. It too fulfils a prominent role as a device for dramatic expression. Winton Dean considers Handel to be

---

[5]Ibid.

[6]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 65. Cf. Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, pp. 338-40, and Ardrey, "Influence of Carissimi on Handel", pp. 31-32.

"one of music's supremely great orchestrators."[7] Often Handel's adept orchestration creates the mood or sets the scene in the mind's eye and ear.

> Handel was ever alive to modernity and he was conspicuous in involving new colour effects in his scores. Thus we discover that opportunities for colouring his scores, often in striking anticipation of the nineteenth and even twentieth centuries, were avidly seized.[8]

The most frequently encountered scoring consists of strings, oboes, bassoons, and continuo (organ and harpsichord), to which are often added trumpets and timpani.[9] For special effects, Handel used instruments that were not (nor did they ever become) a part of the typical eighteenth-century orchestra. Some of the uncommon instruments used included the harp (Esther), a carillon (Saul), a mandoline (Alexander Balus), and a side drum (Semele).[10] "Horns, clarinets, trombones and double bassoons were among those instruments added to the orchestra during the course of the century, Handel being one of the first to use them in his orchestrations."[11] The oboes and bassoons, however, appear to be the wind instruments most frequently used, the former

---

[7]Winton Dean, "Handel Reconsidered," The Score 9 (September 1954):53.

[8]Percy M. Young, The Oratorios of Handel (London: Dennis Dobson, 1948), p. 217.

[9]Ebenezer Prout, "Handel's Orchestration," Musical Times 25 (1884):13. See also Adam Carse, The History of Orchestration (London: Kegal Paul, French, Trubner, & Co., 1925; reprint ed., Dover Publications, 1964), pp. 123-124.

[10]Young, Oratorios, p. 218.

[11]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," p. 54. See also Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 75.

usually doubling the violins, the latter generally doubling the violoncellos and string basses. The flute appears rather infrequently. Horns, trumpets, and trombones are generally treated melodically and often soloistically, rather than as mere harmonic fillers. Timpani are used most often with trumpets in tutti sections.[12]

The way in which the continuo instruments are used in the oratorios constitutes an important stylistic element relating to performance practice. In general, the harpsichord (strengthened by a violoncello and string bass), is employed for recitatives and arias. The organ is used only in the choruses to amplify the harmony. It is usually silent in concertino passages, and, in many instances, the tasto solo designation is applied. The organ also reinforces important entries in contrapuntal choruses.[13] A harpsichord is often used along with the organ in accompanying the choruses "to add brilliance and drive to the orchestra."[14]

In Handel's treatment of the orchestra, the concerto grosso style is evident. The large group, the ripieno, usually introduces the arias, and accompanies the choruses. Conversely, the small group, the concertino, introduces

---

[12]Ebenezer Prout, "The Orchestras of Bach and Handel," Proceedings of the Musical Association 12 (1885-86):34-35. See also Carse, Orchestration, pp. 124-125.

[13]Thurston Dart, "Handel and the Continuo," Musical Times 106 (May 1965):349. See also Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 112.

[14]Ibid.

the choruses, and accompanies the arias.[15] Handel's method illustrates his keen sense of texture and balance and proportion in combining voices and instruments. "The purpose of the whole scheme [the concerto grosso principle] was to set up a perpetual play of light and shade"[16] whereby the voices and instruments complement each other without obscuring or detracting from the text, but rather, enhancing it--making it come alive.

It is perhaps worth noting here that for his own performances of his oratorios, Handel employed an orchestra consisting of from twenty-five to thirty-five instrumentalists and a chorus involving approximately an equal number of singers[17]--a marked contrast with many twentieth century performances which frequently employ considerably more musicians than in Handel's performances, the greater number being singers.

Formally, the oratorios share with opera the three-act divisions.[18] The da capo aria, so prevalent in the operas, is encountered much less frequently in the oratorios, although it is not altogether abandoned. In Larsen's study of Messiah there is a table which lists the total number of

---

[15]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 72.

[16]Ibid., p. 73.

[17]E. van der Straeten, "Handel's Use of Uncommon Instruments and Combinations," Musical Times 67 (July 1926):607.

[18]Israel in Egypt, to be discussed later, is an exception in its final form, although it was originally projected as a characteristic tri-partite structure. (See below, pp. 49, 50.)

arias in each of the oratorios and how many of that total utilize the da capo form.[19] The number of da capo arias is expressed as a percentage of the total, ranging from 0 percent (Israel in Egypt) to 77 percent (The Triumph of Time and Truth) for the oratorios listed earlier on p. 3. There is a total of 395 arias in the oratorios of which 148, or 37 percent, use the da capo design. Handel was no longer bound by the traditions of Italian opera and this emancipation resulted in a freer "formal and technical procedure [which] expanded with the range of emotional and dramatic expression."[20]

With regard to Handel's harmonic vocabulary, Hugo Leichtentritt points out that, in general, Handel's harmony is diatonic unless, of course, the drama of the moment suggests otherwise. It appears that

> complicated chromatic harmony and bold modulations had a meaning for Handel only in association with texts or situations, only when he was writing a lyric passage for a cantata or a dramatic scene for an opera [or an oratorio]. Then harmonic devices were invaluable to him in his application of dramatic psychology; in his detailed, profound, and precise delineation of human character. . . .[21]

The whole matter of attempting to express in music certain emotions, moods, scenes, and dramatic situations is inseparably linked with the concept known during the Baroque as Affektenlehre, or, the Doctrine of Affections. In a very

---

[19]Larsen, Handel's "Messiah," p. 39.

[20]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 317.

[21]Hugo Leichtentritt, "Handel's Harmonic Art," Musical Quarterly 21 (April 1935):219.

broad sense, the doctrine states

> that music, though it could imitate physical nature, more properly ought to imitate human nature by representing in specific musical figures the discrete, classified and stereotyped human feelings and emotions which philosophers had isolated and identified. The purpose of such musical imitations of the affections was either a kind of Aristotelian purgation of the emotions, or stimulation of them for elevation of the soul, or contemplation of them for intellectual satisfaction.[22]

An affection can be defined as "a state of mind that could occupy a character's thoughts and sentiments over a period of time until he was moved by dialogue or action to another state. . . ."[23] The obvious question is simply this: to what extent, if at all, was Handel a practitioner of this aesthetic philosophy?

In his rather intensive investigation of this matter, H. J. Fink has conclusively shown that Handel did follow the Baroque convention of expressing a single basic affection for each unit or section of a musical work. The manner in which Handel expressed the affects--Fink has listed forty affections (some of which have as many as twenty-three individual gradations) that are called for in the oratorio texts[24]--is the important point to understand:

---

[22]Harold J. Fink, "The Doctrine of Affections and Handel: The Background, Theory, and Practice of the Doctrine of Affections; With a Comprehensive Analysis of the Oratorios of G. F. Handel" (Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1953), p. 20.

[23]Claude V. Palisca, Baroque Music (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1968), pp. 174-75.

[24]Fink, "Doctrine of Affections and Handel," pp.114-15.

> [Handel] did not employ a rigid schematic organization of expressive means. He did not associate particular musical configurations with the individual affections. . . . Rather, he expresses the affections and amplifies the intent of the word symbolization of the texts by means of freely-chosen musical techniques.[25]

Although Handel's oratorios utilize techniques which typify late Baroque music in general--wide-ranging diatonic and chromatic melodies, the thorough-bass principle, tonally and harmonically conceived counterpoint, terraced dynamics, pictorialism, metrical rhythm, stylized dance forms, and conventional operatic forms--he adopts and adapts them freely. The end result is "music which is vibrant, fresh, dynamic and in its own right intensely dramatic. . . ."[26]

---

[25]Ibid., pp. 169-70. For a thorough treatment of this subject, see Fink's dissertation, particularly chapter five.

[26]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," p. 56.

CHAPTER IV

INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE STYLISTIC CHARACTERISTICS

Handel's English oratorios are unique works; no oratorio tradition had existed in England prior to Handel. There are, nevertheless, several influences, both dramatic and musical, which are significant in Handel's development of the genre. The oratorios represent Handel's

> remarkable synthesis of elements derived from a variety of sources: the Italian opera seria and oratorio volgare, the choral style exhibited in his Latin psalms composed during his Italian period, the German oratorio, the French classical drama, the English masque, and English choral music. This synthesis resulted in a type of oratorio that differs remarkably from the genre as cultivated on the continent.[1]

Reference has already been made[2] to the oratorios of 1732-33 (Esther, Deborah, and Athalia) as establishing a pattern for the new musical-dramatic function of the chorus. A significant influence which affected Handel's treatment of the chorus in these, and subsequent, oratorios was the French classical drama Esther by the French playwright Racine. Racine's play is patterned after the form of ancient Greek drama.

> Handel's early operas and cantatas had classical plots according to the current fashion, but they contain virtually nothing of the true Greek spirit. It was Racine's treatment of the chorus, deliberately modelled on that of the Attic dramatists with their conception

---

[1] Smither, History, 2:178. [2] See page 16.

> of drama on two levels, one enacted by the characters, the other carried by a chorus operating at once within and above the action--and they derive their peculiar power from the fact that they are participants before they are commentators--that transformed the fragmentary eloquence of the Italian operas into the sublime unity of the oratorios. This pivotal position of the chorus is fundamental. . . . Very often it is itself the real dramatic hero. . . . Even when it does not guide the plot, it holds the reins taut by its power of concentrating the main issues and forcing them into the minds of the audience.[3]

In addition to the flexible role given to the oratorio choruses, Handel's choice of subject matter is also worth noting. In a number of instances, the subject matter follows the tradition of the ancient Greek dramatists.

> The central themes of Saul, Belshazzar, Hercules, and Jephtha, round which the whole plot revolves, are envy, . . . sexual jealousy, and submission to destiny--all favourite subjects of the Greeks--and it is no accident that these works are conspicuous both for the grandeur of their choruses and for the overriding unity of their style. Handel in this temper reminds us again and again of Aeschylus.[4]

Apart from the dramatic influence of the Greek dramas on the role of the chorus in the oratorio librettos, there are musical influences to be considered. As a result of Handel's cosmopolitan career, the musical forms and styles he encountered during his life were both numerous and varied. Handel has been described as "one of the most eclectic of all composers, absorbing most musical influences which presented themselves to him. . . ."[5] The musical

---

[3]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 40.

[4]Ibid., p. 41.

[5]Charles L. Cudworth, "Handel and the French Style," Music and Letters 40 (April 1959):122.

traditions of Germany, Italy, France, and England were influential in the development of Handel's own personal style.

Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau (1663-1712), organist at the Liebfrauenkirche in Halle, and Handel's only teacher (from ca. 1693-1696), is considered by Dean to be one of the most important influences upon Handel. Not only did Handel acquire his "mastery of the German art of [illegible] fermo, and perhaps also his improvisatory treatment [illegible]ue"[6] from Zachau, but he also shares with his teacher what Dean calls a "temperamental affinity." Commenting on Zachau's cantatas, Dean suggests that "apart from a strong Italian strain, [they] suggest by their eclecticism, their extrovert temper, and their love of strong contrasts, whether of mood or texture, a temperamental affinity with his pupil."[7]

Handel had been well educated by Zachau in the German church music tradition, but he did not, in contrast with J. S. Bach, make extensive use of the chorale as such; Handel used several chorales, however, in his setting (1716) of the Passion text by Barthold Heinrich Brockes of Hamburg[8] as well as in the Funeral Anthem of 1737.[9]

The two German Passions composed by Handel, the Johannes Passion (1704) and Brockes' Der für die Sünden der Weltgemartete und sterbende Jesus (1716), possess certain

---

[6]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 13.

[7]Ibid.

[8]Abraham, Handel: A Symposium, p. 75-76.

[9]Larsen, Handel's "Messiah," pp. 69-70.

characteristics akin to Handel's concept of English oratorio. Faugerstrom has pointed out that "both works reveal his lack of interest in the meditative aspects of the text and his strong inclination toward the dramatic."[10] The traditional role of the Passion chorus as a representative of the voices of a crowd affords a parallel with the oratorio chorus which often functions as a collective character representing the Israelite nation.

Early in the eighteenth century, there began to appear so-called Passions, the texts of which were "reflections and comments about the subject rather than its true and faithful narration"[11] as had been the practice, for example in the Passions of Heinrich Schutz (1585-1672). Reinhard Keiser (1674-1739), with whom Handel was associated at the Hamburg opera, composed, in 1704, a Passion which was the first work to abandon completely the Gospel narrative for lyrical poetry. Keiser, in 1712, also set Brockes' Passion text, this same text being used by Handel in his Passion of 1716 mentioned above. Brockes' text combines both Biblical passages and non-biblical contemplative material. Brockes' theatrical rather than devotional interpretation of the Passion affords a parallel with Handel's concept of English oratorio.

> Brockes and his circle interpreted the passion as an individual tragedy that could be told in the poet's own words in a series of edifying experiences. Thus

---

[10]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," p. 28.

[11]Paul Henry Lang, Music in Western Civilization (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1941), p. 480.

> deprived of liturgical objectivity the passion became suitable more to the concert hall than the church. The semi-secular oratorio had a direct bearing on Handel's ethical conception of oratorio which interpreted biblical subjects as great examples of eternal human experience.[12]

Winton Dean has also pointed to the Abendmusik cantatas of Buxtehude (1637-1707) as an early influence on Handel. Stylistically, their clarity, massiveness, and "often homophonic style rather than the elaborate polyphony of his [Buxtehude's] church and organ music"[13] all foreshadow characteristics of Handel's oratorios. Additionally, Buxtehude did not regard these works as liturgical music; rather, he presented them in concerts, and thus they share with Handel's oratorios the purpose of providing an evening's entertainment.

Westrup has suggested that the foundations for the style of the anthem type choruses found in the oratorios result not so much from the English choral tradition but from the "stern discipline"[14] of the Lutheran music on which Handel was raised.

Moving on to Italy in 1706, Handel, during his four-year sojourn, met many of the then leading musicians, including A. Scarlatti, Corelli, Lotti, and Steffani. He also became thoroughly acquainted with the great baroque musical achievements: opera, oratorio, chamber cantata, and the

---

[12]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 313.

[13]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 13.

[14]J. A. Westrup, "Purcell and Handel," Music and Letters 40 (April 1959):106.

various instrumental genres, particularly the concerto grosso. Undoubtedly, the artistic development of the eclectic Handel was profoundly influenced and nourished by his Italian experiences. "The supremacy of sensuous melody supported by clear, diatonic, though sometimes richly spiced harmony, and the homophonic galante and buffo styles, as well as the da capo aria and the secco and accompanied recitatives"[15] all derive from Handel's musical experiences in Italy.

Although Handel's two Italian oratorios of 1707 and 1708, Il Trionfo del Tempo e del Disinganno and La Resurrezione, bear little resemblance to the English oratorios--the Italian oratorios, like Italian opera, primarily consist of a succession of solos--they should not, however, be regarded as inferior works. La Resurrezione, in which Handel illustrates a fluent Italian cantabile style combined with his contrapuntal skill acquired in Germany, is a work which "placed him at the age of twenty-three in the forefront of the composers of his time."[16]

The smooth and highly melodious vocal duets of Agostino Steffani (1654-1728), and Alessandro Scarlatti's "fugues that diverge into harmonic flourishes"[17] are thought by

---

[15]Alex Harman and Anthony Milner, Man and His Music: Late Renaissance and Baroque Music (London: Barrie & Rockliff, 1959), p. 241.

[16]Abraham, Handel: A Symposium, p. 73.

[17]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 13.

Winton Dean to have influenced Handel. Scarlatti (1660-1725), in addition to his significance as an operatic composer, also composed more than twenty oratorios.[18] It is, however, the extended Latin sacred compositions of Giacomo Carissimi (1604-1674) which, although antedating Handel's English oratorios by almost a complete century, foreshadow the characteristic which distinguishes Handelian oratorio: the dramatic function of the chorus.

Carissimi's choruses, like Handel's, are not merely commentators on the action which has taken place, but sometimes serve as the narrator, and, frequently, participate in the drama as the protagonist.[19] Ardrey has pointed out that Carissimi, "in the non-staged, dramatic, Biblical presentations with which he was concerned, . . . discerned the effectiveness of the chorus as . . . [a dramatic] element and gave it a place of prominence."[20]

> Carissimi accepted the chorus as a medium representing people--a congregation composed of human beings expressing basic human emotions. These feelings were realistically portrayed through structured musical devices such as simple implied fugues, the solo voice in conjunction with the choral song, melismatic passages coupled with long-note values and the cantus firmus technique. Also, a design for which he was famous was the use of antiphonal choirs.[21]

---

[18]Homer Ulrich, A Survey of Choral Music (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), p. 112.

[19]Palisca, Baroque Music, p. 117.

[20]Ardrey, "Influence of Carissimi on Handel," p. 24.

[21]Ibid., p. 110.

Although there are these similarities which exist between Carissimi's and Handel's concept of the chorus, it should be noted that Carissimi's works do not fall into the same general category as the oratorios of Handel. Whereas Carissimi's works were written for and performed within the context of a solemn, religious service, Handel's works were intended to provide an evening's entertainment at the theatre. There are, moreover, some notable differences in their respective works: Handel's oratorios, usually two hours or more in duration, contrast markedly with the twenty to thirty minutes needed to perform a Carissimi score; Handel's works are scored for a large orchestra which included (in addition to the inevitable strings) winds, brass and percussion; Carissimi's works, by contrast, are scored mostly for one or two violins and continuo.[22]

That Handel knew something of Carissimi's work is evident from Handel's appropriation of twelve measures from the chorus Plorate filii Israel" from Jephta, which he uses in the chorus "Hear Jacob's God" in Samson. Ardrey has concluded that there is no evidence of any other direct appropriation from Carissimi; he does, however, go on to say that because a few of Carissimi's works were published during his lifetime and shortly after his death, the possibility does exist that Handel was familiar with--and influenced by--works other than

---

[22]Ibid., p. 10.

Jephta.[23]

Paul Henry Lang considers the appropriating of musical material from another composer as "a particular form of 'influence'."[24] Thus, the Italian composers Dionigi Erba, Francesco Antonio Urio, and Alessandro Stradella are significant influences in that Handel appropriated from their works in Israel in Egypt.[25] Stradella's Serenata is a good example of what Lang calls "Italian choral lyricism."[26] Erba's Magnificat, which utilizes a double-choir technique, exercises a significant influence upon Handel's writing, particularly in Israel in Egypt.

Although Handel's choral writing does not assume a prominent position until he turned his attention to the English oratorios, his mastery of the choral idiom is particularly evident in Laudate Pueri Dominum and Dixit Dominus which date from his Italian period. Larsen has succinctly summarized Handel's choral development from the Johannes Passion of his

---

[23]Ibid., p. 110. Ardrey suggests (Ibid., pp. 22-23) four possible sources of Carissimi's works with which Handel could have been familiar: Carissimi's manuscripts in the archives of the Jesuit Collegium Germanicum of Rome; Athanasio Kircher's Musurgia Universalis sive ars magna consoni et dissoni published in 1650 which contains the complete score of "Plorate filii Israel"; a manuscript (No. 310) dated ca. 1730-40, which contains a score of Jephta, in the library of St. Michael's College in Tenbury; and a manuscript probably dated prior to 1741 (British Museum, Add. 31477) containing a transcription of the final chorus of Jephta.

[24]Lang, Handel, p. 563. For a more extensive consideration of the practice of appropriation, see chapter five.

[25]See chapter six for tables of the specific appropriations.

[26]Lang, Handel, p. 74.

German period to the psalm-settings composed in Italy:

> Handel's style has changed considerably and has become much more varied. The simple chordal movement has developed into a powerful sound-conscious, harmonically-governed texture; and the linear counterpoint has become saturated by harmony. An entirely new feature is the strong tendency towards concerted writing, on a large scale as well as in detail. The music has risen to a higher level, borne aloft by the Italian baroque sense of pathos and shapeliness, and it has grown in sonority by means of the use of choruses in more than four parts.[27]

The Dixit Dominus[28] is indeed one of the masterpieces of choral literature worthy of every choral conductor's attention. That Handel thought highly of this work is evident from the fact that about thirty years after its composition he extracted from it the chorus Tu es sacerdos in aeternum and reworked it as a double chorus "He led them through the deep" for Israel in Egypt.[29]

The impact of Italian music and musicians on Handel has been well stated by H. F. Chorley:

> from Italian music, Handel acquired the love of suavity, grace, and roundness of period, which from its earliest period distinguished the Italian school of music. . . . Handel never lost sight [of these qualities] in his works, however grand might be the theme, however rude the character, however awful the situation.[30]

---

[27]Larsen, Handel's "Messiah," p. 47.

[28]For additional discussion of this work as well as the Laudate Pueri Dominum see A. Craig Bell, "Handel in Italy," Music Review 28 (May 1967):85-101. The author refutes the all-too-common notion that Handel wrote nothing worthwhile until he went to England.

[29]The details of this appropriation will be discussed later in the paper.

[30]H. F. Chorley, Handel Studies (London: Augener & Co., 1859), p. 6.

Notwithstanding the dominating influence of Italian music and musicians on Handel, and before considering the influence of the music and musicians of Handel's adopted country, some French traits observable in Handel's oratorios should be noted. Reference has already been made to the influence on Handel of the dramatic position assigned to the chorus in Racine's plays modelled on Greek tragedy.[31] Musically, the most significant French characteristic to be noted in the oratorios is the almost exclusive use of the French overture. Athalia, which is accoutred with an Italian overture, and Israel in Egypt, which has no overture at all, are exceptions to Handel's usual practice. Although Handel never lived in France, Lang points out that the French overture was widely used outside of France. Handel undoubtedly had encountered it both in Germany and Italy.[32]

Notwithstanding Handel's propensity for the French overture, there exists, according to Lang, very little evidence to document specific French influences. The only first-hand account comes from Sir John Hawkins who, writing in the eighteenth century, claimed that "Mr. Handel was ever used to speak of Rameau in terms of great respect."[33] Some traits common both to Rameau and Handel have been noted: "the use of the free, highly dramatic accompanied recitative, the

---

[31]See pp. 24-25 above.

[32]Lang, Handel, p. 635. See also Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 251.

[33]Quoted in Lang, Handel, p. 635.

blending of recitative with aria, the combination of solo with chorus, as well as the fine sense for the pastoral."[34]

Marc-Antoine Charpentier (1634-1704), a pupil of Carissimi, established the oratorio in France. His oratorios have been referred to as "eminently dramatic [works in which] every element aspires to capture and project the affections and the 'actions' implicit in the texts,"[35] but the influence of these works on Handel's oratorios was not significant; Charpentier's oratorios were not published during his lifetime nor for two hundred years after his death, and "Handel was probably unaware of Charpentier's contributions."[36]

To these German, Italian, and French influences must be added the English tradition of choral music which provided "a new musical stimulus"[37] in Handel's development of oratorio. Although Handel concerned himself primarily with Italian opera during his first few years in England, he undoubtedly became acquainted with some of the traditional English musical forms. Bukofzer considers the English masque, the odes and welcome songs, and the choral anthem as the primary "points of contact with the English tradition."[38]

---

[34]Ibid., p. 637.

[35]H. Wiley Hitchcock, "The Latin Oratorios of Marc-Antoine Charpentier," Musical Quarterly 41 (January 1955):62.

[36]Ibid., pp. 61,63.

[37]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque, p. 333.

[38]Ibid.

The chorus in English theatre served, like the chorus in French theatre modelled on Greek tragedy, a dramatic purpose, and, according to E. J. Dent, Handel turned to such English works as Dioclesian, Bonduca, Dido and Aeneas and King Arthur by Purcell in order to find models for the layout and construction of his oratorios.[39] Henry Purcell (1659-1695), is perhaps the most significant English influence on Handel. Lang, in commenting on the significance of the anthem influence in Handel's oratorios, refers to "Purcell standing there as a revered godfather."[40] Specifically, the verse anthem, with the often dramatic solo-chorus alternation, "greatly appealed to Handel."[41] Purcell's anthems were "the mainstay of English church service-lists"[42] and Handel, who regularly attended St. Paul's cathedral, had undoubtedly absorbed, both consciously and subconsciously, the spirit and style of English choral music by the time he began composing English oratorios.

Handel's early English choral works, the Ode for Queen Anne's Birthday (1713), the Utrecht Te Deum and Jubilate (1713), the twelve Chandos Anthems (1717-20), and the four Coronation Anthems (1727) also suggest Purcell's influence.[43]

---

[39]Edward J. Dent, "English Influences on Handel," Monthly Musical Record 61 (August 1931):227.

[40]Lang, Music in Western Civilization, p. 525.

[41]Ardrey, "Influence of Carissimi on Handel," p. 28.

[42]Dent, "English Influences," p. 227.

[43]Faugerstrom, "Dramatic Function of the Chorus," p. 28.

Purcell's occasional quasi-fugal texture, and his brilliant and varied vocal and instrumental writing anticipate certain aspects of Handel's style in his anthems and oratorios.[44]

H. H. Wintersgill attributes to the influence of English music what he calls "Handel's two-length bar."[45] The reference here is to Handel's use of hemiola, whereby two measures of three-four meter assume the rhythmic character of one measure of three-two meter. This technique was used principally, although not exclusively, at cadence points. Dean has pointed out that this rhythmic device is not an English trait exclusively, but was also utilized by continental composers. He goes on to say, however, that "the fact that it occurs in nearly all Handel's works from the Queen Anne Birthday Ode onwards . . . but seldom during his Italian period does suggest that he may have acquired a taste for it in England."[46]

Handel's assimilation of the tradition of English choral music combined with his background in Germany and Italy manifests itself in an unprecedented manner in the English oratorio. Having considered Handel's background and some of the many and varied influences on his music, and, with all due respect to the scholars attempting to

---

[44]Harman and Milner, Late Renaissance and Baroque Music, p. 275.

[45]H. H. Wintersgill, "Handel's Two-Length Bar," Music and Letters 17 (January 1936):2.

[46]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 66.

trace specific influences in his music, we must consider these words:

> Most important of all . . . is Handel himself, who invested everything he wrote with a spaciousness and a majesty that came only from his own genius.[47]

---

[47]Archibald T. Davison, Bach and Handel: the Consummation of the Baroque in Music (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951), p. 43.

CHAPTER V

HANDEL AND THE PRACTICE OF APPROPRIATION

It is no secret that Handel deliberately and systematically appropriated musical material from other composers as well as from his own works for many new compositions. That Handel's procedure was indeed deliberate and systematic has been admirably demonstrated by Sedley Taylor. Based on a comparative-analytical study, Taylor, quoting parallel musical passages from Handel and those from whom he appropriated, concludes that "the similarities are much too minute and extensive to be accounted for either by fortuitous coincidence or by unconscious reminiscence."[1]

Handel's practice, while condoned by the majority of musicologists writing on the subject, has been condemned by some. In a letter dated 19 October 1808, the renowned English organist, Samuel Wesley, accused Handel of plagiarism.[2] Writing in 1950, Archibald Davison expresses the opinion[3] that while Handel may be pardoned for aesthetic reasons, there is no moral or ethical justification for his

---

[1]Sedley Taylor, The Indebtedness of Handel to Works by Other Composers: a Presentation of Evidence (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906. New York: Johnson Reprint, 1971), p. 172.

[2]A portion of the letter is quoted in Taylor, p. xi.

[3]Davison, Bach and Handel, p. 40.

appropriations. But if Handel is to be censured, so must virtually every other Baroque composer because "borrowing, transcribing, adapting, re-arranging, parodying (in the same sense as in the Parody Mass of the sixteenth century) was a universal and accepted practice in the Baroque."[4] As far back as the first century, Quintillianus (30?-96? A.D.) stated as "a universal rule that we should wish to copy what we approve in others [and in addition] improve upon the good things and vie with the original in the expression of the same thoughts."[5] William M. Ivins, Jr., in an essay about drawing, discusses the question of originality in art. His conclusions are as pertinent to music--Handel in particular--as they are to drawing:

> "Originality" in art is very much like originality in sin, for we should always bear in mind that "original sin" is the sin, or at least the kind of sin, about which we poor mortals can do nothing at all. We have it simply because we are descended from Adam and Eve. In the same way, draughtsmen who are original are . . . [unique] no matter how much they may attempt to copy or emulate something that someone else has done before them. . . "Copies" and imitations made by men who have this ineradicable quality of originality are infinitely more original than "original drawings" made by men who lack it . . . The best way

---

[4]Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music, rev. ed. (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., 1973), p. 45. The words "borrow," "borrowing," and "borrowed," have been observed rather frequently in the literature discussing Handel's compositional procedures. In my opinion, however, borrowing implies returning. To the best of my knowledge, Handel never returned--or even acknowledged--his purloined materials. It is my intention, therefore, to avoid--except in direct quotation--using this somewhat misleading terminology and to replace it with something closer to the truth--stealing, appropriating, purloining, pilfering, etc.

[5]Quoted in Franklin B. Zimmerman, "Musical Borrowings in the English Baroque," Musical Quarterly 52 (October 1966): 485.

> to find out how much originality a man has is to see what he can do with another man's idea. I believe it is something of this kind that explains why the great masters--the most original men, that is,--have always come out of long lineages of other great artists, on whose shoulders and triumphs they stand.[6]

C. C. Colton in "Lacon" has stated

> There are two modes to obtain celebrity in authorship; discovery and conquest. Discovery, by saying what none others have said, with the proviso that it be true as well as new; and conquest, by saying what others have said, but with more point, brevity and brightness.[7]

Paul Henry Lang discusses a similar concept in terms of "invention" and "imagination."[8] It is the mode of "conquest" or concept of "imagination" which typifies Handel's procedure in the majority of his appropriations. Most Handelian scholars[9] have generally agreed that the material which Handel appropriated, whether his own or that of others, he utilized in a more felicitous manner. "It has been said of . . . [Handel] that whatever he touched he turned to gold; but it might with more correctness be affirmed that his judgment rejected what was not originally good, and that the gold he borrowed he refined."[10]

---

[6]William M. Ivins, Jr., "Some Disconnected Notes about Drawing," Harper's Magazine, December 1949, pp. 84-85. Cited by Grout, History of Western Music, p. 445.

[7]Quoted in Constantin von Sternberg, "On Plagiarism," Musical Quarterly 5 (July 1919):39.

[8]Lang, Handel, pp. 562-566.

[9]cf. Lang, Larsen, Dean, Young et al.

[10]From Paul H. Lang's "Foreward" to the reprint edition of Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. viii. For a thorough discussion of the moral and ethical issues involved in Handel's appropriations, see chapter VIII of Taylor's book, and pp. 559-569 of Lang's Handel.

One may well ask the question why Handel would spend the time transcribing, refurbishing and patching earlier works. Only Handel could answer such a question with authority. At best, the musicologist can only suggest hypotheses in attempting to provide an answer. Indeed, a number of reasons have been suggested for Handel's practice. The apparent haste with which Handel composed some of his oratorios suggests that he may have been forced, because of the exigencies of meeting a deadline, to base portions of his new works on earlier models. The short period of time taken to compose the works cited below would seem to impart some degree of credibility to the preceding statement, especially when one realizes that each of these works occupies between two and three hundred pages in full score:

Israel in Egypt	(1738) [279 pp.]	twenty-three days
Saul	(1738) [286 pp.]	sixty-seven days (interrupted by illness)
Samson	(1741) [296 pp.]	about forty days
Messiah	(1741) [317 pp.]	twenty-four days
Belshazzar	(1744) [267 pp.]	thirty-four days
Joshua	(1747) [199 pp.]	thirty-two days
Alexander Balus	(1747) [213 pp.]	thirty-four days[11]

Handel's physical and emotional breakdown in 1737, resulting in a temporary deterioration of his inventive powers, is an hypothesis suggested by Edward J. Dent. The more copious appropriations observed in the works of the late 1730's would seem to justify Dent's hypothesis.[12] Chrysander,

---

[11]Ardrey, "Influence of Carissimi on Handel," p. 30.

[12]Cf. Gerald Abraham, "A New Approach to Handel," The Score 26 (January 1960):50.

in his Life of Handel, claims that "it was the impulse of his artistic nature to save from perishing musical ideas which he saw lying half developed or in an environment foreign to them. . . . He instantly recognized where they belonged . . . and saw them in complete form and full of dignified potentialities."[13] Lang shares a similar view; he states that perhaps "something in the composer's subconscious flashes a memory that suits the mood, the affective requirements of the moment; it generates a creative spark, and since the age placed little value on absolute newness, the composer reworked a good and usable idea."[14]

It seems unnecessary to labour the point. That Handel did appropriate earlier works in his new compositions remains a fact regardless of the reasons suggested. It is perhaps important to note here that in all of Handel's output, the quantitative relationship of appropriated material to entirely original works is small "even if allowance is made for a good many [pilferings] still undetected."[15] Bukofzer suggests, moreover, that we must remember that Handel appropriated more from himself than from others.[16]

The techniques of appropriation used by Handel range from the development and expansion of a small melodic and/or rhythmic motive to the wholesale appropriation of an entire

---

[13]Quoted in Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 183.

[14]Lang, Handel, pp. 568-69.

[15]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 51.

[16]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque Era, p. 345.

section or movement with little or no change. It has been suggested that "even when he used another composer's music without altering it in any way, he did in effect alter it by the very fitness of the new context in which he set it."[17] Handel does not hesitate to alter a performance medium when appropriating material; thus, in Israel in Egypt, for example, we find him transforming keyboard fugues into choral fugues on several occasions. Often, only a few minor alterations were made in the process of appropriating a piece: a transposition; a rhythmic adjustment to suit the text; a rearrangement of parts; perhaps the omission of a few measures; and the impression created is such that the altered piece sounds as though it had been conceived originally as it now stands.[18] Thematic ideas from secular works are also incorporated into sacred compositions. Sedley Taylor discusses the secular-sacred relationship, and points out the fact that most of Handel's music was not published in his own day, thereby preventing "any fixed association growing up between music and words such as would make a fresh destination given to the former appear incongruous or even lacking in reverence."[19] Bukofzer made an important point when he stated that what is "remarkable is the fact that the borrowed sections always fit

---

[17]John Tobin, Handel's "Messiah": A Critical Account of the Manuscript Sources and Printed Editions (London: Cassell & Co., 1969), pp. 157-58.

[18]cf. Lang, Handel, p. 567.

[19]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 165.

into the whole without any stylistic incongruity."[20]

We may never know with certainty the full extent to which Handel based his work on earlier models, nor will we, likewise, be able to list all of the composers from whom Handel appropriated. Handel did not, however, limit his pilferings to a select half dozen or so composers. In 1831, Dr. William Crotch, a Professor of Music at Oxford University, published a list naming twenty-nine composers to whom Handel is indebted:

> Handel quoted or copied the works of Josquin de Prèz, Palestrina, Turini, Carissimi, Calvisius, Uria (sic)[21] Corelli, Alessandro and Domenico Scarlatti, Sebastian Bach, Purcell, Locke, Caldara, Colonna, Clark, Cesti, Kerl, Habermann, Muffat, Kuhnau, Telemann, Graun, Mondeville, Porta, Pergolesi, Vinci, Astorga, Bononcini, Hasse, etc.[22]

Crotch's use of "etc." implies either that further investigation would reveal additional names, or that it had already disclosed additional names. Crotch ultimately compiled a list of thirty-five composers, to which seven more names had been added by others. Dean points out, however, that many of Crotch's examples can be termed far-fetched because they are nothing more than mere coincidence or conventional musical formulae of the age rather than conscious and deliberate appropriations. Rejecting, then, the tenuous examples, a

---

[20]Bukofzer, Music in the Baroque, p. 344.

[21]Should be Urio.

[22]Cited in Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. xi.

working list of about twenty composers remains.[23]

From Crotch's list given above, and from the list in the appendix to Sedley Taylor's study, there is one name which is conspicuous because of its absence, that of Handel's teacher, Friedrich Wilhelm Zachau. Although Handel does not seem to have appropriated specific works or thematic ideas from his teacher there are, according to Lang,

> many traits we consider typically Handelian . . . present in Zachow's music; it is spacious, euphonious, its melody sturdily designed yet sensuous, it can be suave but also monumental. Above all, this music is healthy and communicative; Zachow too had the ability--and the power--to be simple yet effective.[24]

---

[23]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 52.

[24]Lang, Handel, p. 12.

PART TWO

AN ANALYSIS OF HANDEL'S

ISRAEL IN EGYPT

CHAPTER VI

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

> At the King's Theatre . . . this Day [4 April 1739] . . . will be performed a New Oratorio, call'd ISRAEL IN EGYPT. With several Concerto's on the Organ, and particularly a new one. . . . To begin at Seven O'Clock.[1]

Thus appeared the advertisement in the London Daily Post for the first performance of Israel in Egypt, a work which is unique in all of Handel's oratorio output. There are two primary factors which contribute to the uniqueness of this work: 1) except for four secco recitatives, four arias, and three duets, the entire oratorio consists of a chain of choruses, twenty-eight to be exact, nineteen of which are double choruses; 2) this work represents the most radical application of Handel's practice of appropriation.

Israel in Egypt is in two parts whereas most oratorios are in three, although Julian Herbage contended that Israel in Egypt "consists of the second and third parts of a work for which Handel never provided a satisfactory first part."[2]

The work, as it now stands, begins abruptly with a secco

---

[1]Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 478. The new organ concerto was Number One, in F, of the second set, which Handel had completed on 2 April 1739.

[2]Abraham, ed., Handel: A Symposium, p. 92.

recitative. Because other oratorios of Handel usually begin with an overture, we can assume that it was probably not Handel's intention to begin Israel in Egypt in a dissimilar manner. In fact, what is now referred to as Part One is headed "Act ye 2" in the autograph manuscript.[3] According to Dean, Handel intended to precede "Act ye 2" with his Funeral Anthem, written in 1737 on the death of Queen Caroline.[4] This, then accounts for the nonexistence of the overture. Handel retitled the Funeral Anthem when incorporating it as a first act for Israel in Egypt, calling the work Lamentations of the Israelites for the Death of Joseph.[5] The revival of Israel in Egypt in 1756 seems to indicate that Handel was not completely satisfied with the adapted Funeral Anthem as a first act. The performance of 17 March 1756 (and most likely the performance one week later on 24 March) consisted of portions from Act One of Solomon serving as a substitute for the Lamentations.[6] According to Sir Malcolm Sargent, Handel on another occasion dispensed with the Funeral Anthem and preceded the opening secco recitative with the overture to Saul[7] for purposes of this

---

[3]George Frederic Handel, Israel in Egypt (Autograph manuscript housed in the British Museum, R.M.20.h.3.)

[4]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 312.

[5]Ibid., p. 92.

[6]Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 862.

[7]G. F. Handel, Israel in Egypt, The Huddersfield Choral Society and the Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent (Angel Records, Album 3550B, 1957), Descriptive Notes, p. 4.

study, the analysis to follow deals only with Parts One and Two as published posthumously.

Handel began composing Israel in Egypt on 1 October 1738, and completed the work one month later. Part Two, a straightforward anthem-like setting of Exodus 15:1-21, was composed first, and is titled "Moses Song." Part Two has been described as "an Israelitish hymn of triumph over the destruction of Pharaoh and his host. . . ; [it] leads to a climax of jubilant devotional rapture. . . ."[8] Part One, the narrative of which is found in the first fourteen chapters of the book of Exodus, is titled "Exodus"; however, the texts used in the oratorio are taken from Psalms 78, 105, and 106 and various verses from Exodus.[9] Part One presents the sufferings and oppressions of the Israelites, the plagues brought to bear upon Pharaoh and his Egyptian host, and the miracle of the Israelites' deliverance from their bondage.

While the identity of the compiler of the above-mentioned scriptures of Israel in Egypt is not certain, it is possible that Handel assumed this responsibility. Winton Dean, however, suggested that Charles Jennens, the librettist of Handel's previous oratorio, Saul, may have been

---

[8]Chorley, Handel Studies, p. 14.

[9]For the specific biblical sources of the individual numbers see Handel, Israel in Egypt: A Sacred Oratorio. Edited and the pianoforte accompaniment by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (London: Novello, Ewer, N.D.) pp. i-iii. The biblical references are also given in the notes to Handel, Israel in Egypt, Musica Aeterna Orchestra and Chorus conducted by Frederic Waldman (Decca Recordings DXA-178). In this study, the biblical sources are given in the precis which precedes the discussion of each movement.

responsible for the textual arrangement. Dean's hypothesis--which explains why Part Two was composed first--is "that someone else (?Jennens [sic]) was not ready with the text of Part I, which . . . would have taken longer to prepare. On this supposition, Handel was so seized with the music that he could not wait for the full text."[10]

Israel in Egypt was not a well-received work in Handel's lifetime. Only eleven performances have been accounted for, eight of which were given by Handel.[11] Percy Young has stated that "the very qualities which commend it to choral societies today were those which kept away the contemporary patron: unadulterated choral music was fitting for the church but not the opera house."[12] The nature of the text, however, suggests a choral treatment in that it deals with a company of people and their ultimate destiny.[13] Because Israel in Egypt is an account of "the progress of a people from subjugation and despair to liberation and victory . . . individuals are absorbed into the mass so recitative and arias form a very small part of the whole."[14] A more

---

[10]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 312. Dean also suggested that perhaps Part Two was originally intended to stand alone as an anthem, and that only subsequent to its composition Handel had the idea of setting the account of the plagues in a similar manner.

[11]Ibid., Appendix D, p. 640. See also Deutsch, Documentary Biography, pp. 478-80, 484, 497, 597, 771, 783, 794, for specific dates and places of performance.

[12]Young, Oratorios, p. 223.

[13]Abraham, ed., Handel: A Symposium, p. 95.

[14]Percy M. Young, The Choral Tradition (London: Hutchison & Co., 1962. New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1971), p. 125.

significant factor contributing to the rejection of Israel in Egypt in Handel's day--a factor often overlooked, if, indeed, even acknowledged by twentieth-century audiences--was the literal use of the sacred scriptures within the confines of the theatre. Although biblical stories form the basis of the librettos of Handel's other oratorios, Israel in Egypt is the first Handelian oratorio in which the text is taken verbatim from scripture.[15] Many of the religious, pietistic people of the day considered such a practice to be sacrilegious, and it became, therefore, a highly controversial issue.[16] In spite of bitter opposition, there were those who sought to defend Handel. An excerpt from an anonymous letter published in the London Daily Post the morning after the third performance of Israel in Egypt (17 April 1739) will suffice to illustrate such defences of Handel and his new oratorio:

> And if People, before they went to hear it, would but retire a Moment, and read by themselves the Words of the Sacred Drama, it would tend very much to raise their Delight when [they are] at the Representation. The Theatre, on this occasion, ought to be enter'd with more Solemnity than a Church; inasmuch, as the Entertainment you go to is in itself the noblest Adoration and Homage paid to the Deity that ever was in one. . . . It is the Action that is done in it, that hallows the Place, and not the Place the Action.[17]

---

[15]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 134. See also Smither, History, 2:227.

[16]For a thorough discussion of this issue, see Myers, Early Moral Criticism.

[17]Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 482. The letter is signed R. W. It has been suggested by Chrysander (cited by Deutsch, p. 483) that the writer of the letter might have been Richard Wesley.

Not only did Handel's use of scripture within the theatre result in controversy, but also, as discussed in chapter five, his practice of appropriation received its share of criticism. While it is true that the number of Handel's appropriations is small in comparison to his entire output, the oratorio Israel in Egypt represents his most concentrated example of the practice. Perhaps, as Percy Young states, Israel in Egypt ought to be considered as "an anthology, drastically edited. . . ."[18] What follows here is a summary of the appropriations which are found in the oratorio.

Of the thirty-nine numbers in Israel in Egypt, nineteen are based, either in whole or in part, on earlier works of Handel and other composers.[19] To be mathematical for a moment, one could say that 48.72 per cent of this oratorio's movements can be traced to earlier sources. Part One consists of sixteen numbers of which nine, all choral pieces, are based on earlier works. Part Two, consisting of twenty-three numbers, contains ten pieces which derive from other works. Of these ten pieces, seven are for choral forces; the remaining three are duets. Earlier works of Handel account for four of the nineteen appropriated numbers, the remaining fifteen being predicated upon other composers' works. The composers upon whom Handel drew are

---

[18]Young, Oratorios, pp. 92-93.

[19]For a comparative study of the appropriations in Israel in Egypt see Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, chapters six and seven, pp. 47-163.

Johann Caspar Kerll (1627-1693), Dionigi Erba (?-?), Francesco Antonio Urio (1660-?), and Alessandro Stradella (1642-1682). Their works which Handel used in Israel in Egypt are an organ canzona from Kerll's Modulatio Organica, a Magnificat by Erba, a Te Deum by Urio, and a Serenata, "Qual prodigio e ch'io miri," by Stradella.[20] The works which Handel appropriated for Israel in Egypt from his earlier output comprise two fugues (nos. one and five) from the Six Keyboard Fugues (ca. 1720), a section from the Dixit Dominus (1707), and the tenth Chandos Anthem, "The Lord is My Light" (1717-20). The four works by Handel, Kerll's canzona, and Stradella's Serenata are used in Part One of the oratorio. Erba's Magnificat, Urio's Te Deum, and a five-note motive from Stradella's Serenata are appropriated in Part Two.

---

[20]Percy Robinson, in his book Handel and his Orbit (Manchester: Sheratt and Hughes, 1908), and in other publications--"Handel, Erba, and Urio," Musical Times 46 (December 1905):800-801; "Erba, Urio, Stradella, and Handel," Musical Times 65 (July 1924):607-608; "Handel, or Urio, Stradella and Erba," Music and Letters 16 (October 1935):269-77; "Was Handel a Plagiarist?" Musical Times 80 (August 1939):573-77--has attempted to show that the Erba, Urio, and Stradella works are earlier compositions by Handel. Stradella's authorship has, however, been convincingly substantiated by Edward Allam in "Alessandra Stradella," Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 80 (1953-54):29-41. Winton Dean in Dramatic Oratorios, pp. 53-54, dismisses Robinson's argument on the basis of the lack of solid and convincing evidence. J. Merill Knapp, in his introduction to the republication of R. A. Streatfield's Handel (London: Methuen & Co., 1910; Reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1964), p. xv, concludes that Robinson's thesis "has generally been discounted."

The following tables list the specific pieces in Israel in Egypt which are indebted to earlier models. To facilitate reference to these earlier models, the published sources of the earlier works are given, including title, volume, and page numbers. In addition, page references are given for the parallel musical quotations in Sedley Taylor's study. The following abbreviations are used:

HW2	Handel's Werke[21]	Vol. 2	Keyboard Music
HW16	" "	Vol. 16	Israel in Egypt
HW35	" "	Vol. 35	Anthems II
HW38	" "	Vol. 38	Latin Church Music
HWS I	Supplements: containing Sources to Handel's Works[22]	Vol. I	Erba's Magnificat
HWS II	" " "	Vol. II	Urio's Te Deum
HWS III	" " "	Vol. III	Stradella's Serenata

HAWK II Sir John Hawkins' A General History of the Science and Practice of Music, Volume II of the reprint edition.[23]

---

[21]Friedrich Chrysander, ed., Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke, 96 Volumes. Vol. 49 not published. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1859-94; reprint ed., Farnborough, Hants, England; Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1965-66).

[22]Friedrich Chrysander, ed., Supplements: containing Sources to Handel's Works, 6 Vols. (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Härtel, 1888-1903; reprint ed., Farnborough, Hants, England; Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968).

[23]Sir John Hawkins, A General History of the Science and Practice of Music, 5 Vols. (London: T. Payne and Son, 1776; 2 Vol. Reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1963).

TABLE 2.

APPROPRIATIONS IN PART ONE OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Title of the Selection in Israel in Egypt (HW16) with page numbers	Published Source of Appropriated Material with page numbers	Title of Appropriated Selection	Parallel Musical Quotation in Taylor
Chorus: "They loathed to drink of the river" (pp. 17-22)	HW2, pp. 171-172	Fugua V from the Six Keyboard Fugues	pp. 47-53
Double Chorus: "He spake the word" (pp. 27-40)	HWS III, pp. 33-35	Sinfonia	pp. 53-68
Double Chorus: "He gave them hailstones for rain" (pp. 41-54)	HWS III, pp. 2 and 50-51	Opening Sinfonia; Bass Aria: "Seguir non voglio piu"	pp. 68-72
Chorus: "He smote all the firstborn of Egypt" (pp. 58-71)	HW2, pp. 161-162	Fuga I from the Six Keyboard Fugues	pp. 72-73
Chorus: "But as for His people" (pp. 72-81)	HWS III, pp. 43-46	Soprano Aria: "Io pur seguiro"	pp. 73-75

TABLE 2. (continued)

Title of the Selection in *Israel in Egypt* (HW16) with page numbers	Published Source of Appropriated Material with page numbers	Title of the Appropriated Selection	Parallel Musical Quotation in Taylor
Chorus: "Egypt was glad when they departed" (pp. 82-92)	HAWK II, pp. 597-98	Organ Canzona from *Modulatio Organico*	pp. 76-82
Double Chorus: "He led them through the deep" (pp. 95-104)	HW38, pp. 79-84	Chorus: "Tu es sacerdos in aeternum" from the *Dixit Dominus*	pp. 82-84
Chorus: "But the waters overwhelmed their enemies" (pp. 105-108)	HW35, pp. 198-201	Soprano Aria: "It is the Lord that ruleth the sea" from the tenth *Chandos Anthem*	pp. 84-86
Chorus: "And believed the Lord" (pp. 111-114)	HWS III, pp. 31-32	Soprano Aria: "Ite dunque a cercar" (the B section of an ABA aria)	pp. 87-89

TABLE 3.

APPROPRIATIONS IN PART TWO OF ISRAEL IN EGYPT

Title of the Selection in Israel in Egypt (HW16) with page numbers	Published Source of Appropriated Material with page numbers	Title of the Appropriated Selection	Parallel Musical Quotation in Taylor
Soprano Duet: "The Lord is my strength" (pp. 138-142)	HWS I, pp. 4-8	Soprano Duet: "Et exultavit"	pp. 93-113
Double Chorus: "He is my God: (pp. 143-144)	HWS I, pp. 2-3	Double Chorus: "Magnificat anima, mea Dominum"	pp. 114-116
Bass Duet: "The Lord is a man of war" (pp. 153-168)	HWS I, pp. 14ff. HWS II, pp. 20ff.	Bass Duet: "Quia Fecit" Chorus: "Te eternum patrem" (orchestral introduction)	pp. 117-136
Double Chorus: "The depths have covered them" (pp. 169-172)	HWS I, pp. 9-11	Double Chorus: "Quia respicit humilitatem"	pp. 137-141
Double Chorus: "Thy right hand, O Lord" (pp. 173-183)	HWS I, pp. 11-13	Double Chorus: "Ecce enim" (A continuation of the previous piece)	pp. 142-148

TABLE 3. (continued)

Title of the Selection in *Israel in Egypt* (HW16) with page numbers	Published Source of Appropriated Material with page numbers	Title of the Appropriated Selection	Parallel Musical Quotation in Taylor
Double Chorus: "Thou sendest forth Thy wrath" (pp. 185-194)	HWS I, pp. 28-41	Double Chorus: "Fecit potentiam"	pp. 148-149
Chorus: "And with the blast of Thy nostrils" (pp. 195-204)	HWS I, pp. 42-48	Alto Aria: "Deposuit potentes"	pp. 149-154
Double Chorus: "The earth swallowed them" (pp. 217-220)	HWS I, pp. 58-64	Double Chorus: "Sicut erat in principio"	p. 155
Alto and Tenor Duet: "Thou in Thy mercy: (pp. 221-225)	HWS I, pp. 49-51	Alto-Tenor Duet: "Esurientes implevit bonis"	pp. 155-162
Double Chorus: "The people shall hear" (pp. 226-249, but specifically pp 231-238)	HWS III, p. 24	Soprano-Bass Duet: "Amiche, Nemiche"	pp. 162-163

CHAPTER VII

GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS, RECITATIVES, ARIAS, AND DUETS

Israel in Egypt is scored for two four-part choruses, six solo voices (two sopranos, contralto, tenor, and two basses), and an orchestra consisting of strings (violins, violas, violoncellos, and basses), winds (paired flutes, oboes, and bassoons) brass (two trumpets and three trombones), timpani, two organs and a harpsichord. It should be noted that the flutes are not regular participants in the wind section of the orchestra, appearing in only one movement in the entire oratorio (No. 10, "But As For His People"), where they function at times independently of the oboes. A notable feature of the orchestration is Handel's employment, in thirteen choruses, of three trombones, instruments from which little is heard in orchestras of the eighteenth century.[1] Indeed, with the exception of Saul, Israel in Egypt, and Samson, trombones do not appear at all in Handel's oratorios, perhaps due to a lack of skilled players.[2]

---

[1]W. F. H. Blandford, "Handel's Horn and Trombone Parts," Musical Times 80 (1939):794. See also Adam Carse, Musical Wind Instruments (London, 1939; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, Inc., 1965), p. 256.

[2]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 79.

The main tonal centre of Israel in Egypt is C, with each of the oratorio's two parts beginning and ending in the same tonality (Part One, in C minor, and Part Two, in C major). The tonality of C minor rarely occurs in Handel's output; "it is avoided in the keyboard music, in the organ concertos, infects only one of the concerti grossi, and stands in the oratorios in notable isolation."[3] The oratorio Saul, completed only four days before Israel in Egypt was started, also utilizes the tonality of C minor. Although C minor occurs infrequently, Handel showed, according to H. J. Fink, a preference for C minor in situations involving grief and distress.[4] The first chorus of Israel in Egypt, the text of which deals with the bondage, distress, and oppression of the Israelites, clearly illustrates this connection.[5] Additional comments pertaining to tonality and tonal relationships, both inter- and intra-movemental, will be made within the context of the analysis of the various musical categories outlined below.

Each of the thirty-nine numbers[6] of Israel in Egypt

---

[3]Young, Oratorios, p. 92.

[4]Fink, "Affections and Handel," p. 138.

[5]Percy Young in Oratorios, p. 92, mentions other oratorio choruses of lamentation and mourning which are in C minor: "Ye Sons of Israel Mourn" from Esther, "Mourn Ye Afflicted" from Judas Maccabaeus, and "How Dark, O Lord, Are Thy Decrees" from Jephtha.

[6]The individual movements of Israel in Egypt are unnumbered in volume 16 of Handel's collected works. The numbering of the movements adopted in this study corresponds to the numbering used by Dean (Dramatic Oratorios) and Taylor (Indebtedness of Handel), as well as several other sources.

belongs to one of six musical categories: (1) secco recitative, (2) aria, (3) duet, (4) extended homophonic chorus, (5) [illegible]al prelude and fugue, and (6) contrapuntal chorus. Each of the movements in the oratorio will be analyzed under one of these six categories for whatever significant relationships as may exist both within a given classification and between the familial types. This chapter involves the recitatives, arias, and duets; the chapters to follow are devoted to a discussion of the various types of choruses.

Recitatives

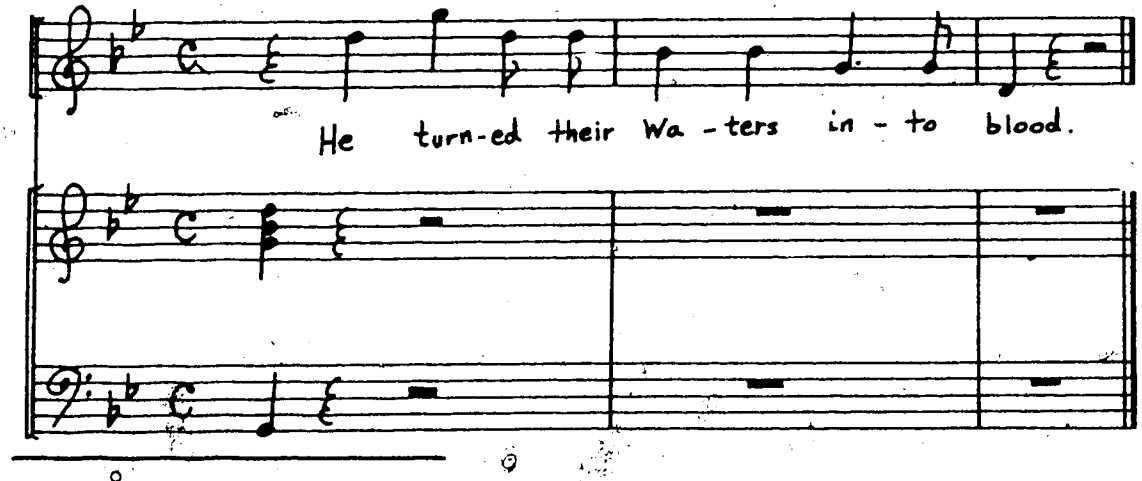
There are four recitatives in Israel in Egypt, two in each part: Part One, Nos. 1 and 3; Part Two, Nos. 36 and 38. All four recitatives are of the secco type. Theodor Göllner has suggested that the few recitatives and arias--and I would include the duets here as well--serve almost as artificially attached periods of relief from the prevailing choral writing.[7] This is, perhaps, not an unreasonable suggestion with respect to Part Two of the oratorio, which contains, in addition to fifteen choral numbers, three of the oratorio's four arias, all three of the duets, and two of the recitatives. When considering Part One, however, the two recitatives and one aria occur early in the work

[7]Theodor Göllner, "Zur Sprachvertonung in Händels Chören," Deutsche Vierteljahrsschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte 42 (December 1968):481.

(Nos. 1, 3, and 5, respectively), and they can hardly be considered as points of relief, unless they are preceded by other choral numbers. The only plausible interpretation of Göllner's remarks is that he is recalling the fact that when Israel in Egypt was originally presented, the now-referred-to first part was preceded by the Funeral Anthem which consists of an unbroken chain of twelve choruses.

The narrative texts of the recitatives are set in the customary declamatory style. The last three measures of the second recitative are, however, dramatically distinct from any other passage in the oratorio's recitatives (see example 1). There are three factors which contribute to the

Example 1, Recitative, "Then Sent He Moses," meas. 6-8 (p. 17, system 2, meas. 3-5).[8]



[8]G. F. Handel, Israel in Egypt, Vol. 16, Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke, ed. by Friedrich Chrysander (Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1863; reprint ed., Farnborough, Hants, England; Ridgewood, New Jersey, Gregg Press, 1966). Unless otherwise indicated, all musical examples will be taken from this volume. To facilitate the reader's use of the score, the captions for all examples will indicate the following information: type and title of the movement, measures of the piece shown, page number in HW 16 with the measures for the given page where the example can be located. Where musical examples are drawn

uniqueness of these three measures: (1) the insertion of a tonal signature in measure 6 of the recitative (the recitatives, otherwise, do not contain tonal signatures) along with the restated meter signature (C); (2) a very emphatic rhythm at the words "He turned their waters into blood" which contrasts with the freer more declamatory style which otherwise prevails in the recitatives; and (3) the absence of instrumental support. The suppressing of the basso continuo in these measures should not be construed as an oversight by Handel; rather, I believe, Handel's dramatic instinct can be observed here. Instrumental support here would have produced an unnecessary distraction from the dramatic character of the text, the starkness of which is underscored by the vocal line, which is confined to the notes of the G minor triad. Harmonic continuo support would have resulted either in a (needless) duplication of these notes, or in a complicated weakening of the effect which they produce. The intense impact of Handel's writing here has been referred to as "one of his greatest strokes of musical rhetoric."[9] Decisively enunciated in this final recitative from Part One is the first of the ten horrible plagues which ultimately result

---

from other volumes from the collected works of Handel, the appropriate volume number and title, preceded by the designation HW. (for Händel's Werke), will be shown as well as page number and measures from that page shown in the example. Examples from any other sources will be documented in a footnote.

[9]Donald F. Tovey, Essays in Musical Analysis, Vol. 5, Vocal Music (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. 89.

in the victorious deliverance of the Israelites. The opening recitative and chorus, which Macfarren refers to as the Prologue, and which recounted the bondage, sorrow, and oppression of the Israelites, is now over, and the "real action"[10] has begun (in the second recitative).

As mentioned earlier, Handel avoided consistent use of specific musical formulae to represent specific affections. Nevertheless, according to Fink's study, Handel shows a preference for the diminished seventh chord or diminished triad to express dramatic words, phrases, or the more intense emotional situations.[11] Three of the four recitatives in Israel in Egypt utilize such chordal structures. Diminished seventh chords occur in No. 1 at the words "made them serve" (p. 1, meas. 5), and No. 3 at "servant, and Aaron" (p. 17, meas. 2). Diminished triads are found in No. 3 at "these shew'd His sign" (p. 17, meas. 3), and No. 38 at "women went out after her with timbrels" (p. 257, meas. 4-5). Perhaps the Israelite's emotions of grief and distress implied by the words "made them serve," and the Egyptian's fearfulness because of the signs shown to them called forth these dissonances; otherwise, there does not appear to be any specific affective relationship between these chords and the textual material.

Tonally, the first and last two recitatives emphasize the pillars, the dominant and the subdominant, of the main

---

[10]Macfarren, Analysis, pp. 7-8.

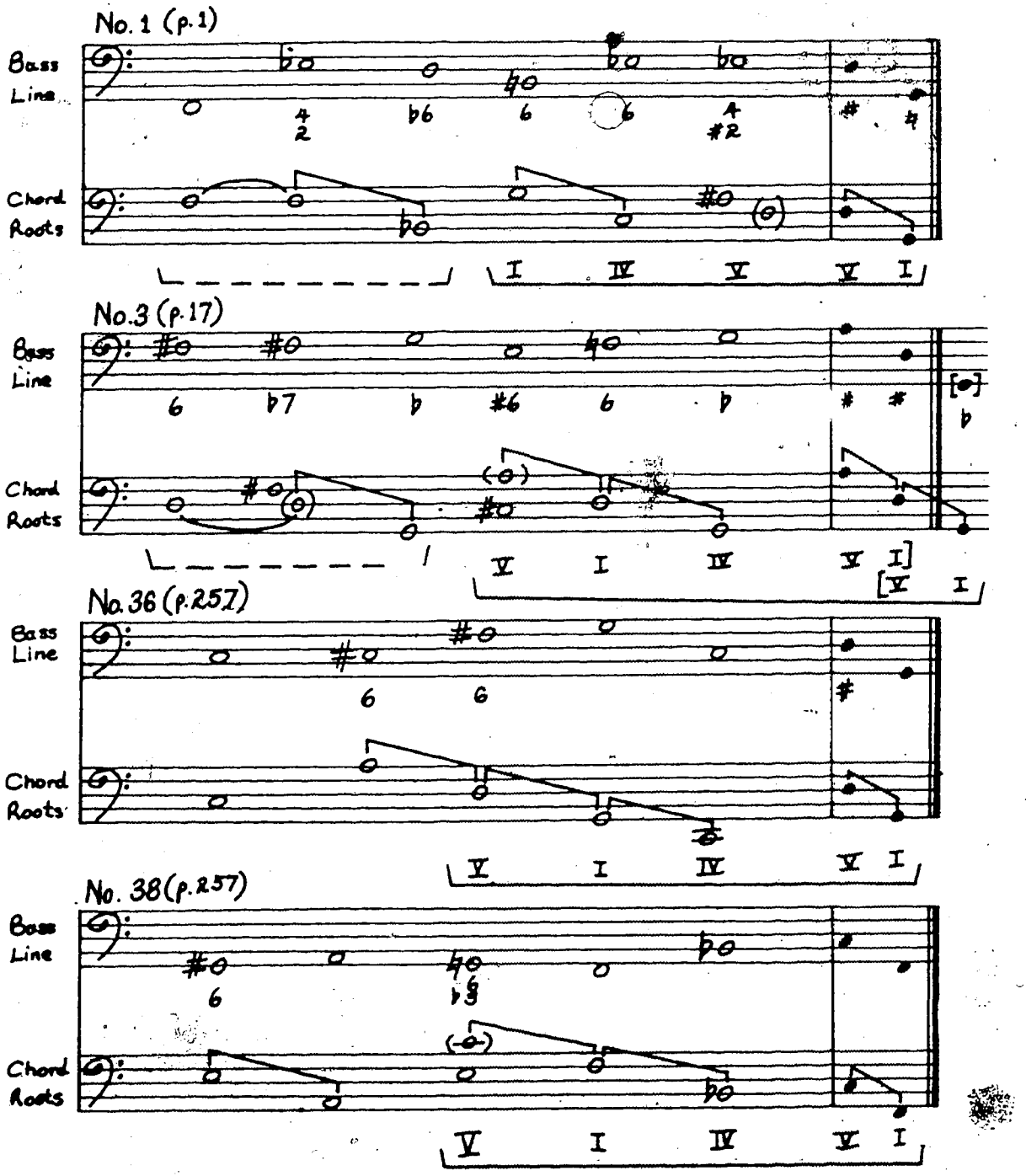
[11]Fink, "Affections and Handel," pp. 164-65.

tonal centre of the oratorio. No. 1 begins on an F major triad and ends on a G major triad, the latter functioning as the dominant of the C minor chorus which follows. No. 36 (see P. 257) begins in C major, the tonality of the preceding chorus ("The Lord Shall Reign Forever"). The recitative terminates with a G major triad which functions as the dominant of the repetition of the chorus which preceded the recitative. The final recitative (p. 257) begins with an E major triad in first inversion, somewhat distant from the C major conclusion of the chorus (although the triad could be interpreted as V^6 of VI in C), and arrives in the final measure on an F major triad, the subdominant of C. The concluding movement of the oratorio, in C major, ensues.

An analysis of the continuo bass lines of the four recitatives reveals no significant melodic relationship; but an examination of the chord roots and their related harmonic functions shows a pattern common to all of the recitatives (see the V - I - IV - V - I functions bracketed in example 2 below). The figures notated below the bass lines in the example do not appear in the autograph manuscript, but are provided here on the basis of the realization of the bass shown in Chrysander's edition of the oratorio. The forward drive of the strong harmonic movement which results from the preponderance of descending perfect fifth root movement (see the bracketed pitches in the example) imparts a sense of urgency and direction to the recitatives. Because of the violoncello doubling of the bass line (producing a sustained

legato effect), the listener would tend to be extremely conscious of this line.

Example 2. Continuo bass lines and corresponding chord roots of the four recitatives in Israel in Egypt. (pp. 1, 17, & 257).



Arias

No. 5. "Their Land Brought Forth Frogs"

Contralto Solo

Orchestration: first and second violins and continuo

Tonality: E-flat major

Meter: 3/4

Performance Designation: Andante

Textual Source: Psalm 105:30, Exodus 9:9,10

This aria, which recounts the second of the ten plagues, is the first extended movement in the oratorio in a major tonality, E-flat, the relative major of the principle tonal centre of Part One. Its submediant tonal relationship to the preceding chorus in G minor is the first of seven intermovement tonal relationships involving a shift of a descending major third.[12]

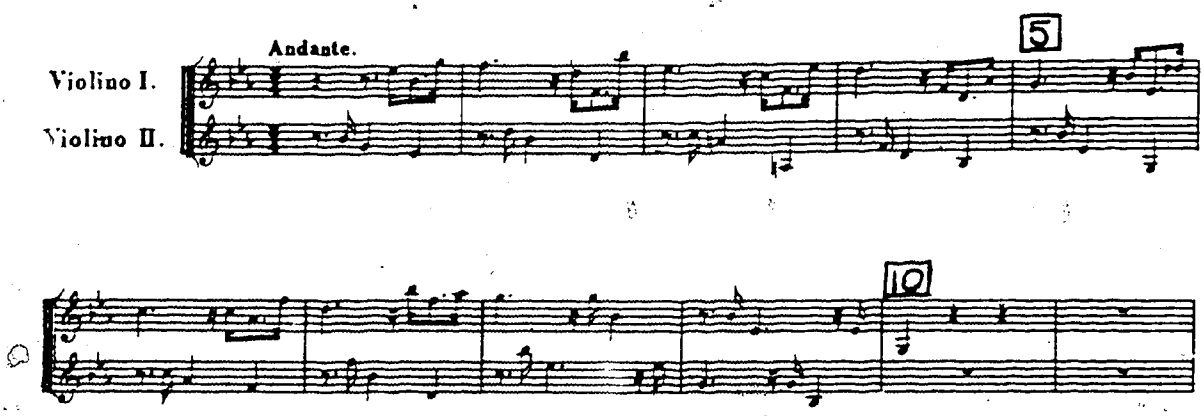
The most significant element of this movement is the orchestral accompaniment. Handel has written a disjunct, dotted-note pattern for the violins (see example 3) to represent the leaping of frogs. Tovey feels that Handel probably enjoyed letting the orchestra "hop in a pretty pattern through the shocking tale"[13] and suggests that he wanted to create a humorous quality to the aria.

---

[12]Cf. Nos. 11-12(E to C), 12-13(G to E-flat), 22-23(A to F), 23-24(E to C), 28-29(G to E-flat), and 34-35(E to C).

[13]Tovey, Essays, 5:89-90.

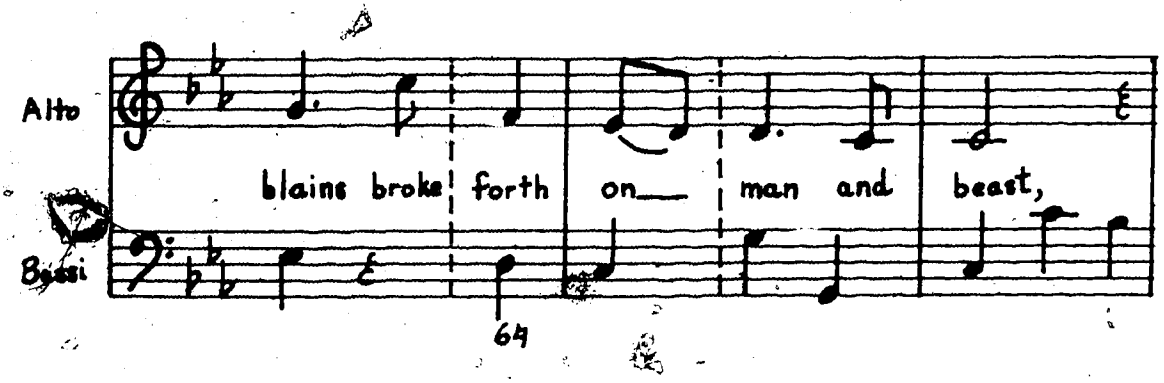
Example 3. Aria, "Their Land Brought Forth Frogs," meas. 1-10. Introduction (p. 23, meas. 1-10).



Notwithstanding the successful imitation by the violins of leaping frogs, Handel's choice of texture and orchestration in this aria results, I think, not from a desire to be humorous, but to provide a contrast with the preceding pieces and the chain of choruses which follows.

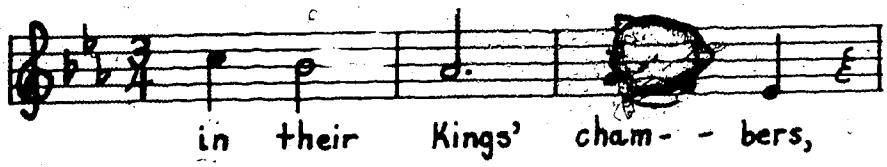
This is the first piece in the oratorio in simple triple meter. Example 4 below illustrates the typical hemiola pattern observed cadences not only in this aria, but also in

Example 4. Aria, "Their Land Brought Forth Frogs," meas. 56-58. A typical use of hemiola (p. 25, meas. 11-13).



other movements in triple meter.[14] The most striking non-cadential shifts of metric stress occur in measures 18 and 23 at the word "their" (see example 5). Notice, as well, the gradual reduction in motion from ♩ to 𝅗𝅥 to 𝅗𝅥. (meas. 1-2 of example). The purpose here is that of word emphasis--not even the kings were exempt from the plagues.

Example 5. Aria, "Their Land Brought Forth Frog. . ' meas. 18-20. Shift of metric stress (p. 23, meas. 18-20).

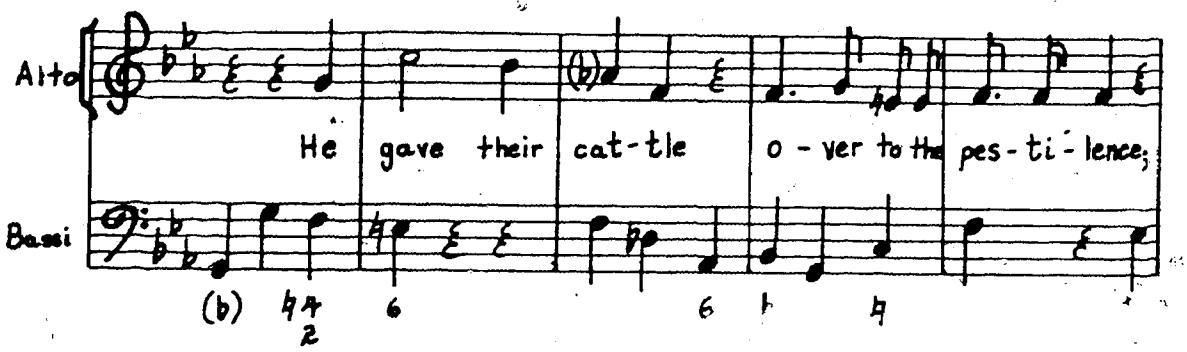


With the exception of four melismatic passages in the aria (meas. 25-29, 42-45, 65-68, and 76-80), the primary purpose of which appears to be a smattering of vocal display, the text is set syllabically to a melody which is diatonic within the tonalities through which it moves (E-flat, B-flat, G minor, F minor, C minor, and E-flat). The rather unexpected tonal shift down a second (G minor to F minor) which occurs in measures 50-54 (see example 6) accentuates the change in textual matter which occupies the remainder of the aria. The silencing of the violins in measures 50-58 also serves to emphasize the first complete statement of the new text, which

---

[14] Eight of the oratorio's thirty-nine movements are set in triple meter (see also Nos. 7, 10, 16, 22, 28, 32, and 34); except for No. 2, which is in compound meter, the remainder utilize duple meter or multiples thereof (predominantly C, occasionally ¢).

Example 6. Aria, "Their Land Brought Forth Frogs," meas. 50-54. Tonal shift from G minor to F Minor (p.25, meas. 5-9).



no longer deals with frogs, but with the pestilence of blotches and blains that affected both man and beast. Once this new textual material has been stated completely (meas. 50-58), Handel reintroduces the leaping violin figure, first as accompaniment (see meas. 59-62, and 71-76), and then as concluding coda material (meas. 85-90), thereby unifying musically the second half of the aria with the first half.

No. 28. "The Enemy Said"

Tenor Solo

Orchestration: strings and continuo

Tonality: G major

Meter: 3/8

Performance Designation: Andante

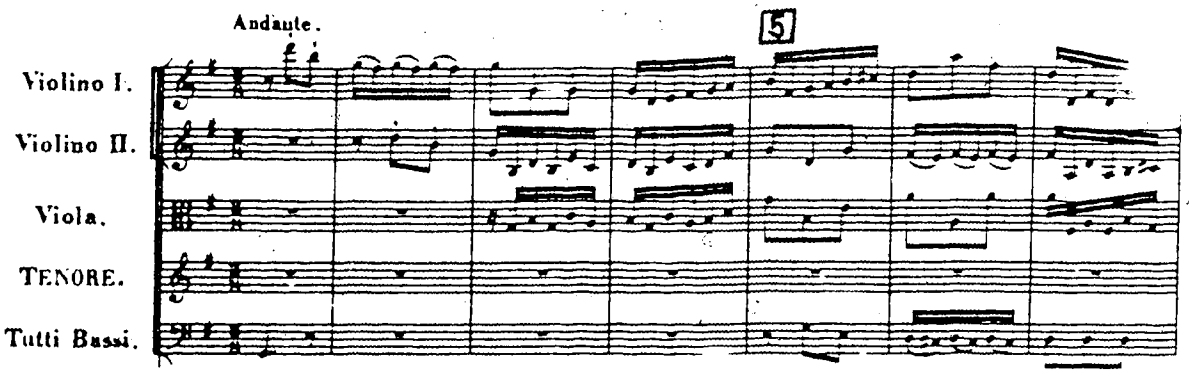
Textual Source: Exodus 15:9

Not until the mid-point of Part Two of Israel in Egypt do we reach the second aria, the most spirited and animated of the oratorio's four solo pieces. The Red Sea had been divided (in the previous chorus), and Pharaoh now proclaims--

with confidence and vigour--his intention to overtake and destroy the Israelites as they pass through the divided waters. Apart from the texture contrast this movement affords, the aria is significant because it is the only piece in the oratorio which represents the voice of the enemy, the text emphasizing the first person singular: "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide."

The sixteen-measure orchestral prelude, of which the first seven measures are quoted below (example 7), contains the essential melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic material of the entire movement. The vocal line of Pharaoh's aria shares similar melodic and rhythmic patterns derived from the

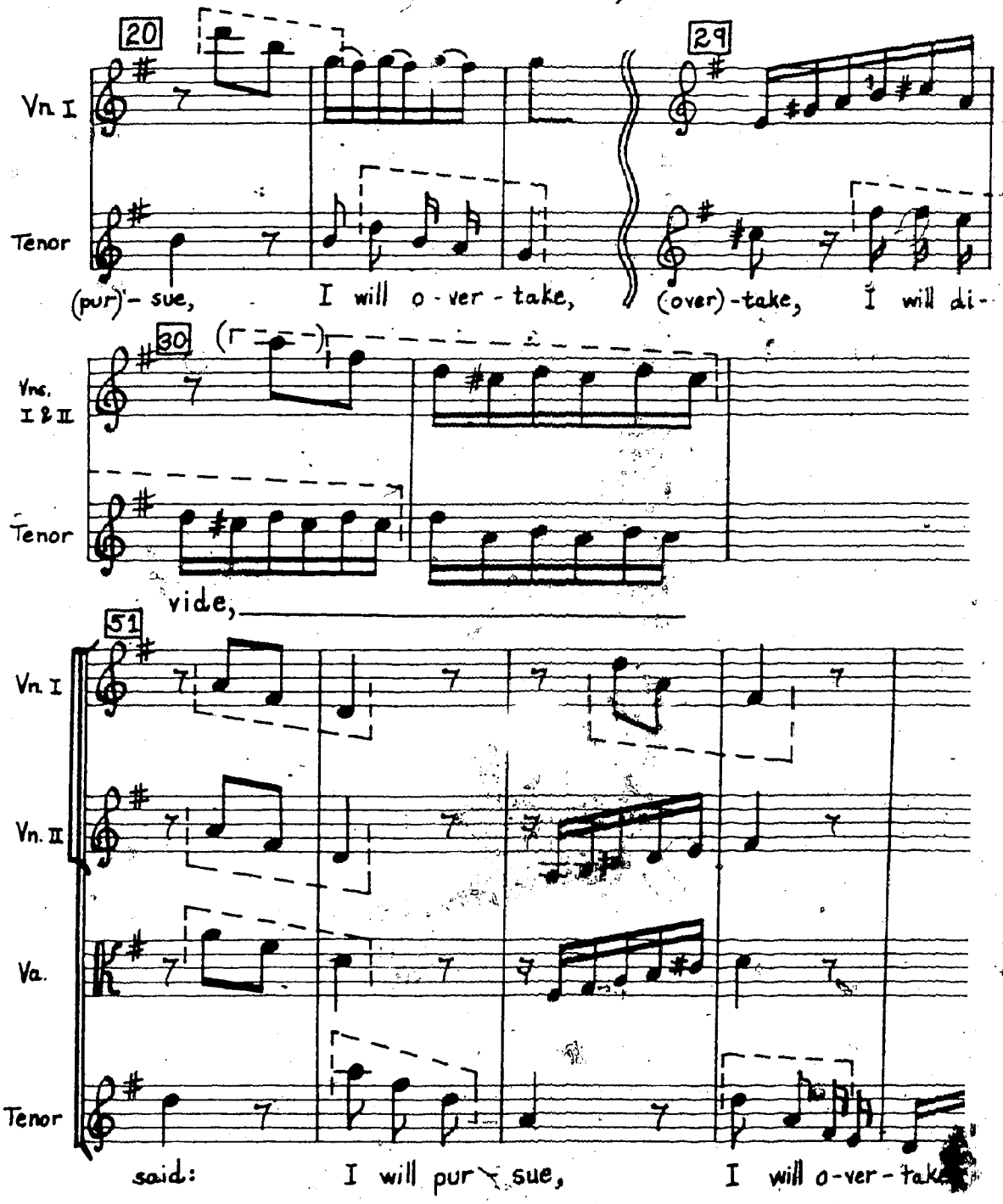
Example 7. Aria, "The Enemy Said," meas. 1-7. Introductory material (p. 205, meas. 1-7).



orchestral prelude. These patterns are frequently treated in a freely imitative style as illustrated in example 8 below.

The melodic line is characterized by a number of coloratura passages on particularly significant words such as "overtake," "divide," and "destroy." Perhaps these sixteenth-note vocal melismas as well as the busy orchestral playing--the

Example 8. Aria, "The Enemy Said," meas. 20-[illegible]9-31, 51-54. Vocal-orchestral imitation (p. 205, meas [illegible]22; p. 206, meas. 8-14; p. 207, meas. 7-10).



majority of the aria's 111 measures consists in one part or another of sixteenth notes--represent "'the enemy' as fierce

and impetuous, impulsively giving vent to his powerless anger. . . ."[15]

According to Hugo Leichtentritt, Rudolph Steglich "has observed in many operas and oratorios an apparently planned Architektonik der Tonarten, extending over whole acts."[16] Such matters, then, as the order of tonalities and tonal contrasts are considered by Steglich to be of vital significance in the design or structure of many works. The G major tonality of the aria under discussion--this is the only piece in Part Two in G major--stands in dominant relationship to the main tonal centre of Part Two. There appears, then, to be a macrotonal plan underlying Part Two of Israel in Egypt, a tonal plan which begins in the tonic, moves to the dominant at the mid-point--the aria is the twelfth piece of Part Two's twenty-three movements--and returns to the tonic for the conclusion. The aria is preceded by a chorus, the D major tonality of which functions as dominant of the solo piece, and is followed by a chorus in E-flat major.

The rather conventional harmonic structure of the aria--with its typical modulations to the dominant and subdominant--does not appear to have any intrinsic expressive function; rather, it serves as the underlying support for the animated melodic and rhythmic activity. Contrasting with the rapid melodic rhythm is the considerably slower

---

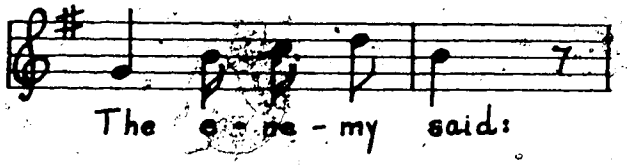
[15]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 23.

[16]Leichtentritt, "Handel's Harmonic Art," p. 213.

harmonic rhythm. Usually one chord per measure is implied, and occasionally one chord is extended so as to last for two complete measures.

With two exceptions, the rhythmic stresses of the text are well adapted to the triple meter of the piece. The exceptions occur at the words, "The enemy said," the first word of which, in measures 17 and 50, is set to a metrically strong beat. Tovey has suggested, however, that in addition to the hemiolic patterns found in triple time cadential

Example 9. Aria, "The Enemy Said," meas. 17. Ostensibly faulty word accentuation (p. 205, meas. 17).



formulae, "there is a tendency . . . for quick triple time to suggest the grouping one, TWO, three, one, TWO, three, rather than ONE, two, three."[17] According to Tovey, then, the declamation of the two measures in question "is not as faulty as it looks."[18]

The climax of the aria occurs in measures 92-101; the vocal part emphatically and dramatically reiterates that the Israelites will be destroyed (see example 10 below). The intensification of sixteenth notes to triplet sixteenths

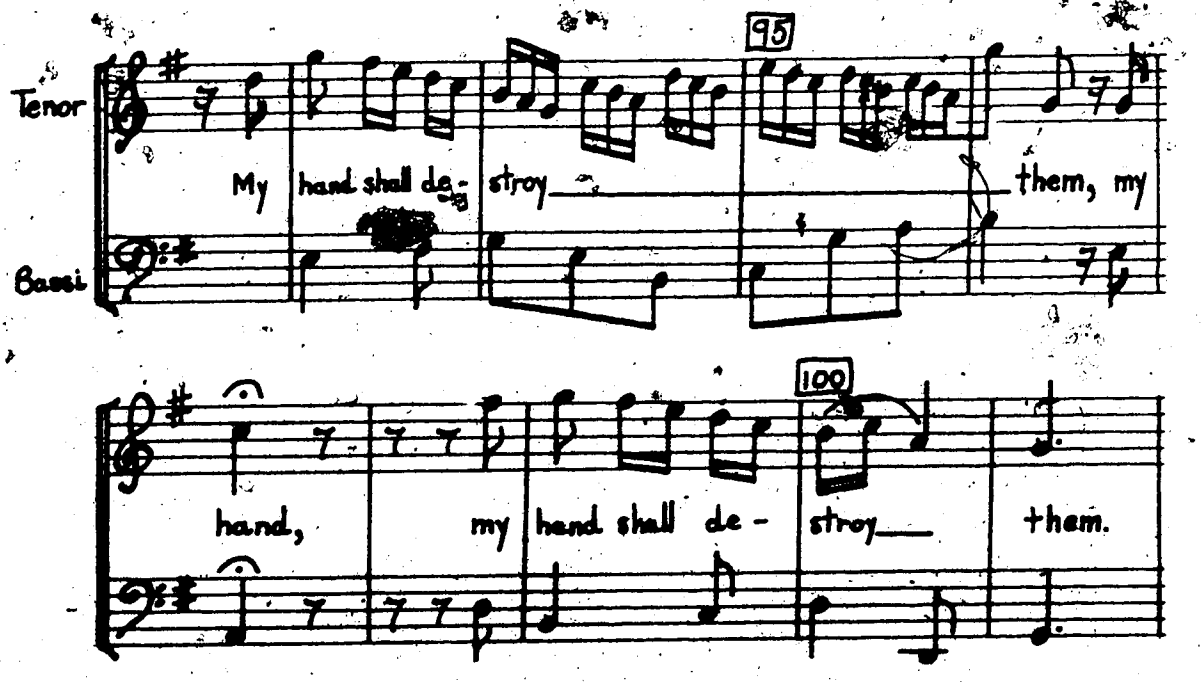
---

[17] Tovey, Essays, 5:108-109.

[18] Ibid.

which occurs in measure 94 and 95 has been prepared earlier in the aria (see meas. 69-70, and meas. 83). In measures 92-100, however, the vigorous orchestral activity ceases, and the vocal part is supported only by the continuo. The sudden textural contrast, coupled with the melisma at the word "destroy" produces a dramatic conclusion to the aria. The corona in measure 97, and the rests which follow, provide an opportunity for the performer to improvise a brief vocal cadenza.

Example 10, Aria, "The Enemy Said," meas. 92-101. Climax of the movement (p. 209, meas. 4-13).



An orchestral coda based on the introductory material concludes the piece.

No. 29, "Thou Didst Blow"

Soprano Solo

Orchestration: paired oboes, bassoons in unison, viola, violoncello, string basses, and organ.

Tonality: E-flat major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Andante larghetto

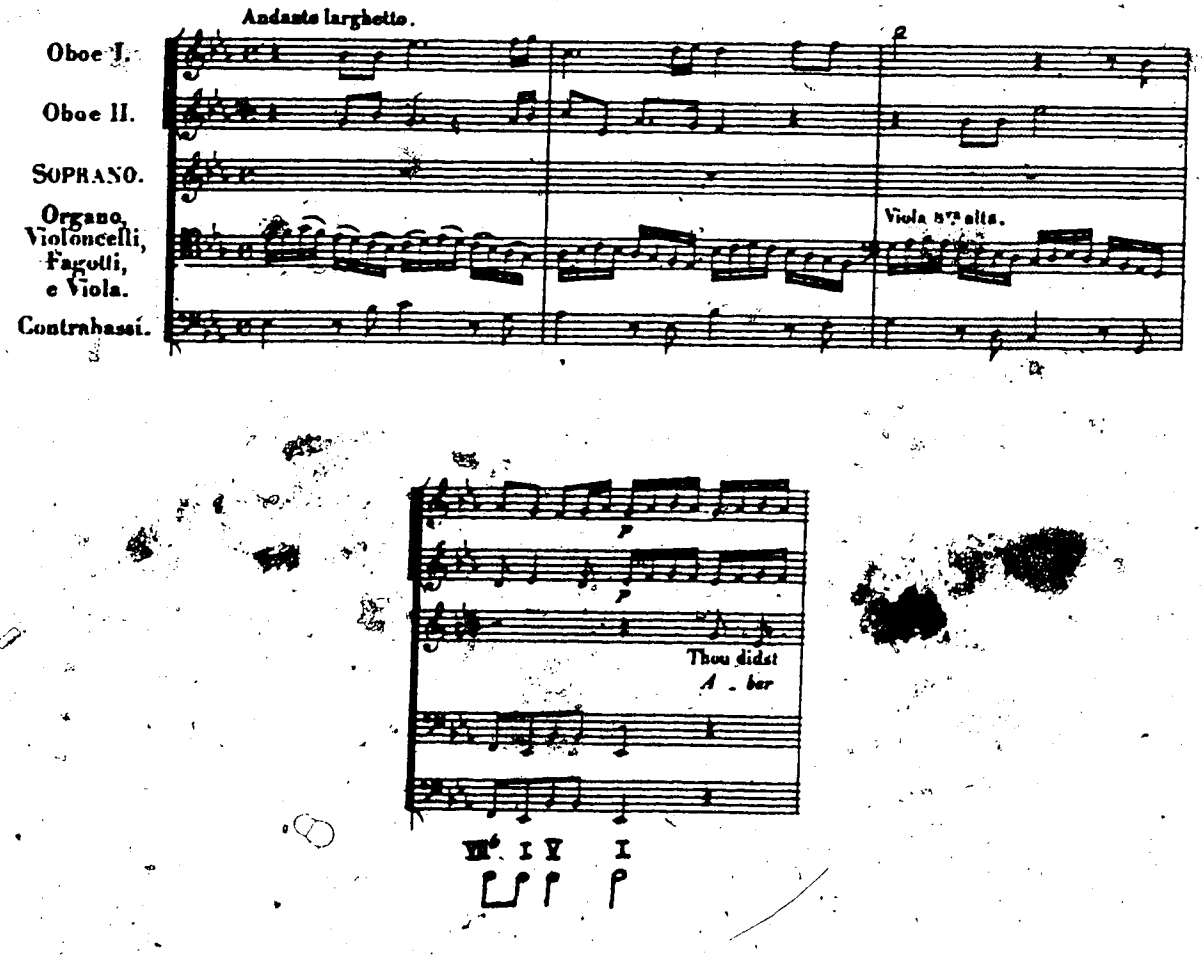
Textual Source: Exodus 15:10

Although this aria is the shortest of the four (37 measures), it is, because of its unique orchestration and structure, the most distinctive solo in the oratorio. The two upper parts of the accompaniment are assigned to oboes--Ebenezer Prout suggested that perhaps Handel intended "a kind of musical pun here, in thus illustrating the words"[19]--and the bass line, a four-measure ground bass pattern which occurs seven times in the aria, is allotted to the violas, violoncelli, bassoons, and organ. The appearance of the string basses is limited to the four-measure introduction where they present a skeletal version of the ground bass in a rhythmic pattern which is used later in the piece both by the oboes and the soprano voice. The primary function of the string basses is to emphasize the harmonic structure of the ground bass (I - VI - IV - V - I^6 - VI - VII^6 - I - V - I). The four-part texture of the two oboe parts, vocal line, and bass line is essentially contrapuntal.

---

[19]Prout, "Handel's Orchestration," p. 258.

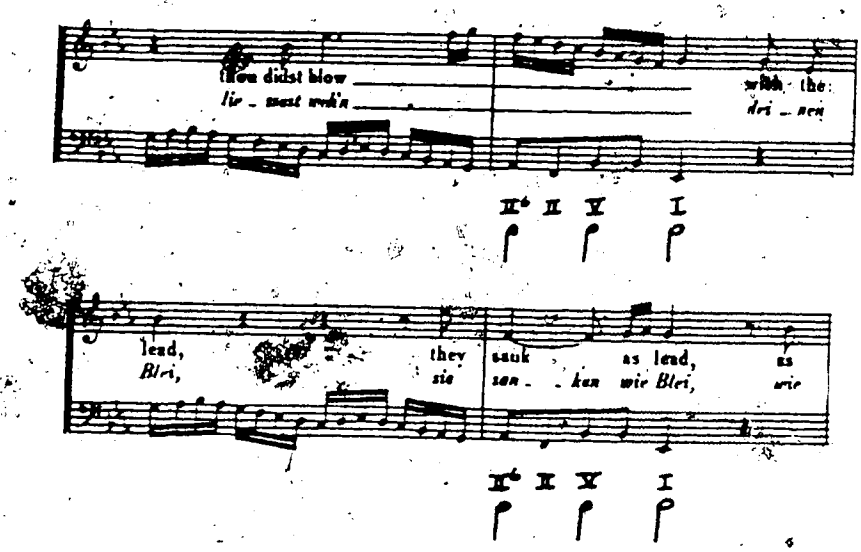
Example 11.[1] Aria, "Thou Didst Blow," meas. 1-4. Introduction (p. 210, meas. 1-4).



Unlike the other arias, this movement is non-modulatory, and, with the exception of one note (A-natural for the second oboe in meas. 20) is completely diatonic. Two chords per measure are implied except at the cadences where the harmonic pace quickens (see example 11 above). The bass line, and hence the cadence, is slightly altered when the voice is present (from VII^6 - I - V - I to II [II^6 - II] - V - I). Compare the cadences in example 12 below with that of the instrumental introduction shown above (example 11). In two instances (meas. 13-14 and 18-19), this altered cadence (see example 12)

avoids what would otherwise be exposed direct octave movement between the voice and the bass, and, in another case (meas. 8-9), parallel octaves. Perhaps more significant is the

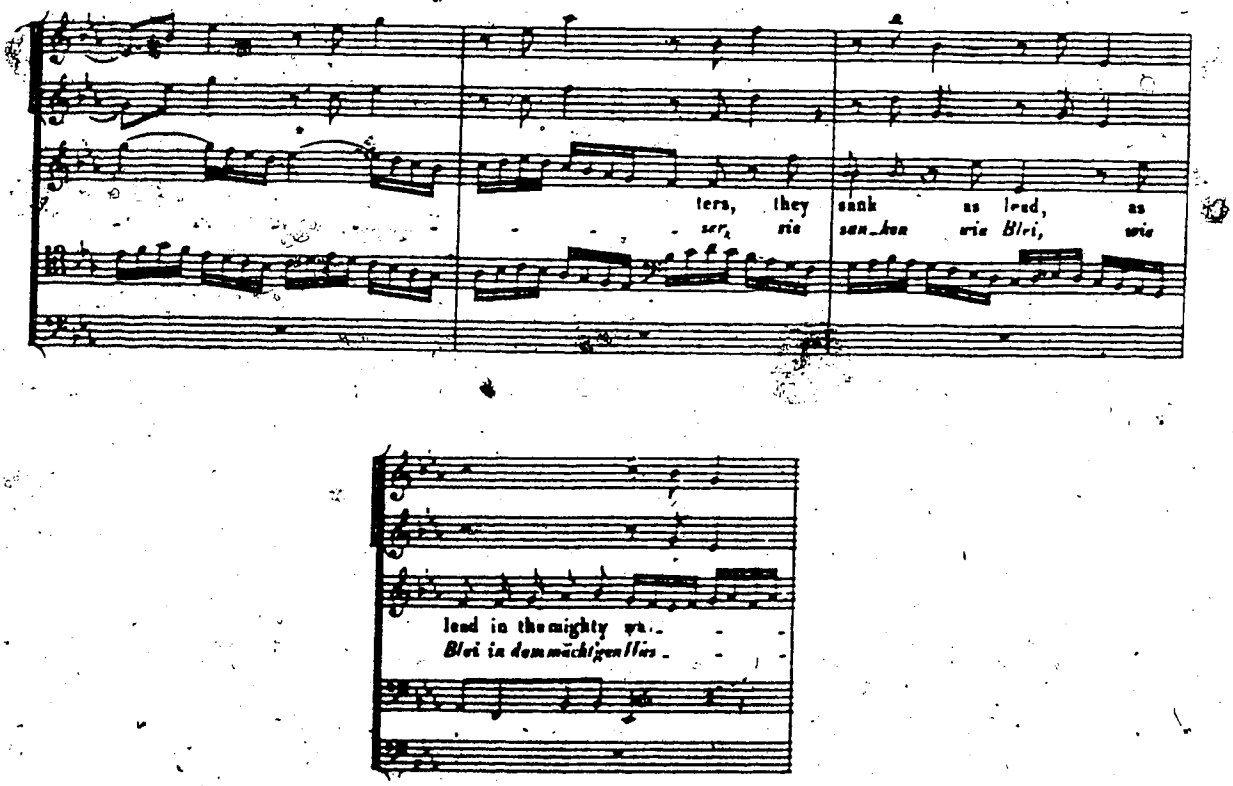
Example 12. Aria, "Thou Didst Blow," meas. 8-9, and meas. 13-14. Cadential formula of the ground bass when used in conjunction with the solo voice (p. 210, meas. 8-9; p. 211, meas. 4-5).



constant overlapping of the vocal phrases both with the ground bass and oboe parts. The overlapping phrases tend to de-emphasize the cadential feeling. Indeed, the almost continuous sixteenth-note motion in one or another of the parts not only tends to conceal the cadences, but creates a feeling of perpetual motion, symbolic, perhaps, of the undulating waters which consumed the enemy. To provide textural contrast, Handel silences the oboes in measures 22, 23, 25, 29, and 30. Five beats of silence between each of the first four appearances of the ground bass pattern provide additional textural contrast.

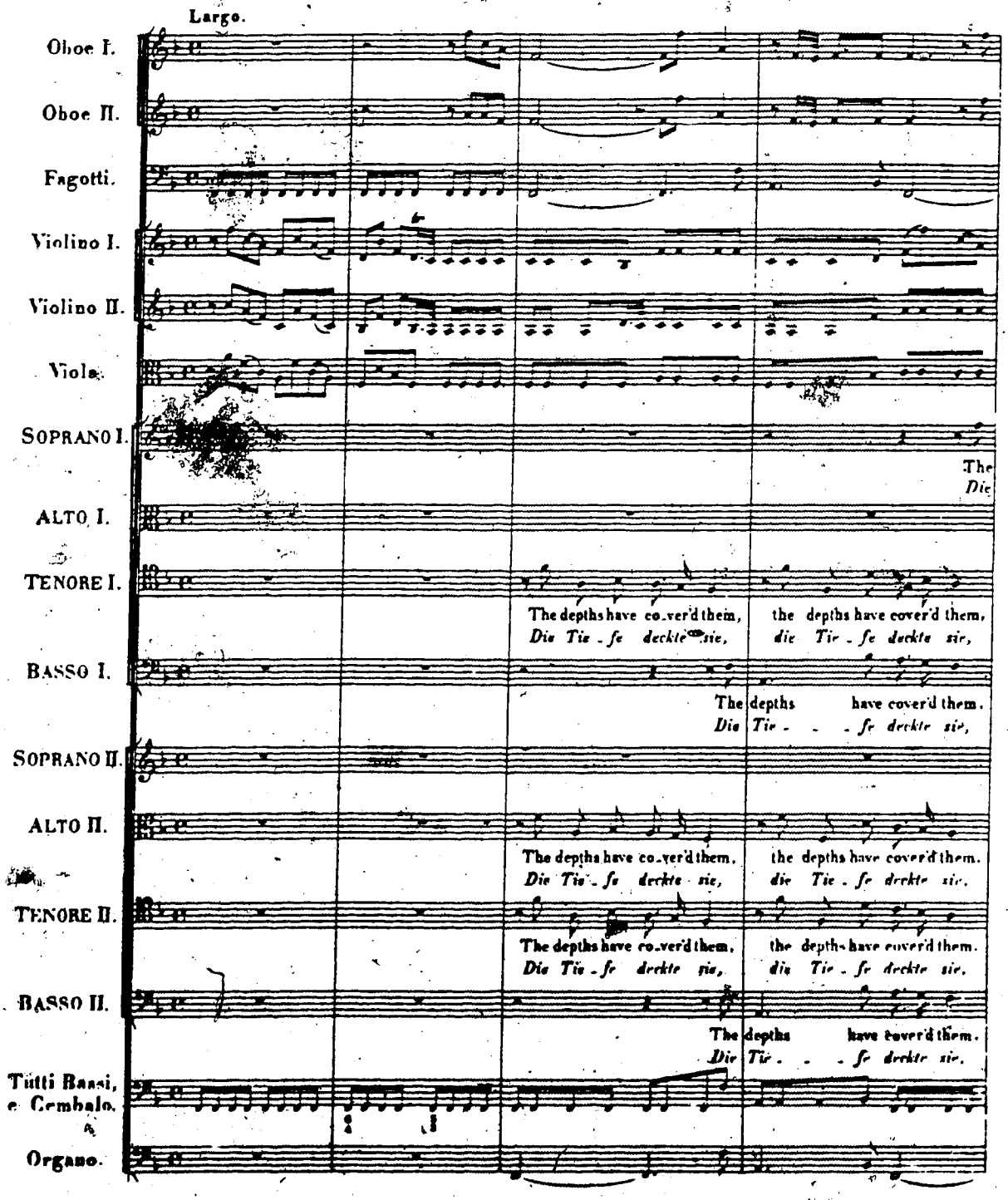
At the words "they sank as lead" Handel employs a descending pattern for the voice and oboes, the rhythm of which comes from the string bass material of the introduction. In the example below, notice too, the overlapping of the vocal phrase with the ground bass cadence.

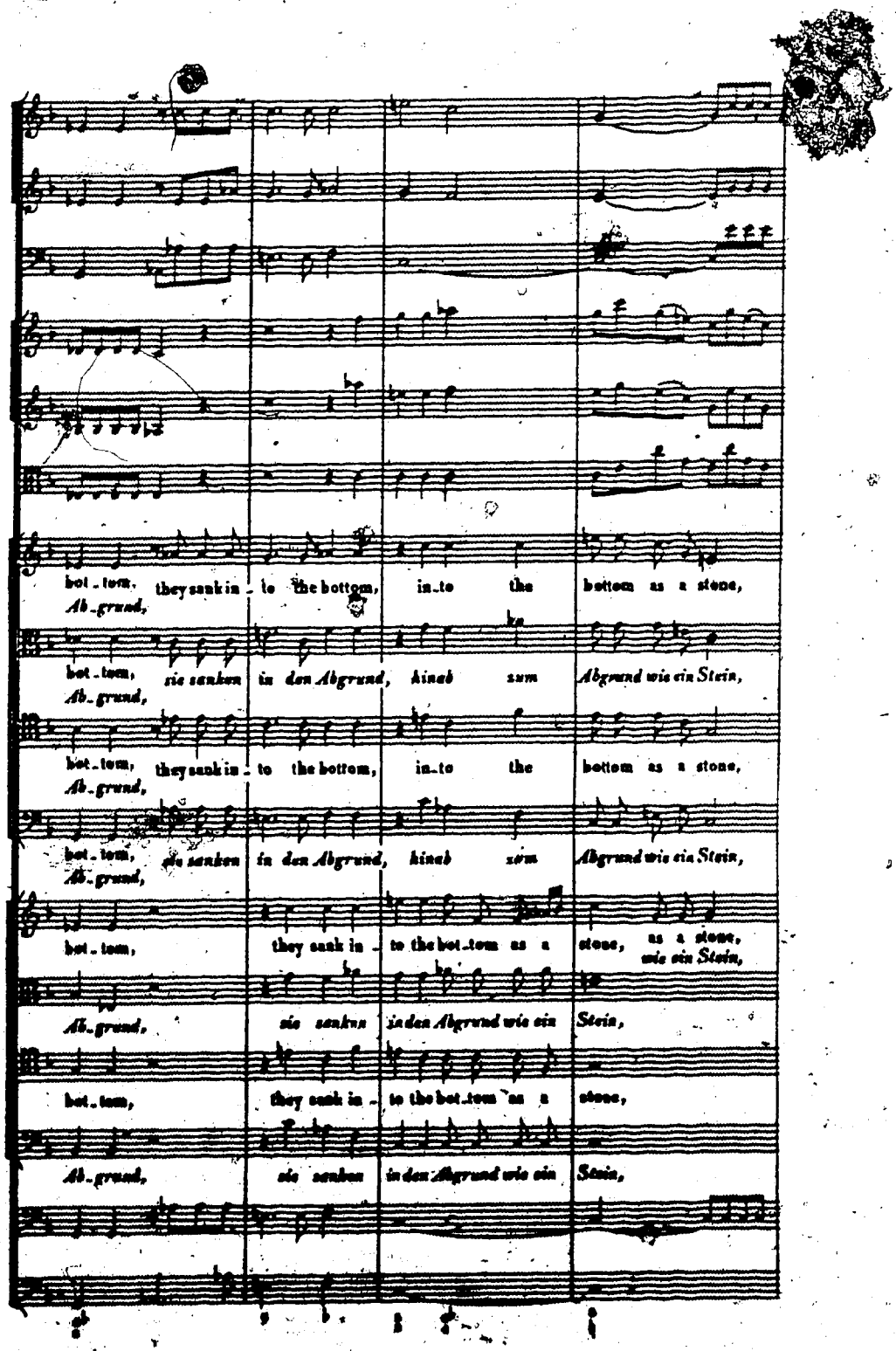
Example 13. Aria, "Thou Didst Blow," meas. 17-19. Rhythmic relationship of voice and oboe parts to opening double bass measures (p. 211, meas. 7 to p. 212, meas. 1).



There is a relationship which exists between this aria and the double chorus, "The depths have cover'd them" (No. 23). A comparison of example 13 with the illustration below from the double chorus reveals similar musical treatment (a descending pattern) of words expressing the same idea.

Example 14. Double Chorus, "The depths have cover'd them," meas. 1-4, 9-12 (p. 169, meas. 1-4; p. 171, meas. 1-4).




bot_tom, they sank in_to the bottom, in_to the bottom as a stone,
Ab_grund,
bot_tom, sie sanken in den Abgrund, hinab zum Abgrund wie ein Stein,
Ab_grund,
bot_tom, they sank in_to the bottom, in_to the bottom as a stone,
Ab_grund,
bot_tom, sie sanken in den Abgrund, hinab zum Abgrund wie ein Stein,
Ab_grund,
bot_tom, they sank in_to the bot_tom as a stone, as a stone,
wie ein Stein,
Ab_grund, sie sanken in den Abgrund wie ein Stein,
bot_tom, they sank in_to the bot_tom as a stone,
Ab_grund, sie sanken in den Abgrund wie ein Stein,

No. 34, "Thou Shalt Bring Them In"

Contralto Solo

Orchestration: first and second violins, and continuo

Tonality? E major

Meter: 3/8

Performance Designations: Largo, e mezzo piano

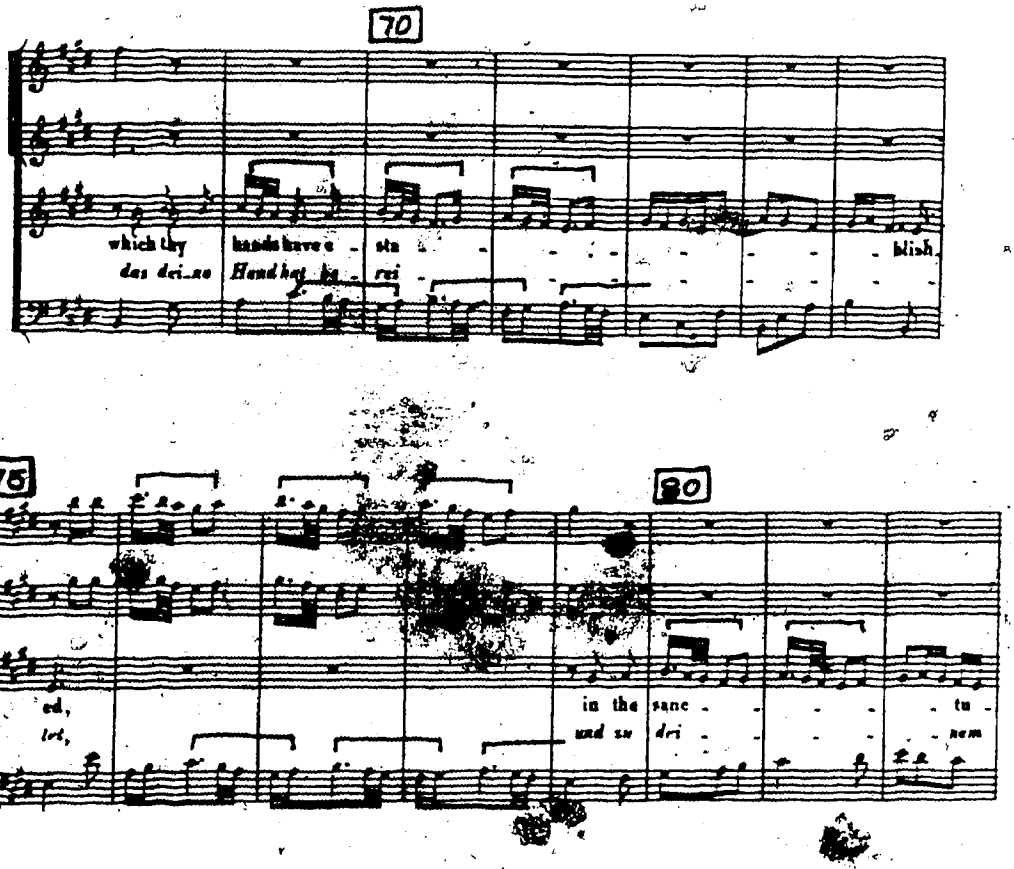
Textual Source: Exodus 15:17

The texts of the three previous arias deal with destruction or the threat thereof, but upon reaching this final aria, a marked contrast is evident. We encounter here a text which affords a glimpse of the Promised Land, a land of peace, love, contentment and tranquility.

The distinctiveness of this aria lies in the cantabile, diatonic melody which is characterized by predominantly conjunct motion and sequential patterns. Leaps exceeding a third are rare. Throughout the entire aria the orchestra and the alto voice share the same melodic material. Seldom, however, do the violins double the voice; rather, their role is that of introducing the movement, and echoing, in short interludes, a previously stated vocal phrase. The voice, then, is accompanied primarily by the continuo. More than mere harmonic support is provided by the continuo; it is an important element in the contrapuntal texture of the piece. Example 15 below shows the contrapuntal relationship of the continuo both to the vocal line and the violins.

Tonally, the choice of E major for this aria may have symbolic significance; Winton Dean has pointed out that

Example 15. Aria, "Thou Shalt Bring Them In," meas. 68-82. Participation of continuo in contrapuntal texture (p. 252, meas. 12-26).



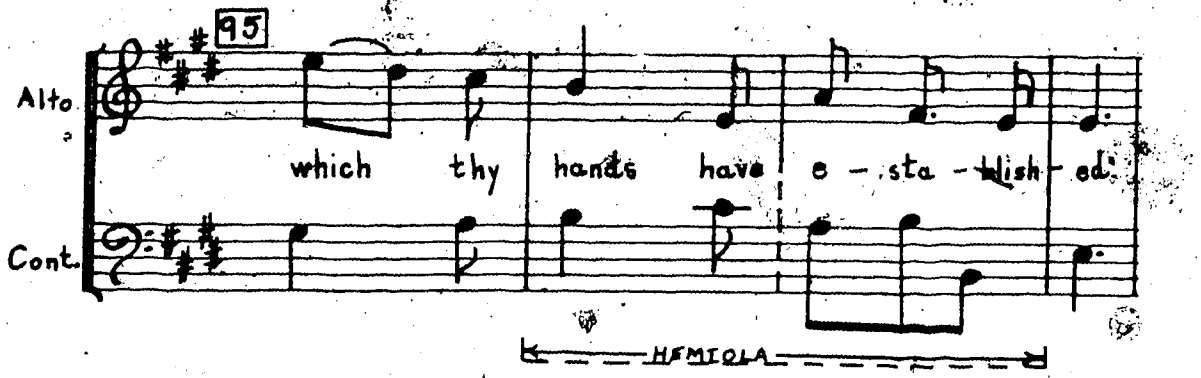
Handel favoured E major for setting texts suggesting serenity.[20] E Major and its dominant, B major, to which the piece modulates, represent the most distantly related tonalities from the principal tonal centre of the oratorio. Perhaps Handel's choice of tonalities somewhat far removed from C major symbolizes that fact that the ultimate possession of the land of promise is in the distant future--the Israelites, in spite of their deliverance from the Egyptians, had yet to endure a forty-year wilderness experience before entering the Promised Land.

---

[20]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 60.

The 3/8 meter of the aria provides a contrast both with the preceding chorus and with the remainder of the oratorio which is in 4/4. Measures 95-98 of the aria represent not only another illustration of the hemiolic cadence, but also the climax of the movement. Vocally, the highest note of the movement occurs in measure 95, and textually, we are

Example 16. Aria, "Thou Shalt Bring Them In," meas. 95-98. Climax of the movement (p. 253, meas. 12-15).

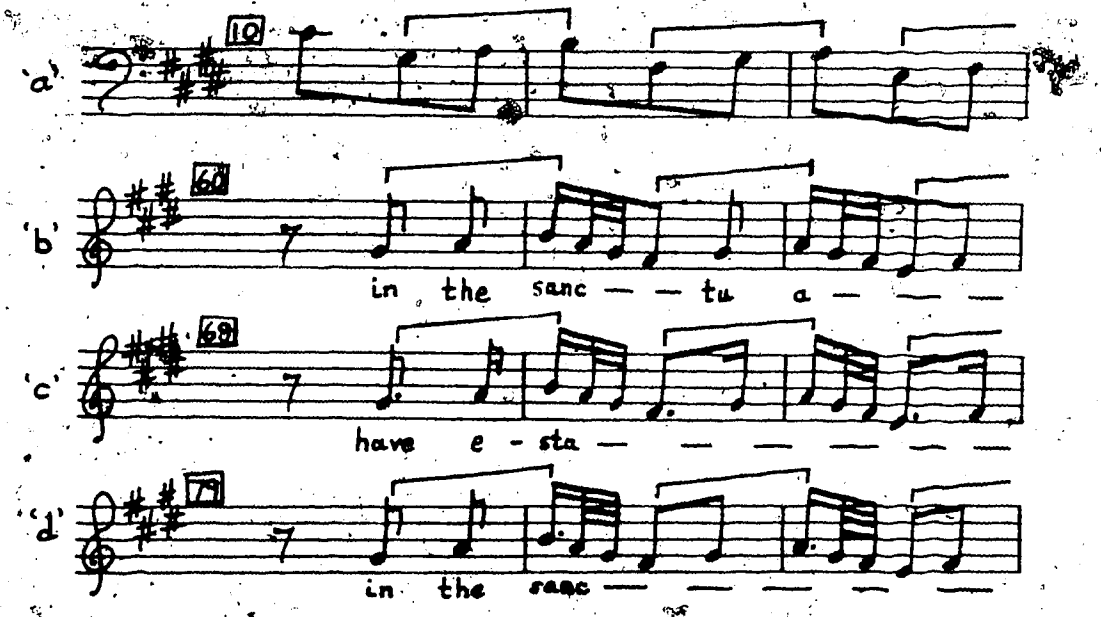


reminded of the omnipotent One responsible for the establishment of the land which His people will enjoy. The syllabic treatment of the text, the use of continuo only as accompaniment, the shift in rhythmic stress, and the descending melodic pattern create a feeling of climax and finality in these measures which are followed by the orchestral coda.

The aria is particularly instructive as to Handel's skill at creating variety within a prevailing unity. Measures 60-62, 69-71, and 79-81 derive from measures 10-12 of the

continuo line (excerpt 'a' in example 17). The unity of excerpts 'b', 'c', and 'd' shown in the example results from the identical pitch structures, while the variety is achieved by subtle rhythmic alterations.

Example 17. Aria, "Thou Shalt Bring Them In," meas. 10-12, 60-62, 69-71, 79-81. Illustration of variety within a prevailing unity (p. 250, meas. 10-12; p. 252, meas. 4-6, 13-15, 23-25).



The three arias of Part Two provide, along with the duets and recitatives, a welcome respite from the choruses which dominate the oratorio. The solitary aria of Part One occurs early in the oratorio, too early indeed to be able to provide the textural relief which is felt on hearing the later arias.[21]

---

[21] See p. 63 above.

Duets

The ensuing discussion of the duets from Israel in Egypt necessitates, for the first time in this chapter, a consideration of Handel's purloining of other composer's ideas. The rationale behind Handel's methodology in deciding which movements should be based on earlier works is perplexing; for example, the four arias discussed earlier derived, so far as we know, from Handel's own conceptions, whereas all of the duets rely heavily on one appropriated work: Erba's Magnificat. In addition to the Magnificat, Handel's only use of Urio's Te Deum is observed in the second duet, No. 22, "The Lord Is a Man of War."

No. 19, "The Lord is My Strength and My Song"

Soprano Duet

Orchestration: violins in unison, and continuo. Violas are added in the four-measure coda.

Tonality: A minor

Performance Designation: Larghetto

Textual Source: Exodus 15:2

Musical Source: a duet, "Et exultavit," from Erba's Magnificat

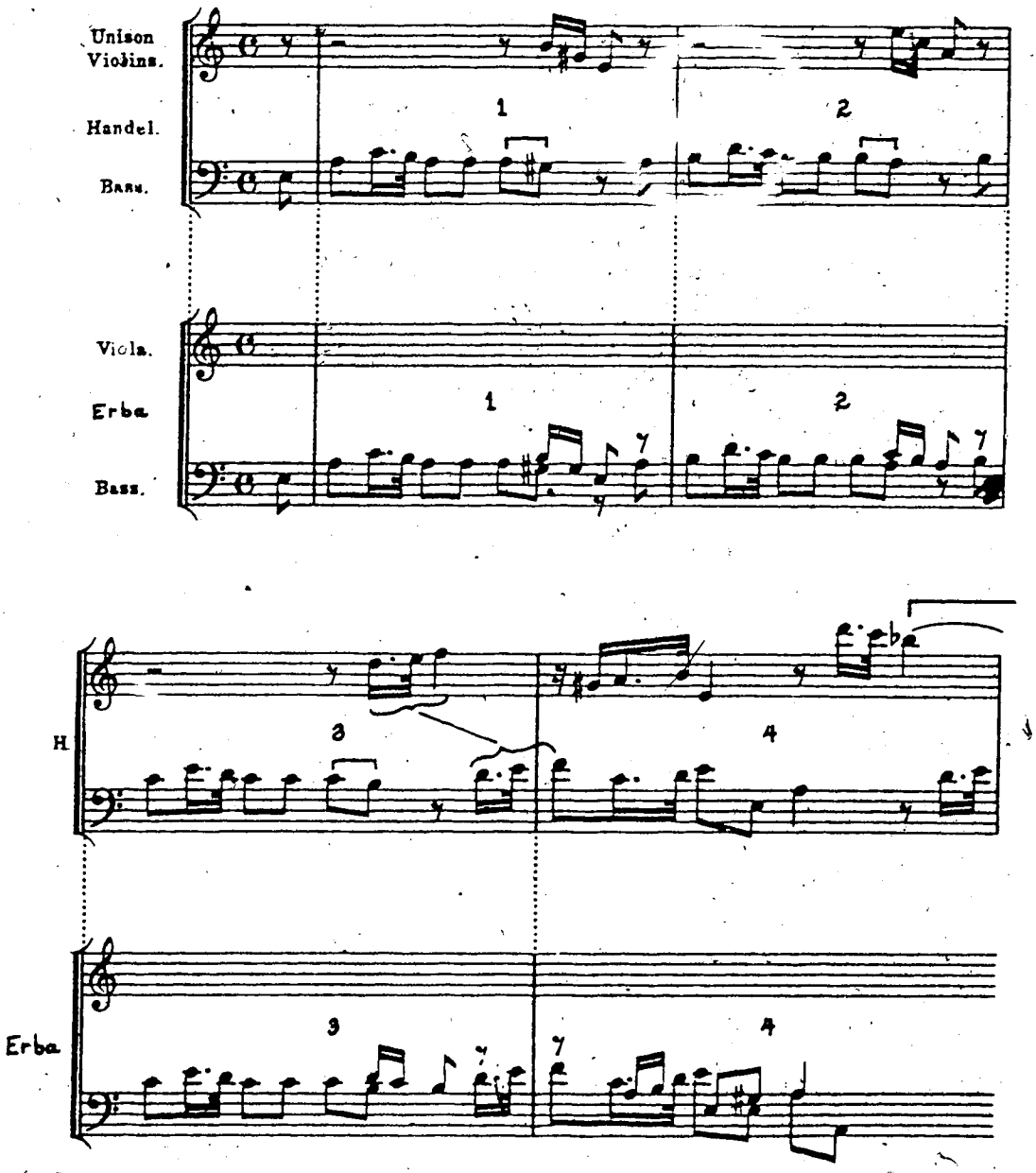
The light four-part texture of this duet provides a most welcome relief--both for the audience and the choristers--from the accumulated effect of the thirteen consecutive choruses which precede the piece.

A comparison of the Handel and Erba scores illustrates the former's ingenuity at improving an earlier model.[22] The most significant stroke of Handel's skill in re-working this duet is his one-measure addition to Erba's four measure introduction (see example 18). Erba's conventional diatonic harmony is transcended by Handel's startling introduction of a Neapolitan first inversion. The Neapolitan chord bestows upon the duet what Macfarren calls "exquisite tenderness."[23] Certainly the poignancy of the chord--it occurs four more times in the piece--impresses the piece on us more than if Handel had been content with Erba's duet in its original form. Example 18 also shows Handel's extension of Erba's vocal parts (see meas. 4-6 of the example); moreover, the extension creates asymmetry, which tends to be more interesting than symmetry; Handel's violin part here also represents a refinement upon Erba; the descending triadic figure in measure 2 conforms to the pattern already announced in measure 1. Furthermore, Handel's violin figure in measure 3, beat 3, allows for imitation one beat later by the continuo. In addition, Handel's textural change (notice in measures 1-3, for example, the one octave transposition--and, as well, in measures 2 and 3 the melodic and rhythmic alteration--of the motive on beats 3 and 4) allows for much greater melodic distinctiveness to the parts than in Erba's arrangement. These changes, though minute individually, result

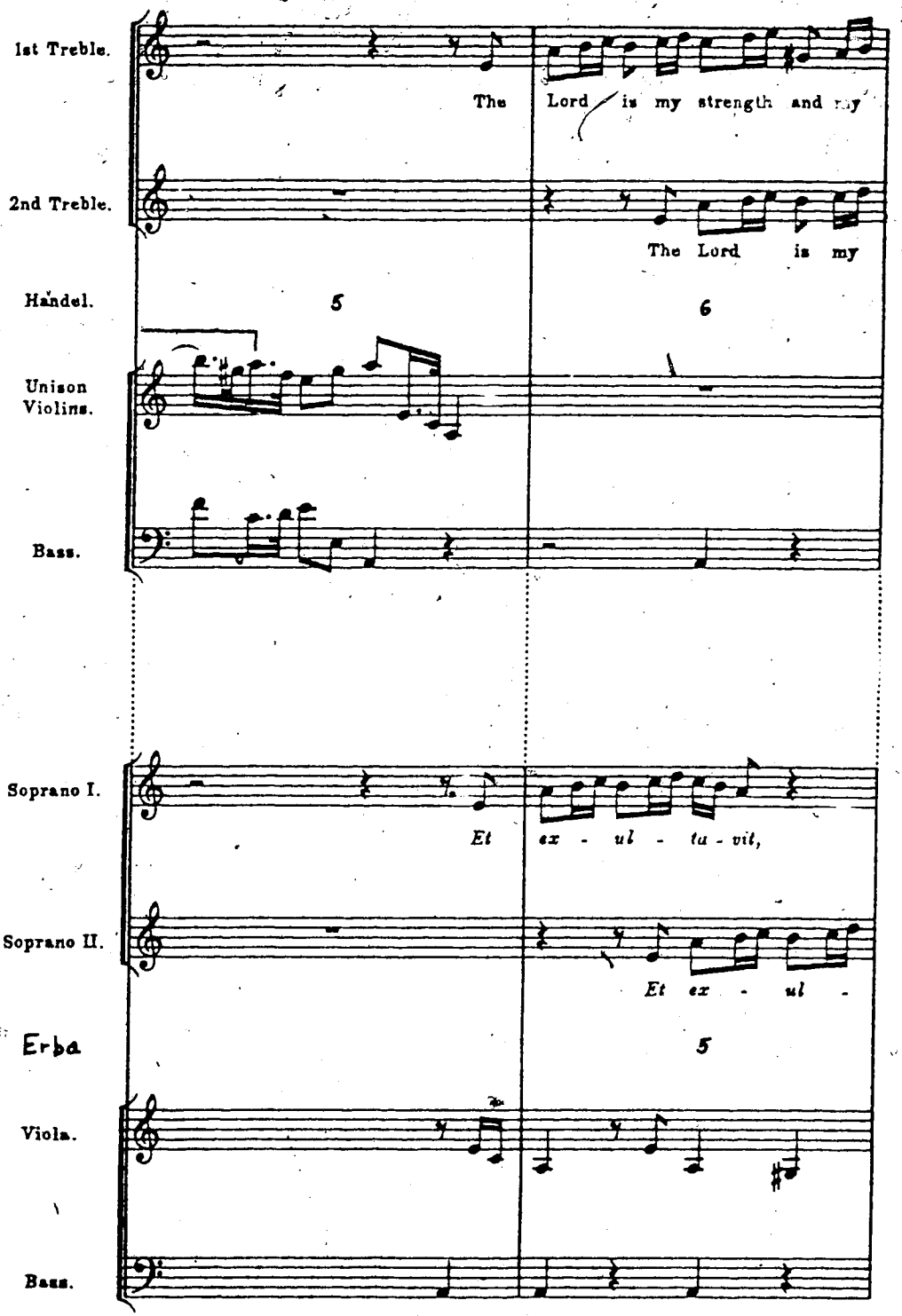
[22]See Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 92-113.

[23]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 18.

Example 18. Duet, "The Lord is My Strength," meas. 1-6. Introduction and opening vocal measures.[24]



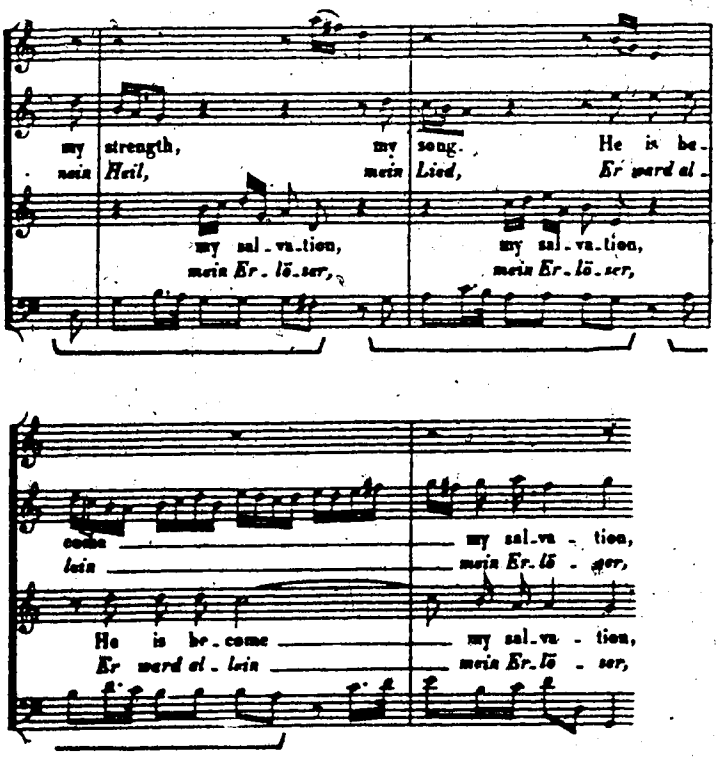
[24]See Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 93-95, meas. 1-6.


1st Treble.
The Lord is my strength and my
2nd Treble.
The Lord is my
Handel.
5
6
Unison Violins.
Bass.
Soprano I.
Et ex - ul - ta - vit,
Soprano II.
Et ex - ul -
Erba
5
Viola.
Bass.

cumulatively in a much more interesting, indeed captivating, piece.

The use of two equal voices in almost constant imitation results in a continual crossing and recrossing of parts. The melodic line of the basso continuo as stated in the introduction frequently serves as a counterpoint to the voices (cf. examples 18 and 19). The bass, then, enjoys melodic

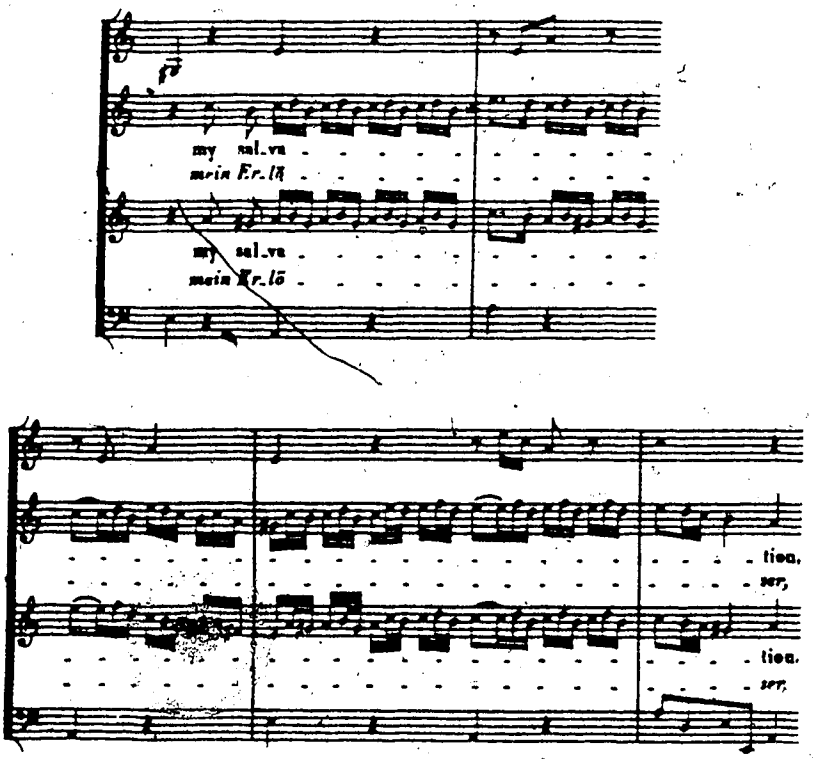
Example 19. Duet, "The Lord is My Strength," meas. 17-20. The continuo as counterpoint to the voices (p. 139, meas. 6-9)



distinction as opposed to providing merely harmonic support; moreover, the several statements of this bass line, both in complete and abbreviated versions, serve as the principal unifying device in the duet.

Tovey regards the setting of this text, which expresses confidence in God, as somewhat pathetic in character.[25] Although he does not justify his point of view, he is, perhaps, basing his opinion on two criteria: (1) the minor tonality, and (2) the larghetto performance designation. Tovey has overlooked, or chosen to ignore, however, the frequent use of spirited melismatic passages which, in spite of the minor tonality, suggest joy, exaltation, and exhilaration (see meas. 10-14, 19, 27, 33-35, 37-38, 40-41, and especially meas. 45-48 [example 20 below]).

Example 20. Duet, "The Lord is My Strength," meas. 45-48. Melismatic passage (p 142, meas. 3-6).



[25]Tovey, Essays, 5:107.

The passage quoted above, with its rhythmic vitality, is anything but pathetic. The expression of the duet is, in Macfarren's words, "of meekness and dependence, supported however by steadfast reliance."[26]

No. 22. "The Lord Is a Man of War"

Bass duet

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings and continuo

Tonality: A major

Meter: 3/4

Performance designation: Andante Allegro

Textual Source: Exodus 15:3,4

Musical Sources: a bass duet, "Quia fecit," from Erba's Magnificat, and the orchestral introduction to the chorus "Te eternum Patrem" from Urio's Te Deum.

Not only is this duet the longest movement of the oratorio (252 meas.), but it is, as one writer has remarked, "an extremely ingenious pastiche"[27] compounded from the sources cited above. Sedley Taylor also mentions that the opening vocal phrase of the duet is "modelled on a lead for the vocal Altos in the Dettingen Te Deum chorus 'All the Earth Doth Worship Thee'."[28] Handel did not, however, compose the Te Deum until 1743, five years after Israel in

---

[26]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 18.

[27]Abraham, Symposium, p. 94. For a thorough discussion and presentation of the appropriations in this hybrid piece, see Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 117-136.

[28]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 121.

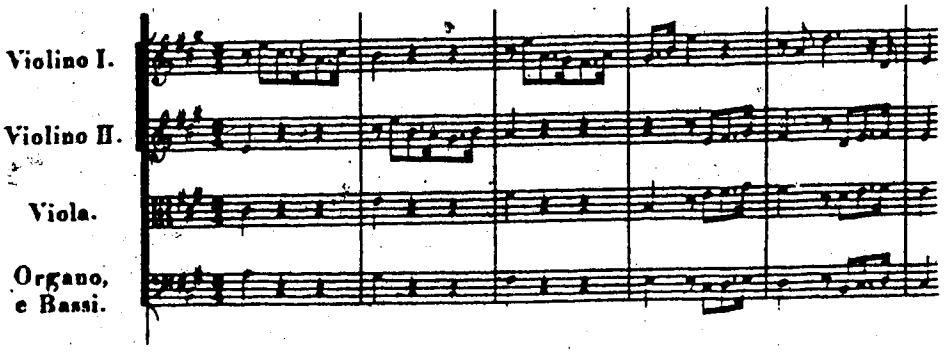
Egypt.[29] It would seem, then, that the vocal opening of the duet served as the model for the Te Deum chorus rather than the antithesis.

Examination of the duet reveals five clearly distinguishable sections; (1) a forty-measure orchestral introduction; (2) a lengthy vocal section accompanied by the orchestra (meas. 40-144); (3) an instrumental interlude (meas. 160-212); (4) a second vocal-orchestral section (meas. 160-212); and (5) a concluding instrumental section which is an exact restatement of the introduction. The instrumental interlude is a note for note restatement of measures 20-36 of the introduction. Using letter A to refer to the instrumental sections reveals a design that corresponds to the Rondo: ABACA (see example 21 for a schematic overview of the duet. Upper case letters designate the main divisions of the piece; lower case letters refer to individual units).

Example 21. Duet, "The Lord Is A Man of War." Schematic overview and thematic material of the piece.

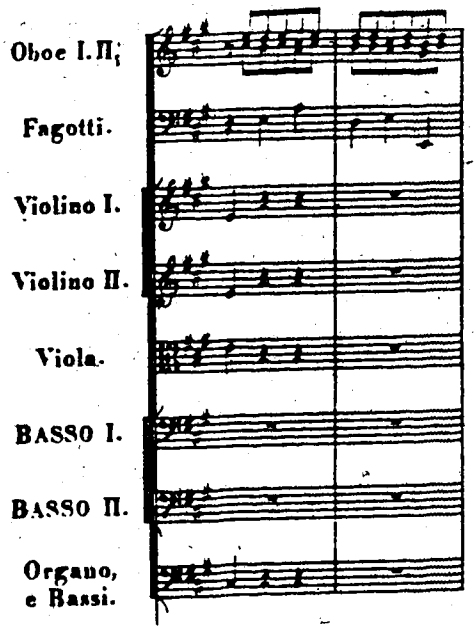
A: Instrumental introduction (meas. 1-40)

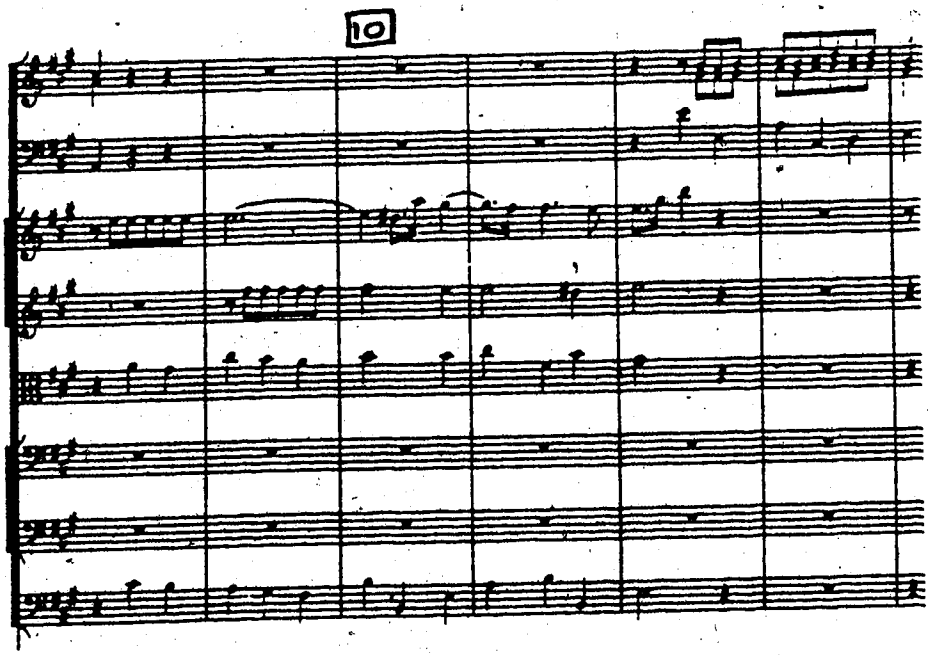
A1 (meas. 1-6); derived from Urio's Te Deum



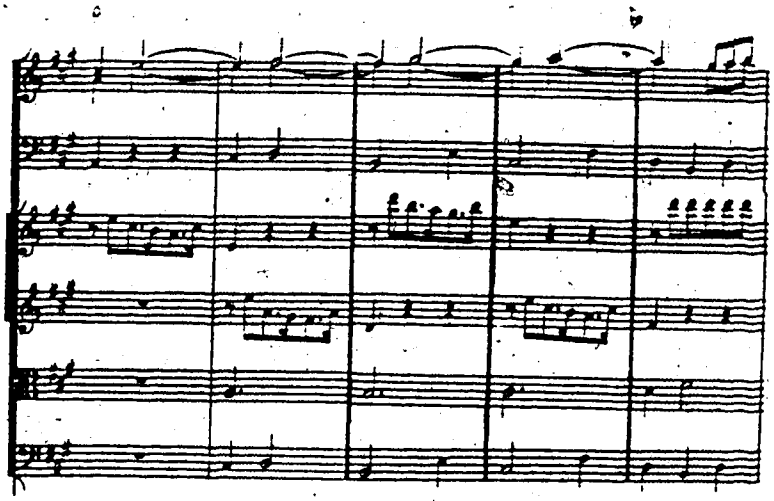
[29]Deutsch, Documentary Biography, p. 570.

A2 (meas. 6-22); derived from Erba's Magnificat





A3 in counterpoint with A1 (meas. 22-26), derived from Erba's Magnificat



A2 (meas. 26-36)

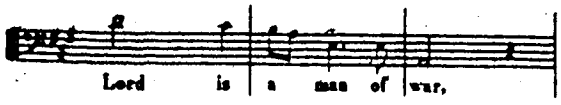
cadential extension: meas. 36-40

This opening section essentially remains in A major.

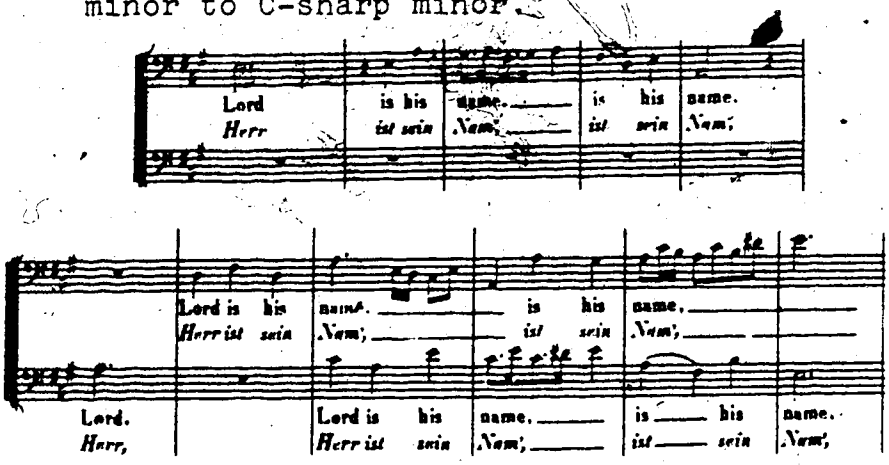
B: Vocal section (meas. 40-144)

B1 (meas. 40-65), accompanied by A1 and A2 material successively.

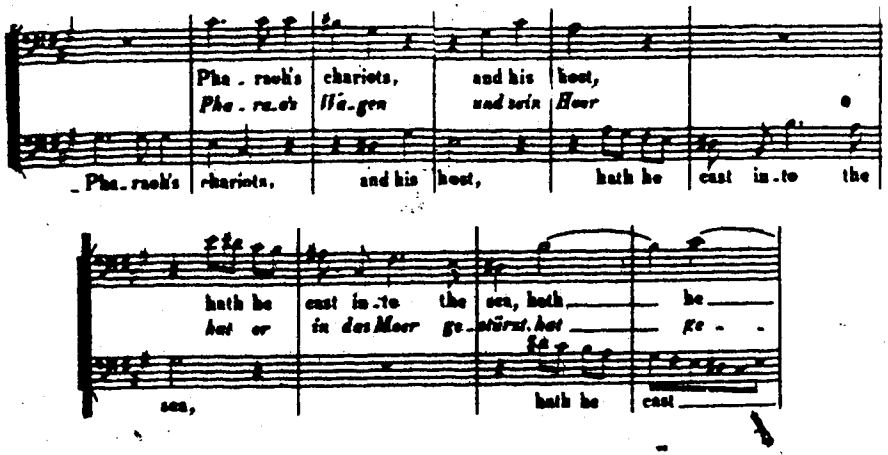
A major to E major.



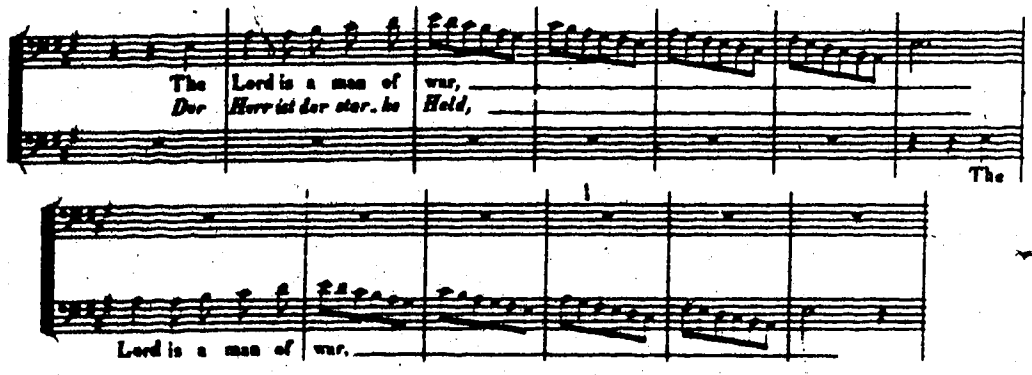
B2 (meas. 67-92); derived from Erba's Magnificat; accompanied by A2 material; E to A to F-sharp minor to C-sharp minor.



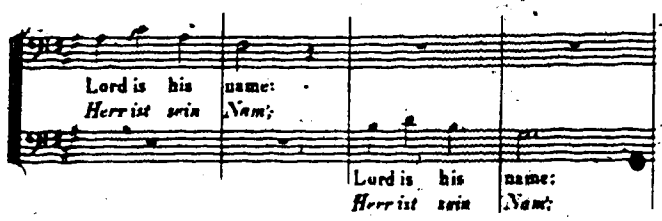
B3 in counterpoint with A3 (meas. 93-110); derived from Erba's Magnificat; orchestral doubling of voice parts; C-sharp minor to A major.



B1a (meas. 111-123); melismatic elaboration of B1; supported primarily by the continuo; in A major.



B2a (meas. 124-127); much shorter than B2 above; accompanied by A1 material; in A major.

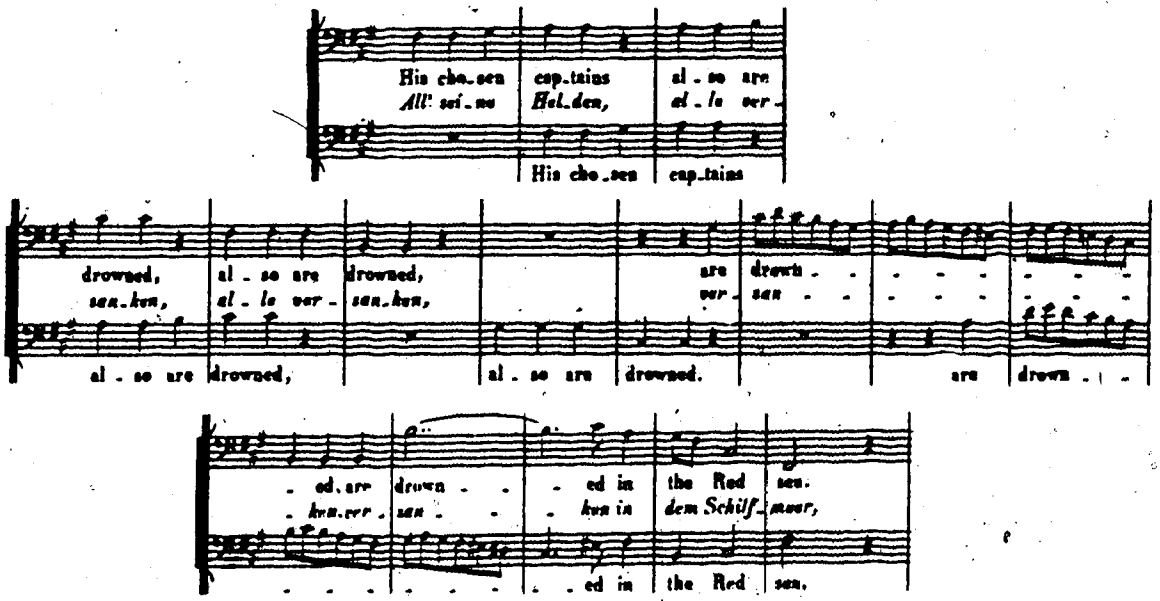


B3 in counterpoint with A3 (meas. 128-144); orchestral doubling of voice parts; in A major (passes through C-sharp minor)

A: Instrumental interlude (meas. 144-160); repetition of meas. 20-36 (A2 and A3 material).

C: Vocal Section (meas. 160-212)

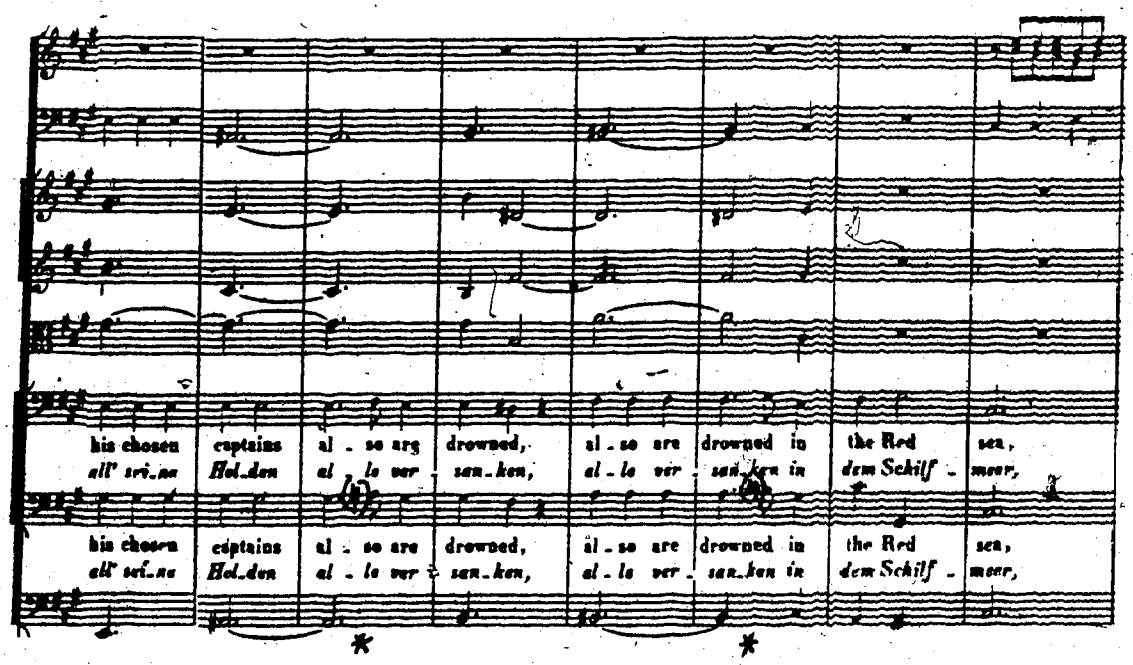
C1 (meas. 160-212); derived from Erba's Magnificat; accompanied chiefly by A2 material, except for melismatic passages where the continuo alone is employed; F-sharp minor to E major to A major.



A: Instrumental Conclusion (meas. 213-242): an exact repetition of the first section.

The text of the first vocal section deals with the destruction of Pharaoh's chariots and his hosts; following the instrumental interlude, however, we are told that even Pharaoh's "chosen captains" were destroyed. The use of both a half diminished seventh chord (meas. 188-189) and a full diminished seventh chord (meas. 191-192) tends to impress upon the listener the doom of Pharaoh's captains, especially because this is the first time in the duet that such tense harmonic structures have been used. In the following example, notice too, the intensity of the A-natural upper neighbouring

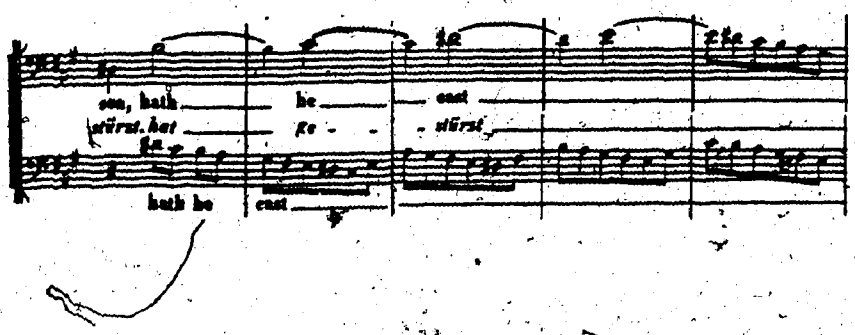
Example 22. Duet, "The Lord is a Man of War," meas. 187-194. Chromatic chords for textual emphasis (p. 164, last meas. to p. 165, meas. 7).



tone in the second bass part (meas. 3 of the example) against the A-sharp of the bassoon and continuo parts, and, two measures later, the B natural against the B-sharp (resulting from the sequential treatment). In measures 205-212, the same passage, transposed up a perfect fourth, is repeated although the diminished seventh chord is replaced with a V^6_5 chord.

The duet is preceded by four choruses in quaduple meter (C) and one movement in duple (¢); the use of triple meter for the duet affords a refreshing metric contrast. In addition to the usual hemiolic cadences, there are several four-measure phrases (meas. 22-26, 101-105, 137-141, 146-150, and 234-238) in which the strong beat of the measure is shifted to the second beat. This syncopated figure in opposition to the regular rhythmic stress averts the rhythmic monotony that otherwise might be produced, if all 252 measures of the duet conformed to the typical arrangement of strong and weak beats.

Example 23. Duet, "The Lord is a Man of War," meas. 101-105. Syncopated rhythmic figure (p. 159, meas. 6-10).



The frequent melismatic passages of this duet afford the performers many opportunities for vocal display; this opportunity for virtuosity is not, however, an end in itself. Howard Smither suggests that the "fanfare-styled melodies"[30] of this duet are a type of imagery; fanfare, of course, being characteristically associated with war. Moreover, the florid vocal writing coupled with the brisk tempo are important elements of contrast with the more severe framing choruses.

Sedley Taylor states, quite properly, that this duet exemplifies "Handel's power of welding together heterogeneous materials into a perfectly homogeneous whole, imbued with far grander spirit than dwelt in its original elements. . ."[31]

No. 32. "Thou in Thy Mercy"

Alto and Tenor Duet

Orchestration: first and second violins and continuo

Tonality: D minor

Meter: 3/4

Performance Designation: Larghetto

Textual Source: Exodus 15:13

Musical Source: the duet "Esurientes implevit bonis" from Erba's Magnificat

We have heard from the sopranos and the basses in the duets, and now, the alto and tenor soloists unite to perform the final duet of the oratorio and, as well, the final piece

---

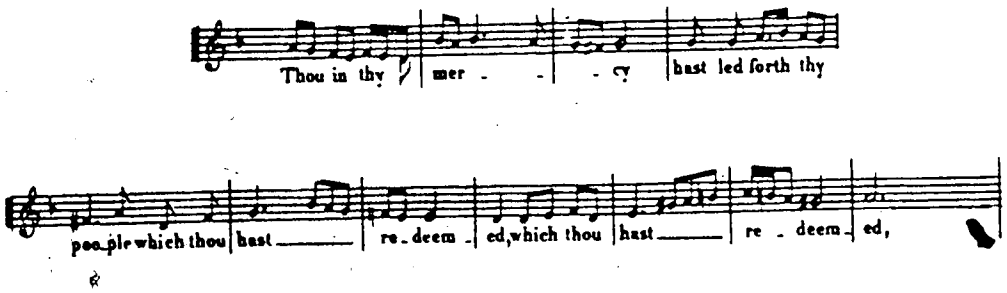
[30]Smither, History, 2:246.

[31]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 136.

indebted to the Erba Magnificat. Handel demonstrates again his "uncanny knack of making what he borrowed so completely his own that, without the necessary clues, no one would suspect the music of being anything but true Handel."[32] The Erba duet contains no introduction, interludes, or postlude, and the voices are accompanied by the continuo only. Handel's version is extended to 116 measures (the third longest piece in the oratorio) by means of an instrumental introduction, two interludes, and a postlude--Handel uses first and second violins and adds additional vocal material. Taylor avers that the added vocal material is "not taken from the Magnificat."[33] This claim will be considered presently.

The principal thematic material on which the entire duet is based is shown in example 24 below.

Example 24. Duet, "Thou In Thy Mercy," meas. 11-21. Principal thematic material (p. 221, meas. 11-21).



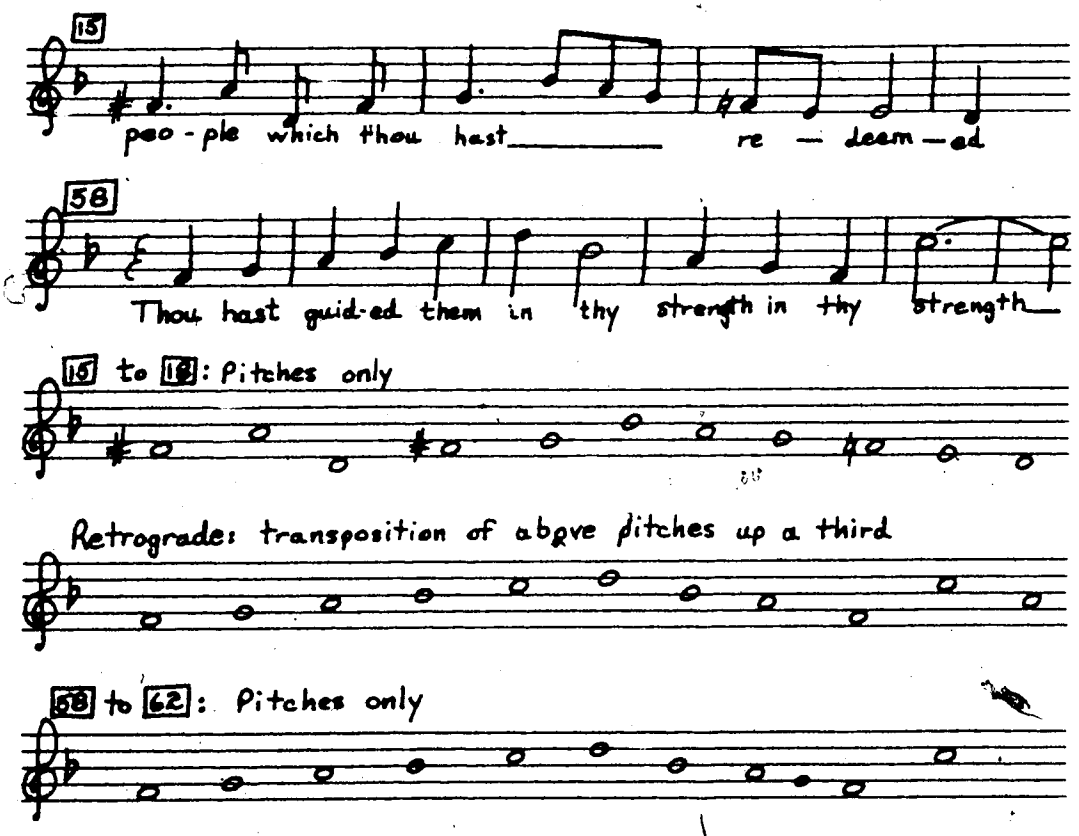
---

[32]Charles Cudworth, Handel (London: Clive Bingley, 1972), p. 31.

[33]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 162.

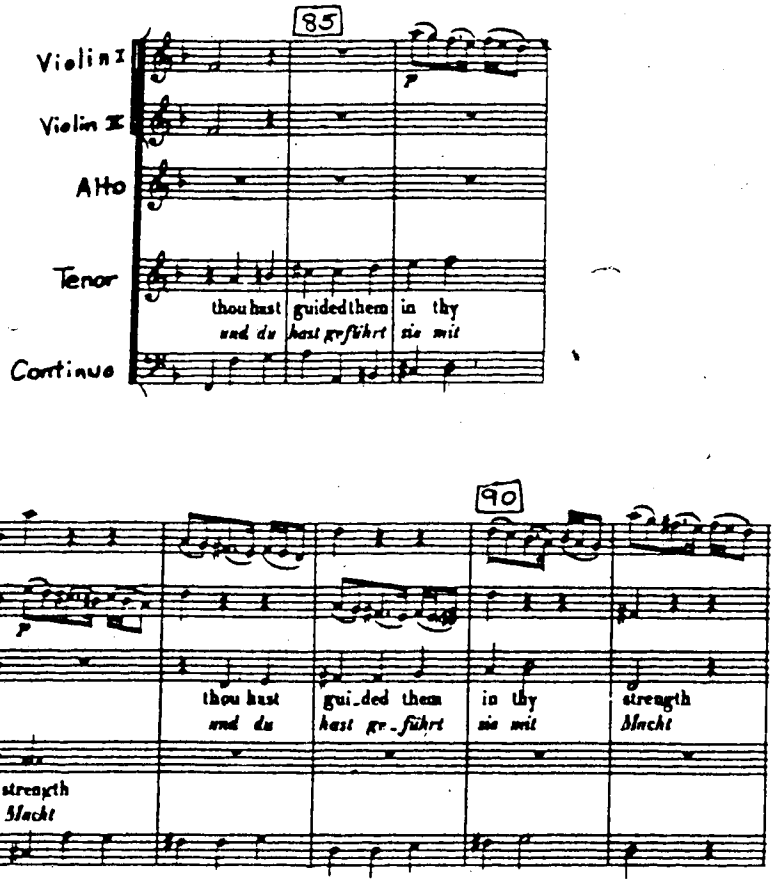
In measure 58, at the words "Thou hast guided them in thy strength," we discover the material which Taylor claims does not derive from the Magnificat. Example 25 shows, however, that there is a relationship between this new theme and the theme shown in example 24 above; the new theme is, to disagree with Taylor, derived from the material of the Magnificat. The ostensibly new theme appears to be a transposed retrograde version, with rhythmic alterations, of measures 15-18 of the opening vocal statement. The example presents the material as it appears in the score, which is then followed by a presentation of the pitches only to facilitate a closer

Example 25. Duet, "Thou in Thy Mercy."
Thematic relationship between ostensibly new theme and the opening theme.



comparison. Notice how, by displacing the strong accent and lengthening the note to two beats, Handel draws particular attention to the word "Thy". Commencing in measure 84, a modified version of the material shown in example 25 above is presented, first by the tenor, then followed by the alto (see example 26). Whereas in the previous statement of this textual matter the voices were accompanied by only the continuo, Handel employs the violins as accompaniment in this subsequent statement. The use of the opening measure of the

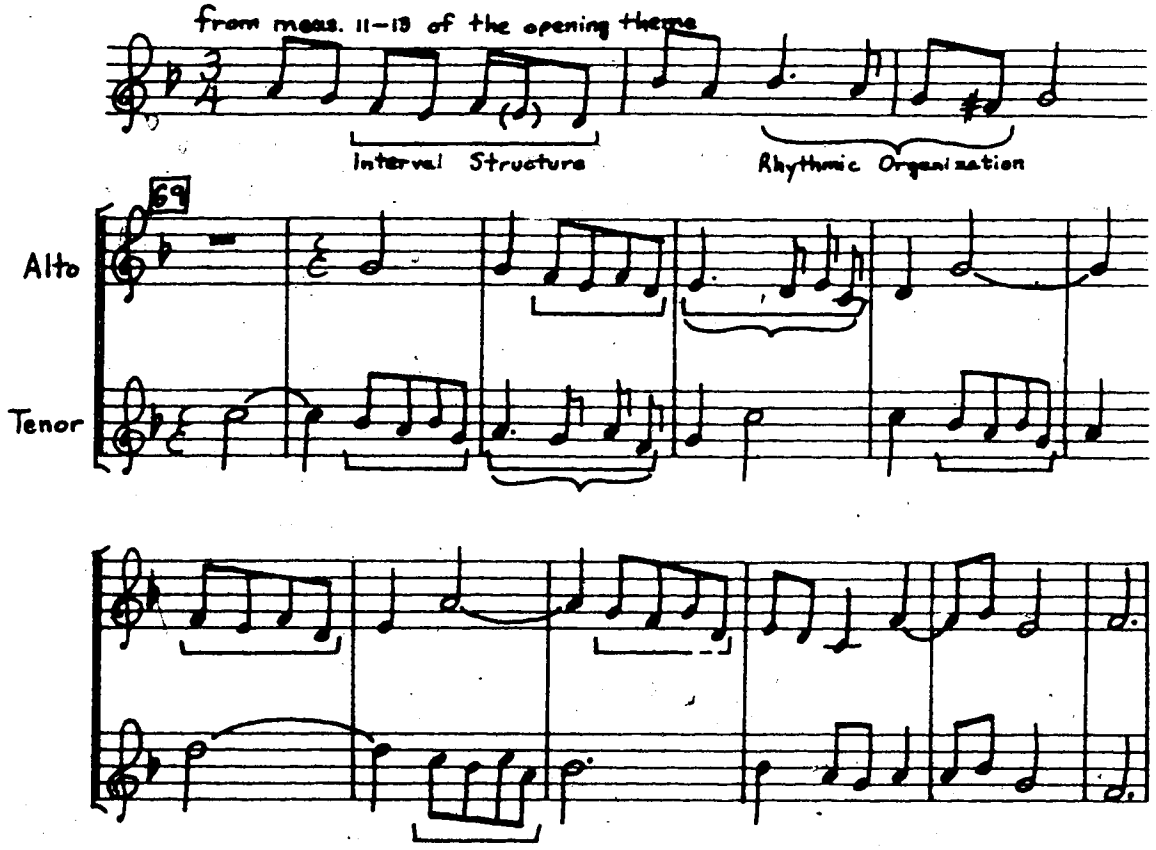
Example 26. Duet, "Thou in Thy Mercy," meas. 84-91. Altered version of previous example, with orchestral accompaniment (p. 224, meas. 15-22).



principal theme as the basis for the orchestral accompaniment throughout this passage is a felicitous means of achieving unity.

The vocal material of measures 69-79, treated canonically, also derives from the opening material shown in example 24. The complete canonic passage is quoted below, with its relationship to the opening theme also demonstrated.

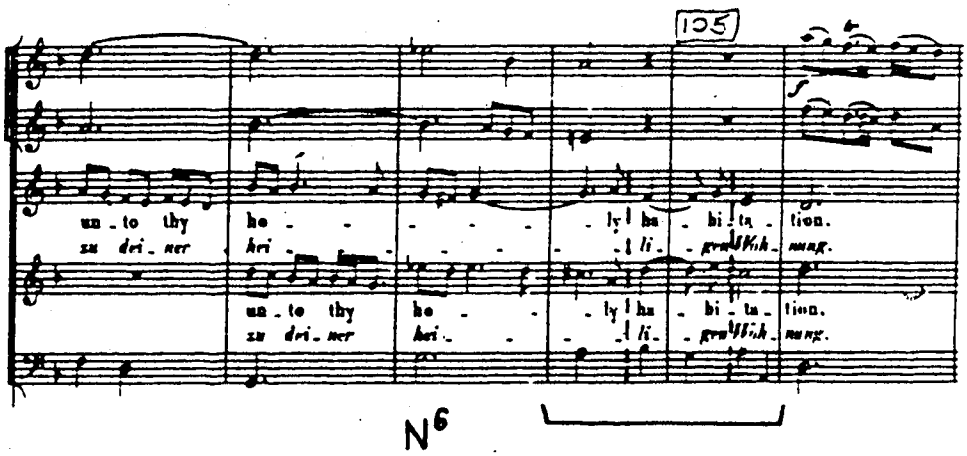
Example 27. Duet, "Thou in Thy Mercy," Thematic relationship between canonic passage, meas. 69-79 (p. 224, meas. 1-10) and opening theme.

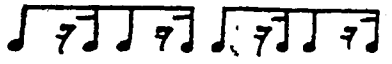


The formal organization of the duet resembles an abbreviated ternary pattern: A(meas. 1-58) consisting of the material shown in example 24; B(meas. 58-100), contrasting vocal material derived from and accompanied by material of the first section; A(meas. 100-116). The final section is, in fact, a repetition of only the orchestral introduction of the first section.

The harmonic vocabulary is primarily diatonic in the tonalities through which the piece moves (D minor, A minor, D minor, G minor, D minor, A minor, F major, and D minor); the Neapolitan chord, however, reappears in this movement, the most notable example occurring in the final vocal phrase of the duet (see example 28). In example 28 below, notice too the hemiola pattern typical of pieces in 3/4 meter.

Example 28. Duet, "Thou In Thy Mercy," meas. 101-106. Chromaticism in the concluding vocal phrase (p. 225, meas. 8-13).



The dramatic impact of the following chorus, "The People Shall Hear," can be attributed in part to the duet which we have just considered. The duet affords a kind of quiet repose prior to the energizing and tension-creating rhythmic figure  with which the strings introduce the chorus. Most noticeable, of course, is the marked textural contrast between the two movements, but the abrupt transition from the D minor tonality of the duet to the E minor tonality of the chorus is also striking. It is, perhaps, significant to note that Handel, in appropriating Erba's duet, transposes the piece from E minor to D minor. On the basis of my examination of Erba's duet, there is nothing excessive about the vocal ranges to warrant the transposition; Handel's violin accompaniment could, as well, be performed in E minor. It is possible that Handel's transposition was an afterthought in order to intensify the dramatic impact here.

CHAPTER VIII

HOMOPHONIC CHORUSES

In addition to six brief homophonic, preludial choruses[1] in Israel in Egypt, consistently homophonic choruses account for only six--one of which is repeated to create the effect of a seventh--of the remaining twenty-two choral movements of the oratorio. Rarely is Handel consistent in his treatment of texture in the choral movements. Most often, it is primarily the juxtaposition of homophonic and polyphonic textures within a given chorus which contributes to the dramatic effect. Nevertheless, the homophonic choruses to be discussed presently, clearly demonstrate Handel's capacity to create vivid and impressive musical portraits, the impact of which is no less significant than that of the remaining choruses of the oratorio.

No. 6. "He Spake the Word"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, three trombones, strings, and continuo

Tonality: B-flat major

Meter: C

Performance designation: Andante Larghetto

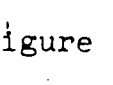
---

[1]For a discussion of these choruses, see chapter IX.

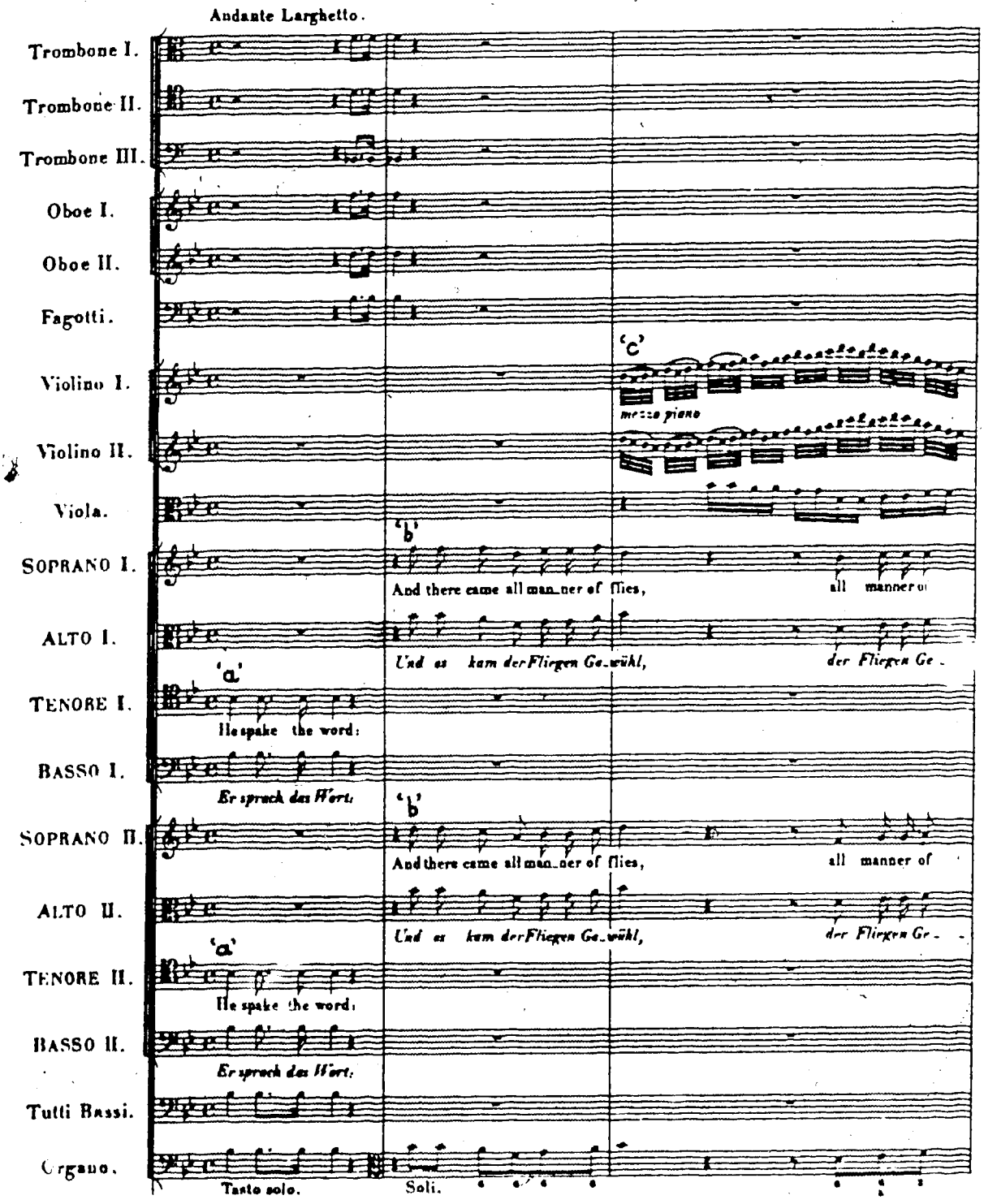
Textual source: Psalm 105:31, 34, 35

Musical source: The tenth movement, Sinfonia, from Stradella's Serenata

The Stradella sinfonia is essentially a piece of chamber music comprised of two instrumental groups: one group consists of two violins and a bass, the other a string quartet with an indication that the parts be doubled. Undoubtedly, the alternation of the two instrumental groups in the sinfonia influenced Handel's arrangement of the piece for the two four-part choruses. The opening measures of the chorus--and Handel gets down to vocal writing immediately--contain the thematic material on which the movement is based (see example 29). Two of the three motives (a and b) are assigned to the voices and derive from Stradella's piece; the third idea (c), intended obviously to depict the buzzing of insects, originates with Handel.

Handel's scoring of the various phrases of the text illustrates his sensitivity to textual implications. The resolute solemnity of the opening words, "He spake the word," is realized not only by the reiteration of pitch and the pompous dotted rhythm, but also by scoring the opening three beats for male voices in unison accompanied only by the violoncellos, string basses, and organ, also in unison. The trombones, oboes, and bassoons repeat and harmonize the rhythmic figure  which reinforces the effect of the vocal utterance (see example 29 below).

Example 29. Double Chorus, "He Spake the Word," meas. 1-3. Thematic material of the movement: motive a, meas. 1; motive b, meas. 2; motive c, meas. 3 (p. 27).



This is the first piece in the oratorio in which trombones are used. They are restricted--with two brief exceptions (meas. 10, 35-36)--to accompanying the 'He spake' motive. Trombones are not suitable to accompany the 'fly' motive because of the low tessitura and slow-speaking properties of the instrument. The lighter, more delicate texture of measure two, achieved by using only female voices accompanied by the organ, as well as the accelerated declamation in eighth and sixteenth notes (there are no weighty quarter notes or energetic dotted note figures here), seems well suited to the text.[2] In subsequent appearances of the 'fly' motive for mixed voices, the simulation of buzzing insects by violins in thirty seconds and violas in figurated eighths and quarters creates a "picturesque sound effect."[3] Lest one's attention become unduly focused on the orchestral writing, which unquestionably shows Handel's rather ingenious programmatic treatment of the subject, Chorley reminds us that "the Retributive Power who called the Plague forth is never, for a moment, to be left out of memory."[4] The 'He spake' motive not only opens the movement, but also recurs several times (meas. 5, 8, 12-13, 17-18, 22-23, 24-25, 30-31), its recurrence constituting a significant unifying factor of the movement.

---

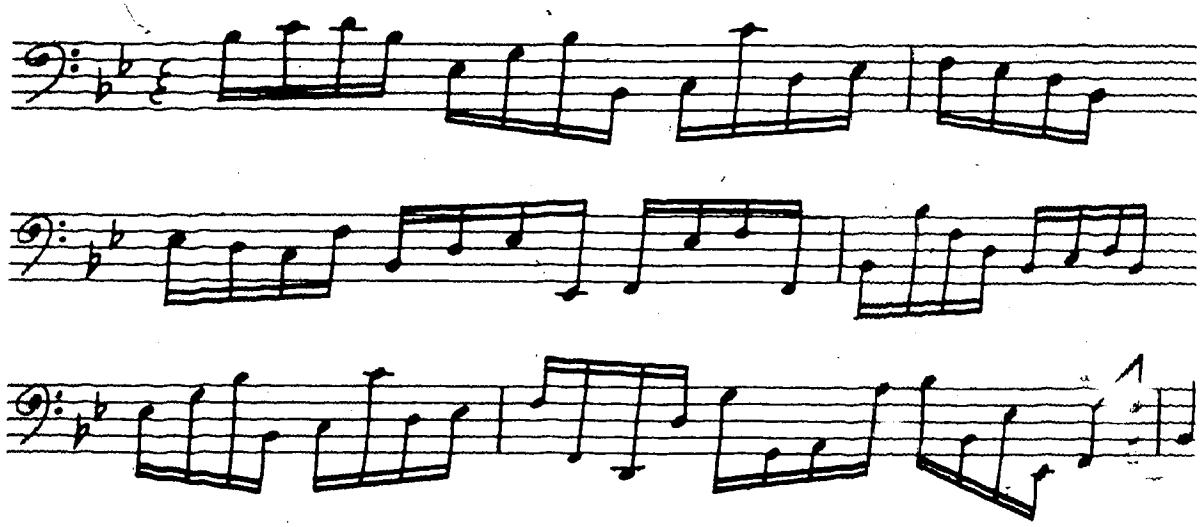
[2] cf. Göllner, "Zur Sprachvertonung in Händels Choren," p. 484.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Chorley, Handel Studies p. 18.

Following the final declamation of "He Spake" (meas. 30-31), new textual material--the plague of the locusts--is taken up by the chorus (measure 35-36). To endow the new text with character, Handel introduces a new sixteenth-note motive for the violoncellos, string basses, and bassoons (see example 30). The violins and violas continue with their

Example 30. Double Chorus, "He Spake the Word," meas. 31-35. Locust motive (p. 37, meas. 3; p. 39, meas. 2).

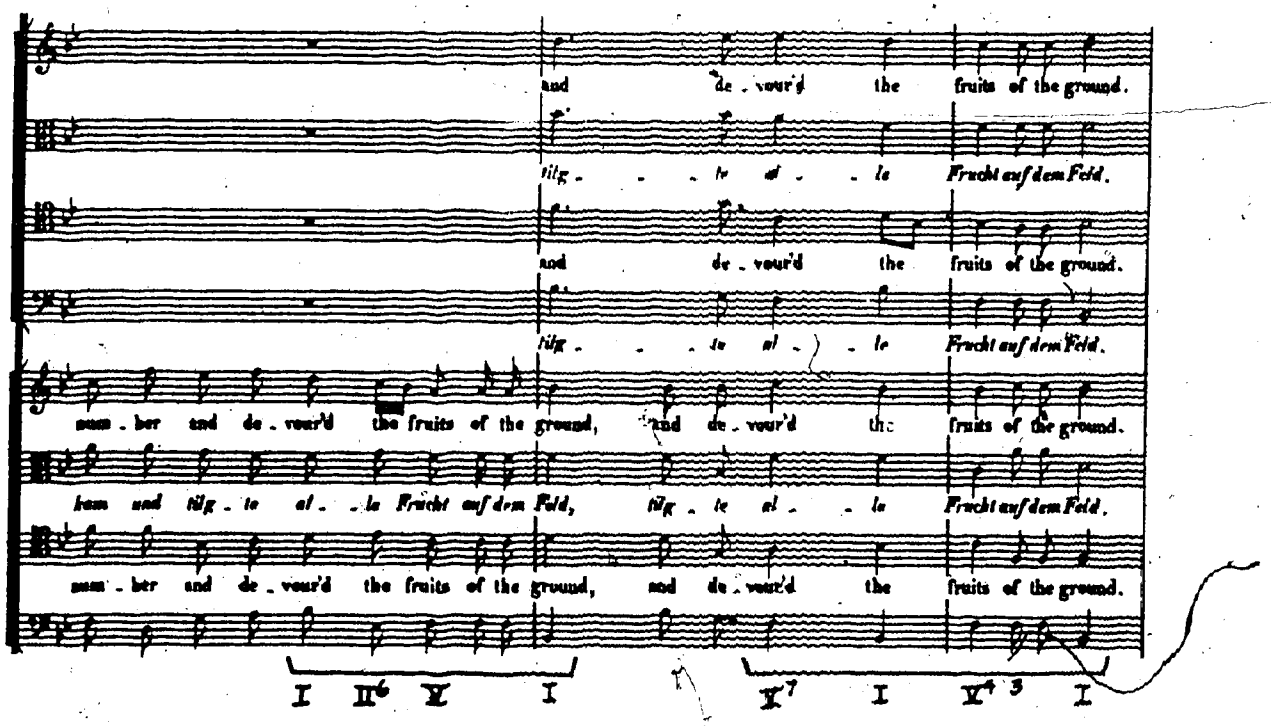


characteristic figuration. Apart from reinforcing the voices and trombones on the 'He spake' motive, the violoncellos, string basses, and bassoons are silent, until measure 31. The introduction of these instruments, particularly the violoncellos and string basses with their heavy--overtone-rich--sound, results in a much thicker texture than encountered heretofore in the piece. This passage suggests, in Macfarren's words, "the thought of the darkness of the cloudlike coming of the winged host that veiled the face of heaven."[5]

[5]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 11.

Measures 35-36 illustrate a typical device observed in many of Handel's choruses: the broadening of the melodic and harmonic rhythm at final cadences. Notice in example 31 below the augmentation of the rhythmic values of the second half of measure 4 (♪♪♪♪♪♪|♩ becomes 𝅗𝅥 𝅗𝅥|𝅗𝅥 ♪♪𝅗𝅥) and the retardation of the harmonic rhythm. These devices underscore the finality of the concluding cadence for the chorus but do not result in a slackening of tempo; thus, the momentum which characterizes the piece can be maintained throughout the five-measure orchestral coda.

Example 31. Double Chorus, "He Spake the Word," meas. 34-36. Concluding choral measures with broadening of the rhythm (p. 39).



No. 7. "He Gave Them Hailstones For Rain"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: paired oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and continuo

Tonality: C major

Meter: 3/4

Performance Designation: Allegro

Textual Source: Exodus 9:23, 24, and Psalm 105:32

Musical Source: the opening Sinfonia, and the bass aria, "Seguir non voglio piu" from Stradella's Serenata, "Qual prodigio"

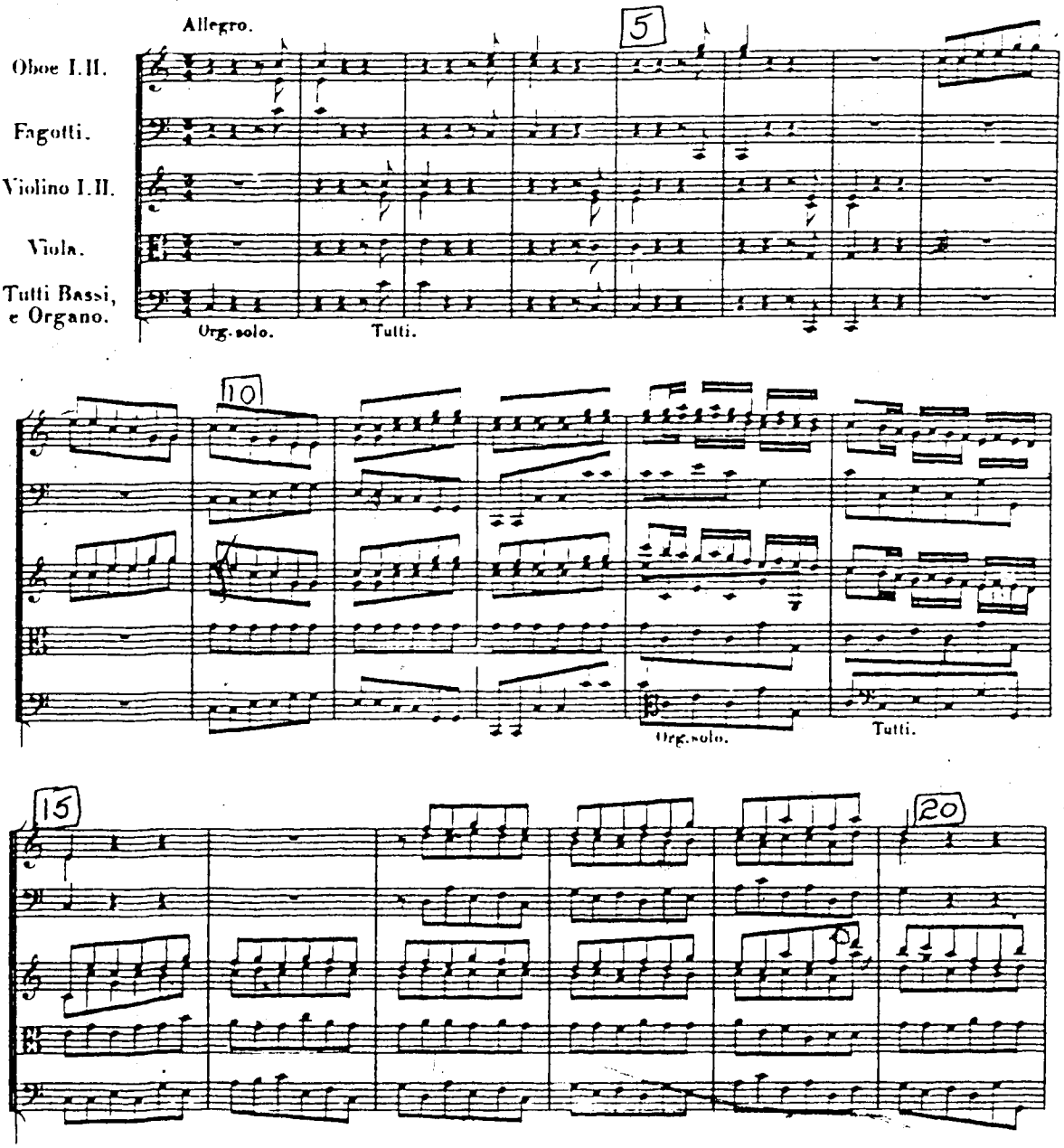
The movement opens with a twenty-one-measure orchestral introduction (see example 32), the substance of which derives from the sinfonia and orchestral accompaniment to the bass aria mentioned above.[6]

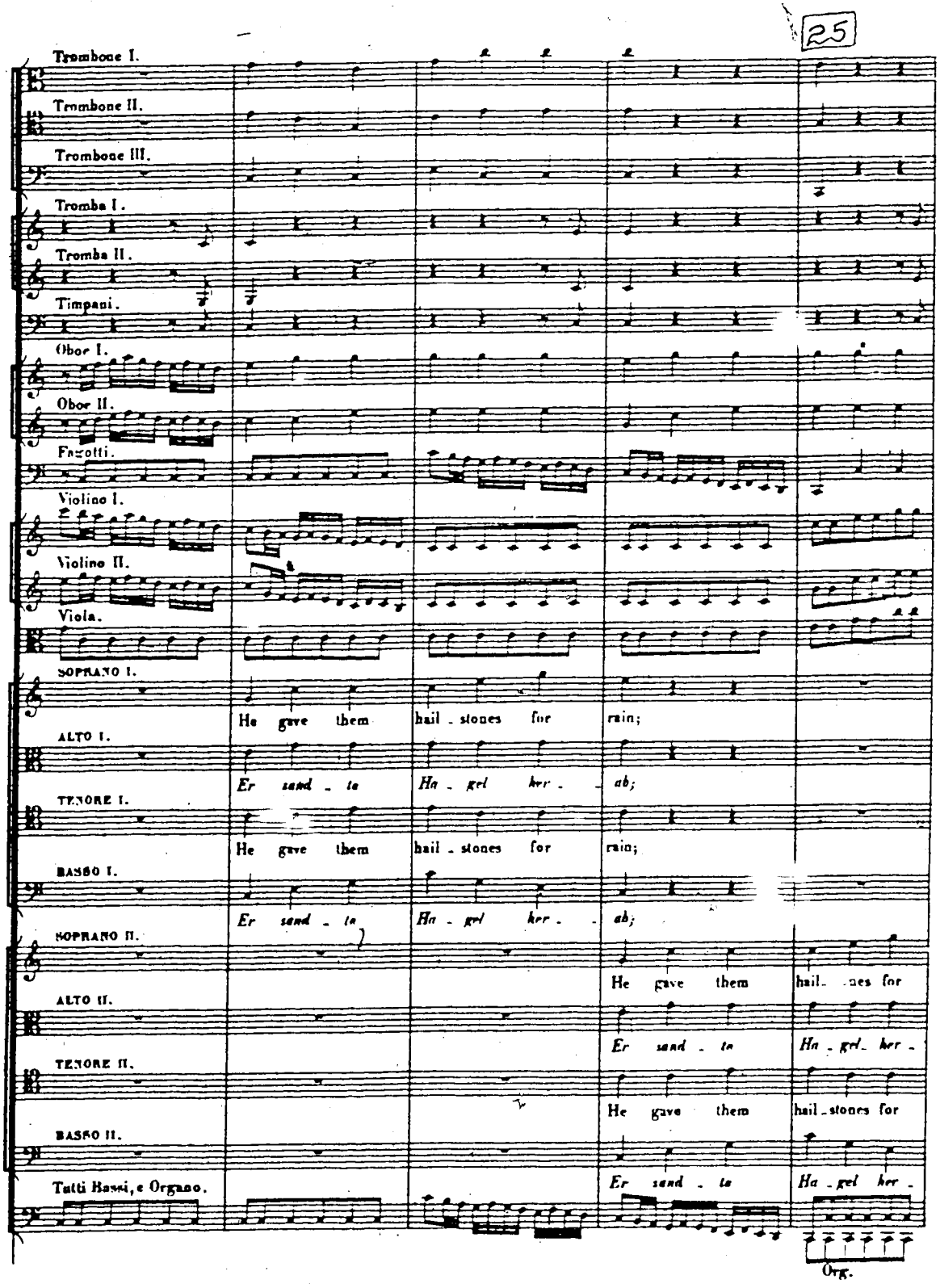
Handel's manipulation of the material in the introduction vividly depicts an approaching storm. Several factors contribute to this pictorialization: the dialogue--separated by $1\frac{1}{2}$ beats of silence--between the winds and strings in measures 1-7 symbolizes the intermittent drops of rain with which the storm begins; the commencement in measure 8 of unbroken eighth-note motion suggests that the raindrops are falling continuously; the increased melodic activity (descending sixteenth note passages in measures 13, 14, and 21) and the quickening of the harmonic rhythm (chord changes with

[6]See Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 68-70.

each eighth note in meas. 16-20) from measures 9-21, coupled with a thickening of orchestral texture, depict the intensification of the storm; and, in measure 22, the hailstones begin to fall at the entrance of the chorus, trombones, and timpani.

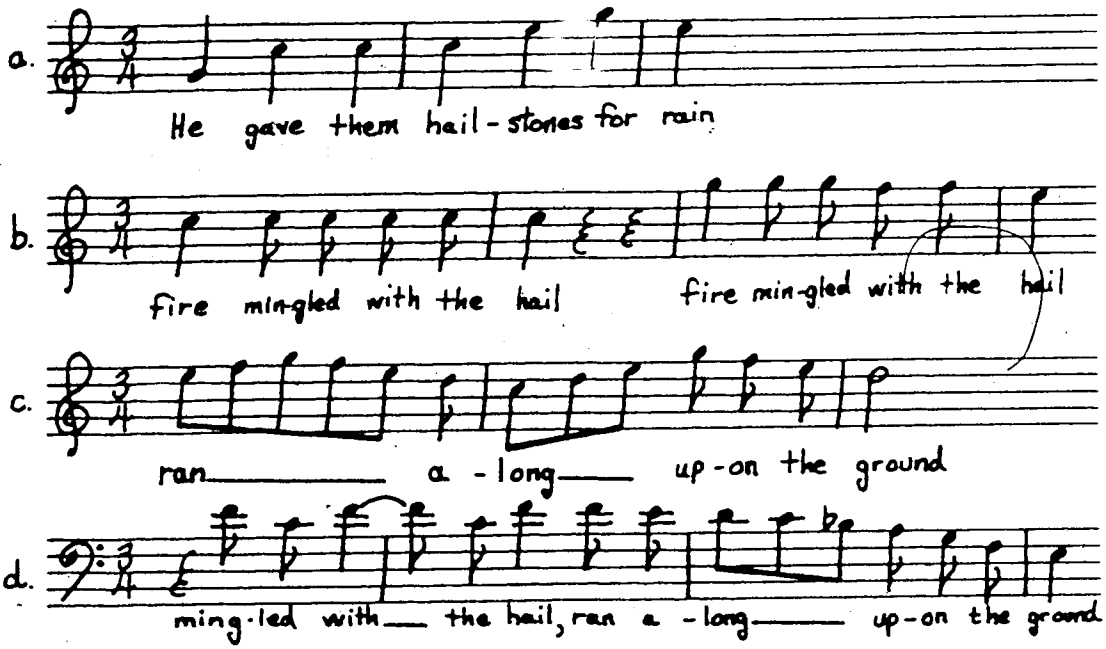
Example 32. Double Chorus, "He Gave Them Hailstones For Rain." Orchestral introduction and the opening four measures of choral antiphony (pp. 41 and 42).




25
Trombone I.
Trombone II.
Trombone III.
Tromba I.
Tromba II.
Timpani.
Oboe I.
Oboe II.
Fagotti.
Violino I.
Violino II.
Viola.
SOPRANO I.
He gave them hail - stones for rain;
ALTO I.
Er sand - te Ha - gel her - ab;
TENORE I.
He gave them hail - stones for rain;
BASSO I.
Er sand - te Ha - gel her - ab;
SOPRANO II.
He gave them hail - stones for
ALTO II.
Er sand - te Ha - gel her -
TENORE II.
He gave them hail - stones for
BASSO II.
Er sand - te Ha - gel her -
Tutti Bassi, e Organo.
Org.

Example 33 shows the principal thematic material of the two four-part choirs. The antiphonal presentation of motives a, b, and c respectively, constitutes an important

Example 33. Double Chorus, "He Gave Them Hailstones For Rain." Thematic material of the two choirs.



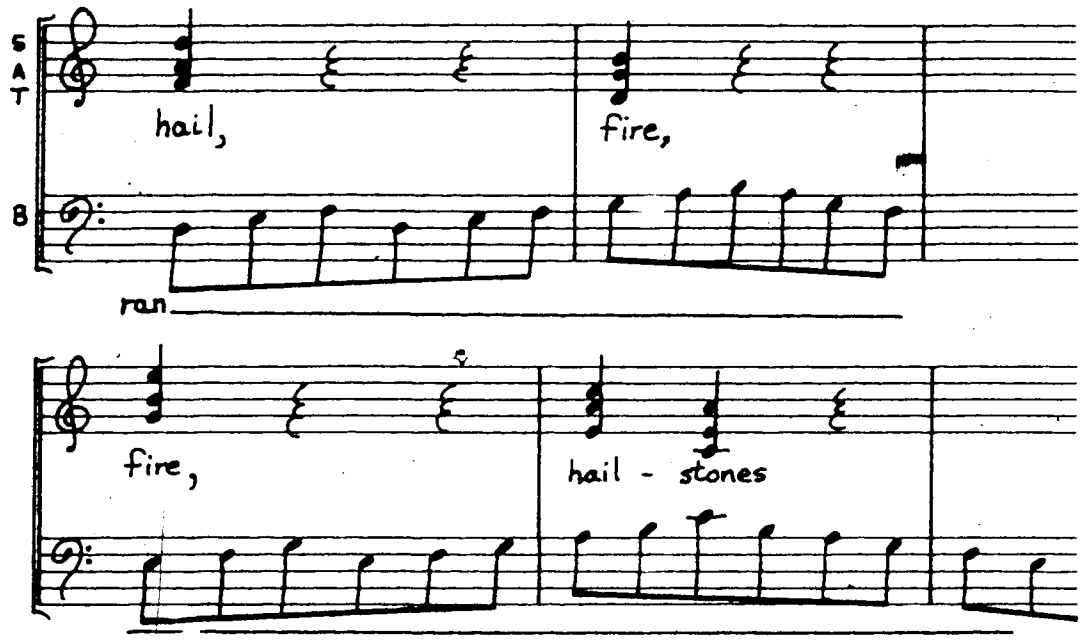
factor in the strong dramatic impact which this chorus carries (the antiphony of measures 22-25 in example 32 is typical). Several other elements contribute to the dramatic effect of this chorus: the jarring transition up a major second from B-flat major of the previous piece to C major;[7] the antiphonal shouts of 'fire' in measures 39-42; the choral interjections of the words 'hail,' 'fire' and 'hail-stones' by the sopranos, altos, and tenors of both choirs over a running eighth-note passage for the basses in

---

[7]Cf. the transition from No. 32, "Thou in Thy Mercy" in D minor to No. 33, "The People Shall Hear" in E minor.

measures 63-66 (see example 34); and, the orchestral representation of the storm.

Example 34. Double Chorus, "He Gave Them Hailstones For Rain," meas. 63-66. Choral interjections over a running bass figure (p. 50, meas. 1-4).



Compared with the highly chromatic and tonally nebulous 'darkness' chorus which follows, the harmony and tonal scheme of the 'hailstone' chorus is exceedingly diatonic and conventional--primary triads prevail in the tonalities through which the piece moves (C to F to G to C). The power and energy of the storm is underscored by the strength inherent in the harmonic and tonal structure of the movement.

The piece concludes with a nine-measure orchestral coda composed of material presented in the introduction.

No. 8. "He Sent a Thick Darkness"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: Paired bassoons, strings, and continuo

Tonality: Nebulous; ending, however, in E major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Largo

Textual Source: Exodus 10:21, 22.

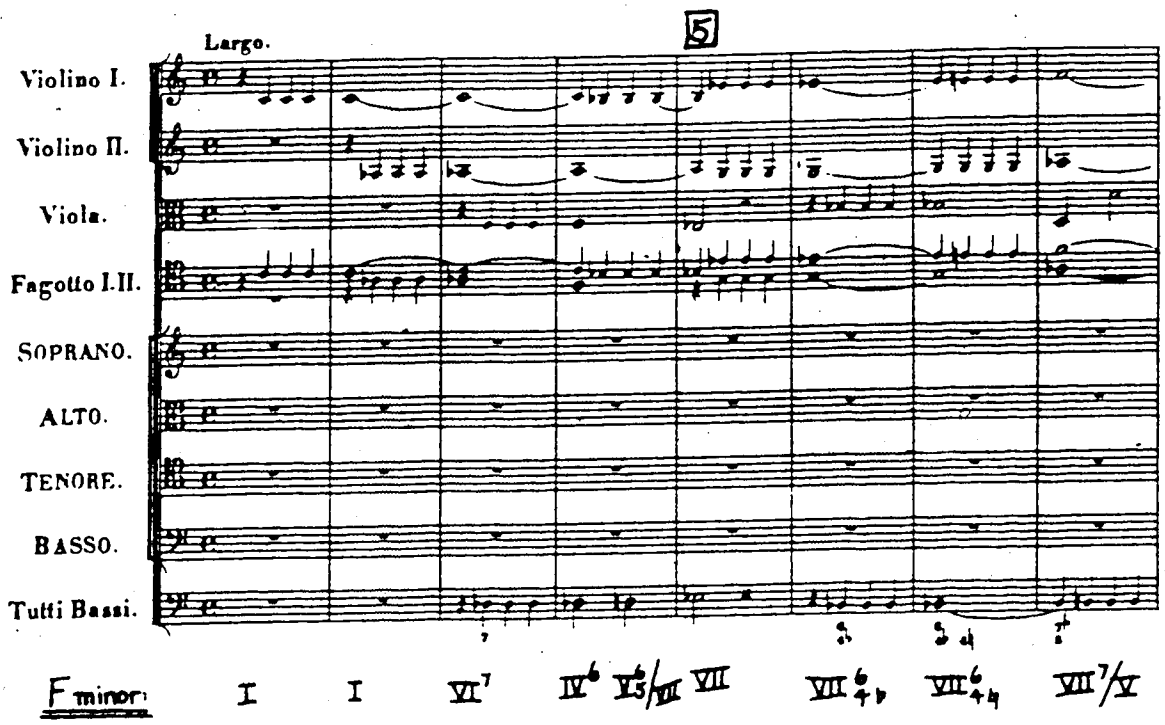
In a radical departure from the generally accepted principles of eighteenth-century tonality and harmonic movement, "Handel has [brilliantly] accomplished the seeming [sic] impossible by depicting in sound a soundless thing like darkness."[8] Tonally, this is the most baffling piece in the entire oratorio. Dean states that "Handel makes Egyptians of us all"[9] suggesting, of course, an analogy between the groping Egyptians and the floundering musical analyst. I have attempted, nevertheless, to indicate my interpretation of the movement's harmonic scheme on the following pages where the chorus is quoted in full. One cannot perceive with certainty whether the beginning of the piece is in C minor, A-flat major, F minor, or D-flat major. Because F minor is--however obliquely--suggested in measures 8-11, the opening measures have been interpreted in this tonality. The analysis reveals essentially three main tonal

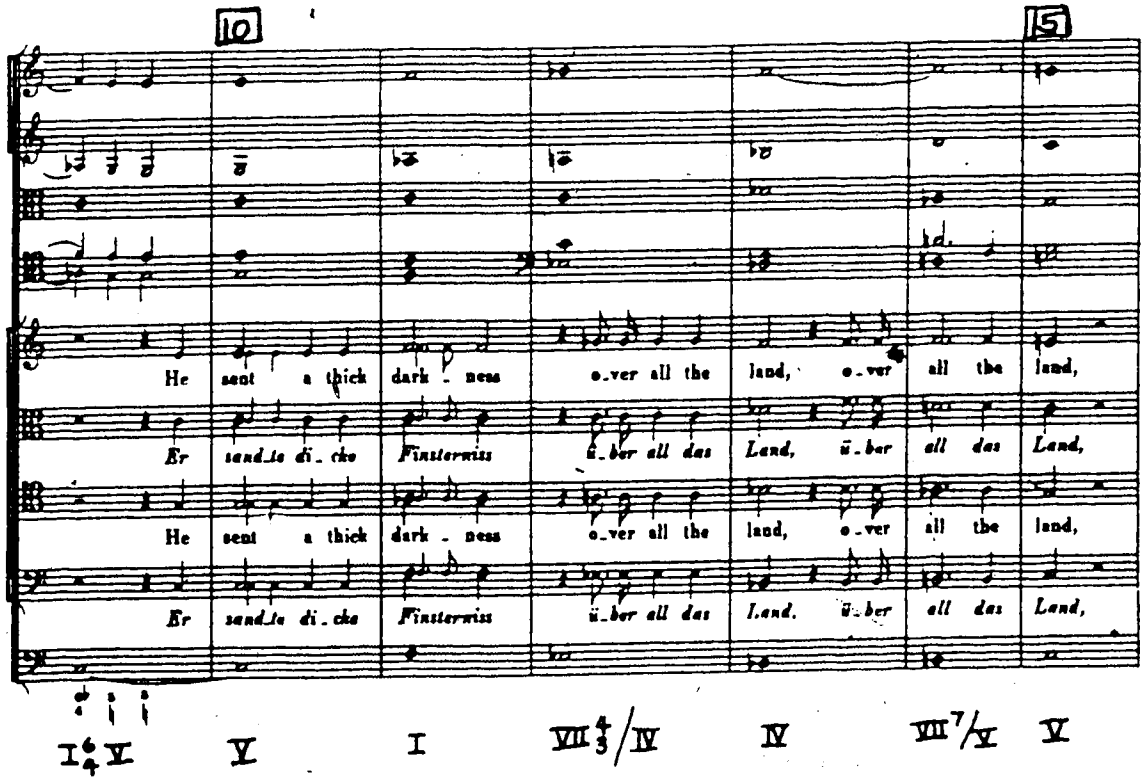
---

[8]Josephine Thrall, Oratorios and Masses, unnumbered volume of The Imperial History and Encyclopedia of Music (New York: Irving Squire, n.d.), p. 85.

[9]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 318.

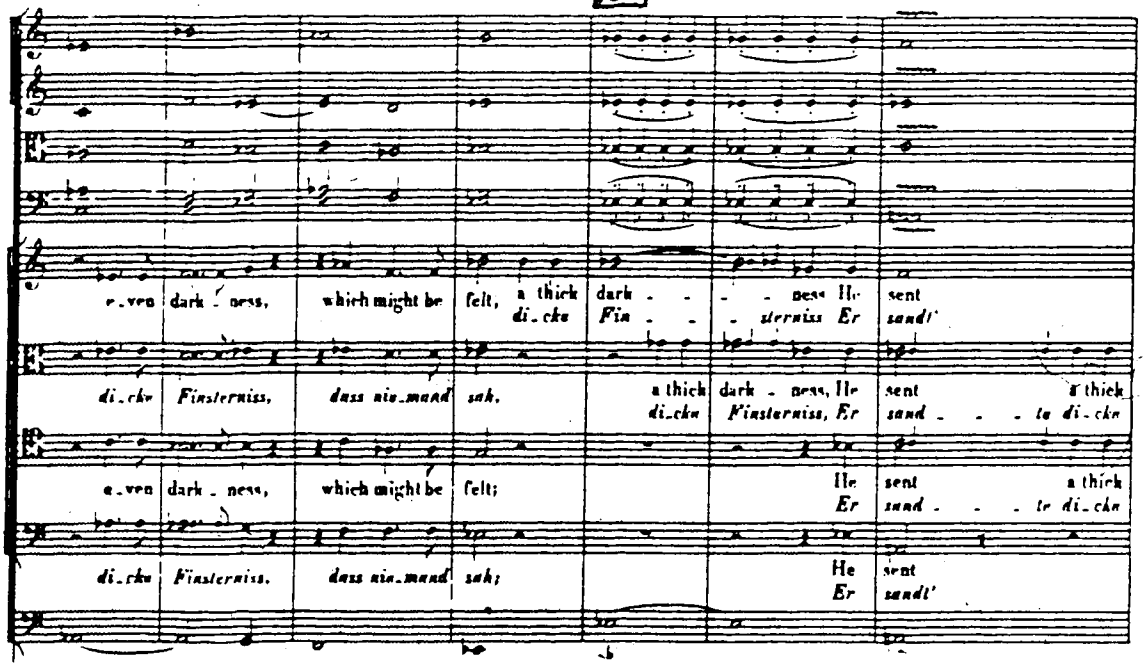
Example 35. Chorus, "He Sent a Thick Darkness." Harmonic analysis.





Note the Modal Interchange here

20

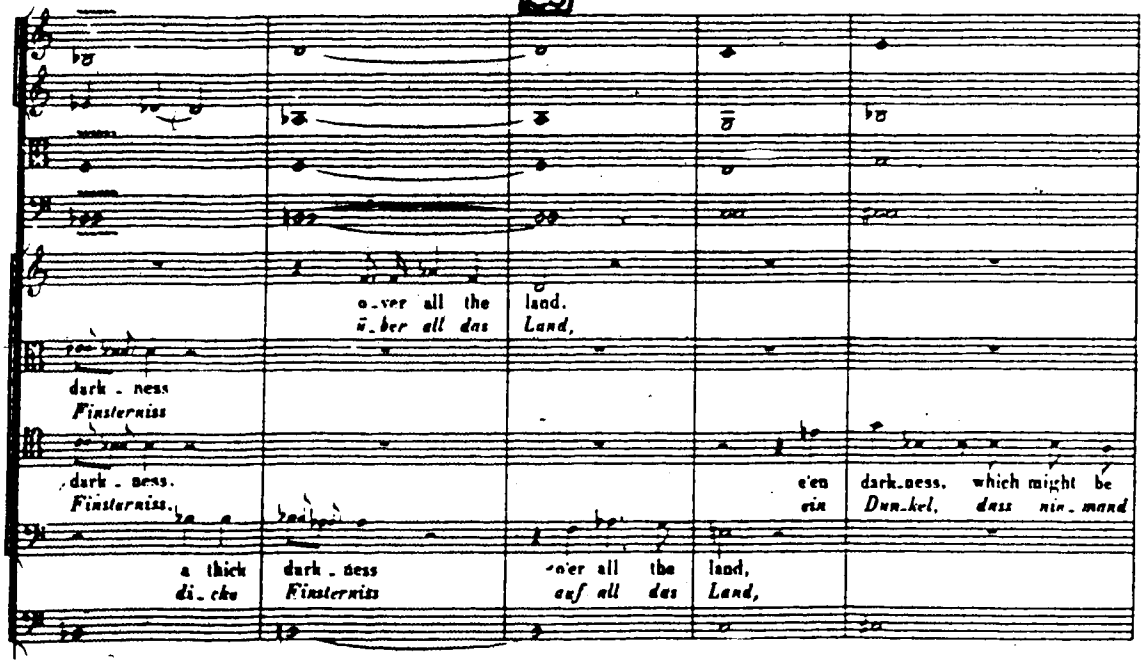


F minor: III

E♭ major: IV V_2^4 I^6 II^7 VII^6 I E♭ minor: I I V_5^6/V

or B♭ minor: IV IV V_5^6

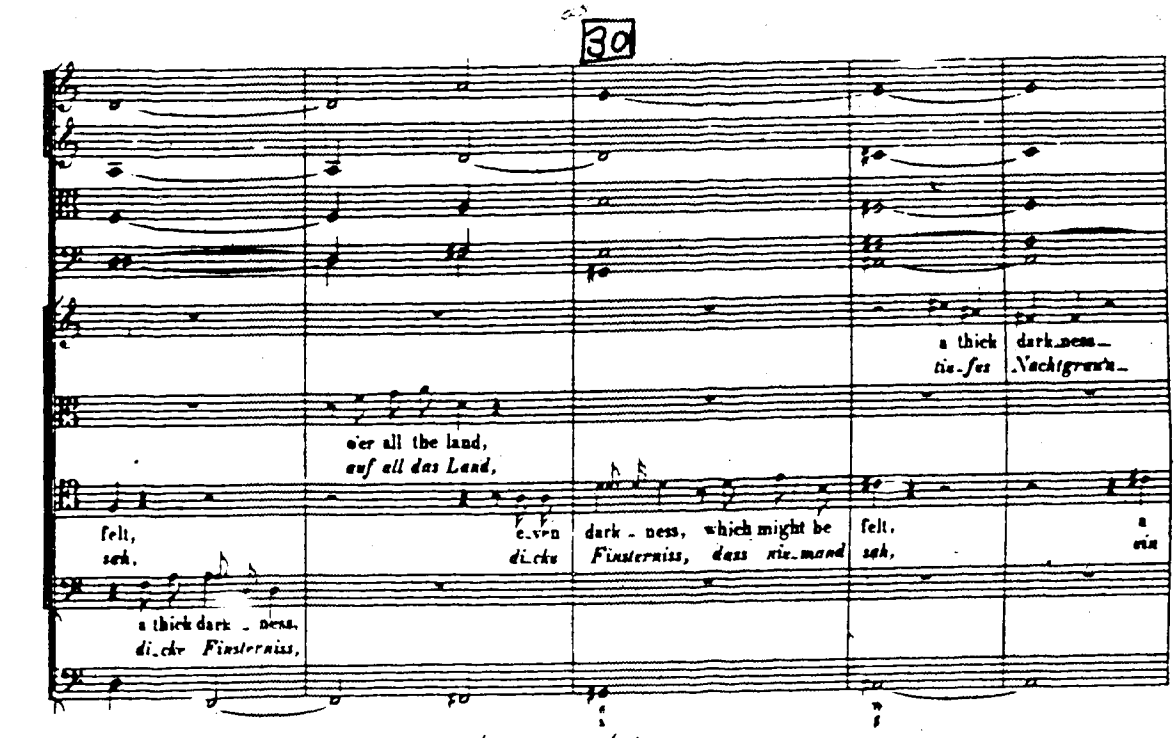
25



E♭ minor: V^{4-3} VII_2^4 ($B^\natural = C^\flat$) _____

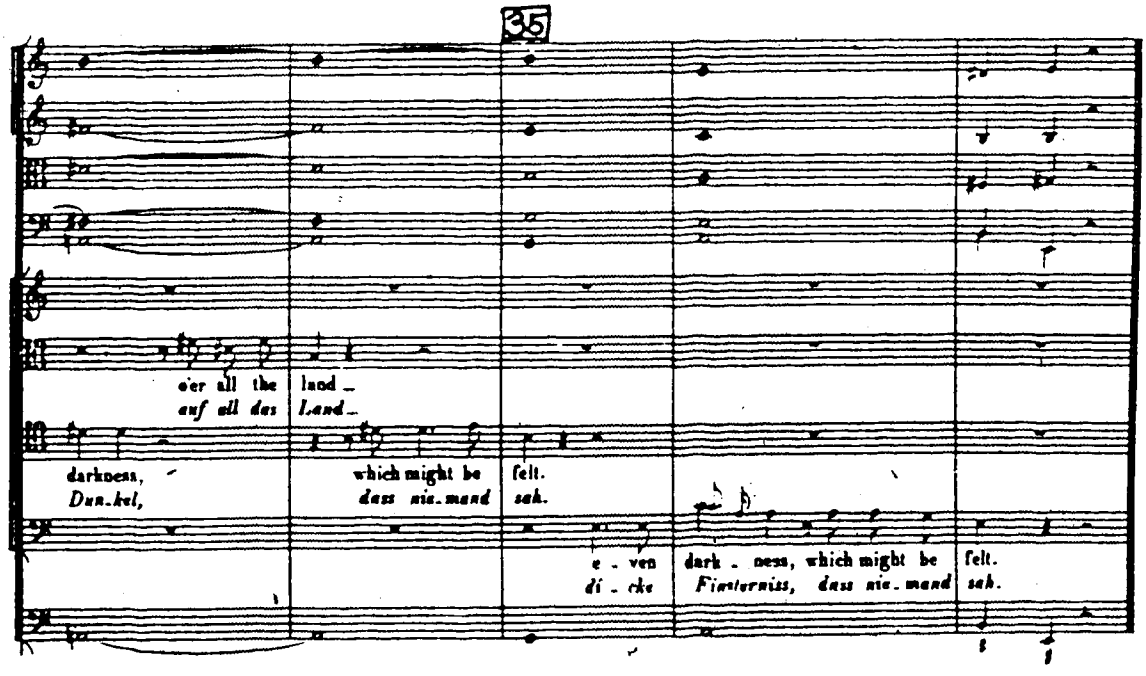
B♭ minor: I^{4-3} $VII^7/V/V$ _____ V/V VII_2^4/V ($C^\sharp = D^\flat$)

D minor: VII^7



D minor: I I^6 ____ V/IV V^6_5/V

E minor: V^6_5/IV ____ V^6_5/V ____



E minor: V^4_2 ____ I^6 IV V I

areas, F minor, E-flat (major and minor), and E minor, with a number of secondary relationships. The modal interchange from E-flat major to E-flat minor in measure 20 is especially striking because it intensifies the text which refers here not just to darkness, but to a "thick" darkness. The vertical structure of each chord and the harmonic progressions appear to be the result of the linear movement of the parts. Handel anticipates--by a century--harmonic procedures associated with Wagner.[10] The slowness of the harmonic rhythm--predominantly one chord per measure, occasionally one chord in two measures--underscored by the slow tempo and the sustained orchestral texture together depict the oppressiveness of the darkness which engulfed the land.

An examination of the violin and viola parts reveals that the majority of the respective parts can--indeed, oftentimes must--be performed on the lowest string of the instrument. The "darker" or richer quality of notes produced on these strings is particularly apt for this text. The timbre of the "sepulchral bassoons"[11] characterizes the ominous atmosphere of the piece. By measure six of the movement, the darkness has completely enveloped the Egyptians; Handel does not permit any light (silences) to break through the darkness (the sustained orchestral chords).

---

[10]Cf. Wagner's Prelude to Tristan and Isolde.

[11]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 319.

After the text has been declaimed by the full chorus (meas. 9-22), Handel fragments the vocal writing by employing the hocket technique. This tossing of the melodic line from one part to another is symbolic, perhaps, of the Egyptians constantly losing their way in the darkness. As Leichtentritt aptly states,

> music of this kind would be pointless without the text: it is inseparable from the words. The apparently planless and illogical staggering into various distant keys [as well as the movement of the melodic material from voice to voice] is full of meaning. Evidently it was Handel's idea to have the music lose its way in tonality [and melodic direction], as the Egyptians lost theirs in the darkened land of Pharaoh.[12]

The dramatic impact of what amounts to be a choral recitative results not only from the movement's inherent characteristics, but also because of the marked contrast with the pieces on either side. Several aspects of the framing choruses contrast with, and hence, heighten the effect of the 'darkness' chorus: their harmonic vocabulary is conspicuously more diatonic (primary triads predominate); they are scored for the full orchestra; contrapuntal techniques are employed; they are to be performed faster and more vigorously; and, the plagues which their texts recount (hail, fire, and death) are much more devastating than is darkness. The only relationship between these three movements is that the darkness chorus begins on C, the tonality of the previous piece, and the final chord (E major) functions as dominant of the chorus which follows.

---

[12]Leichtentritt, "Handel's Harmonic Art," p. 216.

No. 14. "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes, timpani, strings, and continuo

Tonality: C minor

Meter: C

Tempo Designation: A tempo giusto

Textual Source: Psalm 106:11

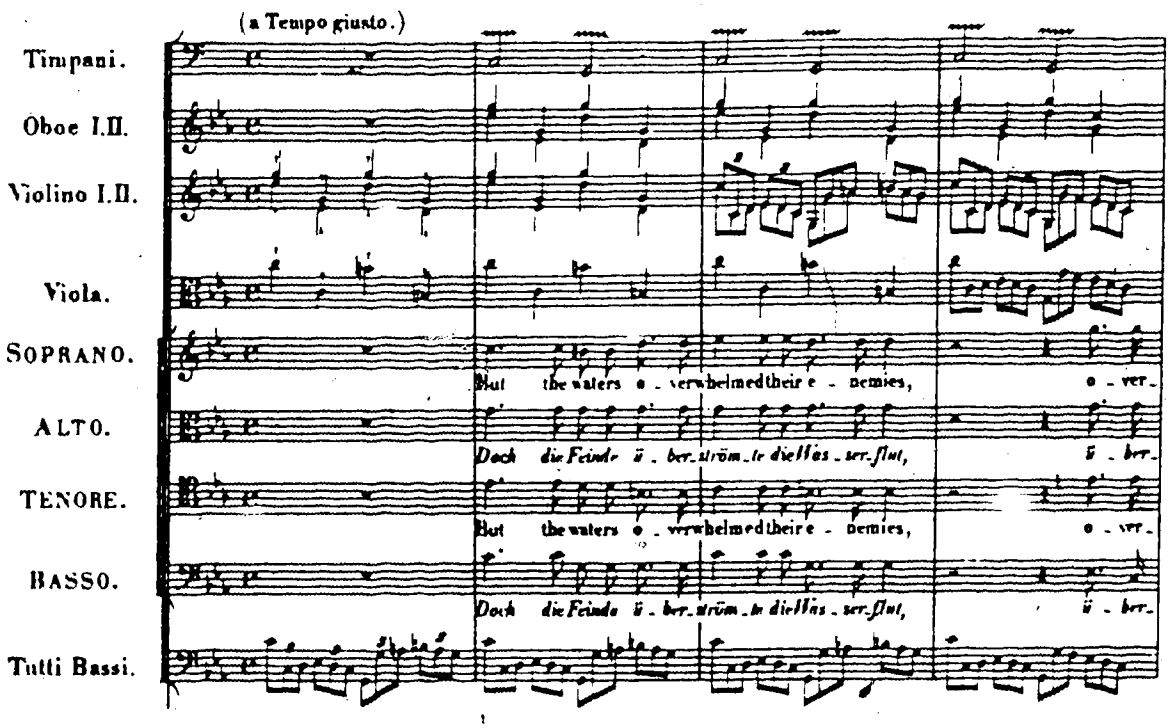
Musical Source: The orchestral accompaniment to the aria "It is the Lord that Ruleth the Sea" from Handel's tenth Chandos Anthem, "The Lord is my Light" (See HW 35, p. 198). The accompaniment for the anthem aria appears to be based on the aria "Venti, fermate, si" from the cantata Armida abbandonate (see HW 52a, pp. 158-159).

This movement concludes a series of three choruses concerned with the Red Sea. In No. 12, the waters had been divided, thus allowing the Israelites to cross in No. 13. The Egyptians, unaware of their imminent destruction, follow the Israelites into the divided waters (No. 14); Handel, in this climactic chorus, recounts the doom of the Egyptian host. In addition to the close textual relationship of No. 14 to the previous two movements, the chorus also represents the climax of the first part of the oratorio. The cumulative tension of the chain of choruses which comprise Part One reaches a peak in this movement. The two choruses which follow, functioning as a kind of coda

or postlude to Part One, allow for a dissipation of this accumulated tension.

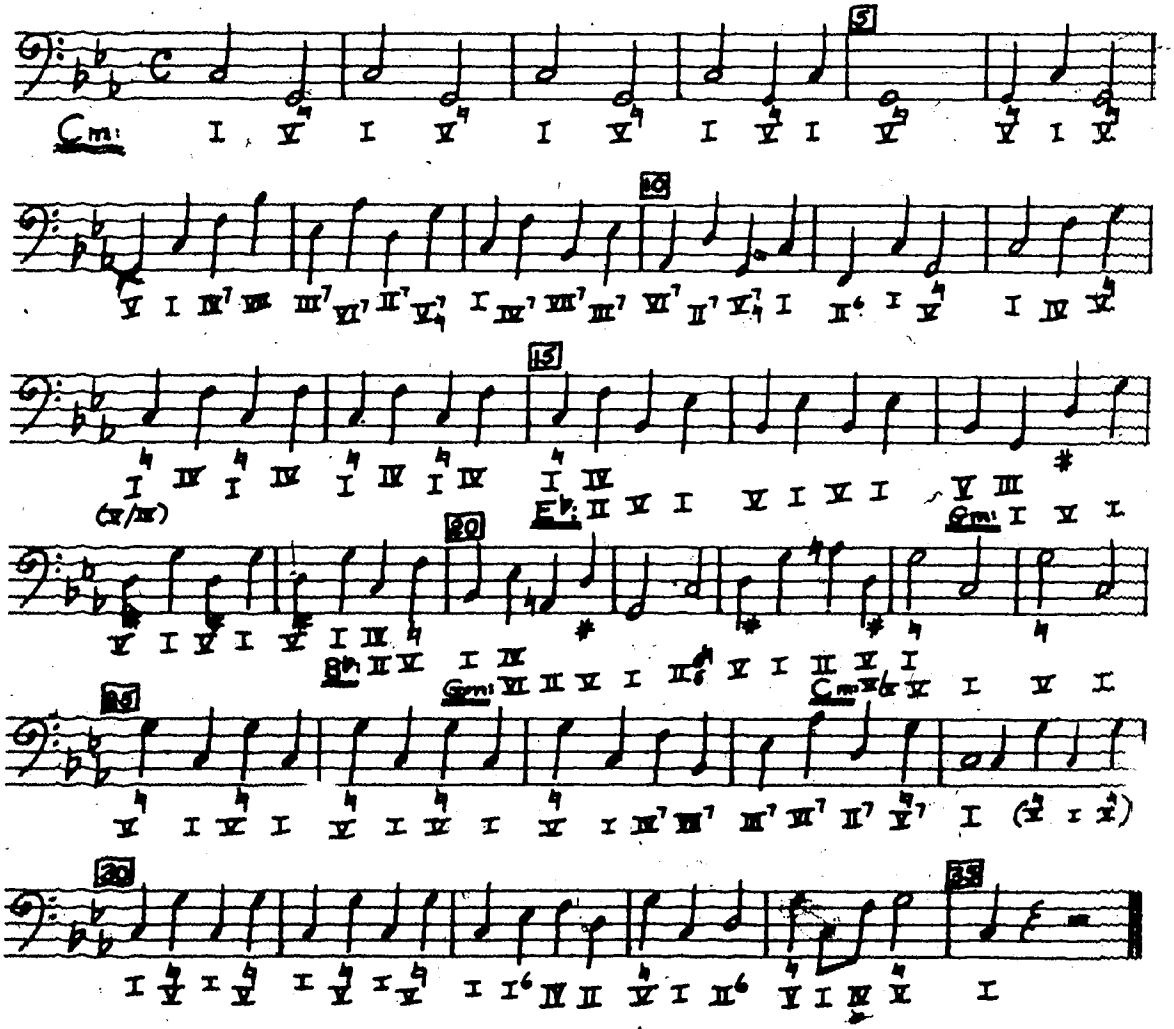
The most striking feature of this chorus is the prominence given to the orchestra. By writing a continuous ascending and descending triplet figure for the string basses--frequently reinforced by the violins and violas--as well as indicating numerous timpani rolls, Handel has created a stupendous presentation of the undulating waters consuming the Egyptians (see example 36).

Example 36. Chorus, "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies," meas. 1-4 (p. 105).



The orchestrally depicted power and strength of the surging waters is reinforced by powerful fundamental clearcut harmonies (only I and V are used during the first six and one-half measures), and by the strong harmonic progressions--up a fourth--which prevail in this movement. Additionally, the harmonic vocabulary is characterized by frequent chains of seventh chords which maintain a certain degree of harmonic tension, symbolic, perhaps, of the Egyptians' intense struggle for their lives. Example 37 below illustrates the

Example 37. Chorus, "But the Waters Overwhelmed their Enemies." Bass line and harmonic analysis of the entire movement (See HW 16, pp. 105-108).



overall tonal plan of the chorus as well as both the strength of the harmonic progressions and the enchainments of seventh chords.

In spite of the predominance of the orchestra in this piece, Handel's treatment of the libretto is not without significance. Particularly striking is the reiteration of the words "not one." Whereas the phrase "the waters overwhelmed their enemies" occurs only four times, the words "not one" are declaimed twenty-five times. Without a doubt, the emphasis on "not one" is meant to convey that the destruction of the pursuing Egyptians was complete--no one escaped.

A rather interesting contrast exists between the setting of the words "not one" in this chorus and in No. 10, "But As For His People," where the repetition of "not one" emphasized that none of the Israelites was lacking in physical strength, certainly a marked contrast with the utter helplessness of the drowning Egyptians. In "But As For His People" the orchestral duplication of the voice parts creates an atmosphere of steadfastness, whereas the intense, indeed, almost overpowering, orchestral writing--triplet figuration for the strings and thunderous timpani rolls--of "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies," is intended to suggest impending and ultimate doom.

No. 23. "The Depths Have Covered Them"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings and continuo

Tonality: F major ending on V/I

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Largo

Textual Source: Exodus 15:5

Musical Source: The chorus "Quia respicit" from Erba's Magnificat

Donald Tovey held the view that this chorus is misplaced and would have a greater dramatic effect following No. 14, "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies."[13] To reposition this chorus would, however, weaken the musical contrast it creates in Part Two (it is preceded and followed by more animated pieces), it would fragment the textual narrative of the Exodus account which Handel follows consistently in Part Two, and it would also weaken the impact of the brief homophonic chorus "And Israel Saw That Great Work" (No. 15) which follows the destruction of the Egyptians. Tovey's suggestion to reposition "The Depths Have Covered Them" was an attempt to solve what he considered to be "the great problem in performing the genuine essence of Israel in Egypt, [which is] not merely to get rid of Erba, but to arrange a coherent whole of what remains

---

[13]Tovey, Essays, 5:105.

of the Song of Moses [Part Two]."[14] To get rid of Erba, however, would mean excluding "The Depths Have Covered Them" a chorus which Tovey admires. Nowhere in his discussion did Tovey mention that the chorus is appropriated from the Magnificat. He was either unaware of the source of Handel's chorus, or he chose to ignore the matter in order to support his position.[15]

Although the vocal parts of measures 3-5 are treated imitatively, the remainder of the piece is homophonic in texture, and I have chosen, therefore, to include this chorus among the extended homophonic choruses. Perhaps the word "extended" is here itself extended; the chorus is only seventeen measures in length; the slow tempo, however, provides aural contradiction of what--visually--might appear to be a brief chorus.

Apart from the opening four measures, this piece parallels--with improvements--the first nine measures of Erba's "Quia respecit humilitatem."[16] Handel's original material in measures 1-4 depicts, by means of descending arpeggiated

---

[14]Ibid., p. 108.

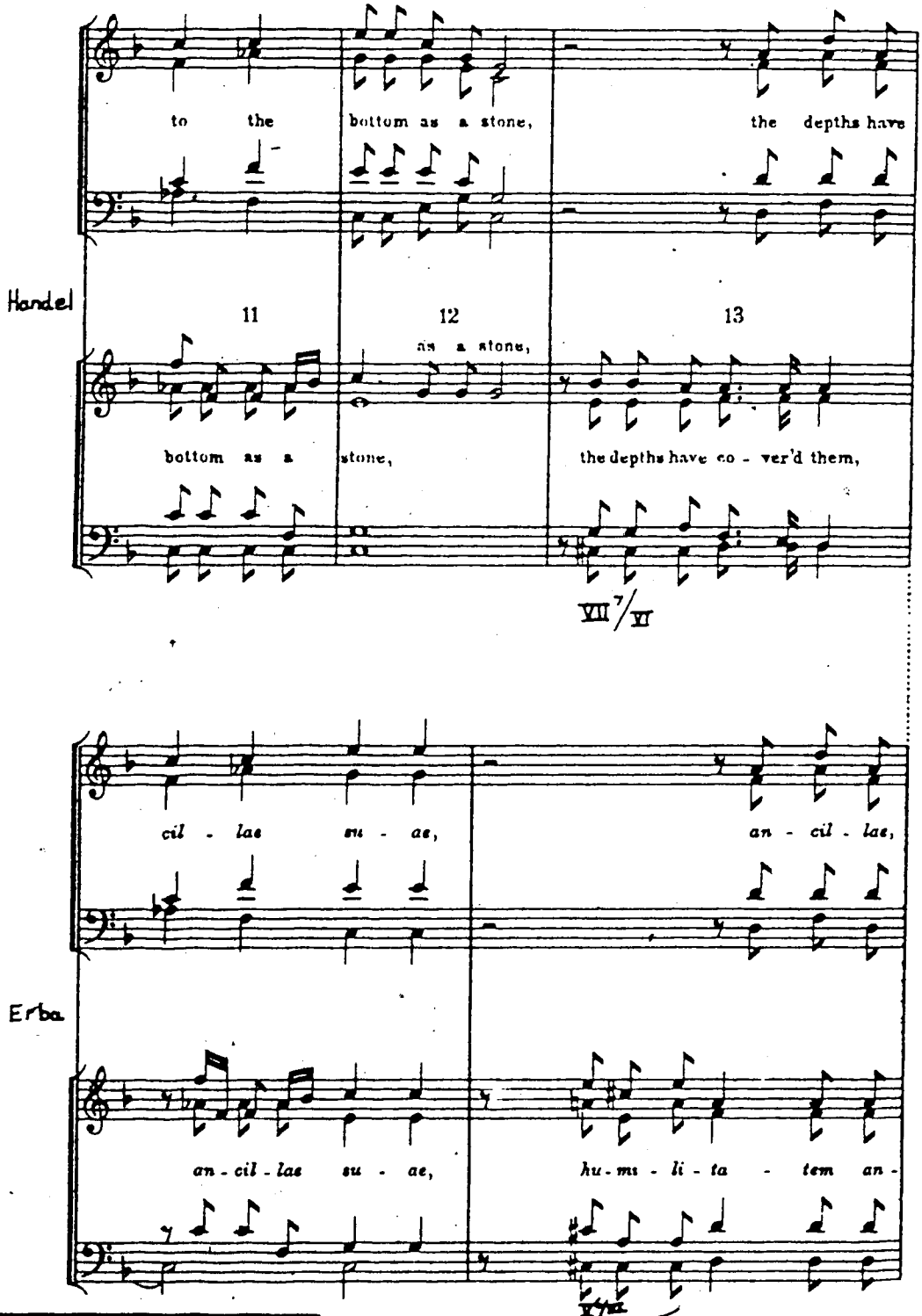
[15]The published evidence of the appropriations appeared some forty-nine years earlier than Tovey's essay as Volume One (Erba's Magnificat) of the supplements to Handel's works. Sedley Taylor's detailed comparative study illustrating Handel's indebtedness to other composers also antedates Tovey's work by thirty-one years.

[16]See Taylor, Handel's Indebtedness, pp. 137-141 for the parallel quotation.

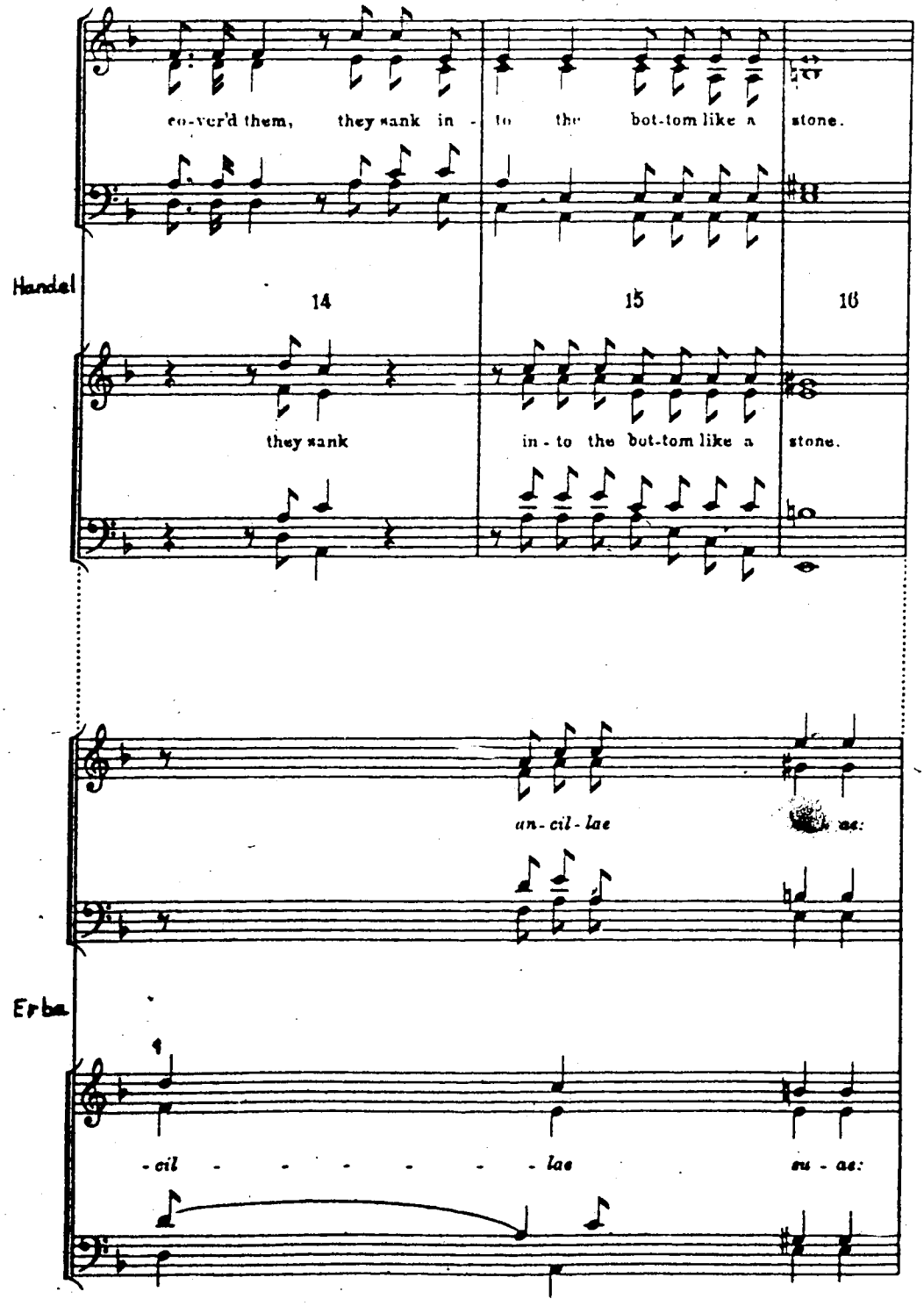
figures in the violins and violas, and a descending sixth leap on the words "the depths," the descent of the drowning Egyptians to the bottom of the Red Sea. A comparison of measures 11-16 (see example 38) of Handel's setting, illustrates the improvement on the corresponding section (measures 7-9) of Erba's piece. Again, the descending arpeggiated figure--not in the Erba score--illustrates Handel's symbolistic response to the text.

The piece contrasts not only texturally with the preceding movement (the bass duet "The Lord is a Man Of War"), but also in meter, tempo, implied dynamics, and harmonic vocabulary. The tonal movement from F major at the beginning to the closing E major chords (actually functioning as dominant of the A minor chords of measures 14-15) represents, along with the brief homophonic choruses and the 'darkness' chorus, one of the more chromatic movements in the oratorio. The most striking contrast occurs with the inflection from the C major triad (at the end of meas. 5) to the C minor triad with which measure 6 begins, the darkness of the latter depicting the blackness of the depths of the sea. This same modal interchange was commented on earlier in relation to "He Rebuked the Red Sea" (No. 12) which derived, perhaps, its harmonic character from the same Erba piece with which we are presently concerned. Notice, too, Handel's use of a diminished seventh chord (vii^7 of vi) in measure 3 of example 38, which intensifies the harmonic colour as well as the text; Erba was content with the milder V^6 of VI.

Example 38. Double Chorus, "The Depths Have Covered Them," meas. 11-16 (p. 171, meas. 3-p. 172, meas. 3) with a parallel quotation from Erba's "Quia Respicit" (HWS 1, p. 11, meas. 4-p. 11, meas. 2)[17]



[17]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 140-141.


co-ver'd them, they sank in - to the bot-tom like a stone.
Handel
14
15
16
they sank in - to the bot-tom like a stone.
an - cil - lae
ae:
Erba
- cil - - - - - - lae
ae - ae:

In Macfarren's words, the movement represents

> the profound stillness of the mighty deep, no longer raging in the active immensity of its destructive power [the reference here is to No. 14, "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies," from Part One], but passively engulphing [sic] as a vast sepulchre the countless victims of its own terrible energy. . . . The figure of the accompaniment, the phraseology of the voices, suggest the thought of an ever, ever-descending motion, gradual, solemn, unereal, and inevitable. . . .[18]

No. 35, repeated as No. 37. "The Lord Shall Reign Forever"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, strings and continuo

Tonality: C major

Performance Designation: A tempo giusto

Textual Source: Exodus 15:18

Although this movement employs two four-part choruses, there are only six real vocal parts; Handel wrote identical parts for the sopranos and basses of both choirs, respectively. The first phrase is scored for the altos and tenors of both choruses in unison, accompanied only by bassoons, violoncellos, string basses, and continuo, also in unison. This first phrase is then harmonized by the entire double chorus and full orchestra.

There is a marked change of mood from gloom, oppression and bondage, which was expressed in the opening C minor

---

[18]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 20.

chorus of the oratorio, to majestic and jubilant exclamations of praise. The chorus, having been preceded by the prophetic aria "Thou Shalt Bring Them In," expresses with grandeur the Israelites' confidence in their omnipotent and eternal God.

Several factors contribute to the majestic quality of this piece (see example 39): the full homophonic texture for the voices reinforced by orchestral doublings in the oboes, bassoons, trumpets, trombones, and continuo; the pompous  figuration characteristic of the somewhat more independently scored violins and violas; the broad, declamatory setting of the text; the emphasis given to important words ("Lord," "reign," "ever") by assigning them to strong beats of the measure; the utilization of a major tonality (C major); and, the diatonic harmonic vocabulary within which strong chord progressions prevail (for example, meas. 6-11: I - VI - II^6_5 - V^7 - I - V - VI - I^6 - V - I).

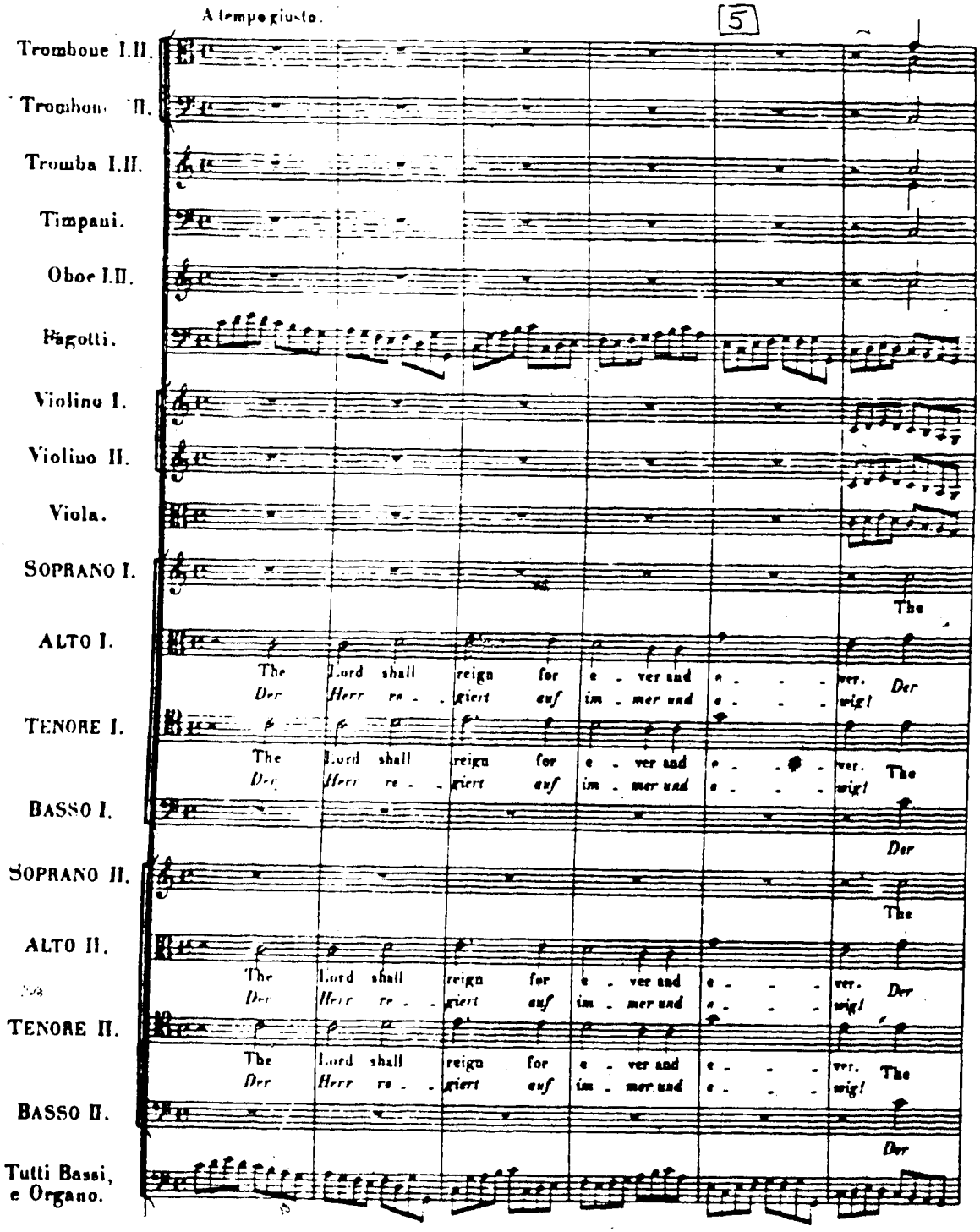
Additionally, the textural and dynamic contrast between the first phrase (in unison and accompanied by the continuo only) and its restatement (harmonized and accompanied by the full orchestra) endows the chorus with strong dramatic qualities.

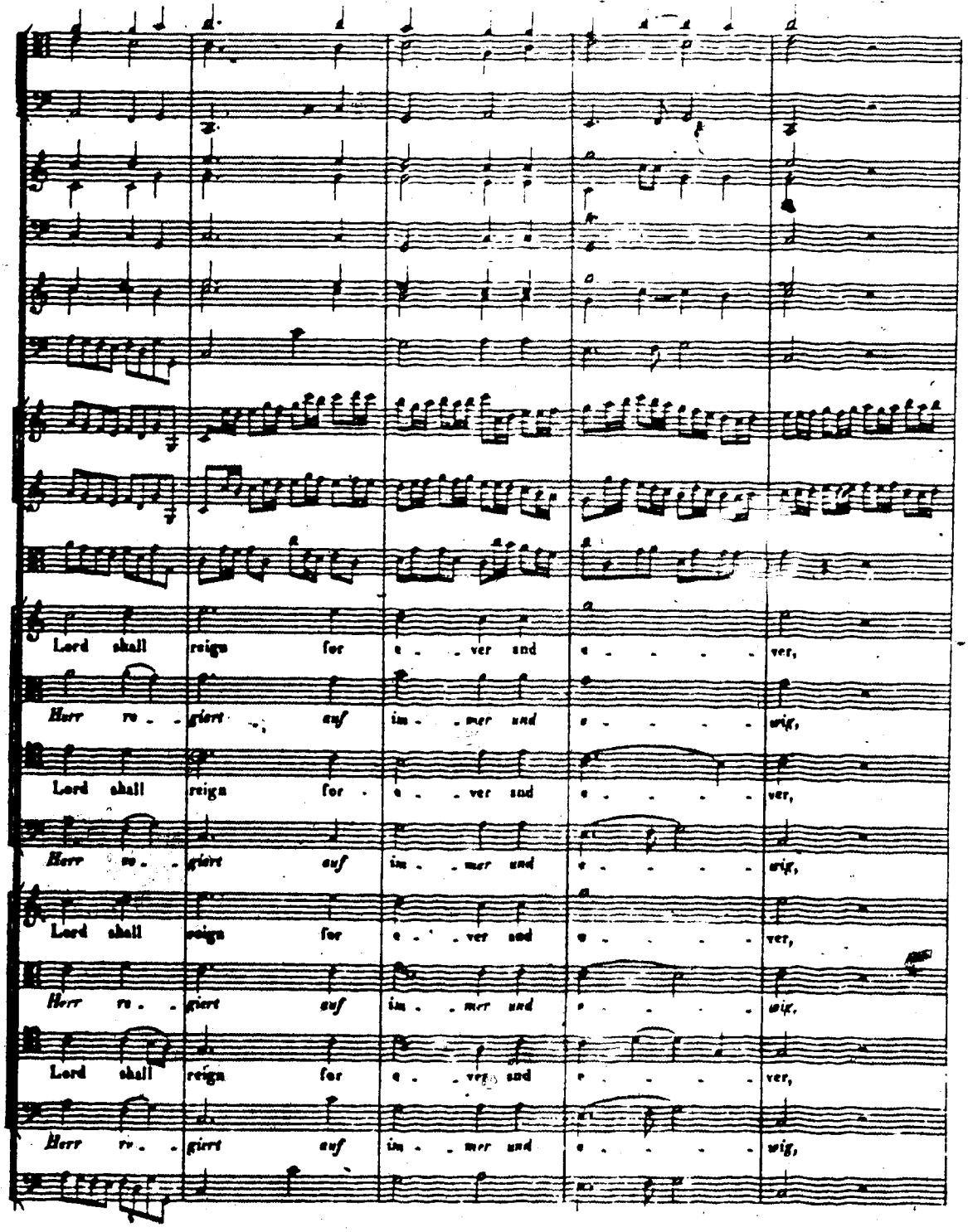
Following a brief recitative (No. 36)[19] recounting the crossing of the Red Sea and the destruction of the Egyptians, the chorus is repeated.

---

[19]See p. 67 for a discussion of the recitative.

Example 39. Double Chorus, "The Lord Shall Reign Forever," meas. 1-11.




Lord shall reign for e - ver and e - - - - ver,
Herr re - giert auf im - mer und e - - - - wig,
Lord shall reign for e - ver and e - - - - ver,
Herr re - giert auf im - mer und e - - - - wig,
Lord shall reign for e - ver and e - - - - ver,
Herr re - giert auf im - mer und e - - - - wig,
Lord shall reign for e - ver and e - - - - ver,
Herr re - giert auf im - mer und e - - - - wig,

CHAPTER IX

VOCAL PRELUDES AND FUGUES

Six of the twenty-eight choruses in Israel in Egypt[1] possess in common a number of characteristics which set them apart from the other choruses in the oratorio: their brevity (the average length of the six choruses is 12.7 measures); an eight-part homophonic texture with the orchestra primarily doubling the vocal parts (except for four a cappella measures in No. 12, and an orchestral accompaniment of greater independence in No. 18); a slow tempo in $\frac{4}{4}$ time; the syllabic, declamatory setting of the text; a relatively static melodic line; their chromatic harmony (Handel's harmonic vocabulary appears to be more consistently chromatic in these brief homophonic choruses than elsewhere in the oratorio, perhaps because of the restricted melodic activity); and, their preludial function. For the fact is that each of these choruses presents only a portion of a larger textual unit which is completed by

[1] No. 12, "He Rebuked the Red Sea" (p. 93); No. 15, "And Israel Saw That Great Work" (p. 109); No. 17, "Moses and the Children of Israel" (p. 115); No. 20, "He Is My God" (p. 143); No. 25, "And In the Greatness" (p. 185); and No. 30, "Who Is Like Unto Thee" (p. 214).

a consequent fugal, or quasi-fugal, movement. The texts of these paired movements--suggesting a prelude and fugue arrangement--evince a kind of cause and effect relationship.

Three of the preludial choruses (Nos. 15, 20, and 25) terminate on the dominant of the ensuing fugal movement thereby strengthening the antecedent-consequent relationship of these movements; Nos. 17 and 30 conclude on the tonic of the piece to follow which allows, as well, for a smooth tonal flow from the prelude to the fugue. The final chord of No. 12, although the dominant of the prelude, stands in a mediant relationship to the tonality of the opening of the fugue resulting in a more startling transition than takes place between the five remaining paired movements.

In each of these preludial movements there is a "pre-eminent solemnity and emphasis to the portions of text they declaim which creates a peculiar character of dignity and majestic earnestness."[2]

The discussion which follows deals with each of the paired movements in chronological order.

No. 12. "He Rebuked the Red Sea"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons; strings, and continuo

---

[2]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 24.

Tonality: C major, ending in G minor

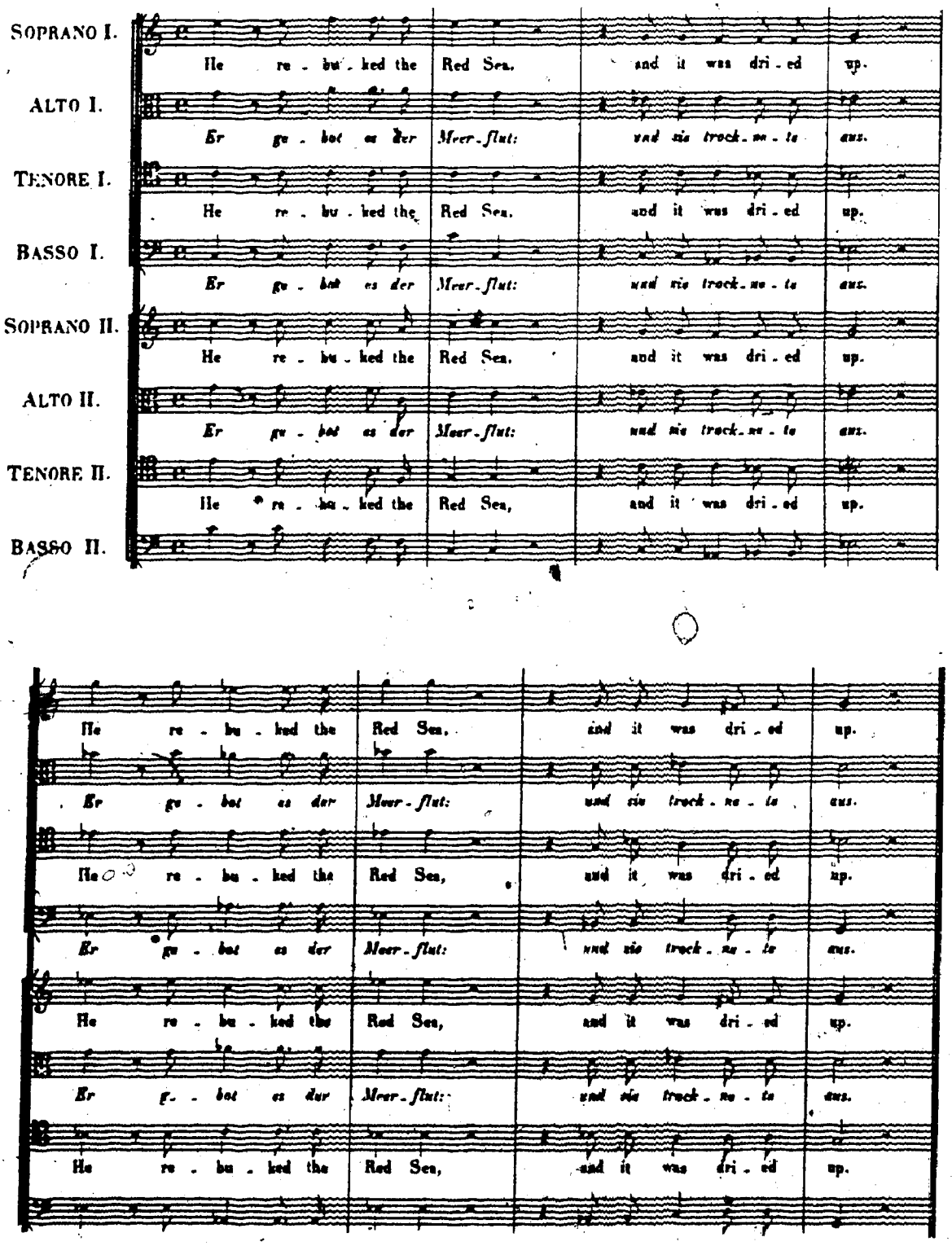
Meter: C

Performance Designation: Grave, e staccato

Textual Source: Psalm 106:9

The first preludial chorus illustrates Handel's capacity for using essentially simple means to convey a most awe-inspiring event: the dividing of the Red Sea. The vocal parts of the entire movement are shown in example 40. The piece consists of two antecedent-consequent phrase relationships. Phrases one and three, which are accompanied by the orchestra, function as antecedents to the unaccompanied second and fourth phrases. The a cappella consequent phrases declaim the result of the 'rebuke' pronounced in the antecedent phrases. Undoubtedly the words "and it was dried up" influenced Handel's a cappella setting of phrases two and four. Several additional factors set phrases two and four apart from their antecedents: a change in texture from eight voice parts to four (cf. meas. 1-2 and 5-6 with meas. 3-4 and 7-8); a substantial drop in the tessitura (see first soprano part, meas. 2-3, and first and second soprano, first alto, first tenor, first and second bass parts, meas. 6-7); a change of mode from major to minor; and three beats of silence. Although not indicated in Handel's manuscript, a sudden dynamic contrast—forte to piano—

Example 40. Double Chorus, "He Rebuked the Red Sea." Vocal parts of the entire piece (pp. 93-94).

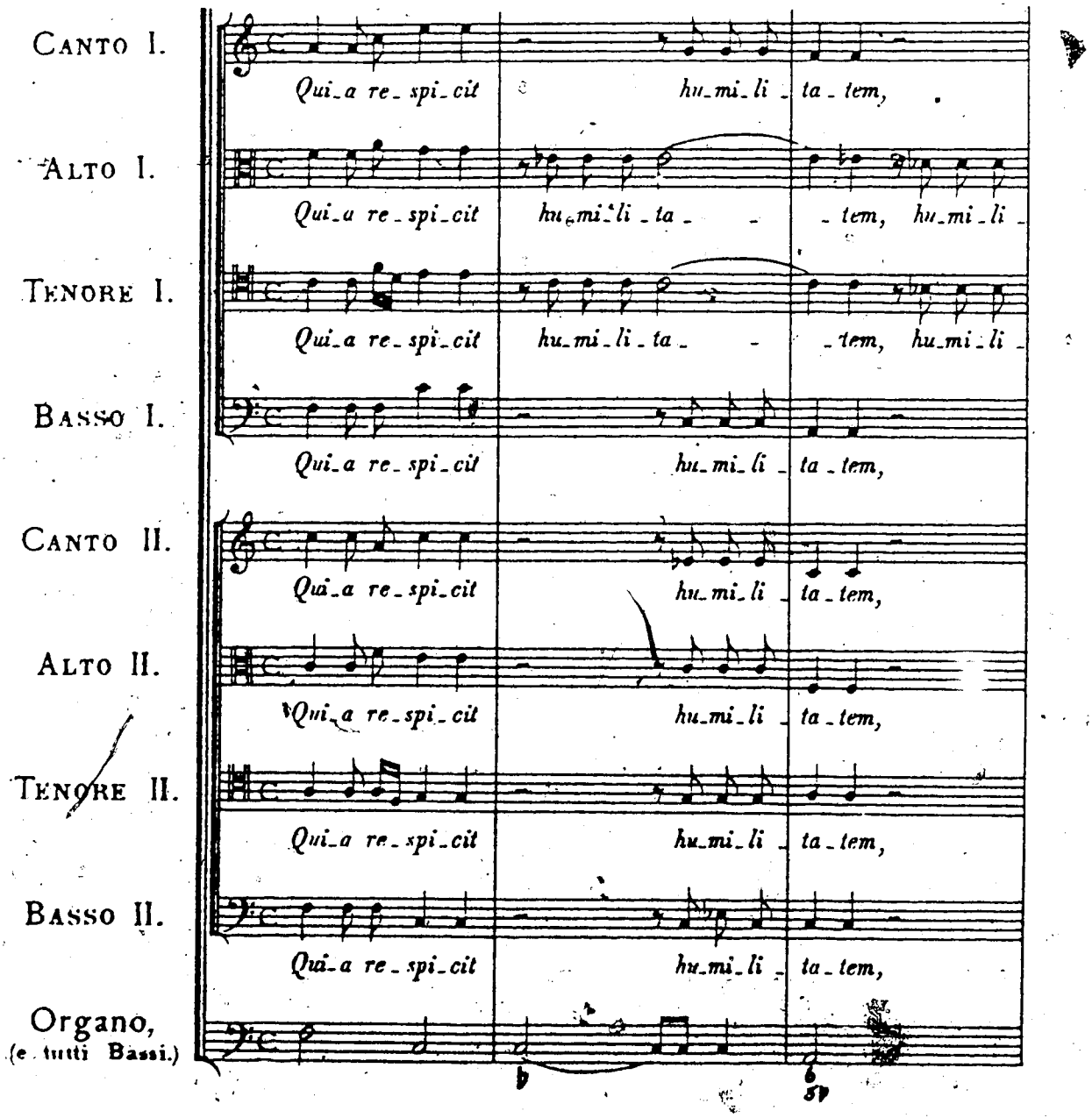


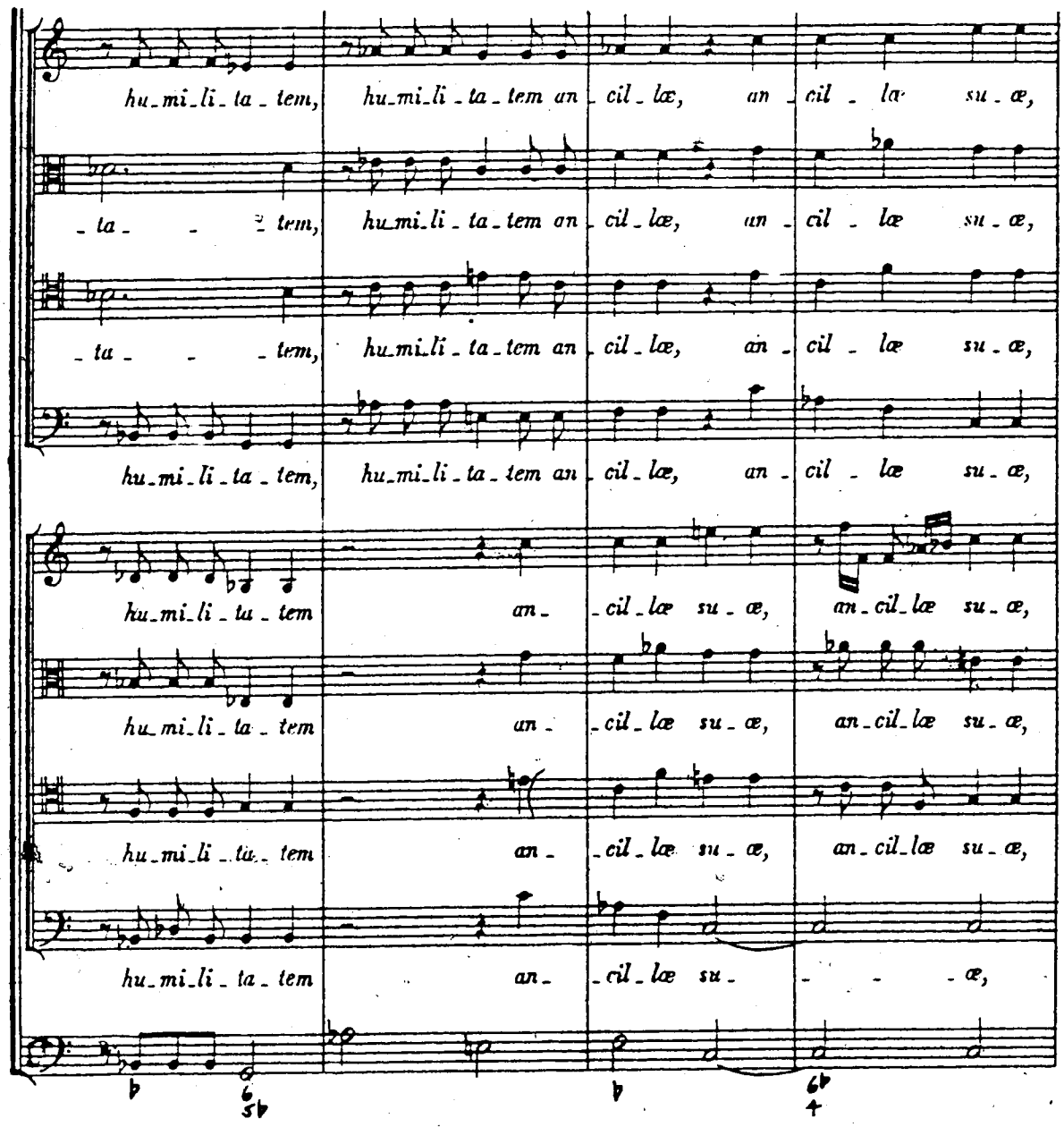
is implied. The sudden contrasts between the phrases of this brief chorus create a tremendous dramatic impact. Notice, too, how Handel has paid particular attention to textual musical relationships in phrases one and three, emphasizing in two ways the one responsible for the miracle: not only is the word "He" articulated on the strong beat of the measure, but it is also further intensified and set apart by the eighth rest which follows.

Friedrich Chrysander feels that the third movement, "Quia respicit humilitatem," of Erba's Magnificat (see example 41) inspired Handel's setting of "He Rebuked the Red Sea." There are, certainly, similarities between the harmonic progressions in the opening four measures of the Handel and Erba scores (compare examples 40 and 41). The modal inflection, C major to C minor (meas. 2-3 of example 40 and meas. 1-2 of example 41), is particularly striking. Notice, however, Handel's use in measure 3 of A-flat in the bass and D natural in the alto; Erba uses A natural and D-flat. The harmonic organization of Handel's phrase (and hence the choice of notes) is conspicuously different from Erba's plan; Handel's harmony involves the chord progressions VI - II^6_5 - V - I in E flat, whereas Erba's piece uses V^6_5/II - II - V^6_5 - I in A flat. Furthermore, both the melodic and rhythmic organization of Erba's piece differ from Handel's and additionally, there is little

resemblance in either work between measure four and what follows. With the exception, perhaps, of the C major to C minor modal inflection (which, in each instance, supports the character of the text), I am inclined to view any other similarities as being fortuitous.

Example 41. Double Chorus, "Quia respicit humili atem" from Erba's Magnificat, meas. 1-7. Vocal Parts only (HWS I, pp. 9-10).





No. 13. "He Led Them Through the Deep"

Two four-part Choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings, and continuo

Tonality: E-flat major, ending in G minor

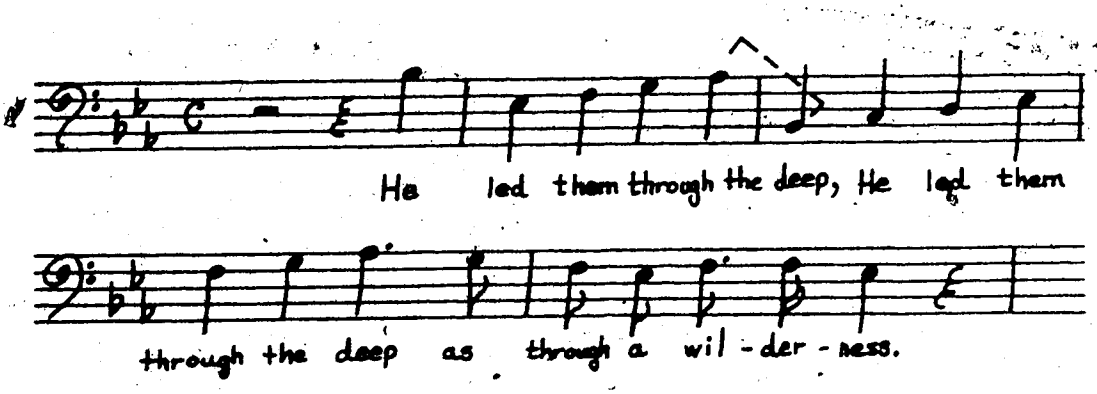
Meter: C

Textual Source: Psalm 106:9

Musical Source: The chorus "Tu es sacredos in Aeternum" from Handel's Dixit Dominus

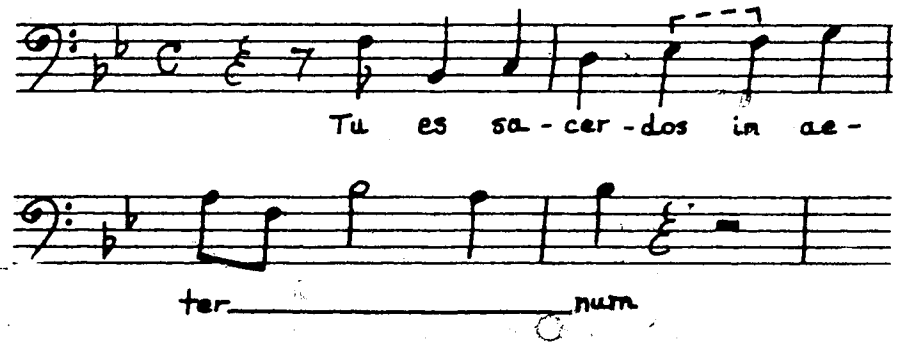
The result--or effect--of the miraculous event described in the prelude constitutes the textual substance of the present chorus. This movement, the second in a series of three choruses dealing with the Red Sea experience, contrasts texturally with the homophonic pieces on either side. The contrapuntal writing averts what otherwise would have been textural monotony. The principal theme of the chorus (see example 42) is treated fugally, the order of entries being bass (subject), tenor (answer), alto (subject), and soprano (answer). To emphasize the One responsible for the miracle, Handel alters the first note of the soprano entry (meas. 13) from a quarter note to a half note. Not only is the duration of "He" twice as long as in the other statements, but the alteration moves

Example 42. Double Chorus, "He Led Them Through the Deep." meas. 1-5. Principal theme (p. 95, meas. 1-p. 96, meas. 1)



the entry from a weak to strong beat of the measure. The descending leap of a seventh at the words "the deep" (meas. 2-3 of example 42) is a significant modification of the original subject as it appeared in the Dixit Dominus more than thirty years previously (see example 43). The plunge down a seventh is a rather obvious example of symbolism, the leap depicting the Israelites' descent to the floor of the divided Red Sea as they begin crossing to the other side.

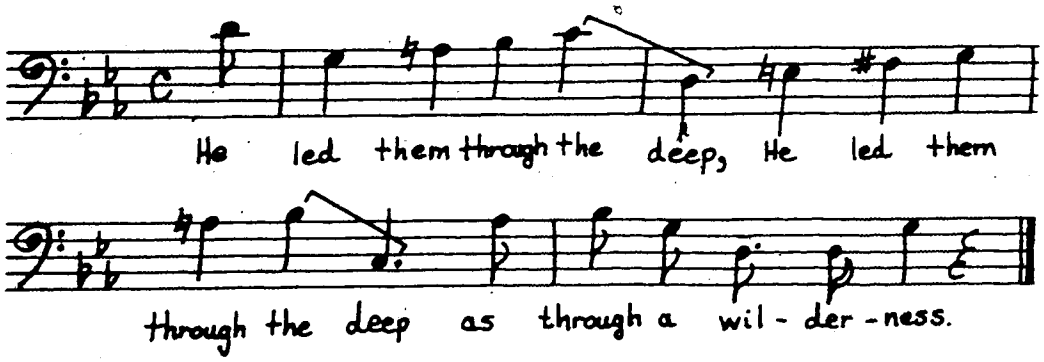
Example 43. Chorus, "Tu es sacredos in Aeternum," meas. 1-4. Principal theme (HW 38, p. 79, meas. 1-4).



Additional word emphasis is apparent in the final entry of the subject. Compare the final four measures of the piece (see example 44) with the opening statement (see example 42). Notice in this final entry the two drops of a seventh at the words "the deep" whereas the opening statement contains only one.

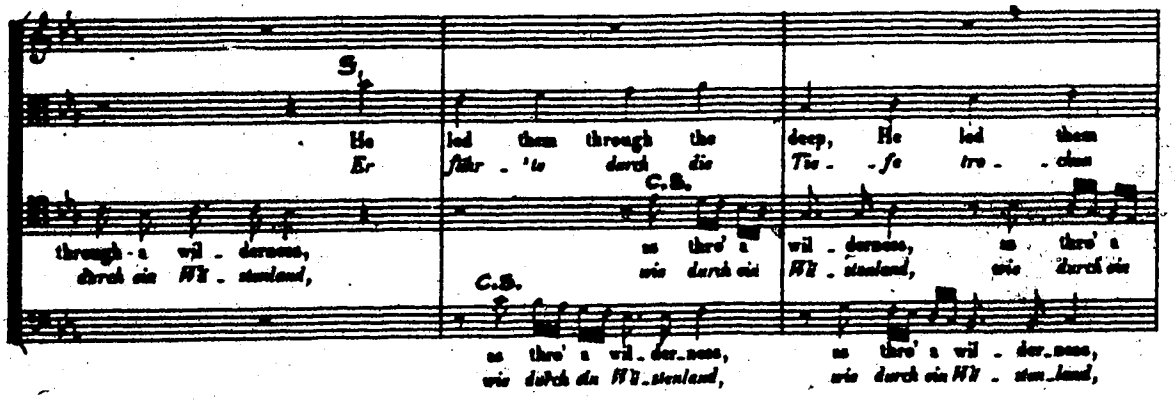
Contrasting with the rather stately, march-like quality of the subject is the lively countersubject (see example 45). Perhaps Handel intended the sixteenth-note motion to depict

Example 44. Double Chorus, "He Led Them Through the Deep," meas. 28-32. Final entry of the subject (p. 103, meas. 2-p. 104, meas. 3).



the urgency and swiftness with which the Israelites crossed the Red Sea. The countersubject material first occurs in the violins against the first appearance of the answer in the tenor part (meas. 6-9). Its first statement by the voices--doubled by the violins, string basses, and bassoons--occurs in measure 10 (see example 45). The almost constant sixteenth-note activity in one or another of the parts from measure 6 to 30 results from the continual presence of the countersubject.

Example 45. Double Chorus, "He Led Them Through the Deep," meas. 9-11. Countersubject against subject (p. 97, meas. 1-3).



Although Handel has employed two four-part choruses, the sonority of the piece most characteristically involves only four or five real parts: a result of doublings. The bass line of both choirs, for example, is the same throughout the piece. In fact, until measure 13, the respective parts of each choir are identical. This concentration of vocal forces during the exposition strengthens the individual melodic lines, reinforcing the statements of the subject and the answer.

Whereas the Dixit Dominus chorus from which the present movement derives begins and ends in the same tonality, "He Led Them Through the Deep" begins in E-flat major and ends in G minor. Perhaps the shift in tonal centre could be considered symbolic of the transition of the Israelites from one place to another. Nevertheless, the conclusion on G allows for a smooth transition to the concluding piece of the Red Sea trilogy, No. 14, "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies" (in C minor).

That both the prelude and the fugue end on G is not, I believe, without some dramatic significance. G is the dominant of the principal tonal centre of the oratorio, and tonally, the dominant implies movement rather than repose. In both instances, the movements which ensue from the termination on G suggest activity; indeed, the most important

actions of Part One are narrated: the Israelites' exciting crossing of the Red Sea (which begins, appropriately, in the relative major tonality of Part One); and the destruction of the Egyptians (in C minor).

No. 15. "And Israel Saw That Great Work"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons; strings and continuo

Tonality: C minor

Meter: C

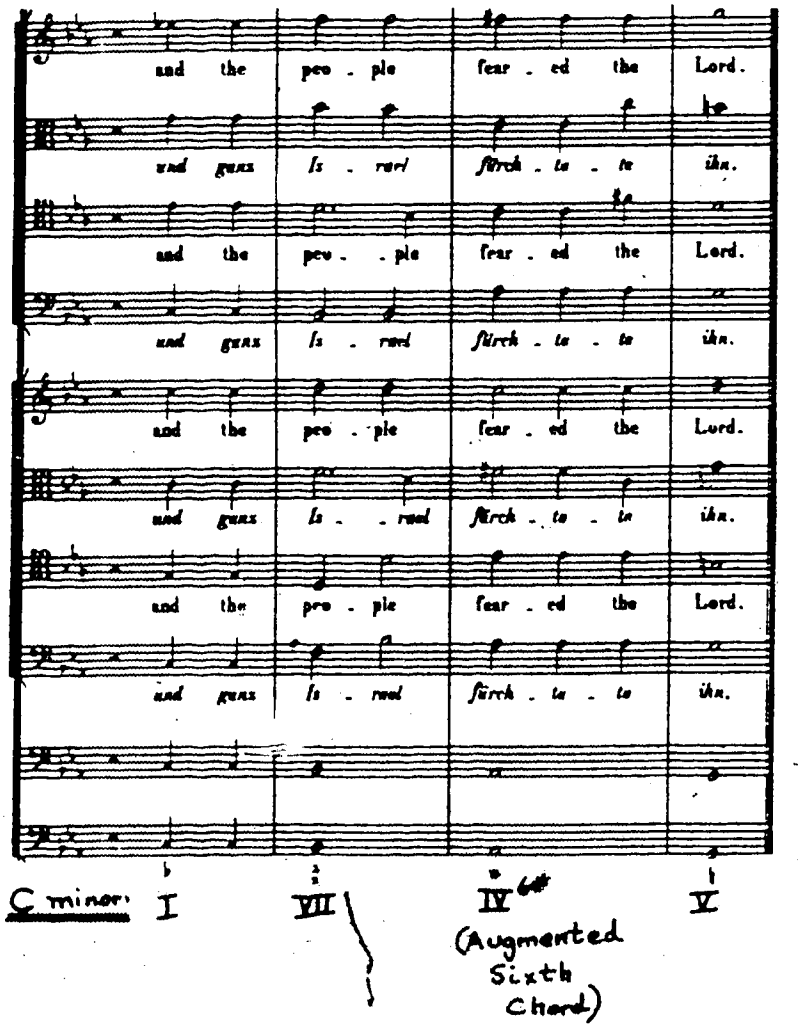
Performance Designation: Grave

Textual Source: Exodus 14:31

Although this piece functions as the prelude to the ensuing fugal movement, it possesses, as well, a direct textual relationship to the chorus which precedes it (No. 14 "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies"). The preceding movement has dealt with the destruction of the Egyptians, following which the Israelites stand in awe of the event which they have witnessed. The striking musical contrast between No. 14, with its thunderous timpani rolls and incessant triplet pattern for the strings, and the prelude, which is declaimed in characteristically solemn choral-orchestral homophony, constitutes an intense dramatic effect. In the

prelude, notice, too (see example 46), the emphasis imparted to the word "feared" by the use of an augmented sixth chord.

Example 46. Double Chorus, "And Israel Saw That Great Work," meas. 8-11. Tension creating chromaticism. (p. 110, meas. 3-6).



In addition to the expressiveness of the harmony, the half-measure silences between the phrases are dramatically significant. The effect of the first silence (after the

words "And Israel saw that great work") is that of the Israelites stopping briefly and reflecting upon what has just transpired, then realizing, as expressed in the second phrase, that it was the work of the Lord. This realization engenders in the Israelites a holy fear of their God which is expressed in the final phrase of the prelude. The prelude closes on the dominant, the resolution of which ensues in the opening chords of the fugue.

No. 16. "And Believed the Lord".

Four-part Chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings and continuo

Tonality: C Minor

Meter: $\frac{3}{2}$

Performance Designation: Larghetto

Textual Source: Exodus 14:31

Musical Source: Soprano aria "Che S'atteri" from Stradella's Serenata Qual Prodigio.

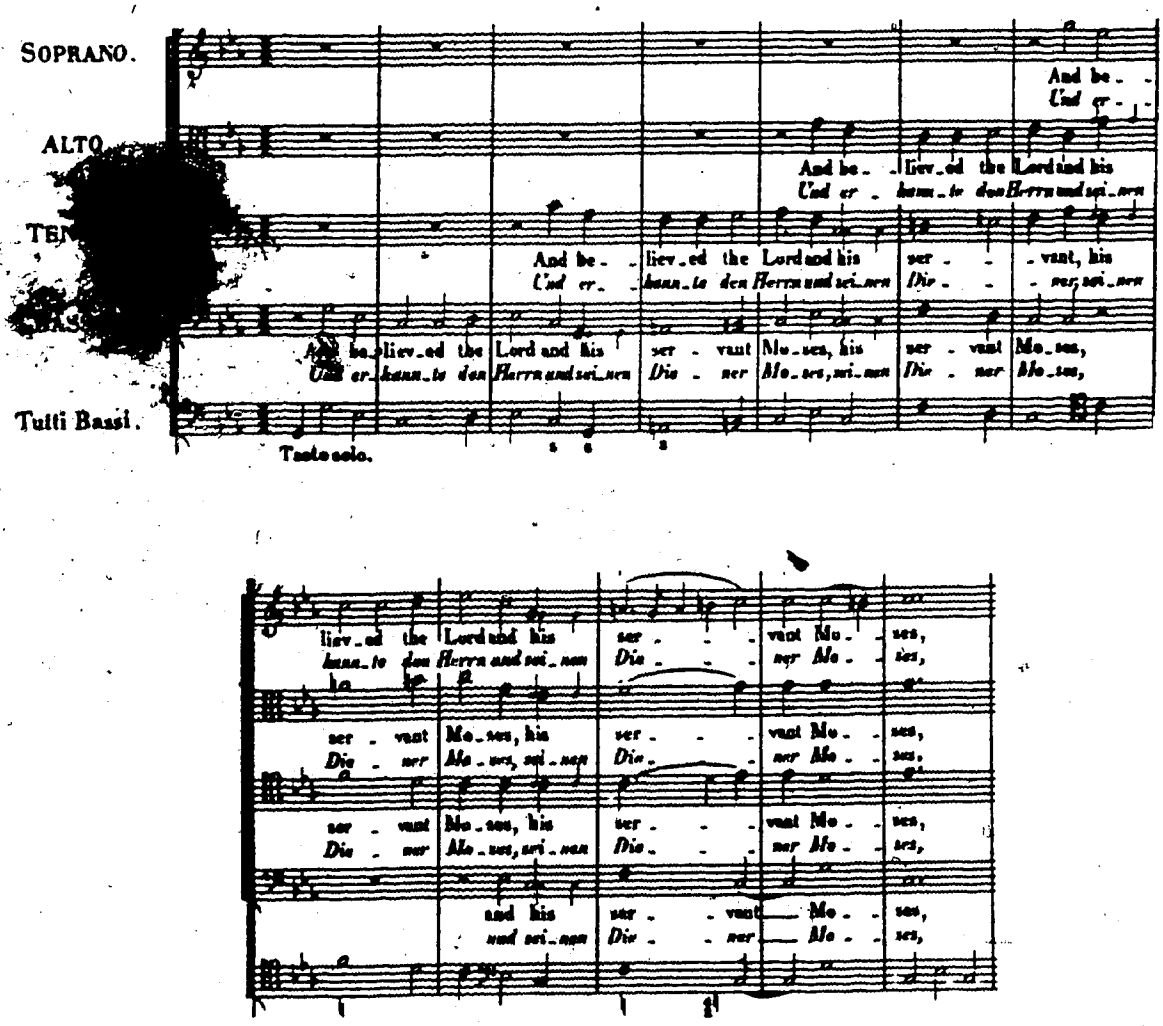
This contrapuntal movement functions not only as a postludial companion (and a musical resolution) to the prelude but also as the conclusion to the whole of Part One. From the beginning to the end of the plague movements, and in the choruses recounting the deliverance of the

Israelites and the destruction of the Egyptians, the dramatic tension and power increases, reaching a peak in "But the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies" (No. 14). This dramatic tension is abated in the final chorus of Part One, a piece of quiet affirmation of belief in God.

The unique feature of No. 16, by contrast with any other contrapuntal piece in the entire oratorio, is the departure from the conventional tonic-dominant relationship between subject and answer as each voice enters. Notice in example 47 below that each voice enters with the subject in the tonic, the order of entries being bass, tenor, alto, and soprano. The first exposition is succeeded immediately (meas. 13-22) by a series of entries--a counter exposition--which presents the answer in the dominant as well as reversing the order in which the voices enter (soprano, alto, tenor, and bass). Except for Handel's ten-measure insertion (meas. 22-31), the piece follows both the melodic and tonal scheme of Stradella's material without any significant alteration.

Although the piece contains few direct textual-musical relationships, there are two that are worth mentioning because of their relationship to other movements. Both of these relationships occur in the section of the chorus (meas. 22-31) which involves Handel's addition to Stradella's

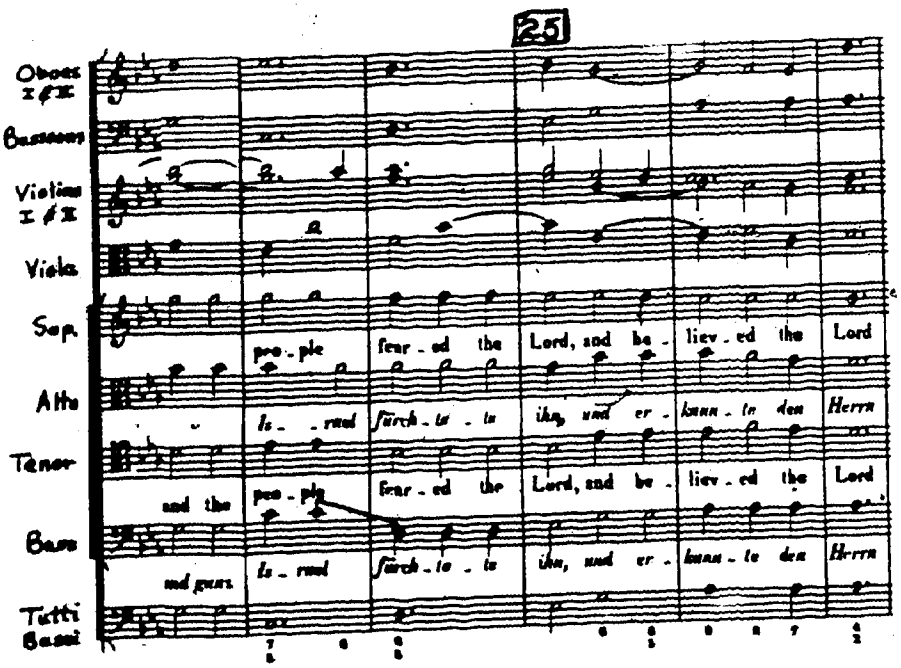
Example 47. Chorus, "And Believed the Lord," meas. 1-12. Canonic presentation of the principal theme (p. 111, meas. 1-12).



material. Firstly, the change to a homophonic texture in measure 22 symbolizes the Israelites as a group rather than as individuals. The text "and the people feared the Lord" in measures 22-25 was presented in the prelude and its restatement here not only emphasizes the text ("people" suggests a collective--homophonic--treatment), but also relates texturally to the preceding movement which was avowedly

homophonic in character. Not only the homophonic texture, but also the textual repetition strengthens the antecedent-consequent relationship of this prelude and fugue. Secondly, the drop of a seventh (C to D) for the basses in measures 23-24 at the words "people feared" recalls, perhaps a certain fear which the Israelites felt upon crossing the Red Sea (cf. with the descending seventh at "the deep" in examples 42 & 44).

Example 48. Chorus, "And Believed the Lord," meas. 22-27. Textural and textual relationship to the antecedent chorus.



Following the homophonic episode, the contrapuntal material returns for the remainder of the piece. The closing vocal cadence incorporates the hemiolas which are

characteristic of triple-meter movements. A four-measure instrumental coda brings the movement and Part One to a serene close.

No. 17. "Moses and the Children of Israel"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and continuo

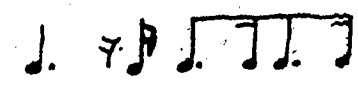
Tonality: C Major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: A tempo giusto

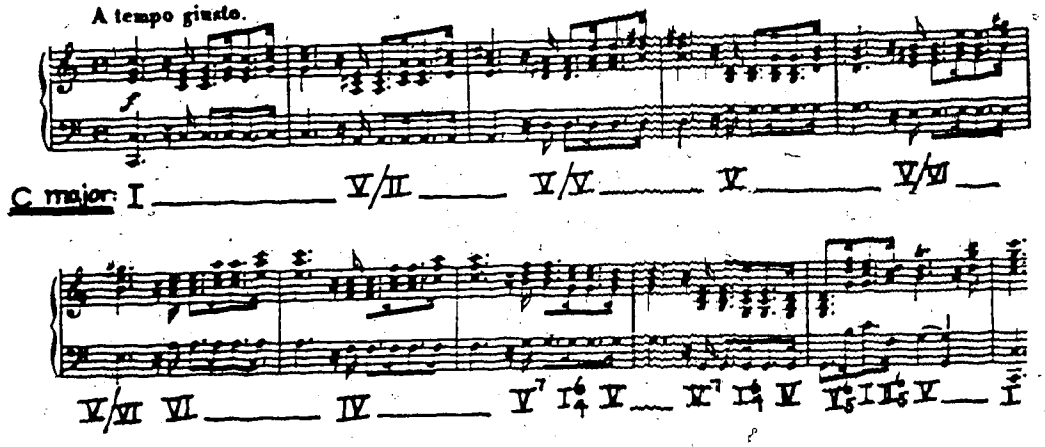
Textual Source: Exodus 15:1

This chorus, given the heading "Introitus" in the manuscript, opens Part Two ("Moses Song") of the oratorio. A ten-measure introduction prefaces the entrance of the voices in measure 11. Handel withholds the trumpets, trombones, and timpani until measure 11, thereby underscoring the entrance of the voices.

Part Two of Israel in Egypt might well be considered an anthem of praise and thanksgiving; and Handel captures, immediately, the spirit of joy and exultation both in the rhythmic and harmonic treatment of this piece. The characteristic dotted rhythm  in the strings, winds, and continuo imparts vitality to the movement.

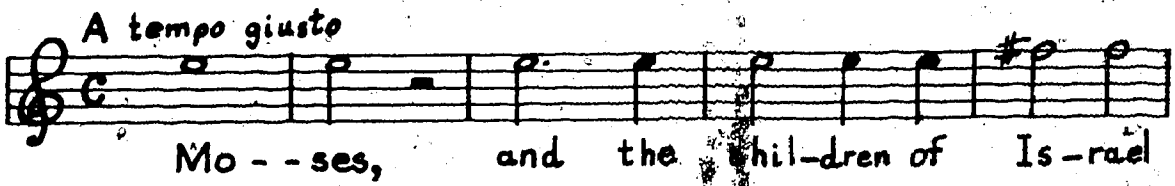
Handel's use of several secondary dominants (V/II, V/V, V/VI, VII^{6}/V) results in a rather intense, but bright, harmonic structure (see example 49).

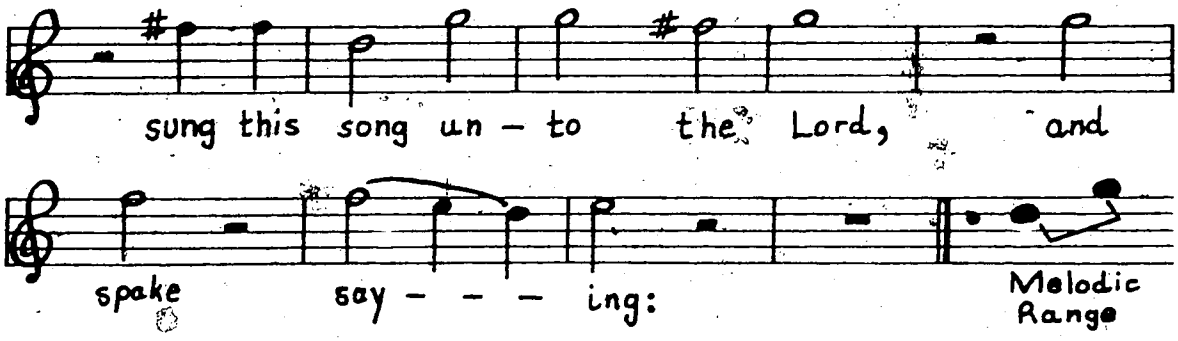
Example 49. Double Chorus, "Moses and the Children of Israel," meas. 1-10. Harmonic structure of the instrumental introduction (pp. 115 and 116).



Example 50 shows the characteristically restricted melodic activity which tends to focus attention upon the tension-creating harmonies. The text of this piece is certainly incomplete and requires the subsequent movement commence without a pause.

Example 50. Double Chorus, "Moses and the Children of Israel," meas. 11-24. First soprano melody (p. 116, meas. 6 to p. 118, meas. 6).





No. 18. "I will Sing [illegible] e Lord"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Pai[illegible] oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and continuo

Tonality: C major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: A tempo giusto

Textual Source: Exodus 15:1

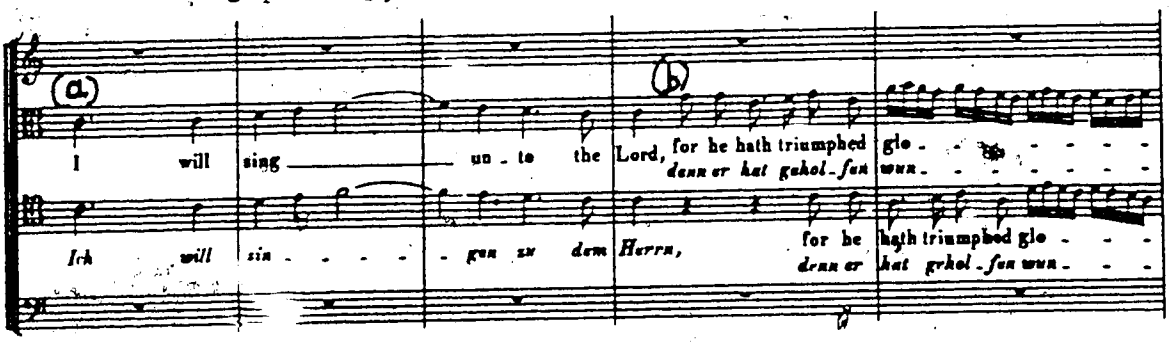
Musical Source: According to Taylor, "no older material has been detected save, indeed, an ascending and descending scale passage, of four notes--a regular locus communis of contrapuntists."[3] See, however, the discussion below.

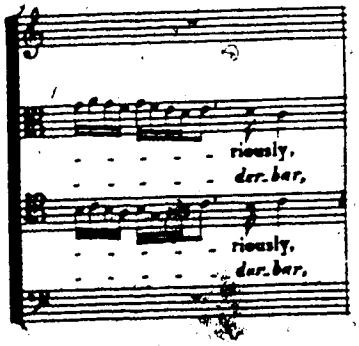
---

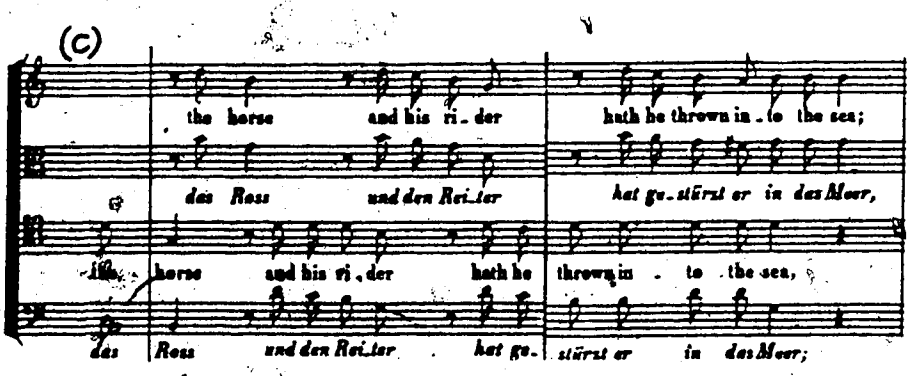
[3]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 92.

Three different ideas form the basis for this stupendous chorus. The thematic material shown in example 51 is presented in the first 15 measures, after which the motives are combined and presented antiphonally until measure 45, whereupon the two choirs unite resulting in a four-part texture to the end of the movement.

Example 51. Double Chorus, "I Will Sing Unto the Lord," A Thematic material of the movement: (a) p. 119, meas. 1-4; (b) p. 119, meas. 4-p. 120, meas. 1; (c) p. 112, meas. 3-p. 123, meas. 1.

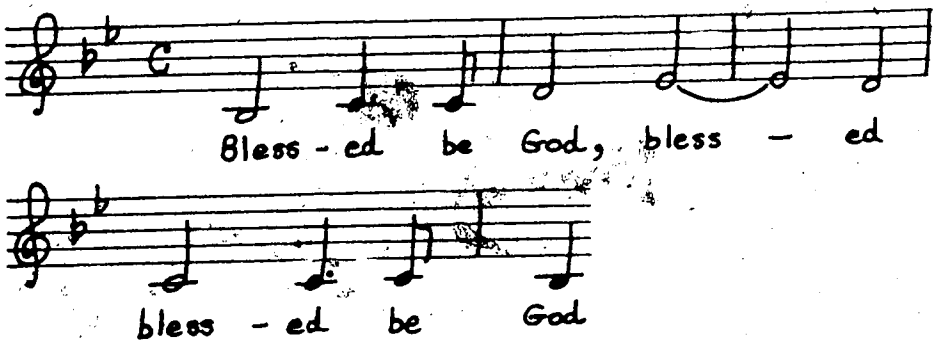






In his essay "The Church Music" Basil Lam quotes an excerpt from the chorus "Let God Arise" from Handel's eleventh Chandos Anthem. The triumphant anthem chorus is preceded by another chorus the text of which states, "O God, at Thy rebuke the chariot and horse are fallen."[4] There is a certain similarity both between the melodic and the rhythmic structure of the motive in the Chandos Anthem and the opening motive from the Israel in Egypt chorus under discussion (compare examples 51, motive 'a', and 52).

Example 52. Chorus, "Let God Arise," from Chandos Anthem. Melodic excerpt.



Dean suggests that "the finale [of the oratorio--this chorus is repeated at the end-] could have begun its days as a Chandos anthem on its own."[5] This broad and majestic cantus firmus-like theme contrasts markedly with the second and

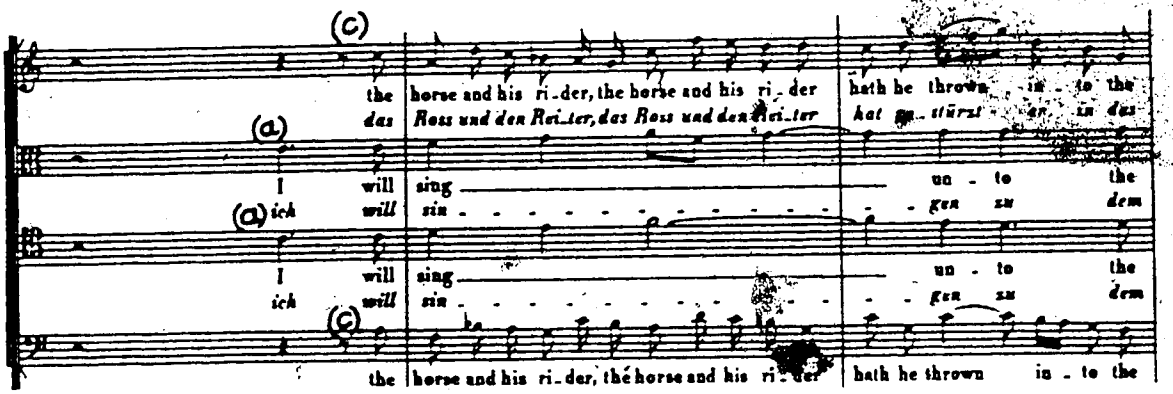
---

[4]Quoted in Abraham, Symposium, p. 174.

[5]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 22.

third ideas shown in example 51 above. Handel ingeniously combines the first and third of the motives shown in example 51 (see meas. 17-23 and 30-38) and intersperses statements of this combination with the second motive (see meas. 24-28 and 37-42).

Example 53. Double Chorus, "I Will Sing Unto the Lord," meas. 30-32. Combination of thematic ideas (p. 127, meas. 1-3).

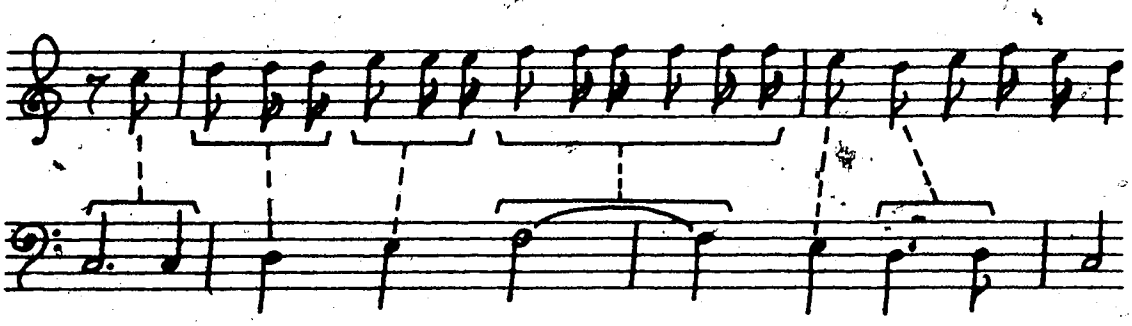


Until measure 46, the trumpets and timpani are silent; the suppression of these instruments illustrates Handel's keen sense of timing in approaching the climax of the movement. The introduction of the trumpets (with their characteristic brilliance) and the timpani--emphatically stroked--coupled with the added power resulting from the concentration of the vocal texture to within four parts (beginning in meas. 45) creates "a fine specimen of Handel's triumphal rhetoric."[6] Measures 52-56, wherein motive 'a' is treated in

[6]Tovey, Essays, 5:107.

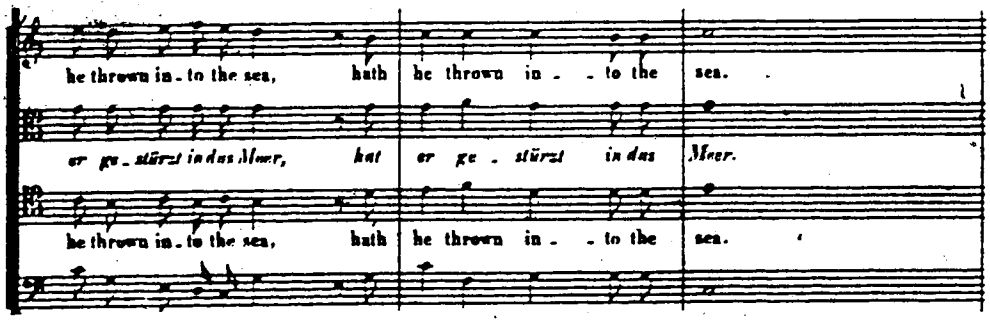
stretto, represents the beginning of a gigantic climatic section in which each of the three thematic ideas is presented in succession by the chorus, supported by the full orchestra. The presentation of the material in measures 52-56 is subtly introduced in the four preceding measures by using the text --and the rhythmic figures associated with--"the horse and his rider," but using the melodic shape of the cantus firmus which opened the movement (see example 54).

Example 54. Double Chorus, "I Will Sing Unto the Lord" Comparison of melodic shape of meas. 48-49 with 52-55.



The rhythm of the last two measures of the choral parts illustrates the augmentation technique which Handel characteristically activated for the conclusion of choruses. The augmentation of the last vocal phrase results in an emphatic enunciation of the text. There is, as well, a symbolic reference to the text implied by the downward arpeggiated figure in the orchestra following the final choral phrase.

Example 55. Double Chorus, "I will Sing Unto the Lord," meas. 63-66. Augmentation of the closing vocal phrase (p. 137, meas. 1-3).



The harmonic vocabulary and tonal movement are extremely conventional in this movement. Tonally, the piece moves from C to G to C to F to C. The harmonic progressions most frequently encountered consist of movement among the primary triads, and most often from tonic to subdominant to dominant and back to tonic harmony. The emphasis upon primary triads used in primary tonal areas, as well as the preponderance of strong--tonally definitive--harmonic progressions, symbolizes, I believe, the omnipotence of God--which is implicit in the text--in delivering his people from the Egyptians.

No. 20. "He is My God"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, three trombones, strings, and continuo

Tonality: A minor to A major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Grave

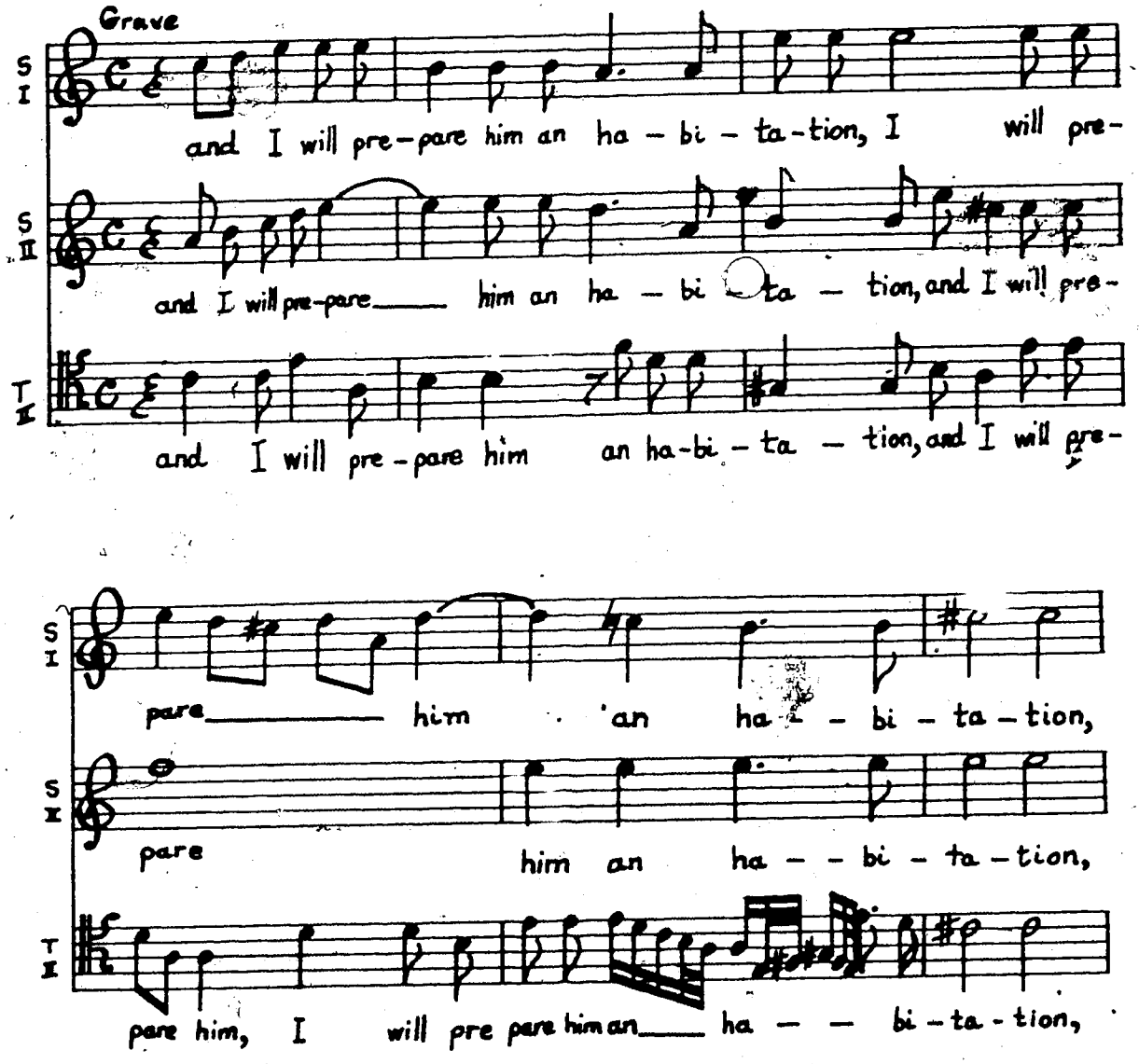
Textual Source: Exodus 15:2

Musical Source: The opening chorus, "Magnificat Anima", from Erba's Magnificat

This is the only preludial chorus that is, without question, based on an earlier work. Handel has appropriated almost note for note the six-measure opening chorus of Erba's Magnificat to which he has added four measures, two at the at the beginning and two at the end. Handel has also added trombones and bassoons to the orchestra. The most unusual feature of this movement is the melodic flourish for the second tenors in measure 7. This melodic eccentricity, in conjunction with the somewhat independent part-writing, and the absence of rests between the phrases, all of which derive from Erba, results in a texture which is more dense than that of the other five preludial choruses (compare example 56 below with example 40 on page 142).

Handel's initial two-measure addition to this chorus simply thunders out a repeated A minor chord on the words "He is my God." Measure three (Erba's opening) continues to reinforce the A minor chord. That the harmony is unchanging for the first three measures, symbolizes, perhaps, the sustaining power and omnipresence of the Israelites' God. Sedly Taylor has referred to the concluding two

Example 56. Double Chorus, "He is My God," meas. 3-8
Soprano parts and second tenor part of measures based on Erba's Magnificat (p. 143, meas. 3-5, and p. 144, meas. 1-3).



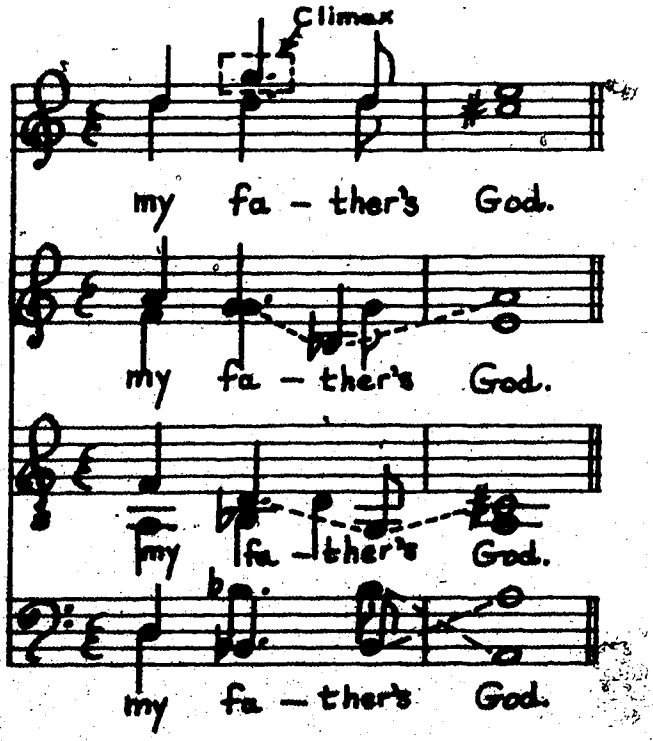
measures of this chorus as "the closing flash of genius which we have learned to expect from Handel when he has finished working up a piece of old material."[7] There are three factors which contribute to the climactic termination

---

[7]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 114.

of this chorus: the one beat of silence between Erba's material and Handel's additional measures; the high G for the first soprano on a strong beat of the measure (this is the highest soprano note in the piece); and the intensity of the Phrygian cadence. The concluding three chords of the prelude effect a smooth transition to the ensuing fugal movement in D minor. Analyzed in D minor, these chords are I - IV^6 - V, the dominant resolving to the tonic in measure one of the fugue. Although the part-writing is somewhat awkward here--note especially the first to, first tenor,

Example 57. Double Chorus, "He Is My God," meas. 9-10. Handel's two-measure conclusion, the climax of the movement (p. 144, meas. 4-5).



and both bass parts--these two measures, because of the silence which separates them from the previous material and particularly because of the poignancy of the Phrygian cadence, seem to "burst through Erba's fog like the sun through the clouds."[8]

No. 21. "And I Will Exalt Him"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes, three trombones, strings and continuo.

Tonality: D Minor

Meter: ¢

Performance Designation: None

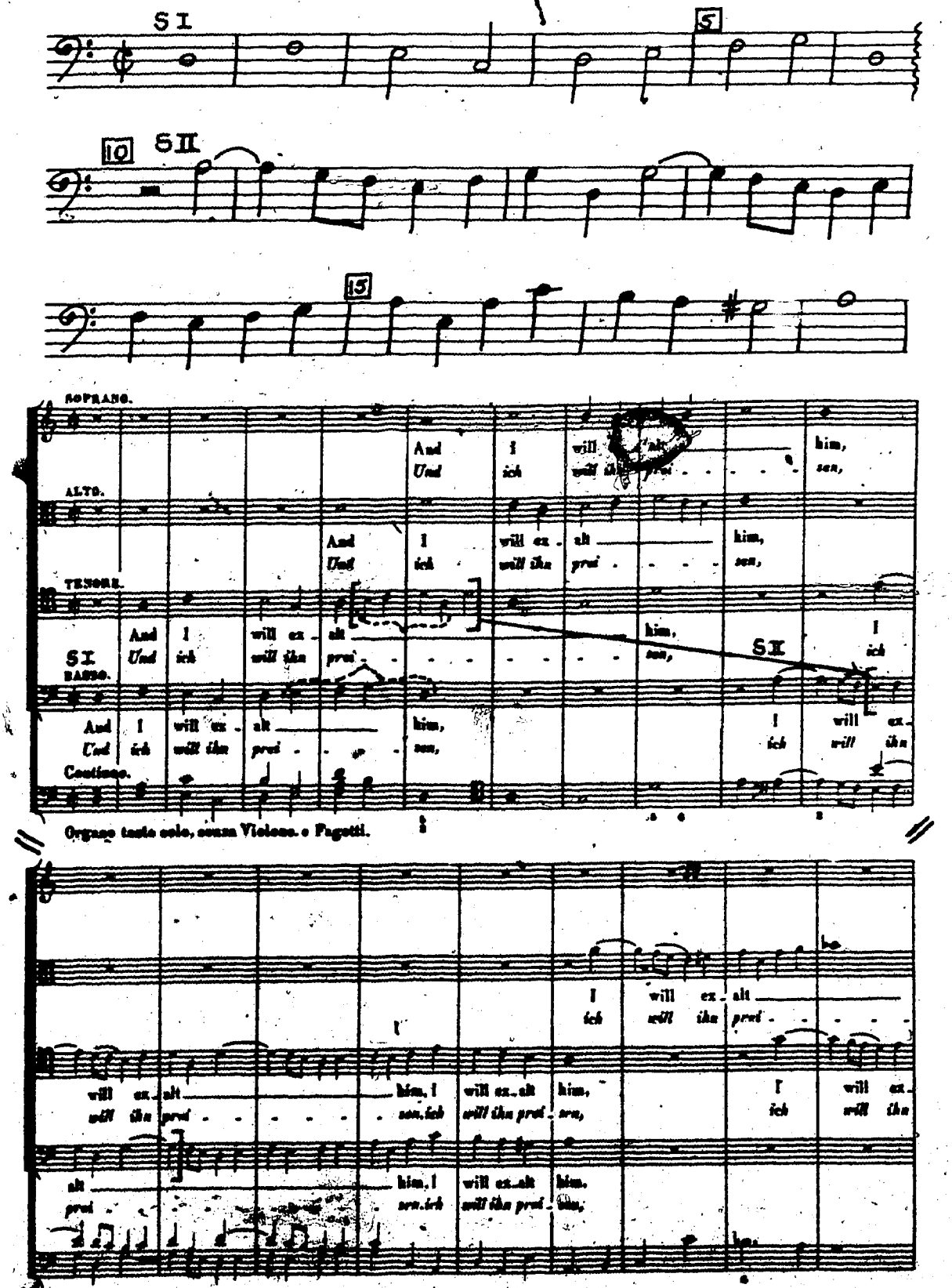
Textual Source: Exodus 15:2

Except for a twelve-measure episode in the middle of this chorus, and the concluding seven measures, both of which episodes are decidedly homophonic, a contrapuntal texture based on fugal procedures prevails in this chorus. The subject of this fugue is divided into two parts with each part respectively being presented as an exposition (see example 58 below). The effect, then, is that of a double fugue. To distinguish between each part of the subject, I will refer to the first part as subject I and the

---

8 Tovey, Essays, 5:107.

Example 58. Chorus, "And I Will Exalt Him," meas. 1-20. Exposition (p. 145, meas. 1-20).



second part as subject II, although the latter seems merely to be a continuation of the former. In example 58, I have indicated the entire subject (subjects I and II) as a complete unit, then shown the opening twenty measures of the piece. The second half of the subject (subject II) derives, in fact, from the conjunct motion and perfect fourth leap of the second half of the first part.

In measure three (see example 58 above), notice the C natural, which, according to Macfarren, furnishes the subject with a modal quality. The presence of B naturals supports, as well, Macfarren's modal interpretation. Macfarren held the opinion that "for the sake of investing the text with all possible ecclesiastical association"[9] Handel set this piece in the Dorian mode--perhaps the fact that the opening twenty measures are accompanied only by the organ contributes to the ecclesiastical quality. In my opinion, however, the modal quality of the subject is somewhat tenuous. An analysis of the subject (see example 58 above) reveals only one appearance of the subtonic, in measure three The C natural in the bass voice of measure 15 is no longer a subtonic, but rather, the mediant of A minor; there is, moreover, a very definite shift to F major in the middle of the piece (see meas. 33-43) which weakens the case for a

[9]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 19.

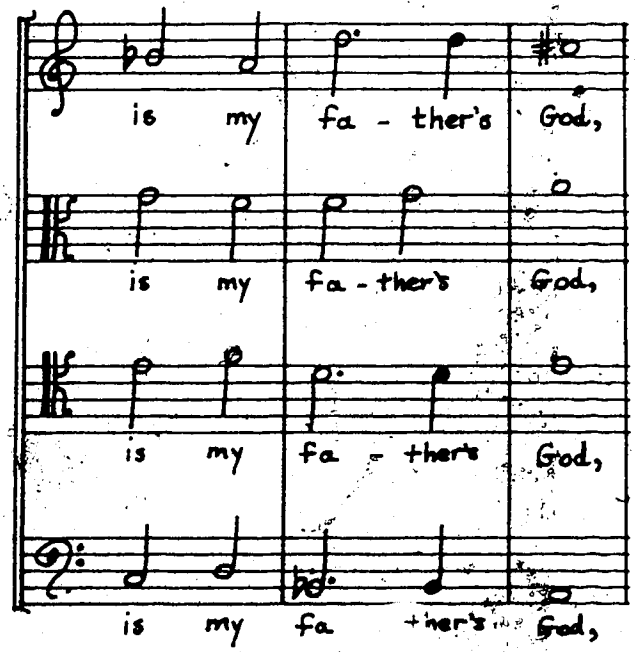
modal interpretation. Additionally, there is a preponderance of C-sharps and B-flats, especially from measure 78 to the end of the piece. For the piece as a whole, a D minor interpretation, with allowances for Dorian inflections, seems entirely plausible.

As alluded to above, the orchestra is withheld during the first twenty measures of the piece. The effect of its entrance in measure 21 is startling--another indication of Handel's dramatic instinct at work. The orchestral entrance draws one's attention to the reappearance of Subject I (silent since meas. 11) in the bass voice. Moreover, this is the first time in the piece that Subjects I and II are combined as a kind of counter-exposition. The role of the orchestra is that of doubling the voice parts.

Handel's propensity for juxtaposing contrapuntal and homophonic textures is also evident. A $3\frac{1}{2}$ measure homophonic orchestral interlude in the relative major tonality of F major (meas. 39-42) is followed by eight measures of choral-orchestral homophony. Not only does this homophonic episode provide textural contrast, but tonally it returns to D minor from F major. Furthermore, there is a close relationship between the episode and the previous preludial chorus. The text of the episode is based upon measures 1-2 and 9-10 of the prelude; additionally the last three

measures of the episode reiterate the Phrygian cadence which concluded the prelude (compare examples 59 below and 57 on p. 166).

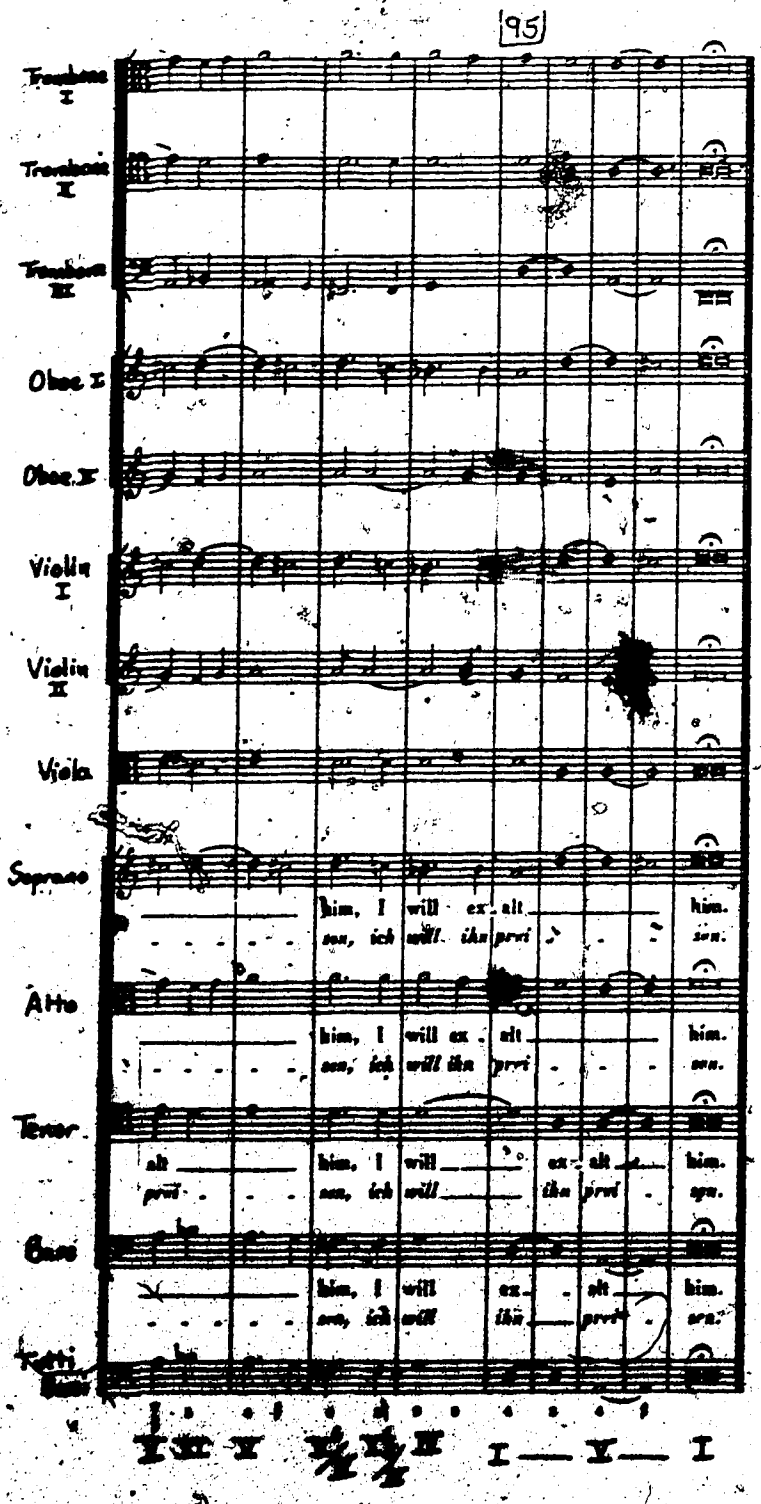
Example 59. Chorus, "And I Will Exalt Him," meas. 48-50 of homophonic episode (p. 148, meas. 7-9).



Following the homophonic episode, the two subjects undergo further elaboration, the most notable of which is the application of stretto to the last five notes of Subject II.

Handel concludes the movement with a characteristic stroke, avoiding the expected authentic cadence in measures 92-93, and substituting $V^6 - V^6_5$ of IV, leading thence to a six measure restatement of the text in a broadened melodic and harmonic rhythm, as if to reaffirm that God will indeed be exalted.

Example 60. Chorus, "I will Exalt Him," meas. 91-99. Conclusion of the piece (p. 152, meas. 6-14).



No. 25. "And in the Greatness of Thine Excellency"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings and continuo

Tonality: A minor

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Adagio

Textual Source: Exodus 15:7

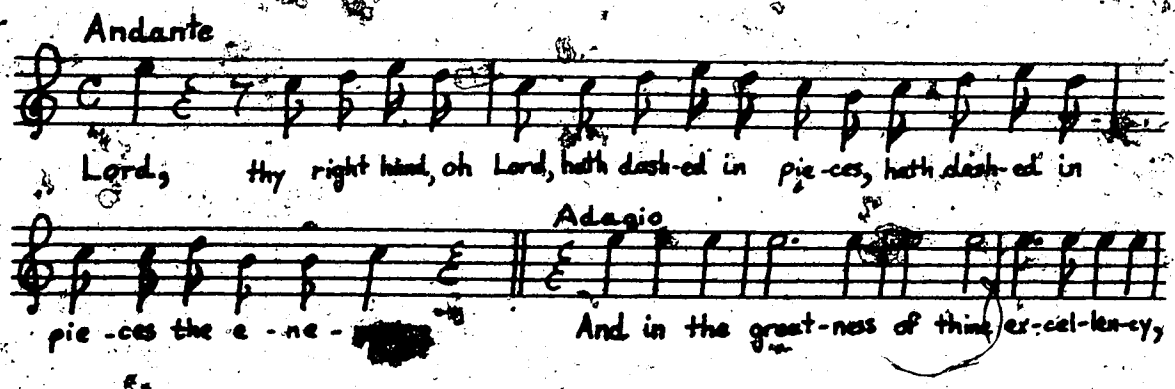
A rather striking parallel exists between this chorus and No. 15, "And Israel Saw That Great Work", the penultimate piece from Part One. Like No. 15, the present chorus not only serves as a prelude to a fugal movement, but also possesses a direct textual relationship to the movement which preceded it. The previous piece (No. 24) has dealt with the Egyptians' destruction. In the prelude, we have a change of expression "from the jubilation of the last piece to profound awe--a true sense of Omnipotence, and a feeling that they who now rejoice in the consequences of its demonstration are in its hands, and may, at the moment, become its sacrifice."[10] The musical contrast here carries a tremendous dramatic impact. Not only is there a contrast of tempo and rhythmic activity (see example 61 below), but the

---

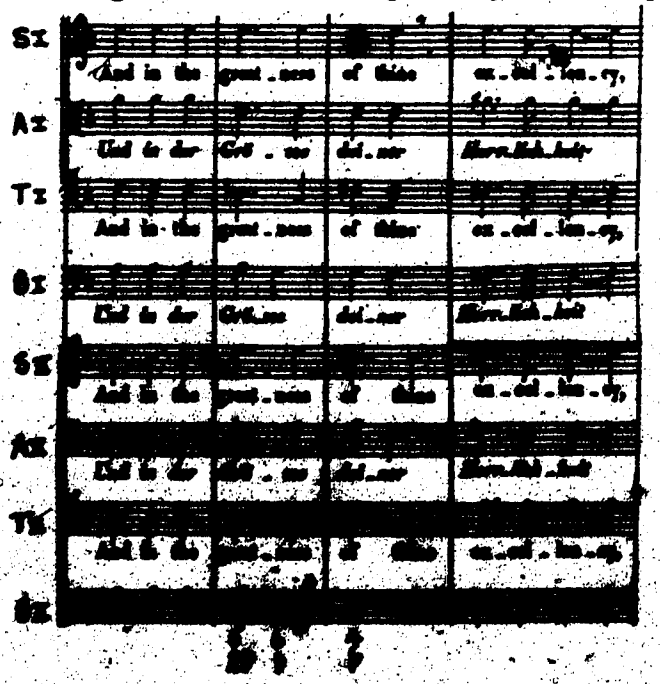
[10] Macfarren, Analysis, p. 21.

harmony of this brief piece is more chromatic than in the preceding movement. In example 62, below, notice the biting dissonance on the word "greatness" as well as the use of a diminished seventh chord in measure three at the words "of thine." The conclusion of the prelude on the dominant engenders a smooth transition to the ensuing fugue.

Example 61. Double Choruses, "Thy Right Hand, O Lord," meas. 33-35 (p. 182, meas. 3-p. 183, meas. 2), and "And in the Greatness," meas. 1-4 (p. 183, meas. 3-p. 184, meas. 1). Contrast of tempo, rhythmic activity, and melodic activity.



Example 62. Double Chorus, "And In the Greatness," meas. 1-4. Tension creating dissonances (p. 183, meas. 3-p. 184, meas. 1).



No. 26. "Thou Sendest Forth Thy Wrath"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, three trombones, strings, and continuo

Tonality: A Minor

Meter: ¢

Performance Designation: None

Textual Source: Exodus 15:7

Musical Source: "Fecit potentiam" from Erba's Magnificat

This fugal movement is an almost completely unaltered purloining of the musical source mentioned above. The changes consist primarily of minor rhythmic adjustments to suit the text (e.g., 𝅗𝅥 may be altered to ♩ ♩ or ♩ ♪ ♪, or vice versa), and occasionally, the use of passing tones or neighbouring tones in order to embellish the original material. Handel's use of three trombones and bassoons in the orchestra is the only significant addition to Erba's orchestration.

The first thirty measures of this fugue are scored for Choir I accompanied by the organ only; measures 1-26 constitute the exposition. A $4\frac{1}{2}$ measure episode (see meas. 26-30), involving soprano, alto, and tenor voices, and organ, separates the exposition from the first appearance

of the combined choirs and full orchestra. The basses of both choirs, reinforced by the third trombone, bassoons, violoncellos, and string basses, restate the fugue subject in counterpoint with the sopranos, altos, and tenors of both choirs which are supported by the rest of the orchestra. The textural change from measure 30 to 31 is indeed startling (and not unlike that encountered earlier in No. 21, "And I Will Exalt Him"). Erba, however, must be given the credit for the impact created by this textural change (see also measures 44-48 and 50ff. for similar contrasts). Handel's trombones (with their sonorous tone quality) and bassoons, in addition to reinforcing the vocal parts, impart, perhaps, a degree of severity to the piece underscoring the funereal quality of the text. The text of the fugue constitutes a reflection upon the wrath of God which consumed, or as the prelude states, overthrew the enemy.

The chorus contains little of the descriptive qualities characteristic of many other pieces in the oratorio. Essentially, the piece is important for the textural contrast it provides with the predominantly homophonic texture of the two preceding movements.

No. 30. "Who Is Like Unto Thee, O Lord"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons; strings and continuo

Tonality: C minor to A minor

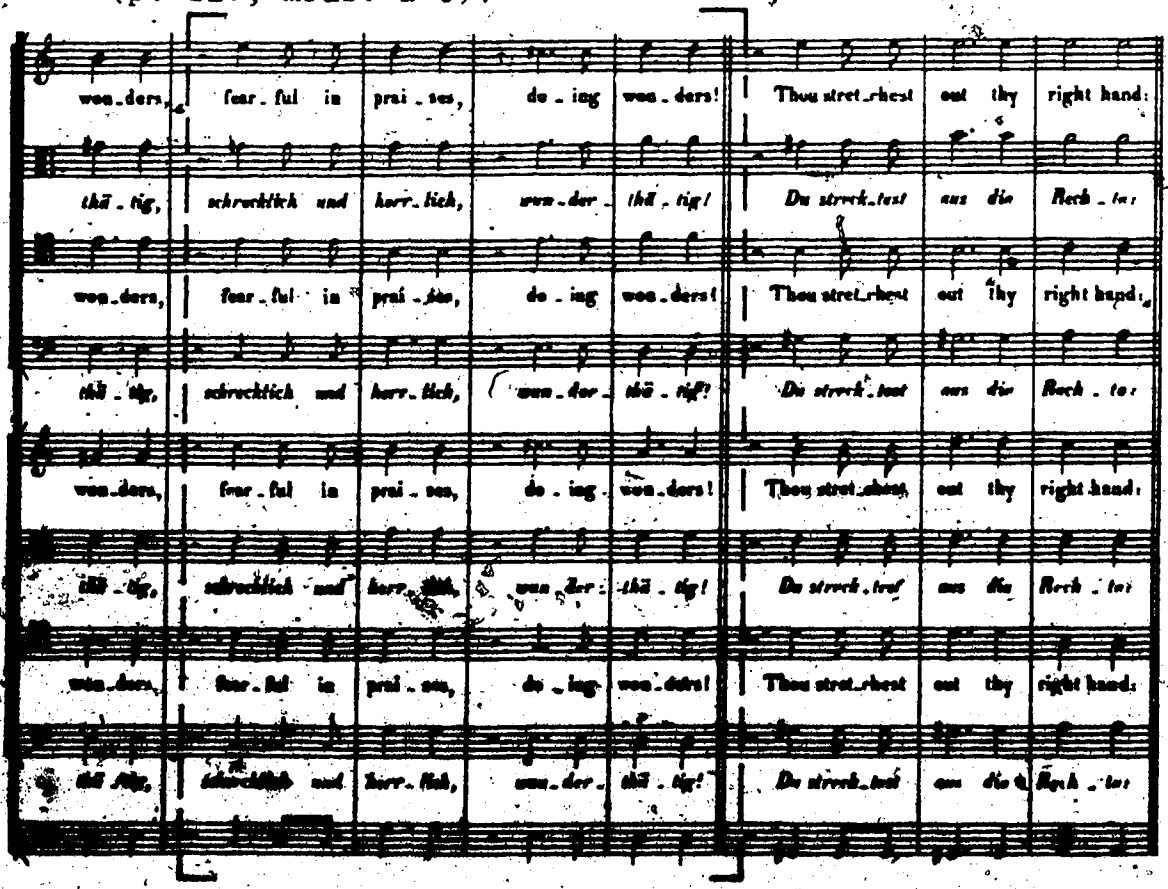
Meter: C

Performance Designation: Grave

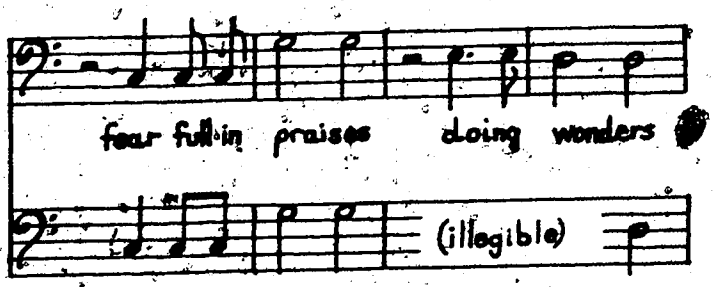
Textual Source: Exodus 15:11,12

The last of these brief homophonic choruses, "Who Is Like Unto Thee" (No. 30), raises a question concerning Friedrich Chrysander's editorial addition of four measures which do not appear in the autograph manuscript. The questionable measures are surrounded with brackets in example 63 below.

Example 63. Double Chorus, "Who Is Like Unto Thee," meas. 14-20. Chrysander's editorial addition (in brackets) preceded and followed by Handel's autograph material (p. 216, meas. 1-8).



In the preface of his edition of Israel in Egypt Chrysander states that

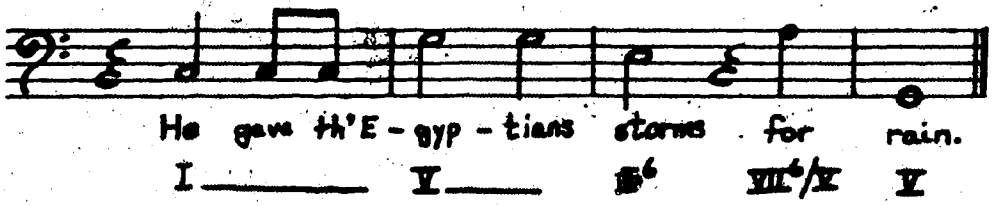
> in the original [the autograph manuscript] at the words "doing wonders", Handel puts a 𝄐 over the last E in the continuo [meas. 1 of example 36], and in the conducting score drew his pencil through the three following bars "Thou stretchest out thy right hand" [meas. 6-8 of example 36], and curiously wrote the following bass under them:
>
> 
>
>
> A later copy taken by Smith, doubtless not till after Handel's death, suppresses the cancelled bars and winds up in E major with "doing wonders", and thus leaves us in the dark about the enigmatical addition. This omission of the three bars certainly rests on a misconception; for Handel doubtless only cancelled them in the year 1746, when, on employing the movement for the so-called Occasional Oratorio, he could make no use of these last three bars leading to the following chorus [in C major]. On the same occasion he also probably sketched the bass just quoted, and was only prevented from filling in the other parts by an interval of ten years which elapsed before the next performance . . . [11] This filling in I myself have now supplied . . . .

---

[11] HW 16, p. i. Having examined the autograph manuscript--Chrysander's 'original'--score, I am able to find no trace of his 𝄐 "over the last E in the continuo." A corona does, however, exist over the last E in the continuo part of the conducting score. Perhaps it is worth mentioning here that the conducting score was a working score copied from the autograph manuscript by a copyist. So far as is known, Handel's autograph manuscripts were not used in performance; moreover, they are extremely difficult to read because of Handel's ratherly slovenly musical notation. I suspect that even Handel at times had difficulty reading his manuscripts because of their general untidiness. Legible working copies were, therefore, a necessity.

The penultimate statement in the quotation above suggests that Handel intended to insert the four measures in question into subsequent performances of the oratorio. There is no conclusive evidence, however, to support Chrysander's hypothesis.[12] Chrysander's assertion that the omission of the last three measures at the words "Thou stretchest out thy right hand" took place when Handel decided to use the chorus in the Occasional Oratorio is entirely plausible. Perhaps Handel in penciling in the bass line shown above was jotting down a possible solution for use in the Occasional Oratorio. Example 64 below shows the bass line of the last four measures in this chorus as it is used in the Occasional Oratorio. There is, certainly, a similarity

Example 64. Double Chorus, "Who Is Like Unto Thee," meas. 14-17 of bass line as used in the Occasional Oratorio (HW 43).



[12] It is perhaps worth noting here that the Deutsche Gramaphone Archiv production of Israel in Egypt omits Chrysander's four-measure editorial addition in their performance. c.f. George Frideric Handel, Israel in Egypt, Charles Mackerras conducting the Leeds Festival Chorus and the English Chamber Orchestra (Archiv Production, Musikhistorisches Studuo der Deutschen Grammophon Gesellschaft, 2708020, 1970).

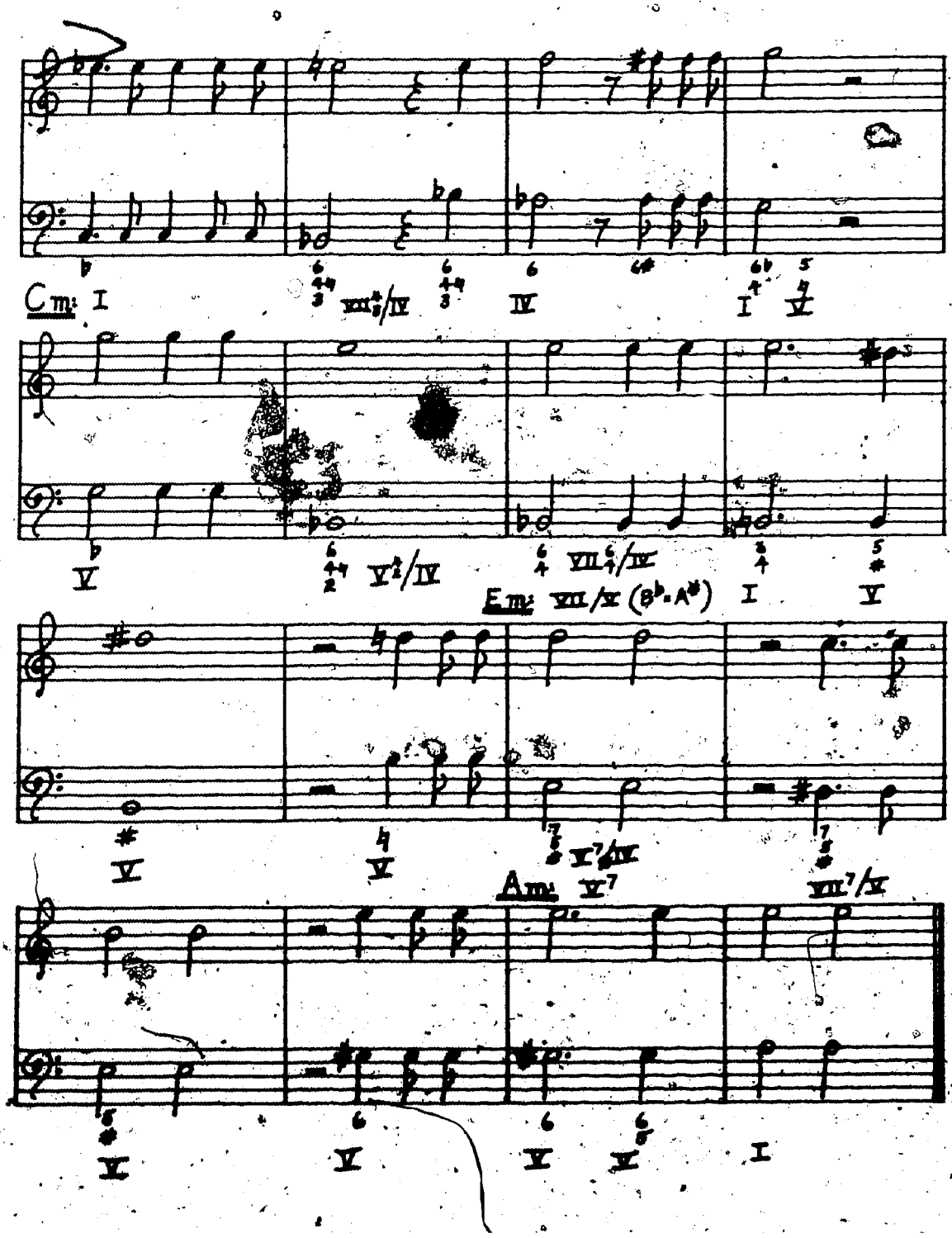
between the first $2\frac{1}{2}$ measures of example 64 and the bass line shown in the quotation above from Chrysander's preface to Israel in Egypt. It does not seem unreasonable that sequent to the partly illegible addition in the conductor's score of Israel in Egypt, Handel decided upon the bass line shown in example 64 above and modified the text to "He gave the Egyptians storms for rain"--the 'hailstone' chorus from Israel in Egypt follows "Who is Like Unto Thee" in the Occasional Oratorio.[13]

The tremendous impact of this piece results, in large measure, from the expressiveness of the harmony. Example 65 below shows a harmonic analysis of the entire movement, minus Chrysander's editorial addition. The modulation to E minor in measures 7-9 is especially striking; the chord in measure 7, VII^6_4/IV in C, is treated enharmonically ($B\flat = A\sharp$) as VII^7/V in E and resolves to I^6_4 in E minor in measure 8. Certainly these measures draw attention to the words "glorious in holiness."

The silences between the phrases also contribute significantly to the dramatic quality of this piece. Perhaps

[13]Additional movements from Israel in Egypt which Handel used in the Occasional Oratorio (first performed 14 February 1746) were the double chorus "I Will Sing Unto the Lord," and the arias "Thou Shalt Bring Them In" and "The Enemy Said."

Example 65. Double Chorus, "Who is Like Unto Thee," Harmonic analysis of the entire piece. Outer parts only are shown (pp. 214-216).



the most awesome of these silences occurs in measure 10 between the words "holiness" and "fearful", awesome because of the modal change from B major on the last syllable of "holiness" to B minor on "fearful".

The consequence of the last phrase of the prelude, the text of which states, "Thou stretchest out thy right hand," is taken up in the ensuing fugal chorus.

No. 31. "The Earth Swallowed Them

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired [illegible], bassoons in unison, three trombones, strings, and continuo

Tonality: A minor

Meter: C

Performance Designation: None

Textual Source: Exodus 15:12

Musical Source: "Si[illegible]erat" from Erba's Magnificat

This is the last chorus in Israel in Egypt based on Erba's Magnificat. Handel has treated this piece in a manner similar to No. 26, "Thou Sendest Forth Thy Wrath"; a comparison of the two movements reveals identical performing forces, tonality, and meter. As in No. 26, this movement consists of the wholesale appropriation of Erba's chorus plus the addition occasionally of embellishing notes as well as the expansion of the orchestra to include trombones and bassoons.

The text of the fugue ("The Earth Swallowed Them") constitutes the consequent phrase to the words of the closing three measures of the prelude, "Thou stretchest out thy right hand."

Examined in its surroundings, this fugue is rather pallid; there is, moreover, no direct relationship between the wo[illegible] and the music. Textural and harmonic contrast with the prelude are the most significant aspects of this chorus. We have, otherwise, a movement of relative neutrality. There are, perhaps, two alternative explanations for this ostensibly neutral and somewhat insignificant piece: 1) Handel's usual creative abilities were, temporarily, in a state of limbo; or 2) he was fully conscious of the neutrality of the piece and placed it here along with the duet which follows--also quite neutral,[14] to provide a period of repose before the intensely dramatic chorus "The People Shall Hear" (No. 33). We can never know with certainty which of the two explanations is correct, or indeed, if either constitute an accurate assessment; but on the basis of Handel's manipulation of material elsewhere in the oratorio, I am inclined towards the second explanation.

---

[14] See chapter VII, p:102 for a discussion of this duet.

CHAPTER X

CONTRAPUNTAL CHORUSES

The nine choruses to be discussed in this chapter comprise not only strictly contrapuntal pieces, but also movements in which there is a consistent juxtaposition of contrapuntal and homophonic textures, the latter typical of Handel's flexible and often dramatic choral technique. Seven of the nine choruses are modelled, either in whole or in part, on previously composed pieces, five of which have been attributed to composers other than Handel.

No. 2. "And the Children of Israel Sighed"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, strings, and continuo

Tonality C minor

Performance Designation: Largo

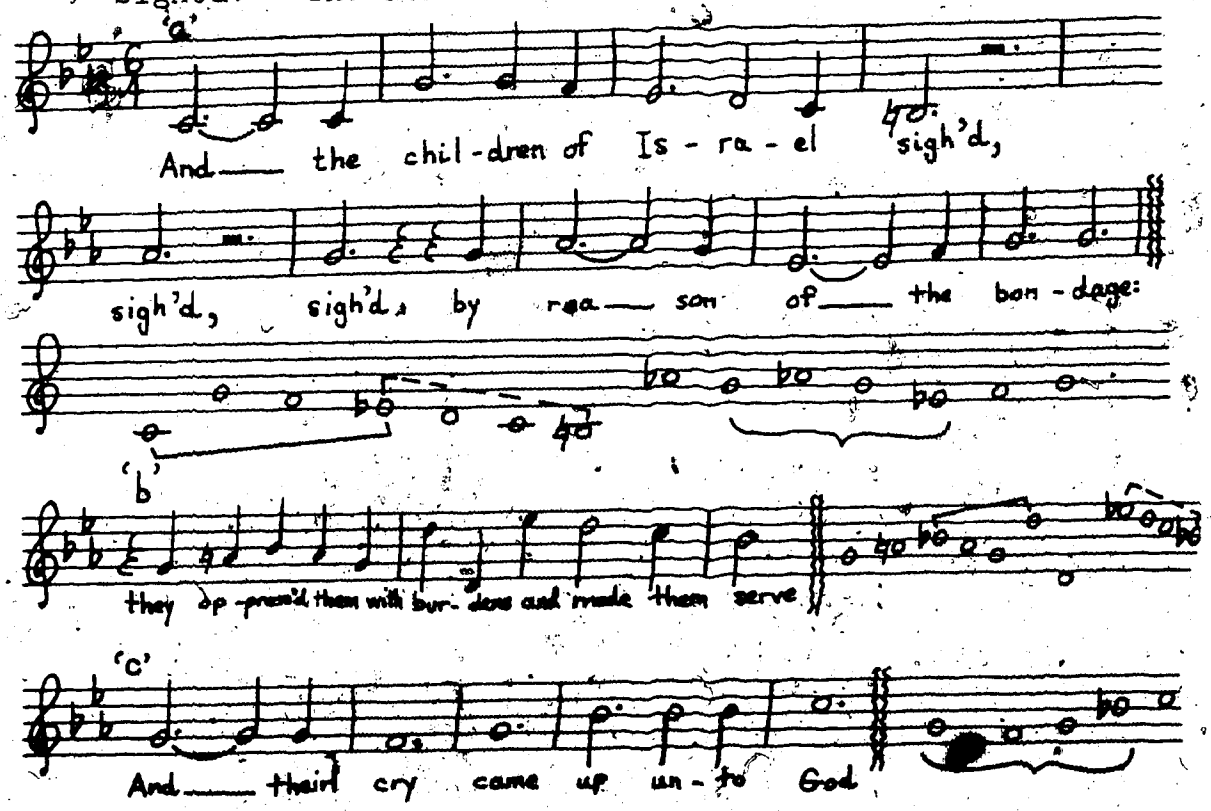
Meter: $\frac{6}{4}$

Textual Source: Exodus 1:11, 13, Exodus 2:23, and Exodus 3:9

There are three textual ideas upon which this first

chorus of the oratorio is predicated: the sighing of the Israelites, the oppression by the Egyptians, and the Israelites' cry to God; and Handel has provided each of these textual ideas with a musical equivalent, motives 'a', 'b', and 'c', respectively (see example 66 below). Although each of

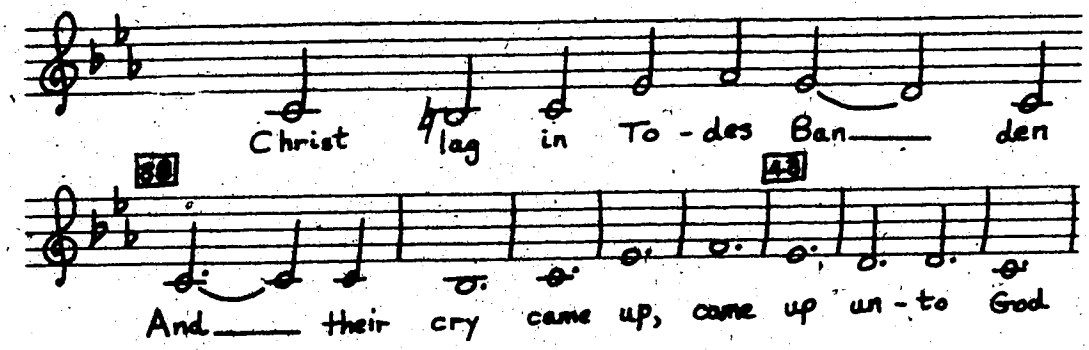
Example 66. Double Chorus, "And the Children of Israel Sighed." Thematic material of the chorus.



the musical motives is distinct, closer examination reveals that the relationship which exists among them is as tangible as is the relationship which unites the literary ideas. In Example 66, I have indicated both with solid and broken lines melodic material in motive 'b' which clearly derives from motive 'a'. Notice too the similar rhythmic treatment

of motives 'a' and 'c'. With regard to motive 'a' Arnold Schering, on pages 34-35 of his article "Händel und der protestantische Choral" (Händel-Jahrbuch, 1928),[1] points out that Handel has quoted a phrase (the first) from the chorale Christ lag in Todesbanden which in turn is based upon the Easter Sequence Victimae paschali laudes. My comparison of the chorale melody with the chorus under discussion verified Schering's assertion. Handel used the entire first phrase of the chorale three times (meas. 38-45, 64-75 in an expanded quotation, and 82-89), and the first half of the chorale phrase four times (meas. 12-16, 23-26, 28-31, and 36-39). The first phrase of the chorale and measures 38-45 from the chorus are shown below (see example 67). In five of the

Example 67. First phrase of the chorale Christ lag in Todesbanden and corresponding quotation in the opening chorus, "And the Children of Israel Sighed," meas. 38-45 (p. 7, meas. 4-p. 9, meas. 2).



[1]Cited in Abraham, Symposium, p. 92, n.3.

seven quotations (meas. 12-16, 28-31, 36-39, 38-45, 82-89), Handel lowered the second note of the chorale a semitone thereby reintroducing the original modal quality characteristic of the Easter sequence mentioned above (p. 186).[2] Undoubtedly, this quotation [illegible] than fortuitous, and was "probably evoked by t[illegible] 'bondage' in connexion with 'And their cry came up to God'."[3] Except for the final quotation from the chorale, this phrase--or an excerpt from it--is always heard in counterpoint with motive 'b' both in the chorus and the orchestra. This consistent juxtaposition of motives 'b' and 'c' represents the opposing forces implicit in the text: the Egyptian taskmasters and the captive Israelites. Inevitably, the burdens inflicted upon the Israelites resulted in a simultaneous cry for deliverance. The Israelites' final united "cry"--in eight-part homophony (meas. 82-89)--dominates the conclusion of the movement; the prayer does not go unheeded, and, as Chorley states, "from this point to the end of the work, we have only signs and wonders vouchsafed in answer to 'the cry' for the humiliation of the tyrant, and afterwards thanksgiving for the marvels wrought by the Most High for His chosen people."[4]

The opening nine measures of the piece (motive 'a') and the subsequent restatement of this material (meas. 48-62)

---

[2] Cf. No. 21, "And I Will Exalt Him" (see HW 16, P. 145).

[3] Abraham, Symposium, p. 92, n. 3.

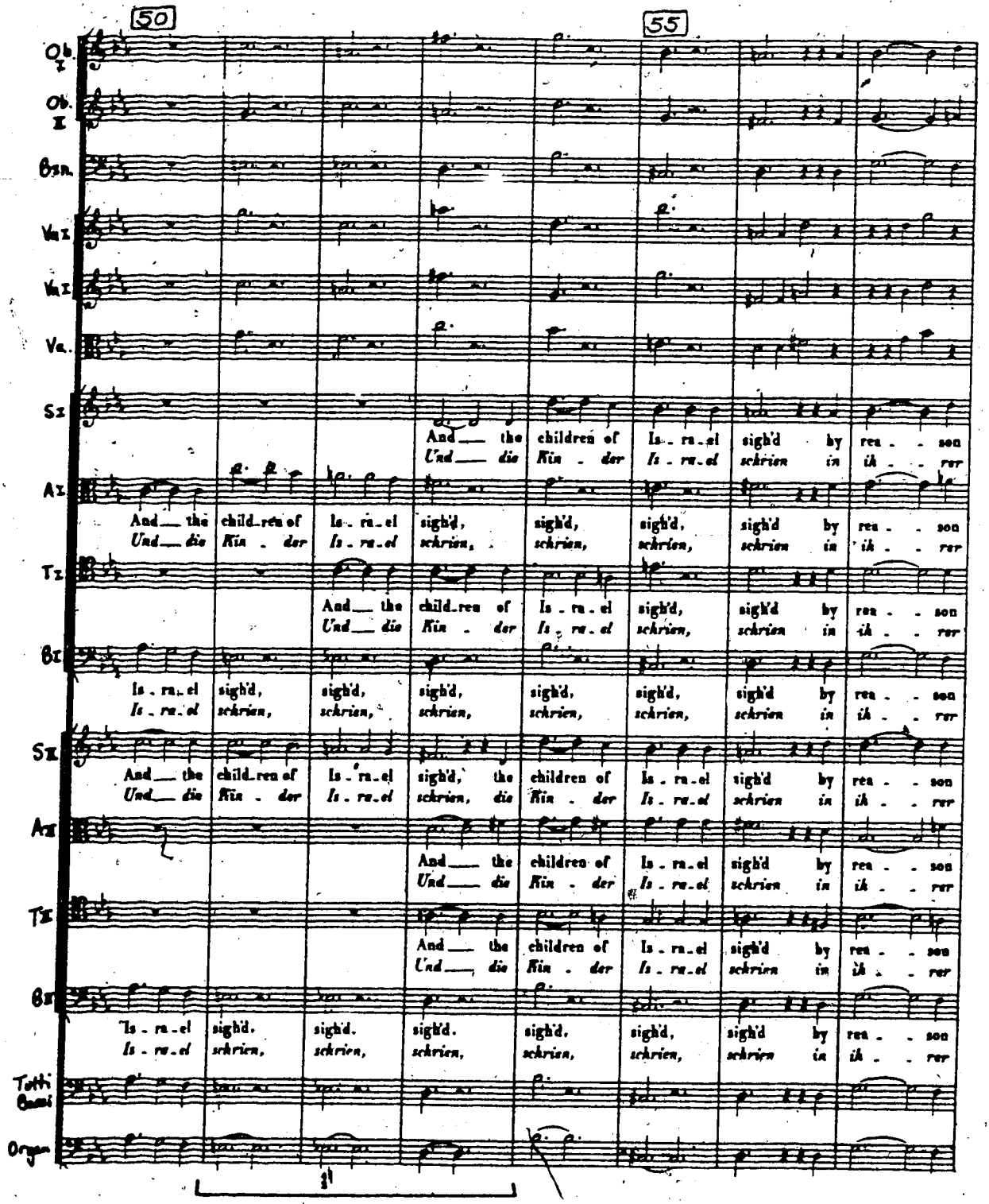
[4] Chorley, Handel Studies, p. 16.

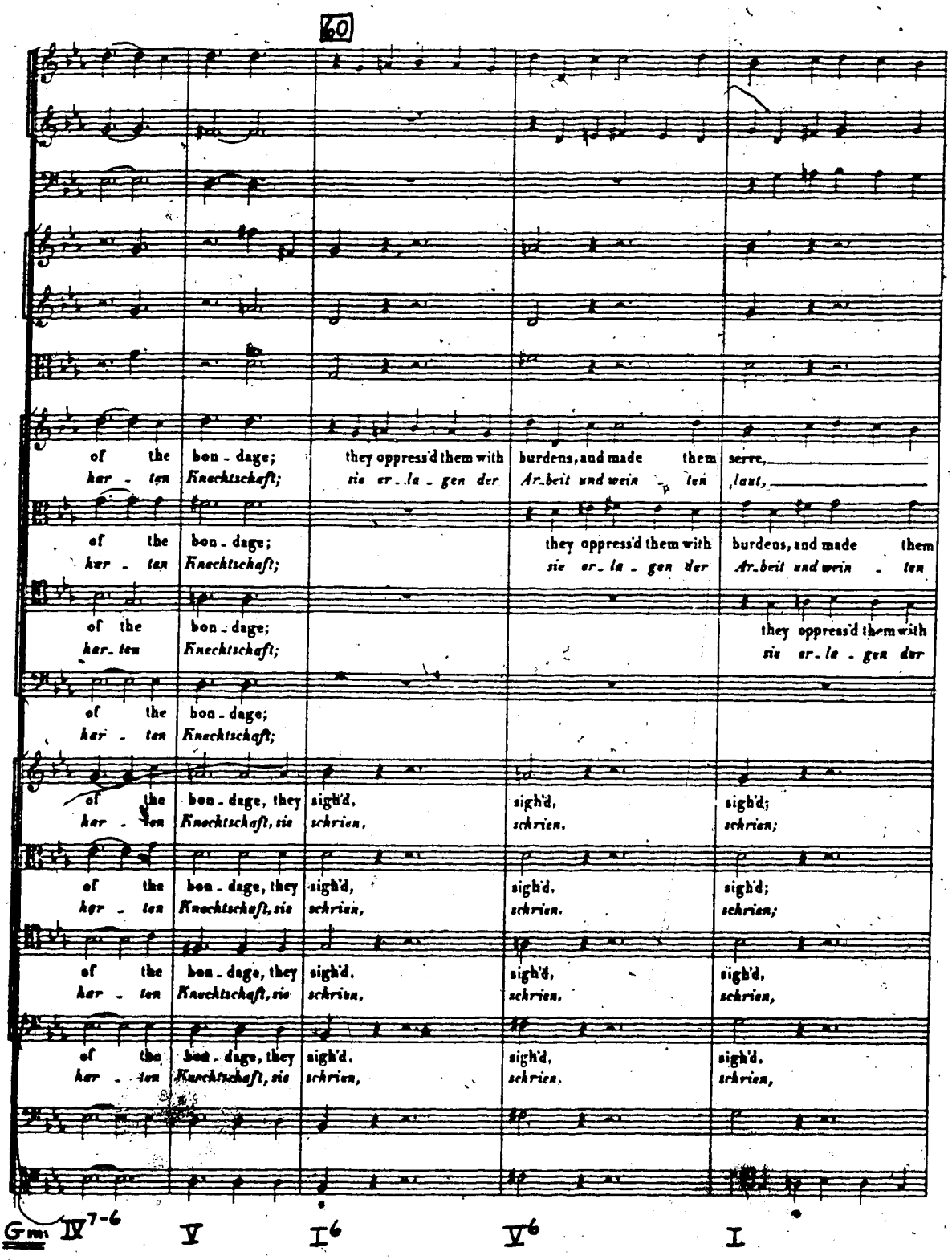
possess expressive qualities which vividly depict the Israelites' feelings of grief. Except for the orchestral interjections in measures 4-6, the orchestra is silent during the opening nine measures, the voice being supported only by the organ. The silences in the vocal part between the utterances of the word "sigh'd" (see example 66 above) and the interjections of the violins and violas during the break in the vocal line create onomatopoetically the sighs of the afflicted."[5] The poignancy of the ascending diminished seventh leap (meas. 4-5) also intensifies the emotion of grief. The overwhelming distress and bondage experienced by the Israelites reaches a peak in the middle of the piece (meas. 48-62) where the material is presented contrapuntally in a multi-voiced choral-orchestral texture. Several factors contribute to the expressiveness of the passage (see example 68): the silences after the word "sigh'd"; the descending chromatic line for the basses in measures 51-53 as well as the descending diminished seventh leap from measure 54 into measure 55 (which projects the chromatically descending bass a semitone further); the overlapping statements of motive 'a'; the orchestral "sighs" (especially meas. 51-56); and the chromatic harmony, particularly in measures 51-57, a

---

[5]Young, Oratorios, p. 94.

Example 68. Double Chorus, "And the Children of Israel Sigh'd", meas. 50-62. (p. 10, meas. 1-p. 11, meas. 5).




60
of the bon - dage; they oppress'd them with burdens, and made them serve,
har - ten Knechtschaft; sie er - la - gen der Ar - beit und wein - ten laut,
of the bon - dage; they oppress'd them with burdens, and made them
har - ten Knechtschaft; sie er - la - gen der Ar - beit und wein - ten
of the bon - dage; they oppress'd them with
har - ten Knechtschaft; sie er - la - gen der
of the bon - dage;
har - ten Knechtschaft;
of the bon - dage, they sigh'd, sigh'd, sigh'd;
har - ten Knechtschaft, sie schrien, schrien, schrien;
of the bon - dage, they sigh'd, sigh'd, sigh'd;
har - ten Knechtschaft, sie schrien, schrien, schrien;
of the bon - dage, they sigh'd. sigh'd, sigh'd,
har - ten Knechtschaft, sie schrien, schrien, schrien,
of the bon - dage, they sigh'd. sigh'd, sigh'd.
har - ten Knechtschaft, sie schrien, schrien, schrien,
Gm IV7-6 V I6 V6 I

modulatory passage involving a tonal shift from the subdominant to the dominant. The harmony here is the most chromatic and intense in the entire movement (see example 68 for a harmonic analysis of this passage). Although the diminished seventh chord in measure 55 (vii^7 of V in G) could be singled out for its peculiar expressive qualities, I find the rather unorthodox succession of dominant seventh sonorities in measures 52 and 53 (V^4_2 of IV in F to V^7 of G) to be even more extraordinary because of the unexpectedness of its appearance in a movement in which typical eighteenth-century harmonic relationships prevail.

This is the only movement in the entire oratorio in compound time: $\frac{6}{4}$. Motive 'b', with its characteristic quarter-note motion, emphasizes the triple subdivision of the beat, which, especially because the tempo is slow, seems well suited to convey the throbbing sensation of the Israelites distress. Motive 'b', incidentally, no doubt oppresses the singers occasionally with a musical burden: the execution of a descending octave leap followed immediately by an ascending minor ninth, the latter frequently in the extreme part of the voice range (see, for example, the soprano in meas. 24, and the bass in meas. 33).

Though the piece is scored for two four-part choruses, the vocal texture up to measure 22 never involves--as a

result of doublings--more than three parts: soprano, alto, and tenor. The basses of both choirs enter in measure 23 with motive 'c' thereby thickening the texture to four parts. Beginning in measure 27, choir II no longer doubles choir I, and the texture, therefore, becomes much more dense than heretofore in the movement.

Percy Young uses the term "stage management"[6] to refer to the manner in which the voices are introduced in this piece. Perhaps we could think for a moment of the three ideas upon which the piece is constructed as the main characters in a scene from a drama. Handel introduces each character (motive) in succession thereby permitting us to observe the uniqueness of each one: motive 'a' for alto in measures 1-9, accompanied by the organ and the orchestral "sighs" (meas. 4-6); motive 'b' for first violins in measures 10-11, accompanied by the organ; and motive 'c' for sopranos, altos and oboes in unison in measures 12-16, accompanied by imitative statements of motive 'b' in the strings, bassoons, and organ. Motive 'b', treated imitatively by the chorus and orchestra, constitutes the substance of the next six measures. In measure 23, with the reappearance of motive 'c' for the basses, the conflict between the characters intensifies; the plot thickens (as does the texture)

---

[6]Young, Oratorios, p. 93.

and becomes more complex (the contrapuntal combination of the motives). Ultimately, victory for the Israelites appears to be imminent (the homophonic "cry" in meas. 82-89) and the scene concludes with this anticipation of deliverance. Indeed, the first of the series of miracles that eventually resulted in the Israelites' escape is announced in the recitative which follows this chorus.

No. 4. "They Loathed to Drink of the River"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: strings and continuo

Tonality: G minor

Meter C

Performance Designation: Largo assai

Textual Source: Exodus 7:18, 19 and Psalm 105:29

Musical Source: the fifth fugue of Six Fugues for Organ and Harpsichord" composed by Handel ca. 1720

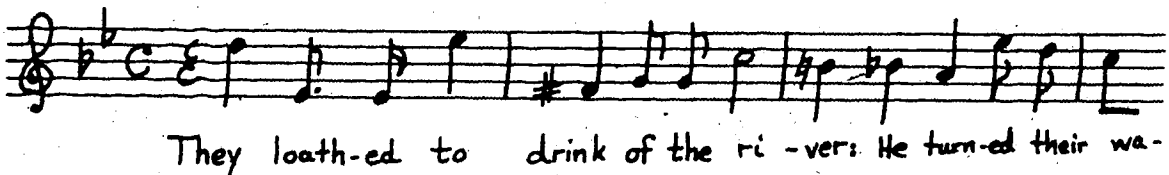
This chorus and the five movements which follow (a duet and four choral pieces) "encompass the process of narrative anger. The actions of the Lord are portrayed by Handel in a narrative procedure with the scene described in the past tense"[7]. The miracle of the water becoming blood had been

---

[7]Ardrey, "Influences of Carissimi," p. 59.

enunciated in the preceding recitative, whereas in the chorus, the text conveys the consequence of that horrifying supernatural event. Handel has set this text in a strict, rather orthodox fugal manner: the structure of the fugue is as follows: exposition, meas. 1-12 (voices enter as follows: tenor, alto, soprano, and bass); episode I, meas. 12-16; middle entry I (tenor), meas. 16-18; episode II, meas. 19-22; middle entry II (bass, incomplete), meas. 22-24; episode III, meas. 24-33; final entry (bass, incomplete), meas. 33-35; Coda, meas. 35-42. The piece sounds anything but dry or pedantic because of the several characteristics of the fugue subject which contribute to the dramatic expression of the text: chromaticism, the descending major seventh leap at the words "they loathed", and the descending diminished seventh leap at the words "to drink" (see Example 69). On subsequent

Example 69. Chorus, "They Loathed to Drink of the River," meas. 1-3. Fugue Subject (p. 17).



entries of the subject or answer the first interval is not always a diminished seventh. The exceptions are as follows: at "they loathed," entries two and four use major sixths,

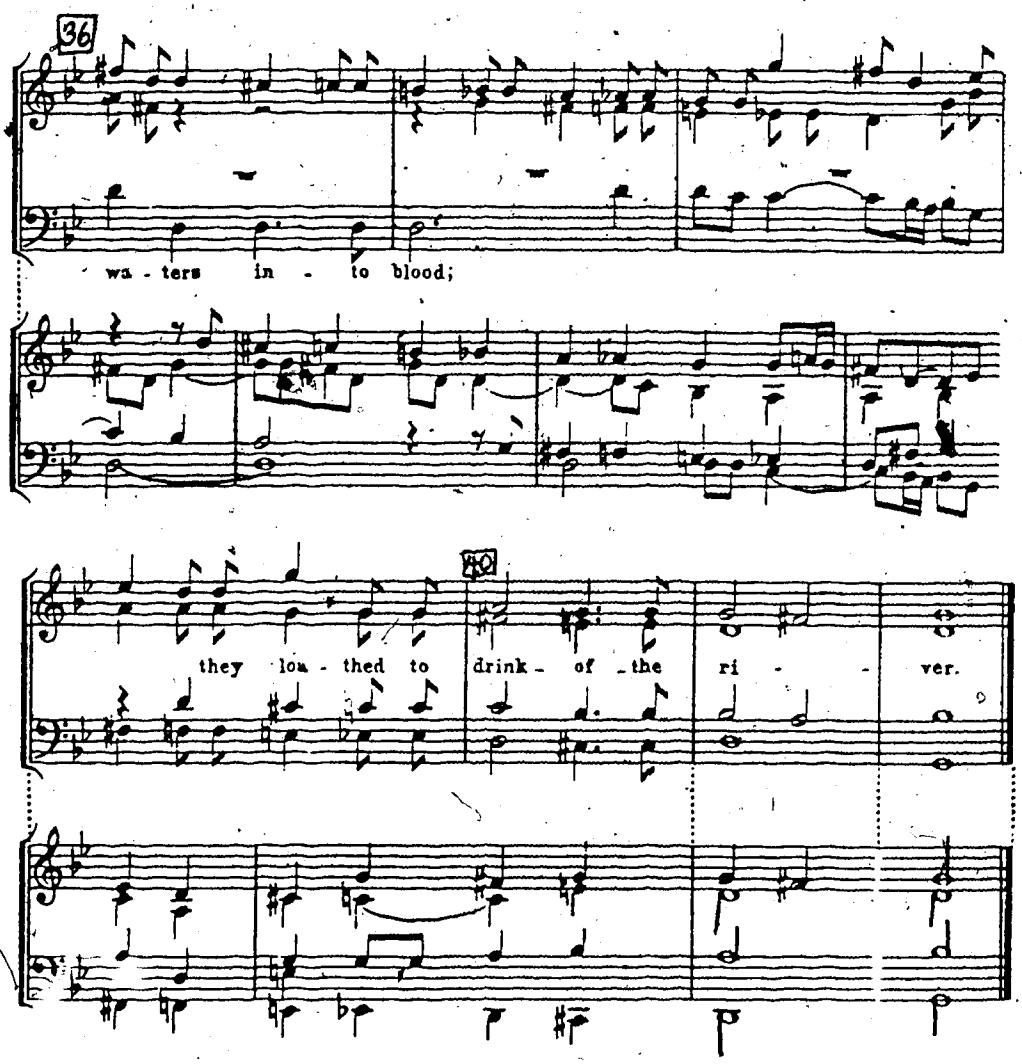
and entries five and six use minor sevenths; at "to drink" entries five and six use minor sevenths. These intervallic alterations are in accord with the concept of the tonal answer relationship. Ardrey suggests that these wide and awkward intervallic leaps which characterize this fugue subject create "an impression of anguish through dissonance."[8]

In rearranging his earlier keyboard fugue for chorus, Handel has made substantial deletions and revisions: the piece has been transposed down a whole tone (resulting in a more comfortable tessitura for the voices); measures 18-42 and 58-66 of the 73-measure keyboard work have been omitted --as a result of a two-beat link which allows for a smooth transition from measure 17 to 43 of the appropriated material, a metric shift occurs in measure 18 of the vocal setting (beat 3 of the vocal piece now corresponds to beat 1 of the keyboard work); and, significant redistribution of the voices has created a more evenly balanced sonority. There is a certain liberating effect (in the chorus) of getting away from a hand position approach to counterpoint, generally inherent in keyboard writing. A parallel quotation (see example 70) from Taylor's study illustrates Handel's process of revision.

---

[8]Ardrey, "Influences of Carissimi," p. 59.

Example 70. Chorus, "They Loathed to Drink of the River", meas. 36-42 as reworked from meas. 66-73 of the keyboard fugue[9].



Especially noteworthy in example 70 are the modifications beginning in measure 36 of the choral fugue with the descending chromatic figure in the soprano voice which is imitated in the next measure by the alto voice and subsequently by the basses and tenors. Not only are the

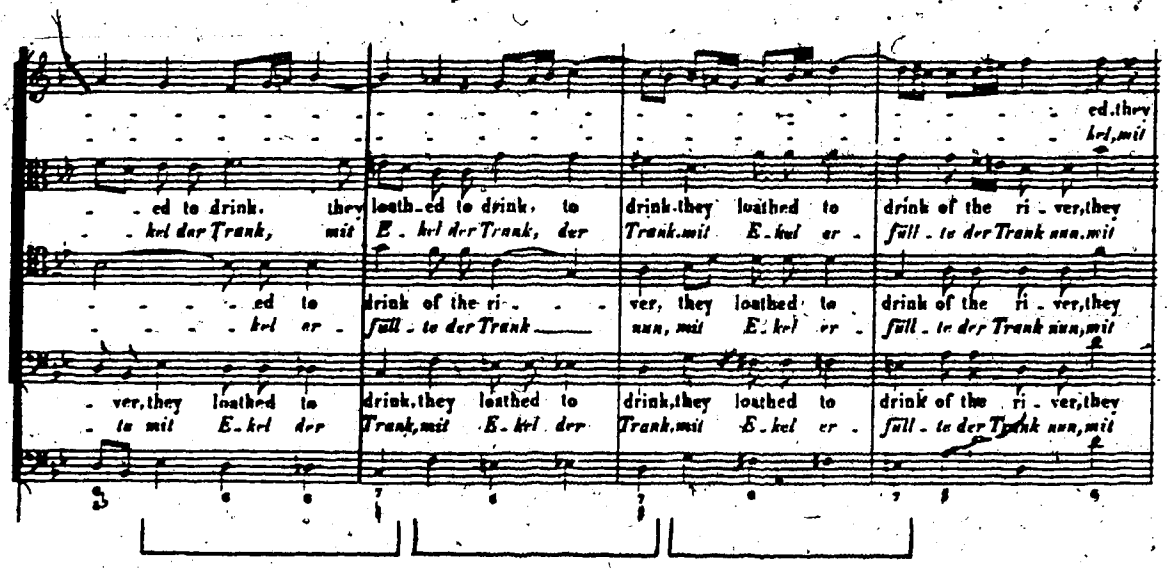
[9]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 52.

keyboard parts redistributed so as to create a balanced vocal sonority, but the texture is altered significantly in measures 36-38. Whereas the texture of the keyboard piece (see the quoted passage) is essentially four parts, the vocal texture thickens from two parts in measure 36 to three parts in measure 37 and finally to four parts in homophony from measure 39 to the end of the piece (measure 42). The four beats of silence for the alto voice (meas. 36-37) and the $3\frac{1}{2}$ measures of silence in the tenor part intensify the pungency of the chromatic figure when it does enter in these voices (meas. 37 and 39, respectively). The elongation of the harmonic rhythm in the last three measures coupled with the poignancy of the diminished seventh chord (VII^7/V) in measure 40 intensify as well the impact of the conclusion of the chorus.

The descending chromatic line with which the fugue ends and which also plays a dominating role throughout the piece grows out of the fugue subject itself (note the C, B-natural, B-flat, A progression in example 69 above). This terse, four-note motive dominates episode III where it is treated sequentially by ascending major seconds--the "loathing" seems to reach a peak here (see example 71).

The orchestration of this movement has no special significance; the scoring merely duplicates the vocal parts. In

Example 71. Chorus, "They Loathed to Drink of the River," meas. 25-28. Sequential treatment of a four-note figure from the fugue subject (p. 20, meas. 8-p. 21, meas. 3).



the words of Percy Young, this movement "is minatory in that its subject (c.f. "And with his stripes", also the Kyrie' from the Mozart Requiem) was an accepted symbol of the horrific, but it is not overpowering in emotional significance. It forms the first stage of an emotional crescendo just as 'He smote all the first born of Egypt' is the last."[10]

No. 9. "He Smote All the First-born of Egypt"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons, three trombones, strings and continuo

---

[10] Young, Oratorios, p. 95.

Tonality: A minor

Meter: C

Performance Designation: A tempo giusto, e staccato

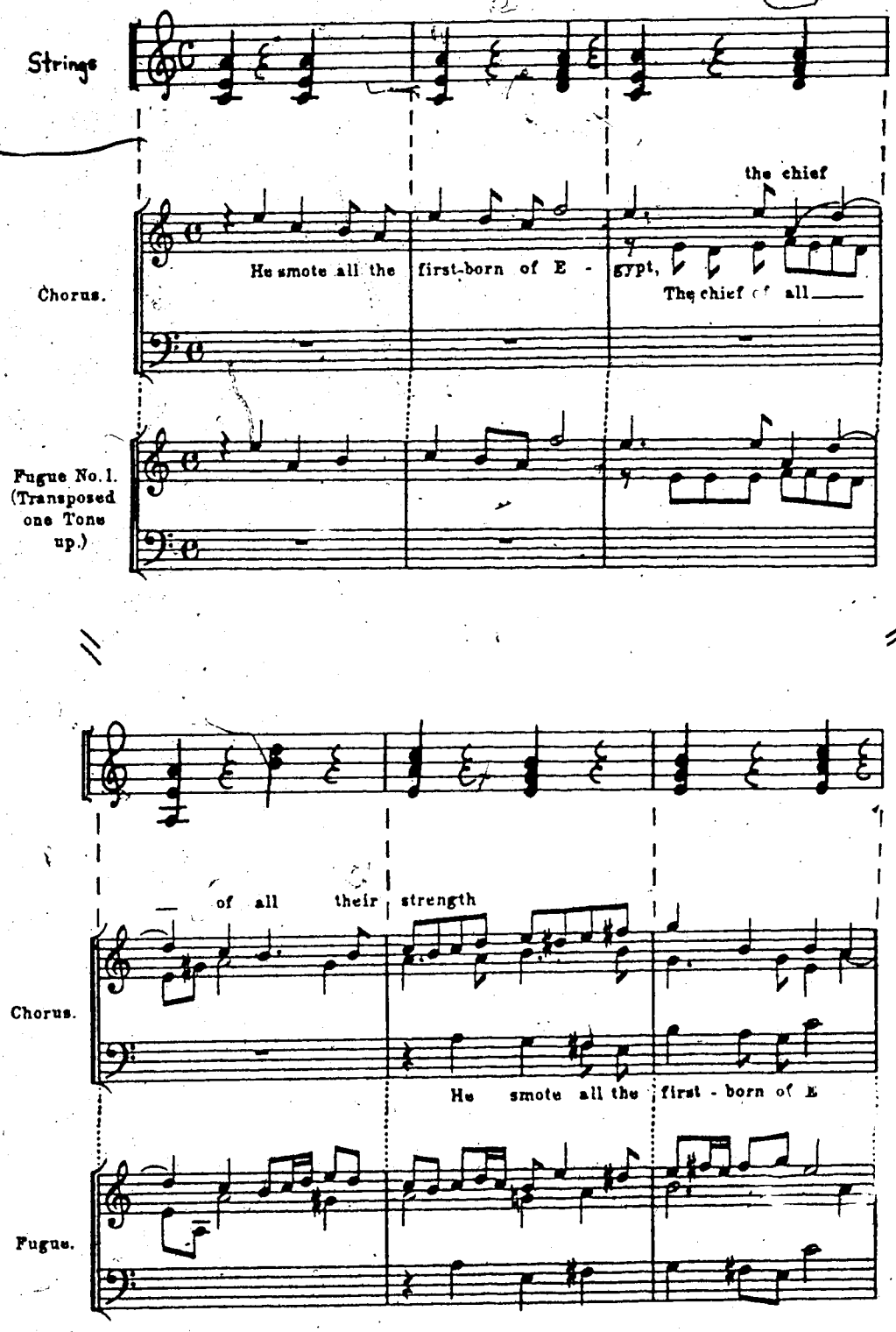
Textual Source: Psalm 105:36 (Cf. Psalm 78:51 and Exodus 12:29)

Musical Source: the first fugue of "Six Fugues for Organ or Harpsichord" composed by Handel ca. 1720

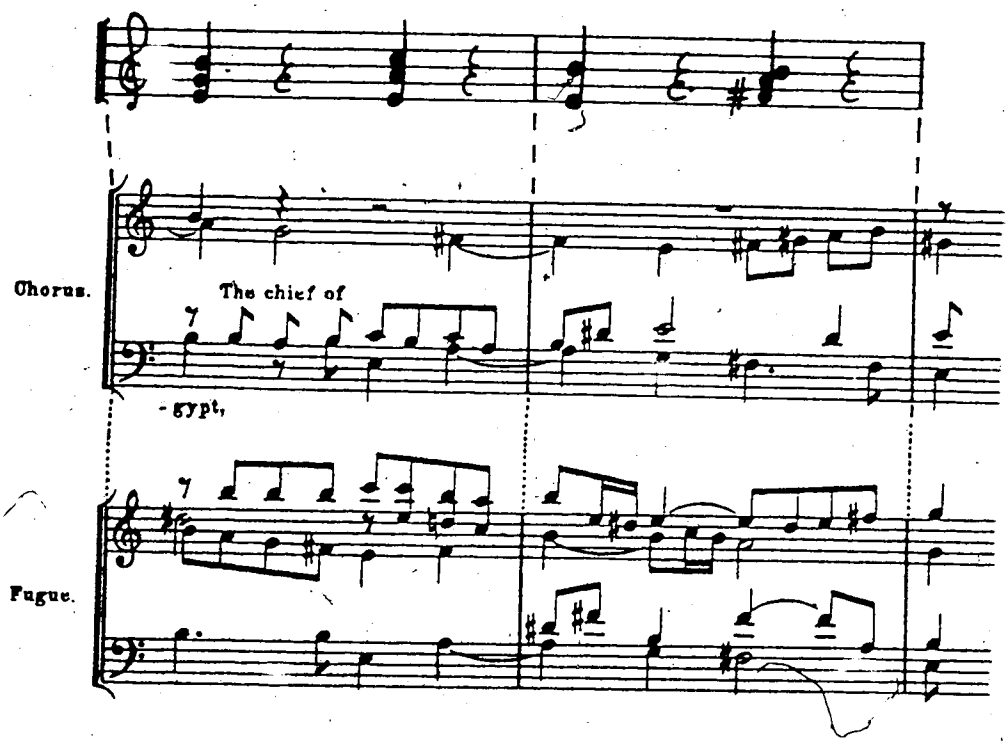
This last of the plague choruses depicts--with graphic vehemence--the wrath of Almighty God as all the first-born of Egypt are slain. Despite the severity of the previous calamities, none is more absolute than death itself. The emotional crescendo which began with the turning of water to blood reaches its culmination point this movement.

Compared with the appropriations from the fifth keyboard fugue used in the first plague chorus, Handel's treatment of thematic material from the first keyboard fugue is much freer in the chorus presently under discussion. The general tonal plan of the keyboard piece has been adopted (transposed up one tone) as well as the essential thematic material, although not without significant modification (see example 72). Because Handel has exercised considerable freedom in his adaptation of the keyboard fugue, a note for note comparison of the two compositions is impracticable after

Example 72. Chorus, "He Smote All the First-born of Egypt," meas. 1-8 compared with the corresponding passage from the keyboard fugue.[11]



[11]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 72-73.

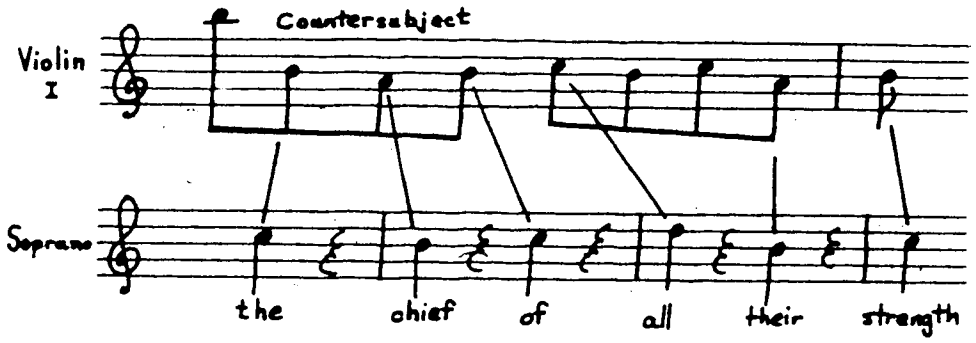


the opening phrases (meas. 1-15). In example 72 above, which illustrates the relationship between the two compositions, I have indicated above the chorus parts what I consider to be the most important dramatic factor of this chorus: the quarter-note chords for trombones, strings, and continuo on beats one and three, chords which are separated by silence on beats two and four. The orchestra in this piece depicts the act of smiting (the voices here are reinforced by the oboes and bassoons).

These orchestral depictions of death blows continue unceasingly to measure 12, and recur several times throughout the remainder of the piece; the most emphatic recurrence begins in measure 45. For eight measures the voices and all instruments (except the violins) unite homophonically in an

episode of extraordinary strength. The accompanying violin parts derive from the countersubject of the fugue.[12] The vocal parts, too, are based on this material, although this is perhaps a paper effect which would not be as apparent to the listener because of the augmentation and the silences on every other beat. The following example shows this relationship. Two additional factors contribute to

Example 73. Chorus, "He Smote All the First-born of Egypt." Comparison of the countersubject with the soprano part of meas. 46-49. (p. 67, meas. 2-5).



the strength of this episode: the reintroduction of the trombones following a silence of twelve measures, and the strength of the harmonic progressions (I-V-I-V-I-IV-V/III-III-VI-II-V-I-V-I-V). In the keyboard piece, Handel employed the technique of stretto only once (in the concluding measures), but in the chorus, two stretti of the subject

[12] See example 72 above, measure 3 alto voice.

occur: in the bass and soprano voices (meas. 40-42), and in all four parts (meas. 53-56). This contrapuntal procedure brings about a significant increase of density and intensity.

An important factor in contributing to the impact of this movement is the dramatic contrast with the preceding 'darkness' chorus (No. 8) in texture, tempo, dynamics, harmonic vocabulary, melodic and rhythmic style, and orchestral participation. Perhaps a comment about the harmony will suffice to illustrate the antithetical relationship between these two movements as well as the degree to which textual content influences Handel's choral style. The strong diatonic harmonic progressions in the 'He Smote' chorus, the majority of which involve primary triads, as well as the conventional modulations to the dominant, subdominant, and relative major tonalities reinforce the strength and power implicit in the text. In direct contrast, is the extreme chromaticism and vague tonal scheme of the chorus depicting the groping, stumbling, and aimlessness suggested by darkness. Tovey likened the contrast between these two movements to daylight following darkness.[13] From a musical viewpoint, I find Tovey's likening quite suitable. Textually, however, the analogy is inappropriate; unfortunately for the firstborn of Egypt, daylight never arrived.

---

[13] Tovey, Essays, 5:97.

As if to provide one last opportunity for Divine vengeance--to be absolutely certain that all first born are smitten--Handel, in the last three measures of the seven-measure orchestral coda (meas. 66-72), re-introduces the orchestrally depicted death blows in the strings and continuo. Melodically, the first violin part here restates, albeit in augmentation--quarter notes separated by quarter rests--the opening four notes of the subject which textually consists of "He smote all."

No. 10. "But As For His People"

Four-part Chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes, flutes, and bassoons; strings and continuo

Tonality: G major

Meter: 3/4

Performance Designation: Andante

Textual Source: Psalms 78:52 and 105:37

Musical Source: The soprano aria "Io pur seguiro" from Stradella's Serenata

With this tenth movement from Part One of the oratorio, we encounter a dramatic change in textual content. No longer does the text deal with oppressive bondage or terrifying plagues (as it has through the preceding nine pieces); instead, the libretto indicates that the Israelites' long

awaited moment of deliverance from the Egyptians has arrived. After some 430 years in the land of Egypt,[14] the Israelites' anticipation of inhabiting the land of promise is now in the process of becoming a reality.

This is the longest chorus of the entire oratorio: 168 measures. The thematic material upon which the piece is based is shown in example 74. Of the four motives shown in the example, only motive 'b' derives from the Stradella source referred to above, accounting for 51 measures of the chorus (meas. 7-46 and 119-131). The remaining 70 percent of the movement has not been traced to an earlier source.

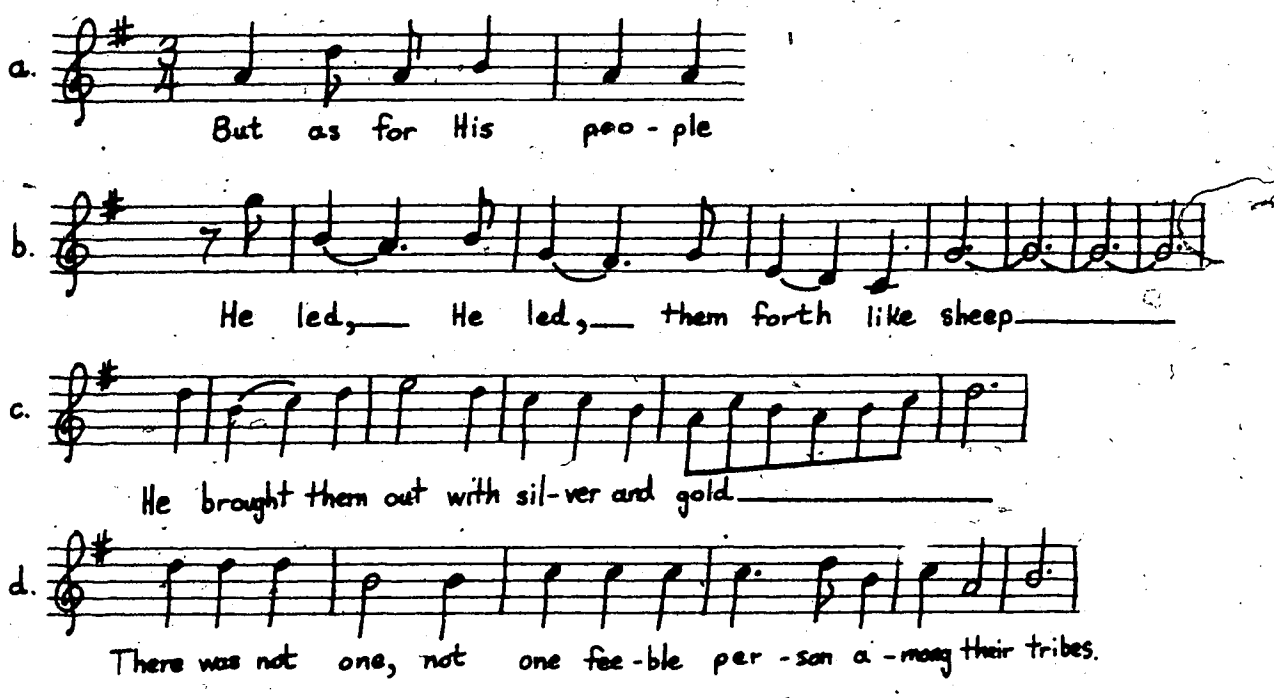
Tovey refers to the opening chords of this piece as being "one of the most perfect transitions, both in mood and harmony, in all music."[15] Tovey, I think, is alluding to the change in mode (from A minor to G major), the change in meter (from $\frac{4}{4}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$), the spirited tempo (♩ = 112 is suggested in the Kalmus edition), and the dexterity with which the ...k tonal shift down a second from A minor of the previous ...s to G major of this movement is effected. Rather ...he ...commencing the chorus with tonic harmony, Handel emphasizes ...e ...ominant in the opening seven measures; the transition ...then, between the two choruses is treated like a

---

[14] See Exodus 12:40.

[15] Tovey, Essays, 5.98.

Example 74. Chorus, "But As For His People," thematic material of the movement.



conventional double subdominant modulation.

Motive 'a', with which the movement opens, functions as a ritornello, recurring in measures 47-51 and 115-119. These appearances of the brief ritornello separate the extended contrapuntal sections based on motives 'b' and 'c' respectively.

This is the only movement in Israel In Egypt where Handel has stipulated the use of flutes. In measures 11 and 12 under the first and second violin parts Handel wrote e Flauto traverso. While the alto voices sustain the word "sheep" for four measures (meas. 11-14), the first and second violins (doubled by the respective flutes) present imitatively the vocal material of measures 7-10 (see motive 'b' in example

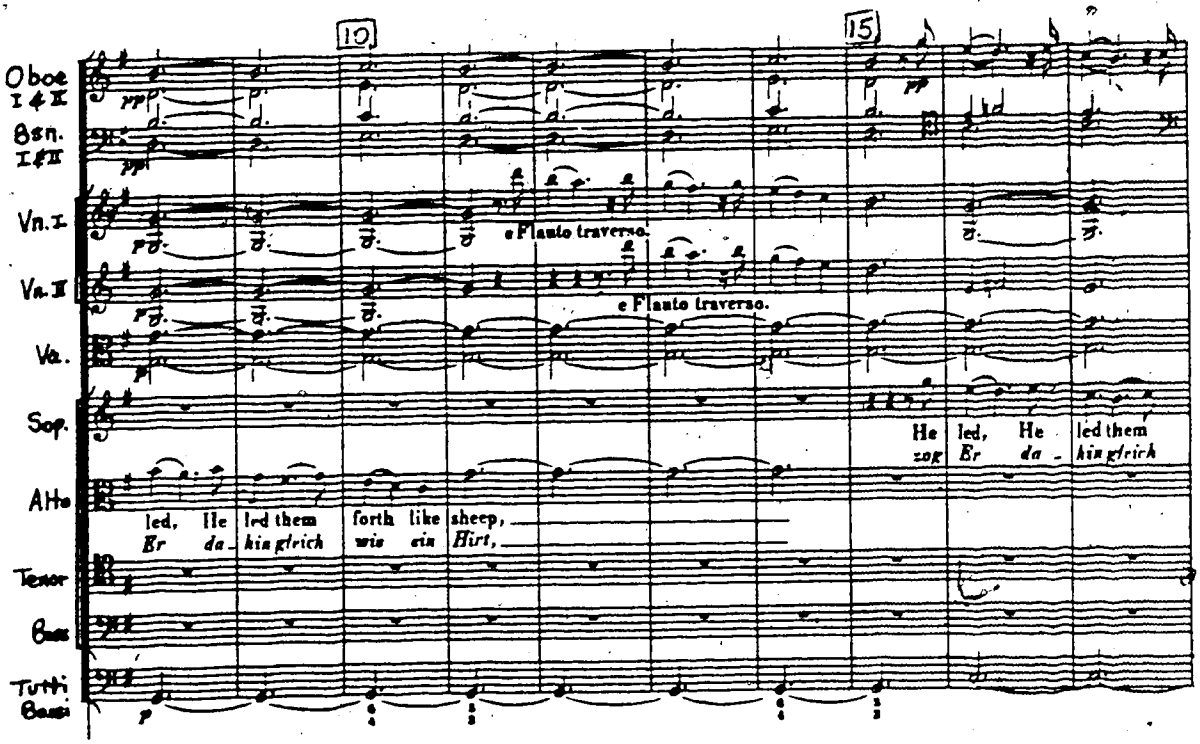
74 above). In Stradella's piece this motive (meas. 1-10) remains in one tonality (C major); Handel's extended sequential treatment of the material (meas. 7-46), however, presents the motive in the major tonalities of G, C, G and D respectively. Characteristic of this 39-measure passage are the sustained tones over several measures for the violoncellos and string basses (G, meas. 8-15; C, meas. 16-27; G, meas. 29-33; and D, meas. 35-46) frequently reinforced by the other instruments and voices (see example 75). The static bass--and the correspondingly slow harmonic rhythm--as well as the subdominant emphases of this passage (for example, meas. 8-15 stand in a subdominant relationship to meas. 1-7, and meas. 16-27 possess a subdominant relationship to meas. 8-15) produce a mood of tranquility which is suggested by the pastoral nature of the text ("He led them forth like sheep"). The imitative treatment of this motive both in the voices and the orchestra, as well as its extended tonal treatment illustrates the manner in which Handel skillfully developed an eight-measure pilfering into an extended passage of exquisite beauty.[16] Tovey likens this passage based on Stradella's theme to "a sublime vocal pastoral symphony."[17]

---

[16]See Taylor's Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 73-75 for a complete presentation of this appropriation.

[17]Tovey, Essays 5:100.

Example 75. Chorus, "But As For His People," meas. 8-17. Handel's employment of Stradella's material (p.72, meas. 8-17).



Following a restatement of motive 'a' in measures 47-51, Handel continues the piece with a 64 measure fugue (meas. 51-114) based on motive 'c' as shown in example 74. The fugue subject and answer are frequently presented in stretto, which --Macfarren suggests--is representative of "the tumultuous gathering of the treasure-laden tribes, who throng exultingly from all parts of the detested land of their servitude."[18]

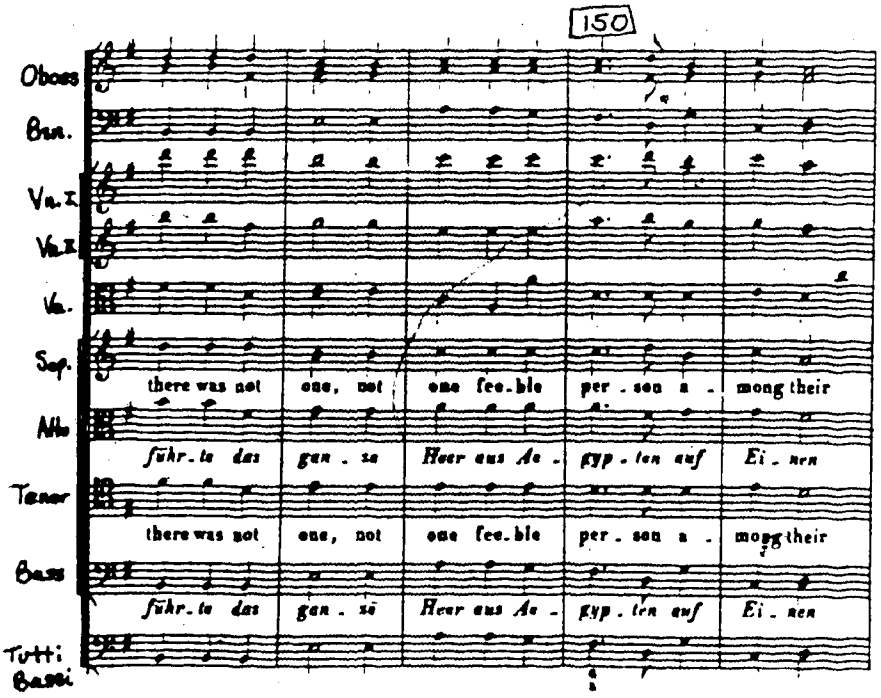
Measures 115-146 constitute a condensed recapitulation of measures 1-114: motives a, b, and c, are presented respectively in meas. 115-118, meas. 119-130, and meas. 130-146.

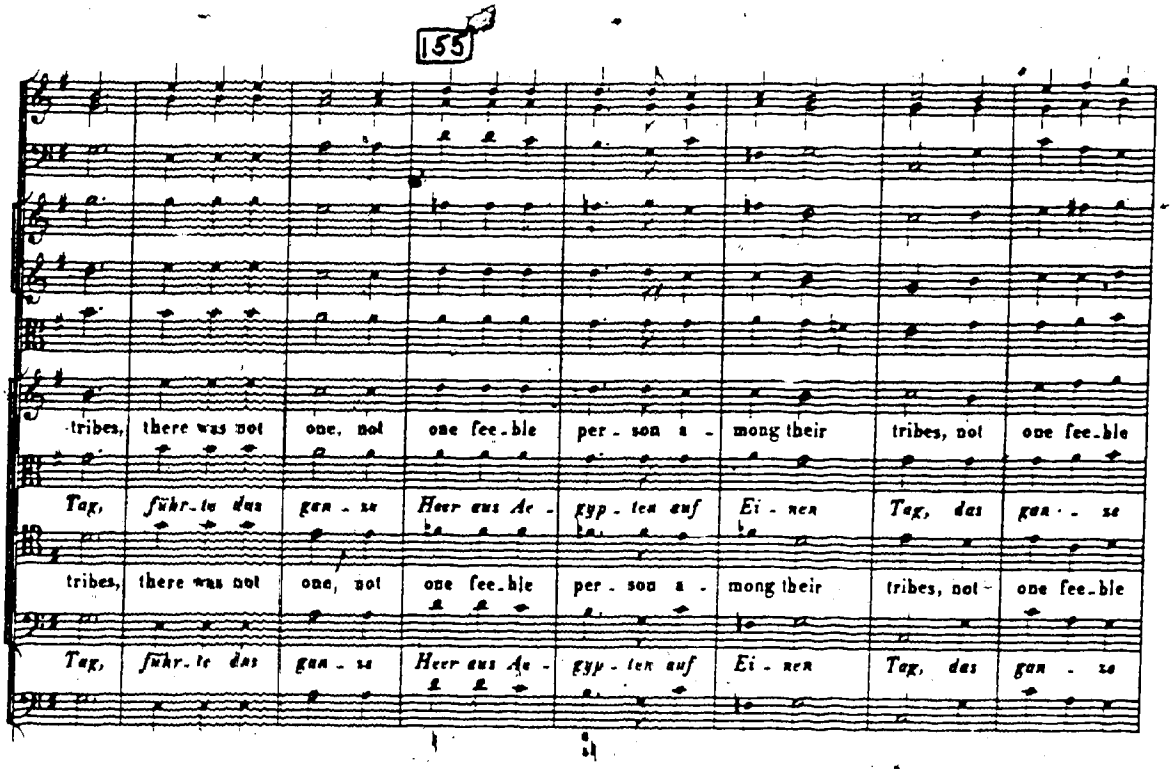
---

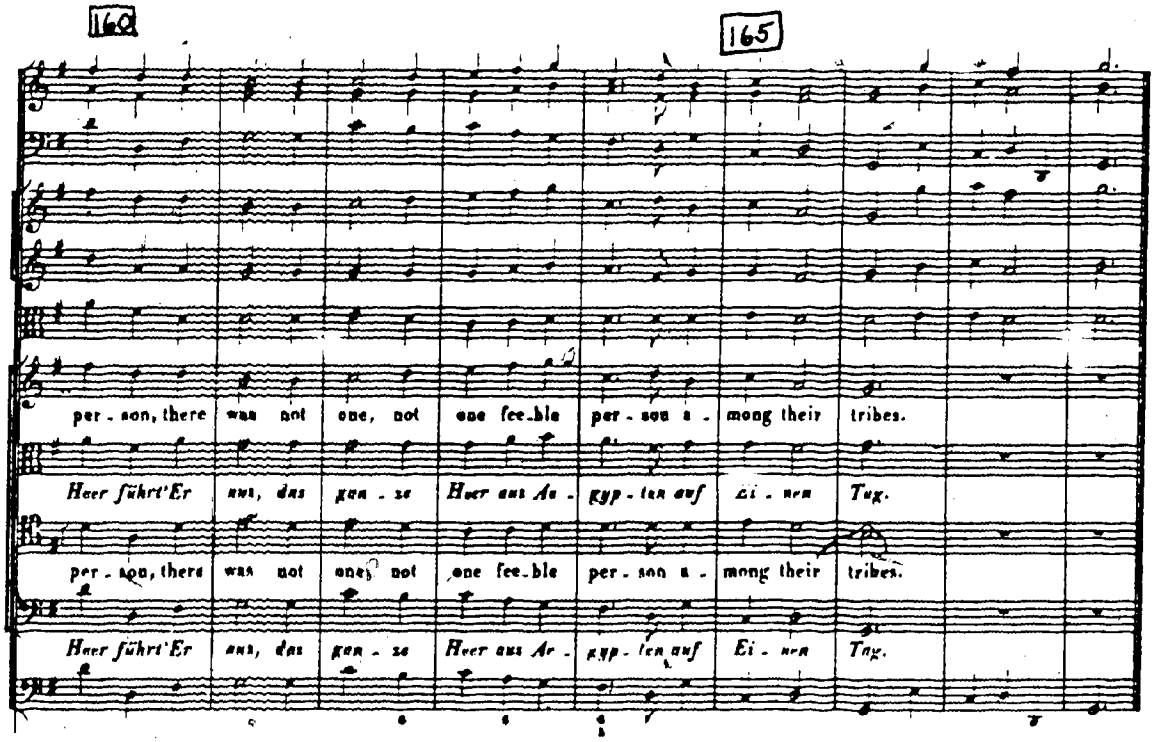
[18]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 13.

A 22-measure coda, based on motive d, ensues. Except for the brief ritornello (motive 'a') the texture up to measure 146 is contrapuntal; beginning with motive 'd' in measure 147, however, and to the end of the chorus, the texture is homophonic. The simultaneous declamation of the text by all voice parts (doubled by the full orchestra), symbolic of the fact that all of the tribes of Egypt have been reunited, the repetition--six times--of "not one", and the secondary excursion to the subdominant (the consequence of sequential treatment) in the penultimate phrase (meas. 155-158), together produce a dynamic conclusion to the movement (see example 76).

Example 76. Chorus, "But As For His People," meas. 147-166. Conclusion of the movement, based on motive 'd' (p. 80, meas. 11 - p. 81, meas. 15).




155
tribes, there was not one, not one fee-ble per-son a-mong their tribes, not one fee-ble
Tag, führ-te das gan-ze Heer aus Ae-gyp-ten auf Ei-nen Tag, das gan-ze
tribes, there was not one, not one fee-ble per-son a-mong their tribes, not one fee-ble
Tag, führ-te das gan-ze Heer aus Ae-gyp-ten auf Ei-nen Tag, das gan-ze


160
165
per-son, there was not one, not one fee-ble per-son a-mong their tribes.
Heer führt'Er aus, das gan-ze Heer aus Ae-gyp-ten auf Ei-nen Tag.
per-son, there was not one, not one fee-ble per-son a-mong their tribes.
Heer führt'Er aus, das gan-ze Heer aus Ae-gyp-ten auf Ei-nen Tag.

No. 11. "Egypt Was Glad When They Departed"

Four-part chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons, three trombones, strings and continuo

Tonality: A minor, beginning with a dominant platform and ending on V

Meter: C

Performance Designation: A tempo giusto

Textual Source: Psalm 105:38

Musical Source: "Canzona" in Modulatio Organica super Magnificat by Johann Caspar Kerl

Of the three choruses in Israel in Egypt based on earlier keyboard works, "Egypt Was Glad," a double fugue, constitutes the most nearly unaltered appropriation.[19] Most of Handel's changes involve minor rhythmic adjustments to accommodate the text.[20] Although Handel has provided an orchestral accompaniment, the orchestra merely duplicates the vocal parts.

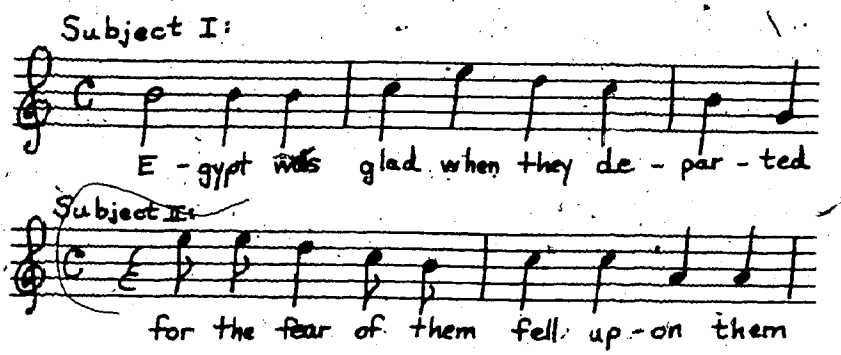
The two subjects upon which the piece is based are shown in example 77 below. Part of the second subject

---

[19] See Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, pp. 76-81.

[20] This technique of wholesale pilfering with only minor rhythmic adjustments has already been mentioned in connection with No. 26, "Thou Sendest Forth Thy Wrath" and No. 31, "The Earth Swallowed Them" (see pp. 175, 182).

Example 77. Chorus, "Egypt Was Glad When They Departed," Fugue subjects of the movement.



constitutes a rhythmic variant of a portion of the initial subject. The ♩ ♩ ♩ rhythmic figure with which the first subject begins is typical of seventeenth-century keyboard canzonas. Measure 1 to beat one of measure 30 are predicated solely upon the first subject; the second subject appears for the first time in measure 30 (commencing on beat two), and on subsequent appearances is usually in counterpoint with the first subject. The movement reveals Kerl's skill as a contrapuntalist--there are several stretti, the subjects are frequently presented in inverted form, often in stretto with the original version, and, as mentioned above, the two subjects are presented simultaneously.

Handel's manipulation of the orchestra in this piece is not unlike his handling of the orchestra in several other fugal movements in the oratorio.[21] In "Egypt Was Glad" the

[21] Cf. No. 21, "And I Will Exalt Him," No. 26, "Thou Sendest Forth Thy Wrath," and No. 31, "The Earth Swallowed Them."

exposition of subject one (meas. 1-12) is accompanied by the organ only; from measures 13-30 the four vocal parts are reinforced by the oboes, bassoons, violoncellos, string basses and organ. The introduction of trombones and violas commencing in measure 30 underscores the initial appearance of the second subject in the tenor part. The violins appear for the first time in measures 33 (violin II) and 34 (violin I), reinforcing the contrapuntal juxtaposition of subjects one and two. In spite of the somewhat startling effect produced by the introduction of the orchestra in measure 13 and the subsequent build up of intensity resulting both from the thickening of the orchestral texture and the combination of subjects one and two, there is no direct relationship between the words and the music as there has been in the preceding choruses.

Dramatically, this movement, like Nos. 26 and 31, constitutes a period of relative neutrality. Macfarren suggested that the piece creates a feeling of repose after the succession of descriptive choruses representative of the plagues.[22] In my opinion, however, the movement seems to interrupt the drama and excitement both of the Israelites' deliverance--which began in the previous chorus (No. 10, "But As for His People") and continues in Nos. 12 and 13 (He Rebuked the Red Sea" and "He Led Them Through the Deep")--and the destruction of the Egyptians (No. 14, "But

---

[22]George A. Macfarren, "Handel and Bach," Proceedings of the Musical Association 11 (1884-85): 75-76.

the Waters Overwhelmed Their Enemies"). That Handel deleted "Egypt Was Glad" from the second performance of the oratorio --10 April 1739--suggests that he may not have been entirely satisfied with this chorus.[23]

No. 24. --"Thy Right Hand, Oh Lord is become Glorious"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings and continuo

Tonality: C major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Andante

Textual Source: Exodus 15:16

Musical Source: the double chorus "Quia respexit humilitatem" from Erba's Magnificat

By means both of motivic repetition in antiphony and by contrapuntal elaboration, Handel has extended a seven-measure pilfering into a thirty-five-measure movement of considerable dramatic intensity. The powerful impact of Handel's chorus derives not only from the prevalence of antiphonal writing--also characteristic of Erba's piece--

[23]Hans Dieter Clausen, "Handel's Direktionspartituren (Handexemplare)," Hamburger Beitrage zur Musikwissenschaft, Band 7 (Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung, Karl Dieter Wagner, 1972), p. 160.

and the juxtaposition of homophonic and contrapuntal textures, but also from the brilliance of the trumpets, the resonance of the trombones, and the emphatic strokes of the timpani, none of which appears in Erba's score; Erba's piece is accompanied by oboes, strings, and continuo only.

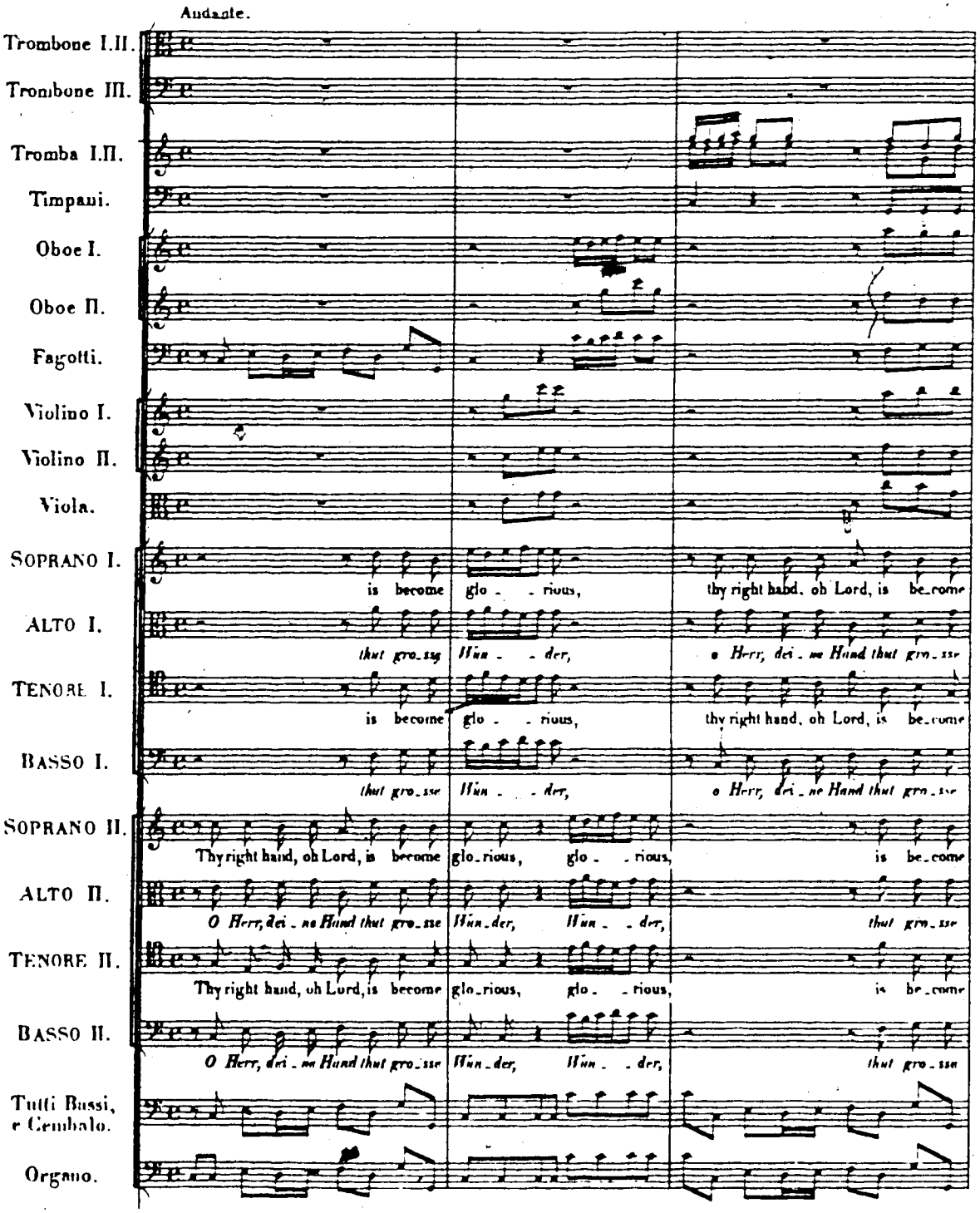
Commenting on this chorus, Macfarren suggested that "it bursts forth from the dreamy, indefinite, vague termination of the last chorus ['The Depths Have Covered Them' (No. 23)] like a young lion starting out of sleep, quick with impulse, vigorous with power to fulfil it, knowing no bound to his desires, feeling no bound to his intense means for their fulfilment."[24]

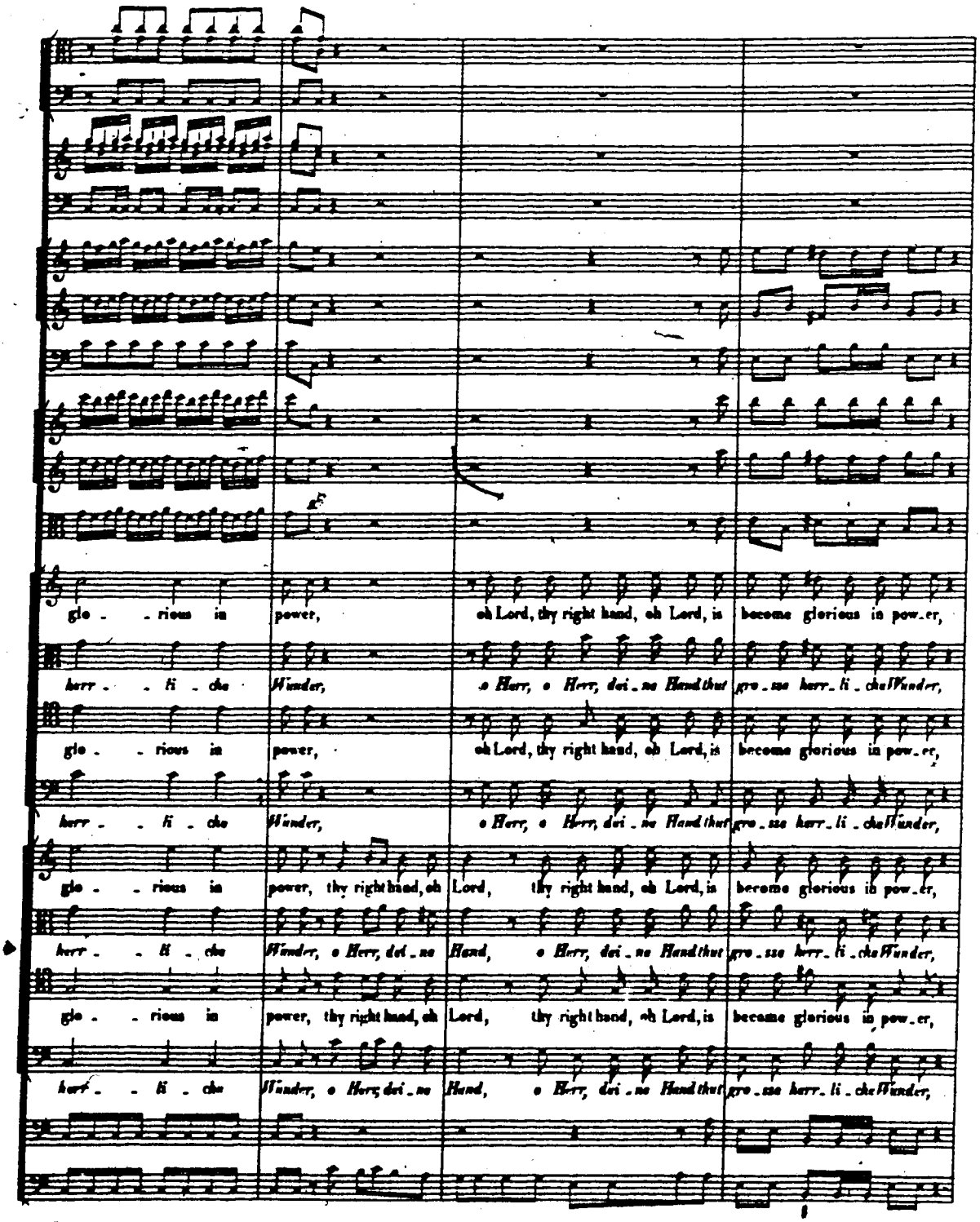
Example 78 (see pp. 216 and 217) shows the essential melodic, harmonic, rhythmic, and textural characteristics of the movement. The opening $1\frac{1}{2}$ measures of Handel's piece parallel the first $1\frac{1}{2}$ measures of the pilfered material. Typical of Handel's manipulation--extension--of Erba's material are the $2\frac{3}{4}$ measures which follow (see example 78, meas. 2, beat 3, to meas. 5, beat 1): the antiphonal declamation in measure 2 of the word "glorious" by Choir II (notice, too, that this is echoed by the trumpets in measure 3), the restatement--with slight modification--in measure 3 by Choir I and II respectively of the material presented by Choir II and I in measure 1, and the broad declamation in

---

[24]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 20.

Example 78. Double Chorus, "Thy Right Hand, Oh, Lord, is Become Glorious," meas. 1-7 (p. 173-174).

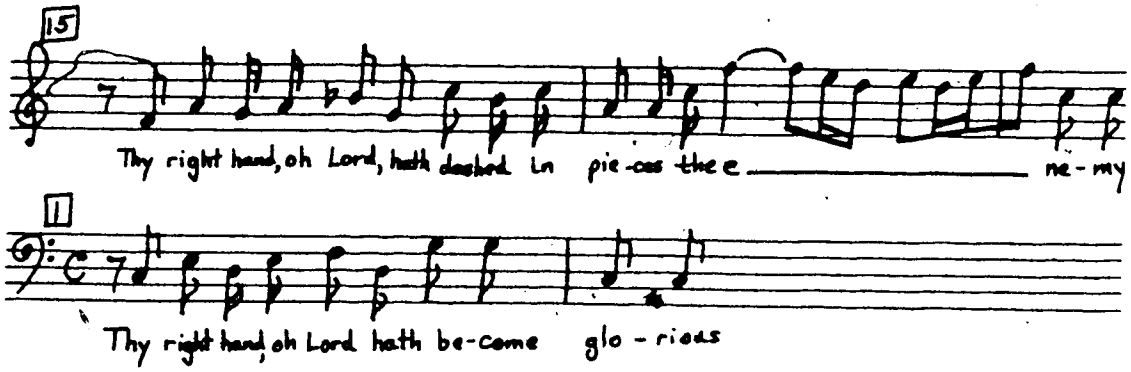



glo - - rious in power, oh Lord, thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in pow-er,
herr - - li - che Wunder, o Herr, o Herr, dei - ne Hand thut gro - sse herr - li - che Wunder,
glo - - rious in power, oh Lord, thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in pow-er,
herr - - li - che Wunder, o Herr, o Herr, dei - ne Hand thut gro - sse herr - li - che Wunder,
glo - - rious in power, thy right hand, oh Lord, thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in pow-er,
herr - - li - che Wunder, o Herr, dei - ne Hand, o Herr, dei - ne Hand thut gro - sse herr - li - che Wunder,
glo - - rious in power, thy right hand, oh Lord, thy right hand, oh Lord, is become glorious in pow-er,
herr - - li - che Wunder, o Herr, dei - ne Hand, o Herr, dei - ne Hand thut gro - sse herr - li - che Wunder,

measures 4-5 of the phrase "glorious in power" which is accompanied by four orchestral statements of the sixteenth-note motive heard earlier in conjunction with the word "glorious" (see meas. 2).

The homophonic texture and antiphonal writing which occupies measures 1-14 are interrupted by a contrapuntal section in measures 15-22 which introduces the second half of the text, "thy right hand, oh Lord, hath dashed in pieces the enemy." The material of this section is derived in part from the bass line of measure 1 of the chorus (see example 79).

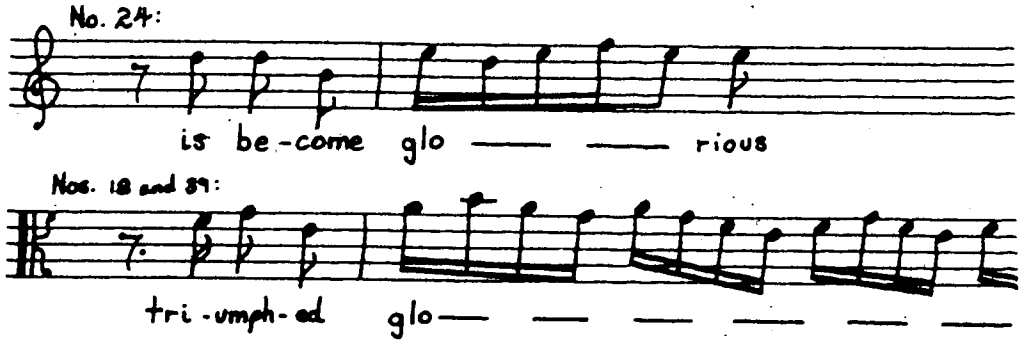
Example 79. Double Chorus, "Thy Right Hand, Oh Lord." The relationship between the contrapuntal motive and the base part of the opening measure.



In measure 22 there is a return to antiphonal homophonic declamations of the text which are supported by an antiphonal orchestral accompaniment; and, in measure 33, the two choirs unite in four-part homophony--reinforced by the full orchestra--to bring the movement to a close in a surge of dynamic power.

The text of this chorus expresses sentiments which were articulated earlier in Part Two of the oratorio, and which will again be treated in the final chorus. A comparison of the musical treatment of the phrase "is become glorious" in this chorus with the treatment of "triumphed gloriously" from Nos. 18 and 39 reveals a similarity; the sixteenth-note figure of "gloriously" is, however, inverted and extended sequentially (see example 80).

Example 80. Similarities between No. 24 and Nos. 18 and 19.



These movements also have in common the tonality of C major, which, in this oratorio, is the tonality of triumph and victory.

No. 27. "And With the Blast of Thy Nostrils"

Four-part Chorus

Orchestration: Paired oboes, strings, and continuo

Tonality: D major

Meter: C

Performance designation: none

Textual source: Exodus 15:8

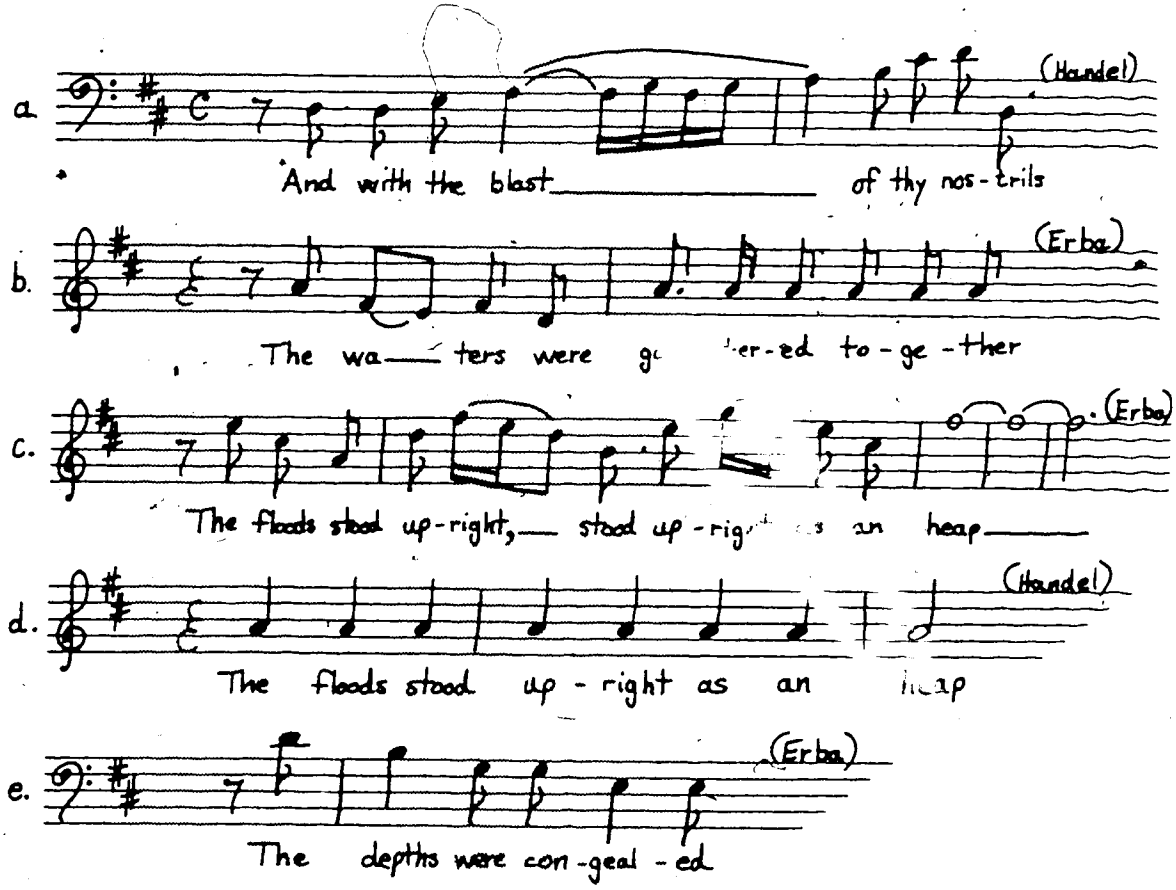
Musical source: the alto aria "Deposuit potentes" from Erba's Magnificat

Of the several movements in Israel in Egypt dealing with the sea, the present chorus contains the most extraordinary example of musical pictorialization. Textually (and musically) the piece elaborates on the miracle of the dividing of the waters announced in the chorus "He Rebuked the Red Sea" (No. 12) from Part One. Although the brief chorus from the first part carries a tremendous impact, it does not depict or describe the miracle. The graphic representation of the event is provided in No. 27--after the fact, upon recollection of the incident.

The chorus is based on five thematic ideas, two of which ('a' and 'd' in example 81) are Handel's; the remaining three come from Erba's aria. Perhaps, though, the repeated notes at the words "gathered together" (see motive 'b') suggested to Handel the use of reiterated tones, albeit in a different rhythm, for "the floods stood upright as an heap" (cf. example 81, motives 'b' and 'd').

The vivid portrayal of this astounding supernatural event results from the felicitous manner with which Handel has adapted and fused the substance of Erba's piece with his own original material. Example 82 constitutes a

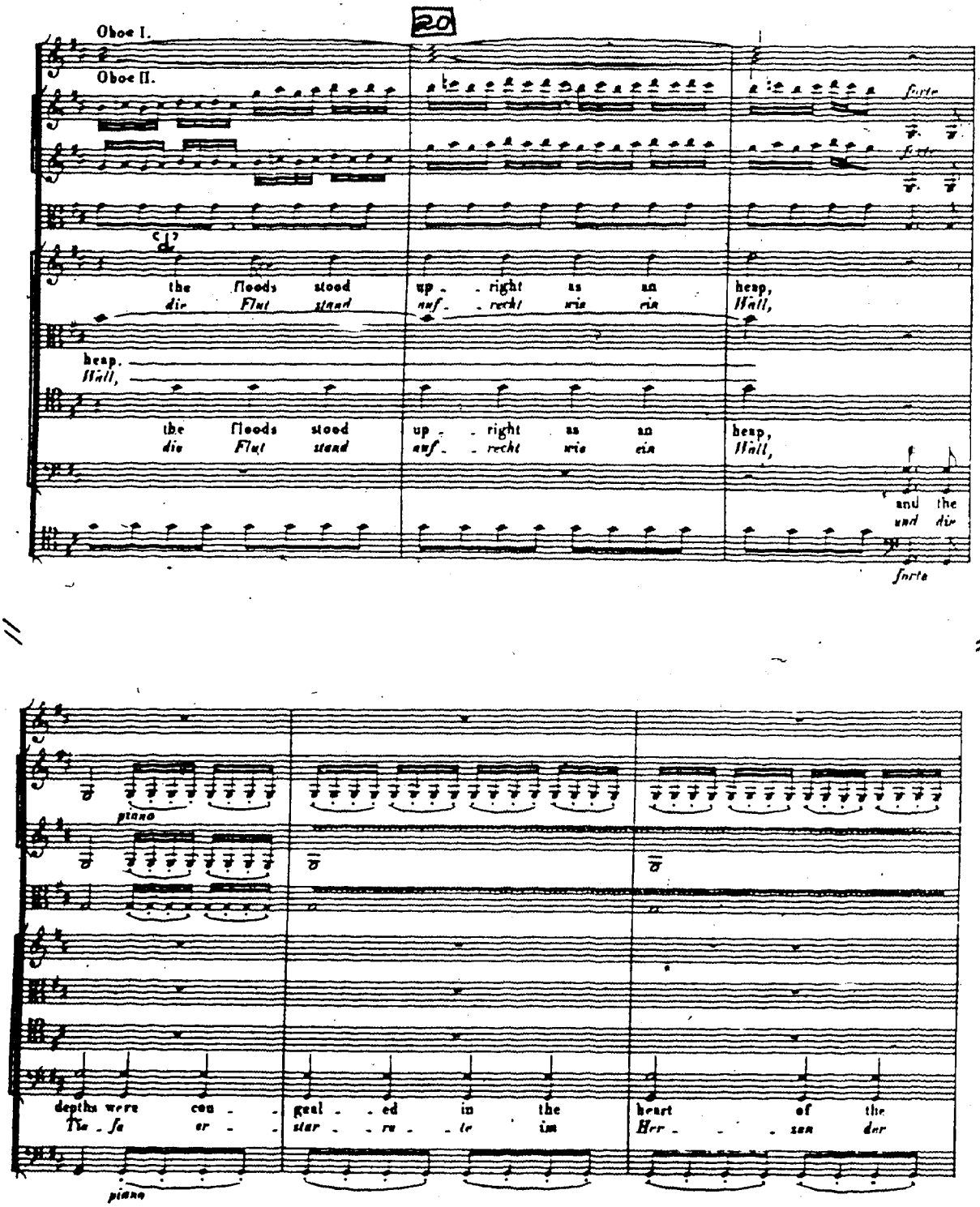
Example 81. Chorus, "And With the Blast of Thy Nostrils," Thematic material of the piece.

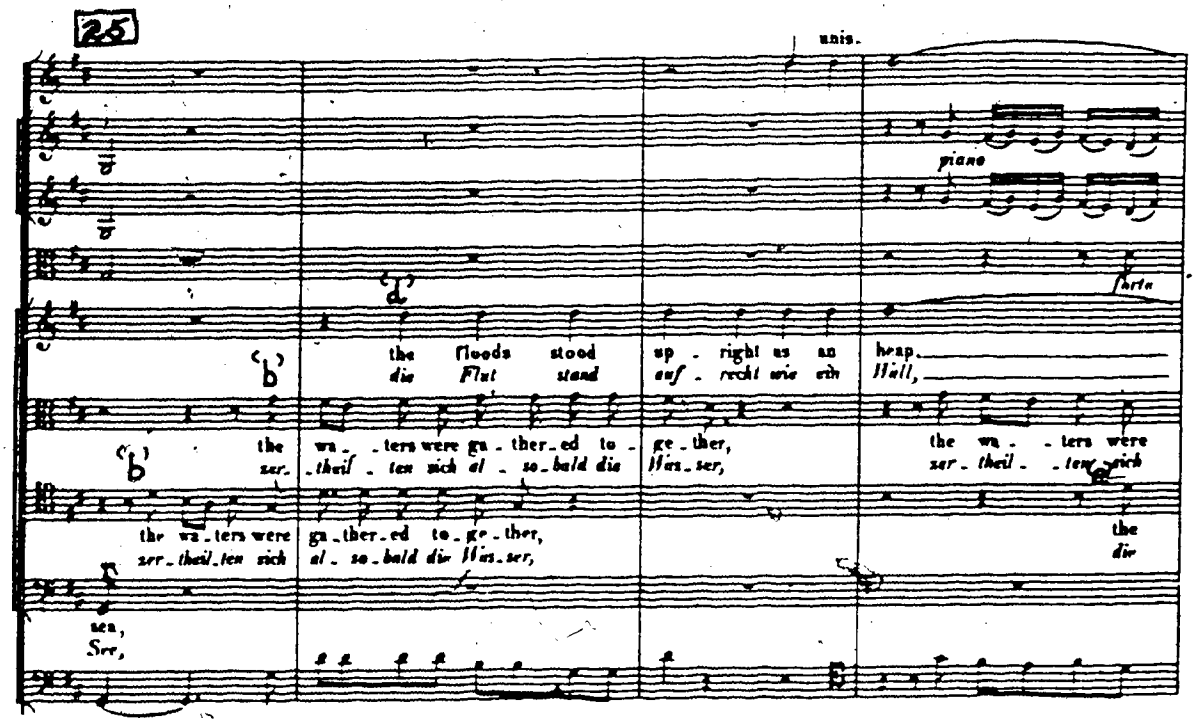


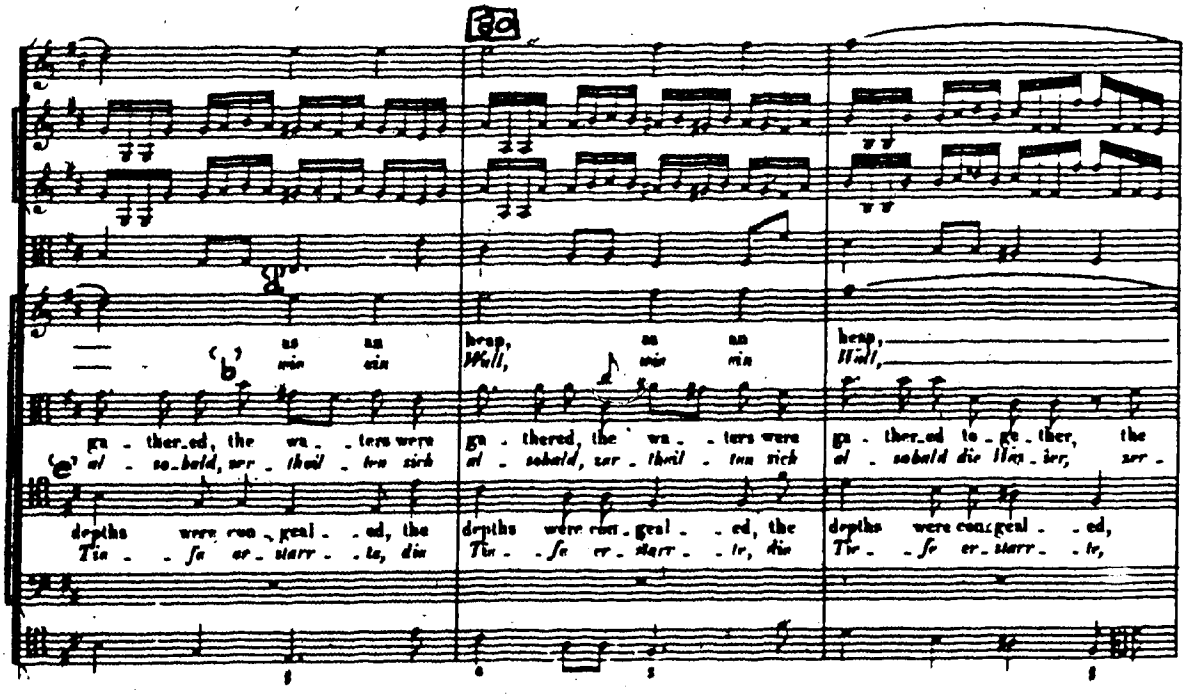
quotation of thirteen measures (meas. 19-31) from the chorus, a quotation which shows Handelian features both juxtaposed with and superimposed on the basic Erba material. Macfarren has aptly expressed the symbolism inherent in the various thematic components of the piece, several of which can be observed in example 82:

> The breathing of Omnipotence is represented by the streaming, gradual, accelerated motion of instruments and voices with which the Chorus opens; the accumulation of waters, by the close and constant imitations in answers at the period of half a bar, of . . . [motive 'b'], which are interrupted by this conspicuously contrasted phrase [motive 'c'], suggestive of

Example 82. Chorus, "And With the Blast of Thy Nostrils," measures 19-31. (pp. 198-199).




25
unis.
piano
the floods stood up - right as an heap.
die Flut stand auf - recht wie ein Hauf,
the wa - ters were ge - ther - ed to - ge - ther, the wa - ters were
ser - theil - ten sich al - so - bald die Was - ser, ser - theil - ten sich
the wa - ters were ge - ther - ed to - ge - ther, the
ser - theil - ten sich al - so - bald die Was - ser, die
sea,
See,


26
as an heap, as an heap,
wie ein Hauf, wie ein Hauf,
ge - ther - ed, the wa - ters were ge - thered, the wa - ters were ge - ther - ed to - ge - ther, the
al - so - bald, ser - theil - ten sich al - sobald, ser - theil - ten sich al - sobald die Was - ser, ser -
depths were con - geal - ed, the depths were con - geal - ed, the depths were con - geal - ed,
Tie - fe er - starr - te, die Tie - fe er - starr - te, die Tie - fe er - starr - te,

> the sudden paralisation in one rigid mass of the ever-moving fluid; the towering, inflexible, impassable wall of waters is depicted by the slow, measured, always distinct, monotonous enunciation, on a high note for whichever of the voices utter it, of the eight emphatic syllables, "the floods stood upright as an heap:" opposed to this is the representation of extreme depth by the low note of the bass voices accompanied with the resonant tone of the open string of all the bow [sic] instruments and the deep pedal pipe of the organ [at the first appearance of the words "and the depths were congealed in the heart of the sea" (see meas. 21-24)].[25]

Additionally, the cessation of harmonic movement in measures 19-24 is intended to portray what Macfarren called "the towering, inflexible, impassable, wall of waters."[26] According to one Bible commentary, the words "the depths were congealed" should be interpreted as "not solid as ice [which the word 'congealed' implies], but in a wall-like formation contrary to nature"[27] The long sustained oboes tones (see example 82)--and the breath support required to perform them--are symbolic, perhaps, of the sustaining forces of Omnipotence. Except during the instrumental coda, the oboes appear only in conjunction with the phrase "the floods stood upright as a heap." Perhaps here, as was suggested in connection with the aria "Thou Didst Blow" (No. 29), a kind of musical pun was intended.

---

[25] Macfarren, Analysis, p. 22.

[26] Ibid.

[27] F. Davidson, A.M. Stibbs, and E. F. Kevan, eds. The New Bible Commentary, 2nd ed. (Chicago: Intervarsity Christian Fellowship, 1954), p. 116.

Notice in example 82, above, the combination of motive 'd' with motive 'b' in measures 26-35, the appearance in measures 28-35 of motive 'e' against motive 'b' and 'd', and the sixteenth notes of the violins which derive from the opening measures of the piece. The symbolism here of the water towering ever higher as the waters gather and congeal by the force of Divine wind becomes even more vivid as the result of a rising melodic-harmonic sequential passage. As a result of the tonal shifts engendered by the sequence, the harmony at this point becomes more chromatic as the piece leaves G major (the subdominant) and passes through A minor and B minor to C-sharp major (V/V in B minor), which functions as V of F-sharp minor, the tonality of several measures to follow (see measures 35-40 which are based on motive 'e'). Measures 42-60 are similar to measures 25-40, except for the tonal movement, which returns to the tonic from the mediant, the characteristic broadening of the concluding vocal phrase of the piece (which explains the three-measure differential between measures 25-40 and 42-60--a two-measure link [meas. 40-41] for the alto voices connects the two sections), and the poignancy of the half-diminished seventh chord in measure 57. Handel has given special emphasis in measure 5 o the word congealed," not only by the choice of chord (VII^7 of V), but also by having all four voice parts sustain the strong accent of the word for three beats. Following the authentic cadence for the chorus in measure 60,

a twelve-measure contrapuntal coda for oboes, strings, and continuo "closely modelled"[28] on the twelve concluding measures of Erba's piece ensues.

No. 33. "The People Shall Hear"

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes and bassoons; strings, and continuo

Tonality: E minor

Meter: C

Performance Designation: Largo e staccato

Textual Source: Exodus 15:14-16

Musical Source: A five-note motive from the duet "Amiche-Nemiche" in Stradella's Serenata generates measures 25-56, the 'shall melt away' section.

This chorus has been referred to as "probably the greatest of all Handel's polyphonic compositions. . . ."[29] Tovey stated that in this piece "all the noblest aspects of Handel's genius are concentrated and contrasted with a power unsurpassed and . . . unequalled, even in . . . Messiah."[30] Grout also speaks highly of this movement: its "profound and moving symbolism lifts this chorus to an

---

[28]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 152.

[29]Ibid., p. 162.

[30]Tovey, Essays, 5:110.

eminence hardly equalled elsewhere even by Handel himself."[31]

A comparison of the text of this chorus with the texts of the previous sixteen movements of Part Two reveals a striking contrast: whereas the texts until this point have been in the past tense, the text of "The People Shall Hear" constitutes a sudden shift to future tense.[32] Macfarren comments on this grammatical about-face:

> The rejoicing and thanksgiving of the present, on account of the glorious wonders of the most recent past, are here suspended for the contemplation of the no less glorious if less awful wonders of the future, that Divine promise has assured to the enfranchised people. The happy goal of all their desire is but to be gained by means of the still further miraculous intervention of the same Power which has brought the Israelites thus far towards it; and their only prospect of the land of promise is through the idea of the total overthrow of the nation that now luxuriates in its rich fertility. The vague apprehension of a coming event is a remotely different feeling from the definite recollection of one we have witnessed, and the dreamy, mysterious foreboding is the feeling the composer here embodies, in opposition to the living consciousness he has realized in the foregoing development of his subject.[33]

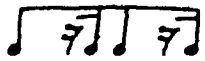
In addition to the shift in textual emphasis, the textural, tonal, and rhythmic contrasts with the preceding alto and tenor duet (No. 32, "Thou in Thy Mercy") heighten the impact of this chorus. The tonal shift from D minor of the duet to E minor of the chorus certainly defies the

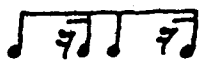
---

[31]Grout, History of Western Music, p. 144.

[32]See also the discussion of No. 34, the alto aria "Thou Shalt Bring Them In," on p. 84.

[33]Macfarren, Analysis, p. 25.

conventional tonal schemes typical of this period; indeed, this shift up a major second creates a startling effect. Moveover, with the exception of the 'darkness' chorus (No. 8) from Part One, the harmonic vocabulary of the piece is more chromatic and the modulations more far reaching than in any other movement in the oratorio. The  rhythmic figure, coupled with the chromaticism of the harmony, constitutes another important factor in creating what Dean calls "dramatic tension."[34]

This chorus consists of four sections which follow the four divisions in the text: measures 1-15 ("The people shall hear and be afraid"); measures 16-23 ("Sorrow shall take hold on them"); measures 24-60 ("All th'inhabitants of Canaan shall melt away by the greatness of Thy arm"); and measures 61-105 ("They shall be as still as a stone, till Thy people pass over, O Lord, which Thou has purchased."). The  figure is repeated almost unceasingly in the orchestra throughout the first sixty measures, thereby bringing unity to the movement.

In addition to the accompanying rhythmic figure in the orchestra, Handel has employed several musical devices which enhance the ominous quality of the text: the broad declamatory setting of "the people shall hear," the increasingly longer silences in the vocal parts after each utterance of "and be afraid" (see measures 12-16), expressive and poignant harmony (diminished seventh chords

---

[34]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 115.

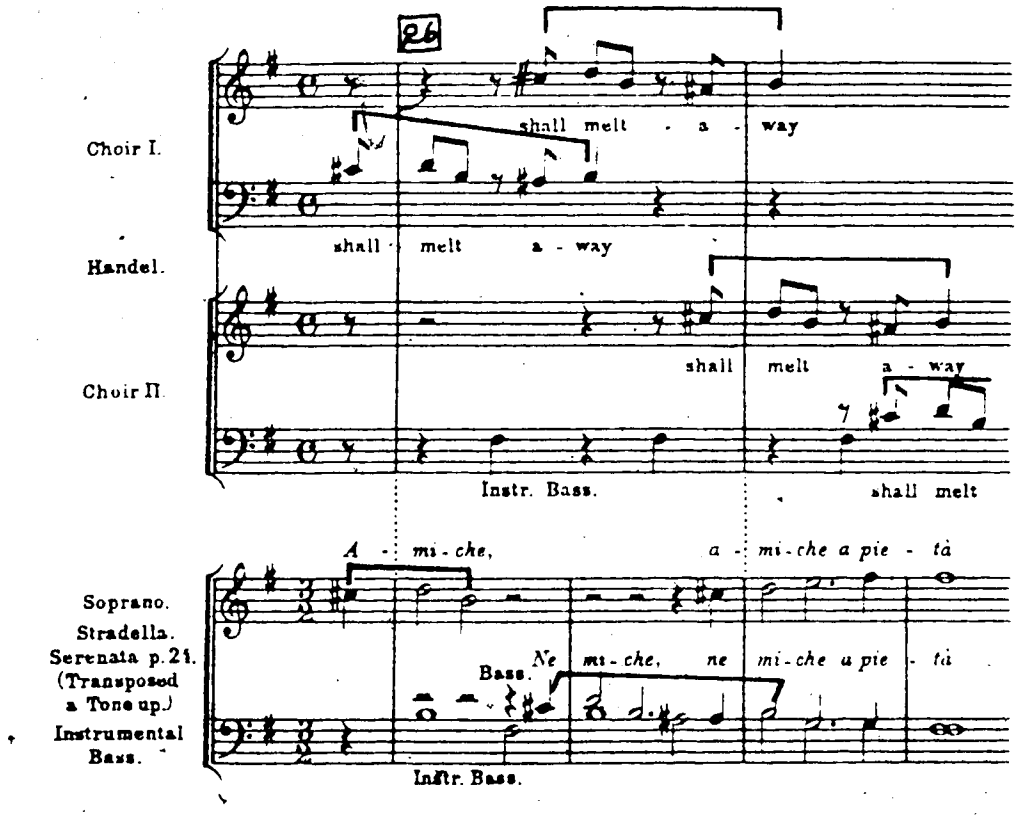
in measures 12-13 at "and be afraid" and in measure 18, beat 3 at "hold"), suspensions (measures 17-19 at "sorrow shall take hold on them"), and dynamic contrast.

The transition to the third section of the movement is indeed dramatic. The last four measures (measures 20-23) of the second section are clearly in E minor, ending (in measure 23) on a dominant chord. This dominant chord is not, however, resolved conventionally; rather, Handel simply lowers the third of V (in measure 24), and in eight-part homophony the voices thunder forth with "all th'inhabitants of Canaan" on a B minor chord which resolves to its dominant (F-sharp major) in measure 25. The ensuing "shall melt away" section commences in B minor.

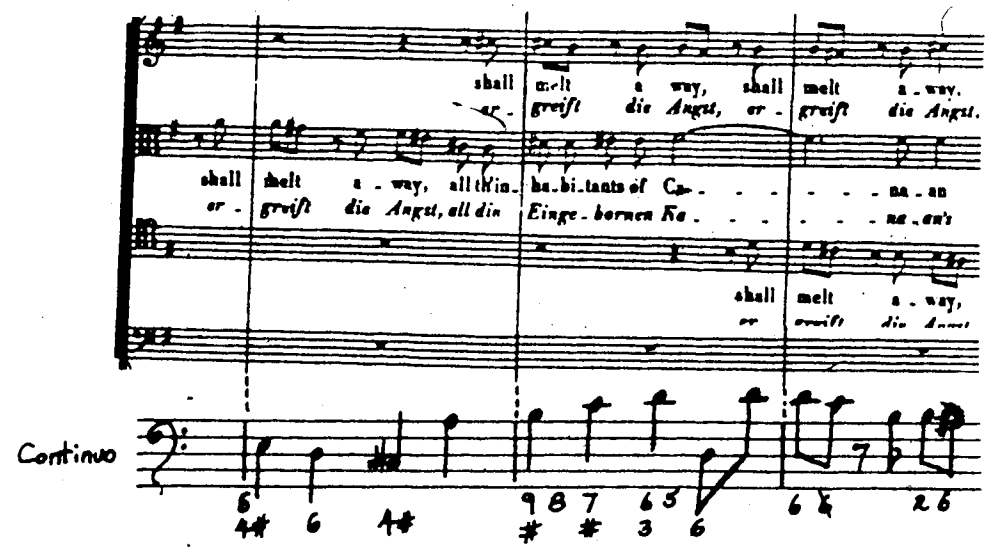
Example 83 below shows the relationship of the motive in Stradella's Serenata to that used in the "shall melt away" section. In Handel's chorus the motive undergoes extensive imitative treatment as well as modification for expressive purposes. Rather than retaining the basic melodic shape of the motive as first presented in measures 26-29, Handel modified it as shown in example 84. The resulting suspensions (6-5, 4-3, 9-8) at the words "melt" and the second syllable of "away" intensify the harmony of the passage, thereby emphasizing the important words of the phrase.

Tonally, the movement moves farthest from E minor in this section, touching, in measure 45, on C-sharp minor.

Example 83. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear," meas. 26-27. Motive at 'shall melt away' based on Stradella's piece (p. 231, meas. 3-4).[35]



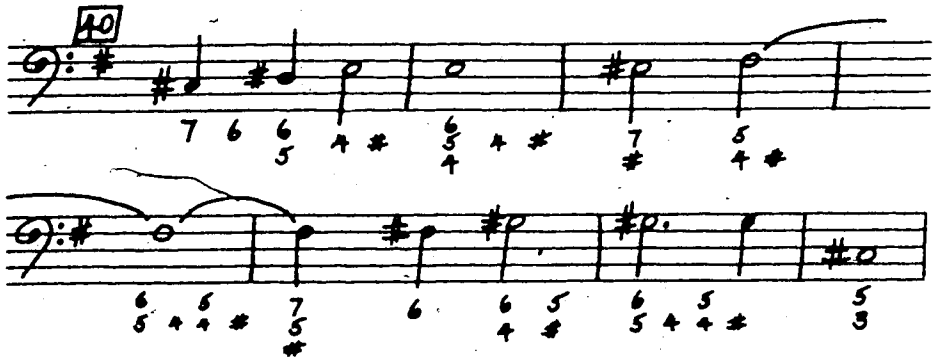
Example 84. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear," meas. 32-34. Handel's modification of Stradella's motive (p. 232, meas. 3 - p. 233, meas. 2).



[35]Taylor, Indebtedness of Handel, p. 163.

Particularly expressive here is the ascending chromatic line from D sharp to G sharp (see example 85). Other instances in this chorus where a chromatically moving bass is used occur at measures 3-6, 11-12, and 77-92.

Example 85. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear." Harmonic movement in meas. 40-45.[36]



In measure 46, the mode changes from the C-sharp minor six-four chord of measure 45 to a C-sharp major triad which functions as V of F sharp, the F-sharp major chord in turn serving as a dominant and bringing this section of the movement back to B minor in measure 50. In measures 52-55, the melodic shape of the Stradella motive reappears for the last time.

In measure 57-60, the chorus--in eight-part homophony and accompanied by the full orchestra (marked forte)--emphatically proclaims the way in which all the inhabitants

---

[36]The F-sharp accidental in the fifth measure of the example should be interpreted in performance--as it is in certain editions--as F-double sharp, because F-sharp is already implicit in the key signature and has not been altered in the previous measures to F-natural.

of Canaan shall be destroyed: "by the greatness of Thy arm." In measures 61 and 62, the entire orchestra and all of the voices except the basses of both choirs and the tenors of choir I are silent. The final section of the piece commences here with the aforementioned male voices singing in unison (mezzo piano) "they shall be as still as a stone," set to a repeated note with an octave drop at "as a stone," the octave drop "echoing" as Dean suggests "the stone that 'sank into the bottom'"[37] (see No. 23, "The Depths Have Cover'd Them"). The contrast in texture and dynamics is nowhere in this chorus more dramatic than between measures 60 and 61 at the transition to the final section of the movement. This depiction of stillness, the stillness of death, is repeated again in measures 70 and 71, although without an octave drop.

In his comments on this final section of the chorus, Winton Dean states that "the physical image [of the Israelites crossing over the Jordan river into Canaan] has been translated into a perfect musical metaphor."[38] Dean's reference is especially to the first three measures shown in example 86 (see p. 233) where "the basses of both choirs hold the word 'stone' for two and a half bars, while first trebles and altos and then the tenors and basses pass over in thirds to the other side."[39] Lang points out the

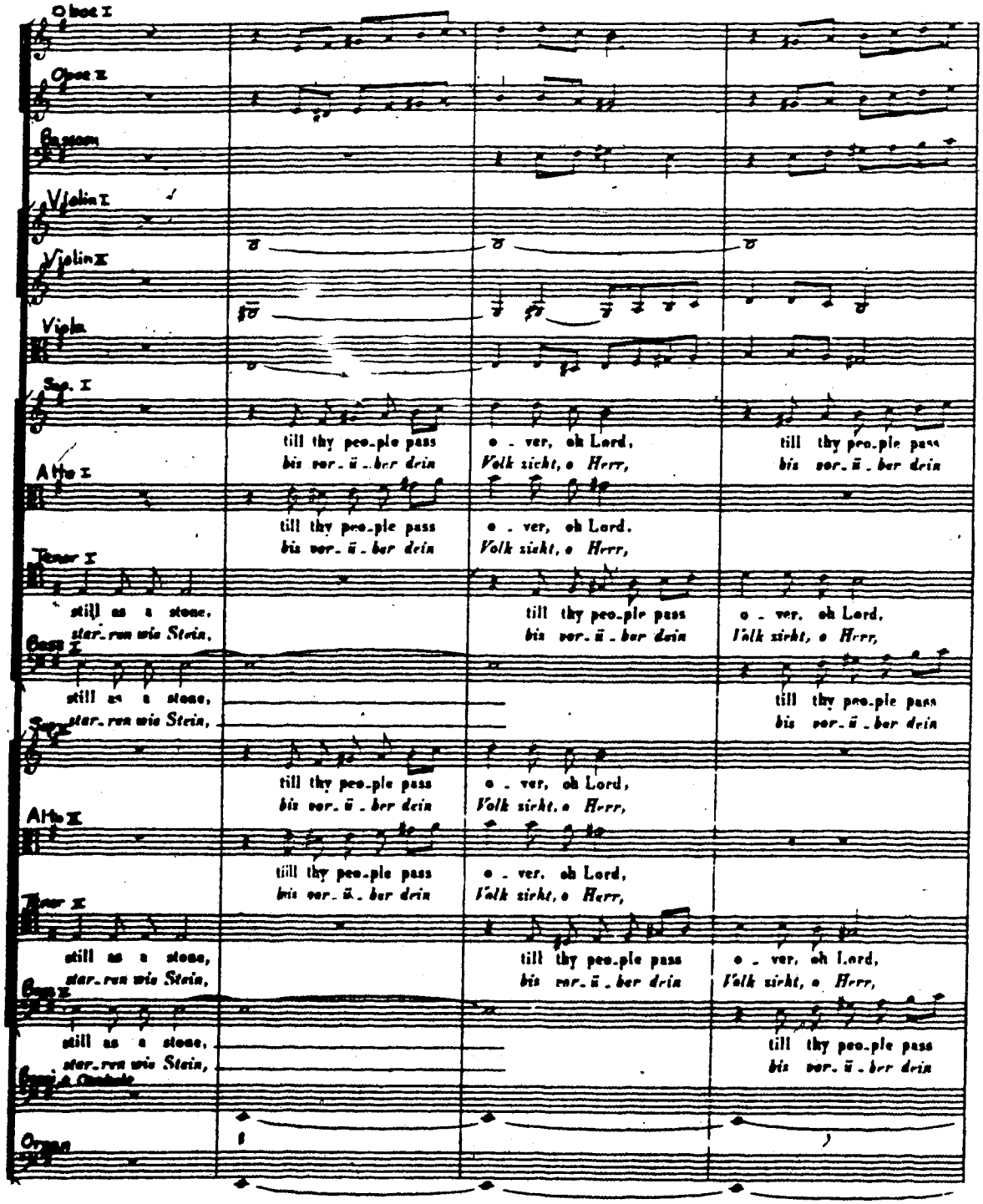
---

[37]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 318.

[38]Ibid., p. 319.

[39]Ibid.

Example 86. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear," meas. 71-74. Symbolistic treatment of the text (p. 242, meas. 1-4).



subtlety of the symbolism here as one pair of voices literally passes over another in a piece of "eye music."[40] This type of melodic motion (ascending minor scales) and the overlapping of voices characterizes the entire final section, not, however, without several brief homophonic passages at the words "which thou hast purchased" to provide textural contrast (see meas. 68-70, 76-77, 93-94, 99-101, and 102-105).

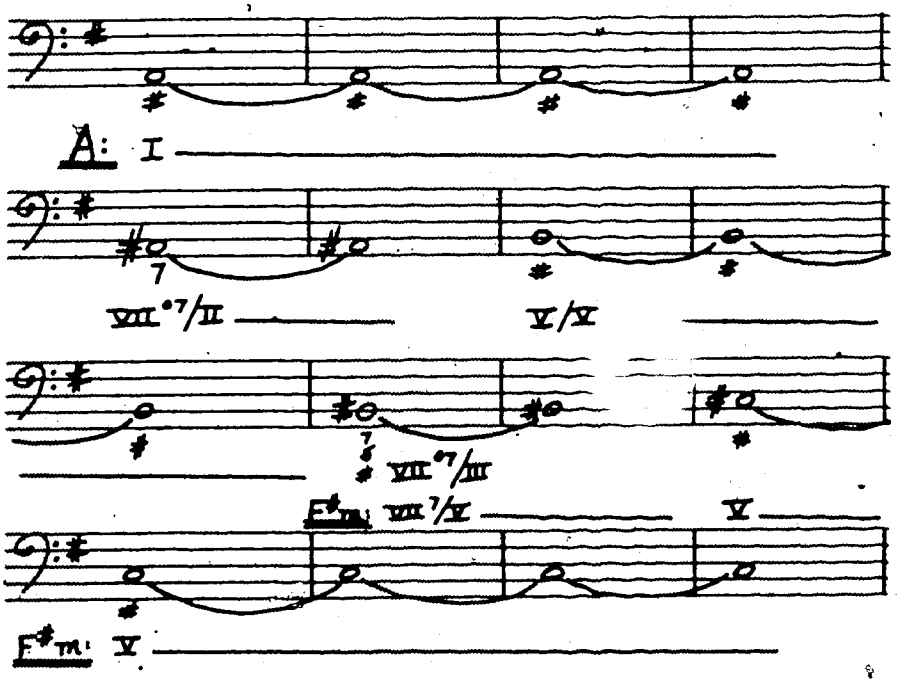
An additional important characteristic of this final segment of the chorus is the frequent use of a static bass line for the bass instruments: measures 63-68, 72-75 (see example 86), 77-80, 81-82, 83-85, 86-87, 88-92, 95-96, and 97-99. The static bass lines--quasi pedal points--not only contrast dramatically with the restless orchestral figure of measures 1-60, but they also possess extraordinary symbolic significance: "ideas of stillness and of a bridge (?stepping stones) over which the people shall pass. . . ."[41] An examination of the respective pitches employed for each of the nine sustained bass tones reveals a chromatically ascending melodic progression (A to C-sharp) from measures 77-92 (the third through seventh sustained tones). This chromatic line results as well in poignant chromatic harmony (see example 87 for the chords involved).

---

[40]Lang, Handel, p. 633.

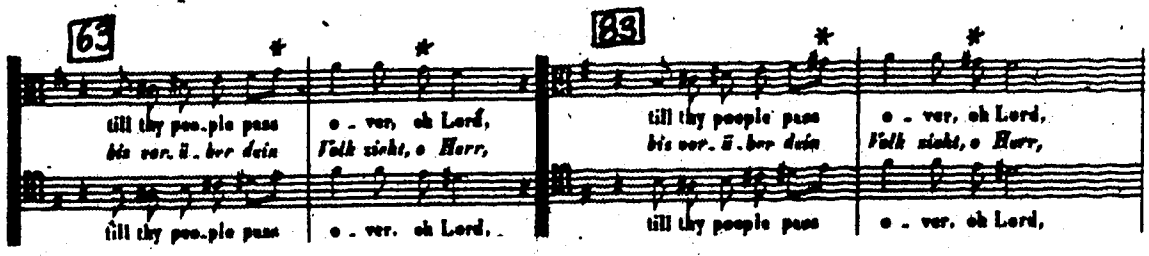
[41]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 318.

Example 87. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear," meas. 77-90. Chromatically ascending bass line.



A comparison of measure 63 with measure 83 reveals Handel's ingenuity in avoiding a redundancy by changing the mode of the scale from minor to major (see example 88).

Example 88. Double Chorus, "The People Shall Hear." Comparison of measures 63 and 83.



Tovey has commented upon the "gratuitously major"[42] scale; although the minor version would work equally well here, the major quality of the scale allows for a refreshing contrast in colour.

Following a final statement of "till Thy people pass over" by the sopranos in unison (meas. 101-102), the movement concludes in the typical Handelian style with a broad declamation of "which Thou hast purchased."

No. 39, "Sing Ye to the Lord"

Soprano solo

Two four-part choruses

Orchestration: Paired oboes, bassoons in unison, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and continuo

Tonality: C major

Meter: C

Performance Designation: A Tempo giusto

Textual Source: Exodus 15:21

Musical Source: See discussion below

The movement is preceded by a six-measure secco recitative based on Exodus 15:20, 21. The recitative concludes with the words "And Miriam answered them:" whereupon the final piece of the oratorio ensues. The movement begins with an unaccompanied soprano solo for Miriam, the prophetess, in which she instructs the Israelites to "Sing. . .

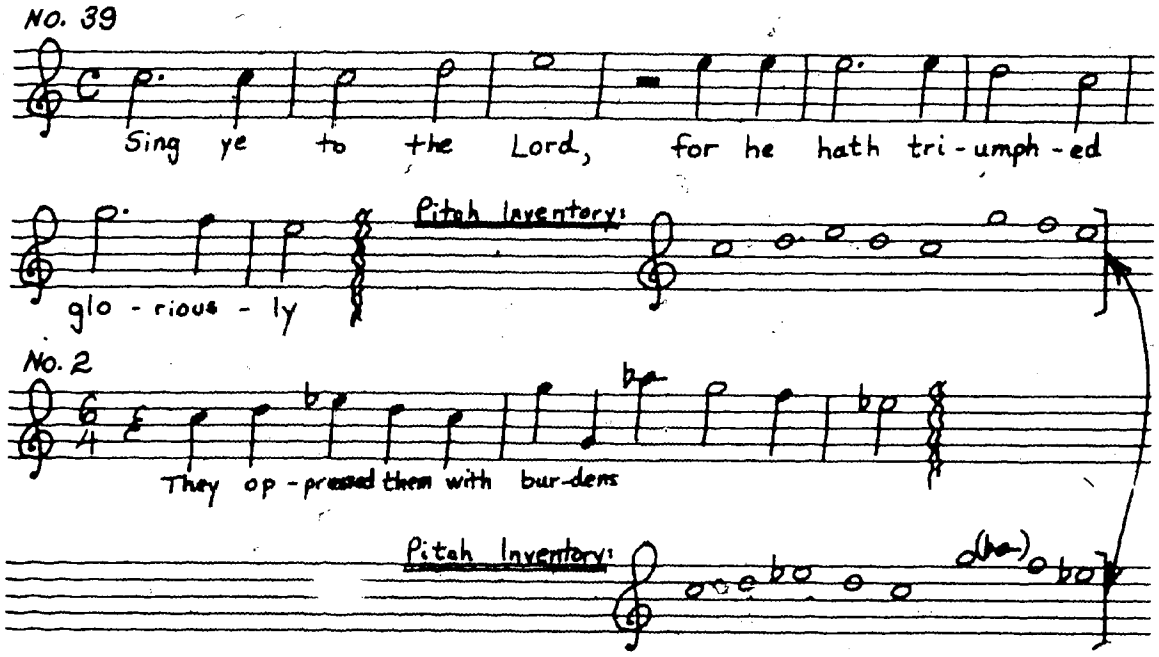
---

[42]Tovey, Essays, 5:112.

to the Lord, for He hath triumphed gloriously." Miriam's solo (measures 1-8 and 13-18) constitutes the melody which is repeated and harmonized by the choirs and orchestra in measures 8-13 and 18-23, the choral-orchestral material comprising a restatement of measures 6-17 of the chorus "The Lord Shall Reign Forever and Ever," heard earlier (Nos. 35 and 37). The remainder of the final movement (beginning in measure 23) consists of a note for note repetition of all but the first four measures of No. 18, "I Will Sing Unto the Lord." Although the movement contains no new musical material, the juxtaposition of an unaccompanied solo soprano voice and two four-part choruses accompanied by the full orchestra (see measures 1-23) creates a stupendous impact hardly equalled elsewhere in the oratorio.

The jubilant quality of this terminating movement of the oratorio contrasts markedly with the somber quality of the opening chorus (in C minor); there is, however, a subtle musical relationship between the two choruses. The relationship extends beyond the fact that both choruses have the same tonal centre (although with a contrast in mode). A comparison of the melodic material used for "they oppressed them with burdens and made them serve" from the opening chorus with measures 1-8 of Miriam's solo reveals a striking similarity in intervallic structure, as shown in example 89. (I consider the octave drop of the 'oppressed' motive to be inconsequential here, because it introduces no new pitches into the structural design and also because it arrives at a weak beat in the measure,

Example 89. The relationship between the first and last choruses.



having the effect of a rebound.) The next tone (the A-flat in the example) functions as an upper neighbouring tone and does not effect the structure of the motive. What is left, then, is a series of pitches common to both of the movements, allowing, of course, for the modal alteration. The alteration of mode--and it is a very telling one--from minor to major, the textual matter, the broad and majestic rhythmic structure, and the emphasis on 'gloriously' (the high G), together result in a dramatic change in mood from the oppression of the beginning of the oratorio to the triumphant and glorious conclusion.

CHAPTER XI

CONCLUSIONS

Israel in Egypt for several reasons is an unusual work: it lacks a convincing beginning which Handel endeavoured to resolve--but not, it seems, with any satisfaction--by using the *Funeral Anthem*; it consists of a preponderance of choruses which results in a certain textural imbalance; and, it represents the most extreme manifestation of Handel's practice of appropriation. In spite of these ostensible shortcomings "there is" as Lang points out, "an impressiveness about *Israel in Egypt* that . . . satisfies."[1] The impressiveness derives, I believe, from Handel's flexible choral technique.

Because there are so few solo pieces in the oratorio, the textural variety which would normally result from the alternation of recitative, aria, and chorus must be achieved primarily by contrasts between the choruses. The analysis presented in the foregoing chapters--especially chapters VIII, IX, and X--reveals considerable variety in Handel's choruses.

As pointed out in chapter I, *Israel in Egypt* is not, in any strict sense, a dramatic oratorio; it evinces, nevertheless, expressive dramatic qualities. As Dean observes, "it

---

[1] Lang, *Handel*, p. 311.

is the manipulation of the chorus [in Israel in Egypt] that stirs the dramatist in Handel."[2] Much of the dramatic effect depends on the juxtaposition of different types of choruses: brief homophonic prelude, extended homophonic chorus, fugue, double fugue, antiphonal chorus, cantus firmus-type movement, and choral recitative. Characteristic of the dramatic qualities referred to in the foregoing sentence are, for example, the contrasts between the choruses in Part One dealing with the Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea, the destruction of the Egyptians, and the Israelites' reaction to these events (Nos. 12-16).

Many of the striking effects achieved in Israel in Egypt result not only from the contrasts from one movement to another, but also from Handel's response to the influence of the words. More often than not, we see Handel's vivid imagination at work. Word painting, pictorialization, and symbolism abound, for example, in the movements which describe the plagues. Some typical illustrations include the drop of a seventh at the words "the deep" in "He led Them Through the Deep" (No. 13), the chromatic harmony and nebulous tonal structure of the 'darkness' chorus (No. 9), the orchestral depiction of hopping frogs (No.5) and buzzing insects (No. 6), and the a cappella setting of the words "and it was dried up" in the preludial chorus "He Rebuked the Red Sea."

---

[2]Dean, Dramatic Oratorios, p. 317.

Israel in Egypt demonstrates Handel's remarkable dexterity at manipulating appropriated material from which derives almost half of the oratorio's movements. Apart from the three appropriated fugal movements which underwent almost no change (Nos. 11, 26, and 31), the nineteen pieces which derive either in whole or in part from earlier sources are skillfully improved and woven in to the entire fabric of the oratorio, and often with dramatic results (Nos. 7, 9, and 14 from Part One, and Nos. 20, 24, and 33 from Part Two are good examples).

Part One divides, textually at least, into four sections: 1) Nos. 1-2, which reveal the oppression of the Israelites, constitute the prologue; 2) Nos. 3-9 recount the plagues brought to bear upon the Egyptians; 3) Nos. 10-14 deal with the deliverance of the Israelites and the destruction of the Egyptians; and 4) Nos. 15-16, which acquaint us with the Israelites' contemplation of the dramatic events which they have witnessed and experienced, serve as the postlude. In Part One, Handel succeeds, I believe, in depicting "the underlying feelings and emotions of a mass of people sometimes with the most dramatic results."[3] Part Two, the Israelite's' anthem of praise, evinces a greater degree of musical unity than Part One because of the repetition at the end of the chorus "I Will Sing Unto the Lord" which was presented earlier (as the fugal consequence to the opening

---

[3]Ardrey, "Influences of Carissimi," p. 32.

preludial chorus). Part Two possesses, as well, a satisfying balance between choral and solo movements because of the fact that three of the oratorio's four arias, all of the duets, and two of the four recitatives are contained herein.

Israel in Egypt as a whole may be somewhat unbalanced because of the preponderance of choruses, but it is just this fact which imparts uniqueness to the oratorio. Moreover, because of the numerous appropriations in the oratorio, we are provided with considerable insight into the modus operandi of Handel, the composer of whom Beethoven once remarked: he is "the master of us all."[4]

---

[4]Quoted in William H. Harris, "The Organ Works of Bach and Handel," Music and Letters 16 (October 1935):304.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books and Articles

Abraham, Gerald, ed. Handel: a Symposium. London: Oxford University Press, 1954.

_____. "A New Approach to Handel." The Score 26 (January 1960):46-51.

Allam, Edward. "Alessandro Stradella." Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 80 (1953-1954):29-41.

Ardrey, Roger W. "The Influences of the Extendend Latin Sacred Works of Giacomo Carissimi on the Biblical Oratorios of George Frederic Handel." Unpublished Ph. D. dissertation, Musicology, Catholic University, 1964.

Bell, A. Craig. Handel: A Chronological Thematic Catalogue. Darley, Yorkshire: Grian-Aig Press, 1972

_____. "Handel in Italy." Music Review 28 (May 1967): 85-101.

Blandford, W.F.H. "Handel's Horn and Trombone Parts." Musical Times 80 (1939):697-699, 746-747, 794.

Blom, Eric, ed. Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. 5th ed. London: MacMillan & Co., 1954.

Bukofzer, Manfred. Music in the Baroque Era. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1947.

Carse, Adam. The History of Orchestration. London: Kegan Paul, French, Trubner, & Co., 1925; reprint ed., New York: Dover Publications, 1964.

_____. Musical Wind Instruments. London, 1939; reprint ed., New York: Da Capo Press, 1965.

_____. The Orchestra in the XVIII Century. Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1940.

Chorley, H.F. Handel Studies. London: Augener & Co., 1859.

Clausen, Hans Dieter. "Händel's Direktionspartituren (Handexemplare)." Hamburger Beiträge Zur Muiskwissemschaft. Herausgegeben von Georg von Dadelsen. Band 7. Hamburg: Verlag der Musikalienhandlung, Karl Dieter Wagner, 1972.

Cudworth, Charles L. Handel. London: Clive Bingley, 1972.

_____. "Handel and the French Style." Music and Letters 40 (April 1959):122-131.

Dart, Thurston. "Handel and the Continuo." Musical Times 106 (May 1965):348-350.

Davidson, F., A.M. Stibbs, and E.K. Kevan, eds. The New Bible Commentary, 2nd ed. Chicago: Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship, 1954.

Davison, Archibald T. Bach and Handel: The Consummation of the Baroque in Music. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1951.

Dean, Winton. Handel and the Opera Seria. London: Oxford University Press, 1970.

_____. Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques. London: Oxford University Press, 1959.

_____. "Handel Reconsidered." The Score 9 (September 1954): 49-53.

Dent, Edward J. "English Influences on Handel." Monthly Musical Record 61 (August 1931):225-228.

Deutsch, Otto Erich. Handel, A Documentary Biography. London: Adam & Charles Black, 1955.

Faugerstrom, Eugene M. "The Dramatic Function of the Chorus in English Oratorio from 1880 to the Present." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, History and Literature, Northwestern University, 1964.

Fink, Harold J. "The Doctrine of Affections and Handel: The Background, Theory, and Practice of the Doctrine of Affections; With a Comprehensive Analysis of the Oratorios of G.F. Handel." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Western Reserve University, 1953.

Flower, Newman. George Frideric Handel: His Personality and His Times. Revised ed. London: Cassell & Co., 1959, Panther Books, 1972.

Göllner, Theodor. "Zur Sprachvertonung in Händel's Chören." Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgerchiechte 42 (1968):481-492.

Grout, Donald Jay. A History of Western Music. Revised ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1973.

Handel, Georg Friedrich. "Israel in Egypt": an Oratorio [the libretto] with an Analysis of the Oratorio written expressly for the Sacred Harmonic Society by G.A. Macfarren. London, 1857.

Harman, Alex and Milner, Anthony. Man and His Music: Late Renaissance and Baroque Music. London: Barrie and Rockliff, 1959.

Harris, William H. "The Organ Works of Bach and Handel." Music and Letters 16 (October 1935):296-304.

Hawkins, Sir John. A General History of the Science and Practice of Music. 5 Vols. London: T. Payne & Son 1776; 2 Vol. reprint ed., New York Dover Publications, 1963.

Hitchcock, H. Wiley. "The Latin Oratorios of Marc-Antoine Charpentier." Musical Quarterly 41 (January 1955): 41-65.

Lang, Paul Henry. George Frideric Handel. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1966.

_____. Music in Western Civilization. New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1941.

Larsen, Jens Peter. Handel's "Messiah": Origins, Composition, Sources. 2nd ed. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.,1972.

Leichtentritt, Hugo R. "Handel's Harmonic Art," Musical Quarterly 21 (April 1935):208-223.

Macfarren, George A. "Handel and Bach." Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 11 (1884-1885):33-50, 63-79.

Myers, Robert M. Early Moral Criticism of Handelian Oratorio. Williamsburg, Virginia: Manson Pack Press, 1947.

Palisca, Claude V. Baroque Music. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968.

Prout, Ebenezer. "Handel's Orchestration." Musical Times 25 (1884):12-13, 69-70, 138-141, 193-196, 256-260, 326-329.

Prout, Ebenezer. "The Orchestras of Bach and Handel." Proceedings of the Musical Assocation 12 (1885-1886): 23-42.

Redlich, Hans F. "Handel in Our Time." Proceedings of the Royal Musical Association 80 (1953-54):87-98.

Robinson, Percy. "Erba, Urio, Stradella, and Handel." Musical Times 65 (July 1924):607-608.

_____. Handel and His Orbit. Manchester: Sheratt & Hughes, 1908.

_____. "Handel, Erba, and Urio, Musical Times 46 (December 1905):800-801.

_____. "Handel, or Urio, Stradella and Erba." Music and Letters 16 (October 1935):269-277.

_____. "Was Handel a Plagiarist?" Musical Times 80 (August 1939):573-577.

Schering, Arnold. "Händel und der protestantische Choral." Händel-Jahrbuch 1 (1928):27-40.

Smither, Howard E. "The Baroque Oratorio: A Report on Research Since 1945," Acta Musicologica 48 (1976): 50-76.

_____. A History of the Oratorio. Vol.1. The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

_____. A History of the Oratorio. Vol. 2. The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Protestant Germany and England. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1977.

Sternberg, Constantin von. "On Plagiarism." Musical Quarterly 5 (July 1919):390-397.

Streatfeild, Richard A. Handel. London: Methuen & Co., 1910; reprint ed. New York: Da Capo Press, 1964.

Taylor, Sedley. The Indebtedness of Handel to Works by Other Composers: a Presentation of Evidence. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1906; New York: Johnson Reprint Corporation, 1971.

Thrall, Josephine. Oratorios and Masses. Unnumbered volume. The Imperial History and Encyclopedia of Music. Edited by Edward Dickinson. New York: Irving Squire, n.d.

Tobin, John. Handel's "Messiah": A Critical Account of the Manuscript Sources and Printed Editions. London: Cassell & Co., 1969.

Tovey, Donald F. Essays in Musical Analysis. Vol. 5: Vocal Music. London: Oxford University Press, 1937.

Ulrich, Homer. A Survey of Choral Music. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1973.

van der Straeten, E. "Handel's Use of Uncommon Instruments and Combinations." Musical Times 67 (July 1926):607-610

Webster's New World Dictionary. 2nd College Ed. Toronto: Nelson, Foster, & Scott, 1970.

Westrup, J.A. "Purcell and Handel." Music and Letters 40 (April 1959):103-108.

Wintersgill, H.H. "Handel's Two-Length Bar." Music and Letters 17 (January 1936):1-12.

Young, Percy M. The Choral Tradition. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1962.

_____. The Oratorios of Handel. London: Dobson, 1948.

Zimmerman, Franklin B. "Musical Borrowings in the English Baroque." Musical Quarterly 52 (October 1966): 483-495.

Music: Primary Sources

Handel, Georg F. Israel in Egypt. Autograph manuscript. Located in the British Museum, London. R.M. 20. h.3. (microfilm).

Handel, Georg F. Israel in Egypt. Conducting score used by Handel. Located in the Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, West Germany. MC/262. (microfilm).

Music: Secondary Sources

Erba, Dionigi. Magnificat. Vol.I. Supplements: Containing Sources to Handel's Works. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1888; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968.

Handel, Georg F. Anthems II. Vol. 35. Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1871; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1966.

Handel, Georg F. Funeral Anthem. Vol. 31. Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1869; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1966.

Handel, Georg F. Israel in Egypt. Vol. 16 Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1863; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1966.

Handel, Georg F. Israel in Egypt: A Sacred Oratorio. Edited and the pianoforte accompaniment by Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy. London: Novello, Ewer, n.d.

Handel, Georg F. Keyboard Music. Vol. 2. Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1859; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1966.

Handel, Georg F. Latin Church Music. Vol. 38 Georg Friedrich Händel's Werke. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1872; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1966.

Stradella, Alessandro. Serenata. Vol. 3. Supplements: Containing Sources to Handel's Works. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1889; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968.

Urio, Francesco. Te Deum. Vol. 2. Supplements: Containing Sources to Handel's Works. Edited by Friedrich Chrysander. Leipzig: Breitkopf & Härtel, 1902; reprint ed., Ridgewood, New Jersey: Gregg Press, 1968.