

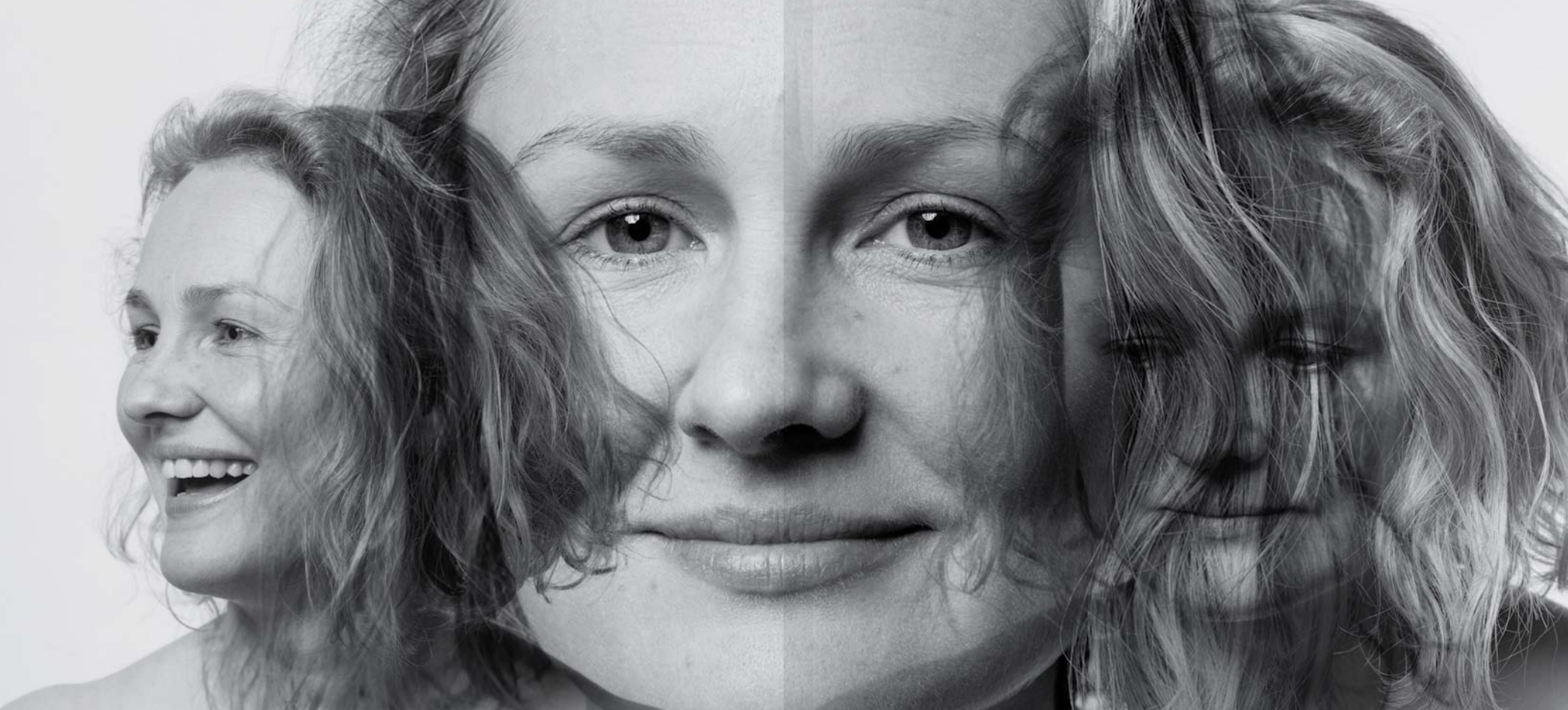


Handel

*L'Allegro, il Penseroso
ed il Moderato*

1740

MCCREESH



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Handel

L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato

1740

GABRIELI CONSORT & PLAYERS

PAUL MCCREESH



GILLIAN WEBSTER *Soprano*

LAURENCE KILSBY *Treble*

JEREMY OVENDEN *Tenor*

PETER HARVEY *Baritone*

ASHLEY RICHES *Bass*

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD *Organ*

GABRIELI CONSORT

GABRIELI PLAYERS *Catherine Martin, Leader*

PAUL MCCREESH *Conductor*

PART THE FIRST

CONCERTO GROSSO OP.6, NO.1 IN G MAJOR

- 1 A TEMPO GIUSTO 1.14
- 2 ALLEGRO 1.44
- 3 ADAGIO 2.33
- 4 ALLEGRO 2.37
- 5 ALLEGRO 2.39
- 6 L'Allegro *Tenor* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 2.03
Hence! loathed Melancholy
- 7 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 0.51
Hence! vain deluding Joys
- 8 L'Allegro *Treble* AIR 1.41
Come, thou goddess, fair and free
- 9 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR 2.54
Come rather, goddess, sage and holy
- 10 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR & CHORUS 2.14
Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee

- 11 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR & CHORUS 2.26
Come and trip it as you go
- 12 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 1.01
Come, pensive nun, devout and pure
- 13 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR & CHORUS 2.02
Come, but keep thy wonted state
- 14 L'Allegro *Tenor & Treble* RECITATIVE 0.27
Hence loathed Melancholy
- 15 L'Allegro *Treble* AIR 4.04
Mirth, admit me of thy crew
- 16 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 0.55
First, and chief, on golden wing
- 17 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR 13.28
Sweet bird, that shuns't the noise of folly
- 18 L'Allegro *Bass* RECITATIVE 0.10
If I give thee honour due
- 19 L'Allegro *Bass* AIR 2.26
Mirth, admit me of thy crew

20 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR 3.23
Oft on a plat of rising ground

21 L'Allegro *Tenor* RECITATIVE 0.14
If I give thee honour due

22 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR 1.43
Let me wander, not unseen

23 L'Allegro *Treble* AIR & CHORUS 3.45
Or let the merry bells ring round

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO ED IL MODERATO
PART THE SECOND

CONCERTO GROSSO OP.6, NO.3 IN E MINOR

24 LARGHETTO 1.19

25 ANDANTE 1.25

26 ALLEGRO 2.36

27 POLONAISE – ANDANTE 4.56

28 ALLEGRO, MA NON TROPPO 1.31

29 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 1.25
Hence vain deluding Joys

30 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR 6.00
But O! sad virgin, that thy power

31 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE 0.38
Thus, Night, oft see me in thy pale career

CD 2 – 64.26 1 L'Allegro CHORUS (*with Bass*) 3.20
Populous cities please me then

2 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR 2.08
There let Hymen oft appear

3 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 0.53
Me, when the sun begins to fling

4 Il Penseroso *Soprano* AIR 3.48
Hide me from day's garish eye

5 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR 1.59
I'll to the well-trod stage anon

6 L'Allegro *Treble* AIR 3.01
And ever against eating cares

7 L'Allegro *Tenor* AIR & CHORUS 3.19

These delights if thou canst give

8 Il Penseroso *Soprano* RECITATIVE 0.52

But let my due feet never fail

9 Il Penseroso CHORUS (*with Soprano*) 1.58

There let the pealing organ blow

10 Il Penseroso ORGANO AD LIBITUM & CHORUS (*with Soprano*) 4.39

These pleasures, Melancholy, give

L'ALLEGRO, IL PENSEROSO ED IL MODERATO

PART THE THIRD

ORGAN CONCERTO OP.7, NO.1 IN B FLAT MAJOR

11 ANDANTE 9.16

12 LARGO E PIANO 3.32

13 FUGA 2.38

14 ADAGIO: ORGANO AD LIBITUM 0.31

15 BOURRÉE 2.33

16 Il Moderato *Baritone* RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D 0.31

Hence! boast not, ye profane

17 Il Moderato *Baritone* AIR, RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D & CHORUS 5.51

Come, with native lustre shine

18 Il Moderato *Soprano* AIR 1.34

Come, with gentle hand restrain

19 Il Moderato *Tenor* RECITATIVE 0.38

No more short life they then will spend

20 Il Moderato *Tenor* AIR 2.04

Each action will derive new grace

21 L'Allegro & Il Penseroso *Soprano* & *Tenor* DUET 6.20

As steals the morn upon the night

22 Il Moderato CHORUS 2.51

Thy pleasure, Moderation, give



'SOMETHING OF A GAYER TURN': WHY HANDEL LAID ASIDE *MESSIAH* IN 1740

THE CULT OF MILTON

During the 1730s Handel's cultivated friends and the patriotic public were encouraging him to set great English poetry to music. They wanted Handel, whom they regarded as the finest composer that the world had ever known, to claim the artistic high-ground and give new life to the supreme cultural achievements of his adopted homeland. This was the agenda of Newburgh Hamilton, who arranged Dryden's *Alexander's Feast* for Handel to set in 1736, the score being opulently published in 1738. The following year Handel set Dryden's shorter *St Cecilia Ode*; but in the mid-18th century Dryden did not rank as the greatest English poet.

In 1737 a monument to John Milton (1608-74), 'the ornament and glory of his country', was unveiled in Westminster Abbey, the pantheon of national heritage. After the Bible, Milton's works were probably the most-read texts in Handel's England. *Paradise Lost* was printed on average every year in the 18th century, twice as often as Shakespeare, and by the mid-century many would have agreed with the poet Elijah Fenton that it was 'the noblest Poem, next to those of *Homer* and *Virgil*, that ever the wit of man produc'd'.

Unsurprisingly, Handel was offered librettos of *Paradise Lost*, in the hope of uniting the two greatest masters of the sublime, the period's favourite mode of aesthetic uplift. He declined to set them. To our good fortune he responded very differently when two of his friends suggested two other Milton texts, and

their detailed correspondence supplies us with the most extensive record of the genesis of any Handel masterpiece.

A TRIPARTITE COLLABORATION

On 29 December 1739 Charles Jennens, who had recently provided Handel with the libretto of *Saul* (and maybe also *Israel in Egypt*), wrote from London to their mutual friend James Harris in Salisbury: ‘Having mention’d to Mr Handel your schemes of Allegro & Penseroso, I have made him impatient to see it in due Form & to set it immediately’. Jennens told Harris that he had offered Handel ‘a Collection from Scripture, which is more to my own Tast & (by his own Confession) to his too; but I believe he will not set it this year, being desirous to please the Town with something of a gayer Turn’. This ‘Collection from Scripture’ is apparently the first-ever mention of Jennens’ libretto of *Messiah*.

Apparently unoffended by Handel’s initial reaction to *Messiah*, Jennens saw an alternative but narrow window of opportunity to prompt Handel to do worthwhile work. He urged Harris, ‘execute your Plan without delay & send it up; or if you don’t care to do that, send me your Instructions, & I will make the best use I am able of them; but by all means let me know your Intentions by the next Post; for He is so eager, that I am afraid, if his demands are not answer’d very soon, He will be diverted to some less agreeable Design.’

Handel needed a new work for the remainder of his 1739-40 season, which – in the absence of enough Italian singers in London to make an Italian opera

production viable – became his first season entirely of English word-settings. In encouraging Harris to develop his plan for a Milton setting, Jennens, always keen to forward Handel’s career in what he considered the right directions, was providing Handel with a chance to trump the competition. In 1738 Thomas Arne had produced a musical-dramatic adaptation of Milton’s *Mask* which was so successful that Milton’s drama was henceforth known by the name of Arne’s setting: *Comus*. If Handel had any doubts as to the viability of Milton at the theatre box office, the popularity of *Comus* would have reassured him. Moreover, it is likely that Handel and his friends thought that his reputation required him to produce a rejoinder: a Milton setting of his own.

Harris was a philosopher of ethics and aesthetics with a Europe-wide reputation, an amateur librettist and composer, and founder of a flourishing music festival in Salisbury. He was also a devotee of Handel’s music – he and Jennens were members of the club of ‘Handelists’ supporting and encouraging the composer – and an ardent admirer of Milton’s poetry. The essence of his ‘schemes of Allegro & Penseroso’, a dovetailing alternation of sections of Milton’s twin poems, played brilliantly to Handel’s need for blocks of contrasting or complementary material.

The libretto became a triumvirate collaboration. Having received the draft and taken it to Handel, Jennens reported back to Harris that Handel was breaking the sequence into smaller segments, to achieve more contrast: ‘He seemed not perfectly satisfied with your division, as having too much of the

Penseroso together, which would consequently occasion too much grave musick without intermission, & would tire the audience. He...resolved upon a more minute division.' Out of Harris' original five alternating *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* sections, Handel, possibly with Jennens' assistance, made 16. Handel's concern not to 'tire the audience' bespeaks his need to balance his own desire to experiment – so evident in this composition – with the expectations of his broad audience.

Harris detailed particular features of *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* for Handel's guidance, explaining that the 'grand contrast of Mirth and Melancholy' contains further juxtapositions, of town and country in *L'Allegro*, and of times of day in *Il Penseroso*. But in fact, *L'Allegro* itself also progresses through time, so that, as Graydon Beeks has pointed out, retaining the order of each poem's events while combining them introduced a contrary motion, Allegro moving through the world from dawn to night, Penseroso seeking seclusion from night to dawn. In the Handel/Jennens rearrangement of Harris' draft, the wit of the 'grand contrast' is sharpened, so that, for example, the opening dismissals of each mood (the 'execration of its contrary') abut each other, as do the two birdsong airs. Allegro is woken by a lark at dawn and Penseroso eavesdrops on, or rather competes with, the evening's nightingale. But the contrasts are not simple, for the vignettes have fluctuating reality. Some of Milton's word-pictures are visions, others are stories, and most of them are desired rather than actual states. Moreover the constant switching between differing times and differing locations

is often implied, not narrated. In his setting Handel realised and heightened the contrasts: the airs and choruses flow one to another with hardly any punctuating recitative, encouraging the listener to surrender to a mesmerising tapestry of anticipation and surprise.

Harris loved Handel's choral writing – an important constituent of the oratorios and a major distinguishing feature from his Italian operas. The libretto's first draft contained 13 of them, which Handel later reduced to eight. Milton's two poems are in the first person singular, recounting the moods of an individual moving through the world or withdrawing from it. Society is only referred to: watched with enjoyment by Allegro, and avoided by Penseroso. Setting some of the words for chorus created a seismic shift, as society is made actual and given a voice, and relationships are newly suggested between the individual and society. The life of the community, which is only narrated in Milton, is enacted through Harris' and Handel's introduction of choruses.

The society of *L'Allegro*'s libretto is the most genial and the most comprehensive that Handel ever treated. Milton's poetry moves from court to village, from castle to cottage, from landscape to back yard, and across every class of entertainment: courtly jousts, masques, plays, hunting, country dances, fairy tales. Man and nature are in harmony in Milton's poems, as they are in Handel's score. Handel's audience would have heard all this as wishful thinking. When *L'Allegro* was first performed, during the season of 1739-40, England had been experiencing a particularly savage winter; the price of wheat jumped 30%, and

there were food riots in the north, west and east of the country. Moreover, England was embroiled in a war which lasted from 1739 to 1748. As so often in Handel's works, especially his English ones, the image of contentment is shot through with a sense of wistfulness.

IL MODERATO

The triumvirate's libretto was still a two-part work, and Handel judged it insufficient to fill an evening. Leafing through his Milton, he came upon *At a Solemn Musick* ('Blest Pair of Sirens'), and asked Jennens to make of it a text for a concluding part. But Jennens recognised that Milton's ecstatic depiction of a Christian heaven would subvert the integrity of the planned composition, commenting to Harris, 'it has no sort of connection with the other'. Jennens' sense of dramatic appropriateness won out over his ingrained desire to preach through Handel. More in keeping with Handel's desire for something 'of a gayer turn', he suggested a secular solution: 'a Moderator should interpose, & reduce the disputants to reason. On this account, & in compliance with the needs of Mr. Handel... I mean to add some verses to Milton's.' Handel agreed, and Jennens' *Il Moderato* was the result: the longest original English text written for Handel.

Il Moderato follows Milton in personifying human propensities. But whereas *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* are descriptive, *Il Moderato* is prescriptive, recommends the way to achieve a contented life: the golden mean between mirth and melancholy. *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* contrast with each other; *Il Moderato* sets

up its own contrast, of moderate versus extreme behaviour. Whereas in *L'Allegro* and *Il Penseroso* the opposite temperament is laughingly dismissed at the outset, *Il Moderato* rejects extreme behaviour of any kind. Specifically, we are warned that, whatever your temperament, trying too hard for happiness and nothing else is self-defeating and self-destructive.

Unlike Milton's poems, *Il Moderato* contemplates not only the relationship of the individual with society, but the relationship of one individual with another. As Jennens wrote, *Il Moderato* 'united those two independent Poems in one Moral Design': the temperaments are no longer opposed but are brought together. While we are to imagine Moderato as the guiding voice of part three, the culminating famed duet for soprano and tenor, 'As steals the morn', based on lines in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, is marked by Handel: '*L'Allegro & Il Penseroso*'.

For all its spellbinding beauty, the duet's sense is ambiguous. Are we to understand that Moderato's 'Truth' has dissolved Allegro's and Penseroso's 'fancies', unclouded their minds, and restored them to clear thinking? Are we to infer that on rejecting excesses, the characters can productively adopt aspects of a balanced temperament? Or do they have to abandon their identities in surrendering to reason and become purely intellectual in order to recognise 'Truth'? If the last is what Jennens meant, then Handel's setting is a terrific instance of the composer overriding his librettist, for the duet is less expressive of intellectual daylight than of the sensuousness of music itself. Indeed, it is the very

music that Allegro requested in part two: 'Such as the meeting soul may pierce / In notes, with many a winding bout / Of linked sweetness long drawn out'.

AFTERLIFE

This recording is the first to present Handel's original version of *L'Allegro*, premiered on 27 February 1740. On that occasion the Italian-trained soprano Elisabeth Duparc ('La Francesina') sang *Penseroso*. Allegro was shared by an unknown boy treble, the great actor-tenor John Beard, and the bass Henry Reinhold. The bass William Savage represented *Moderato*. Handel generally revised a work to suit his company and audience when he repeated it in subsequent seasons, and so this original version of *L'Allegro* was heard only at its first five performances. A season later the work was expanded with settings of additional portions of Milton's text; some of his singers were Italian opera soloists, and one of them, the castrato Andreoni, sang in Italian. In later years Handel dropped *Il Moderato* – though not in Dublin, whence he wrote to assure Jennens that his words were 'vastly admired'. Later still, he paired the first two parts with his *Ode to St Cecilia* (1739), giving *L'Allegro*, after all, a religious finale. Very likely from the start of the collaboration he had foreseen its wonderful potential for adaptation, to the benefit of his own interests, his singers' talents, and the tastes of his audience. Nevertheless, there is greater clarity and sense of purpose in this first version than he ever achieved in later revisions.

Ruth Smith 2015

Handel *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* 1740



Ruth Smith
Paul McCreesh

What is it that draws you to this unique work of Handel?

I have always loved this slightly crazy work. It seems to me that the 'dream ticket' combination of Handel and Milton's poetry creates a work of extraordinary sensitivity. It is quite unlike anything else in Handel.

One way in which it's completely unlike any other English work by Handel is that it doesn't have a narrative: there is no plot, no characters, no dialogue. Instead, it is a succession of vignettes and images constructed from a series of contrasts in which the 'characters' are actually personifications of an emotional state. Harris spliced and interleaved the L'Allegro and Il Penseroso poems, selecting verses and creating juxtapositions that perfectly suited Handel's style, but simultaneously creating a sequence of episodes in which it can be hard to find one's bearings.

Indeed it is hard to discern a clear structure. An obvious comparison would be *Messiah*, which likewise consists of a series of distinct and contrasting episodes, but at least this work has a loose framework provided by the life of Christ and the exploration of well-understood Christian theology. *L'Allegro* is freer still. Perhaps we approach these works in entirely the wrong way, through the prism of 19th century opera, seeking an emphasis on drama, plot and denouement that simply wasn't a priority at this time.

The three 'characters' – Allegro, Penseroso and Moderato – are personified temperaments, responses to the world at large, and especially the natural world..

Certainly Milton's vivid imagery, especially when it describes nature, no doubt appealed to Handel. Nature is depicted as an outward reflection of the inner states of the mind: man is reflected in nature and, by the same token, nature reflects man. One obvious example is the two bird arias; where Allegro is attracted to the lark, Penseroso to the nightingale.

That's partly because Allegro likes daylight, whilst Penseroso likes dusk and night.

Indeed. Light and darkness are metaphors for innocence and knowledge, as well as happiness and sadness: these are the fundamental themes of this oratorio, if that is what we're calling it.

Terminology has always been a problem for L'Allegro. It's not an ode, it's not an oratorio, it's not a cantata, it's not a serenata... it's L'Allegro. Jennens called it an 'entertainment' and your comparison with Messiah is very apposite because Handel chose this project instead of Messiah, to Jennens' disappointment. Handel was "desirous to please the Town with something of a gayer Turn". A sophisticated and sensitive audience would have responded to it at quite a deep level, but it is also a work that the audience could drop in and out of. At this time Handel was performing in Lincoln's Inn Fields, a less fashionable part of town, with a less elite audience, for whom he wrote this more accessible work. You don't have to know the Anglican creed, as you do for Messiah, to understand what's going on; you don't even have to stay the whole course, as you might for an opera, to understand what these characters are going through.

The very word ‘entertainment’ is now such a loaded term – it suggests frivolity and immediate gratification – but one might conceive that this entertainment was intended to work on many levels. How well did Handel’s audience understand some of these literary and mythical conventions? No doubt some did but, as today, perhaps many of the audience would simply have gone along because they liked a particular soprano.

Handel certainly took on an enormous challenge by writing for a large public, with a lot of different interests to serve. Some did just come to hear the latest singers, and some were interested in the philosophy. There’s a very nice review of the first performance of L’Allegro assuring the public that, despite the title, it’s not actually in Italian, and you don’t have to be very learned to enjoy it. Complicated as Milton may be, you don’t have to understand every word to get the sense of the songs, especially in settings as colourful and vivid as these.

Of course one can derive great pleasure simply from listening to the wonderful music. However, whenever I conduct 18th century music I am always intrigued to know what and how much the audience knew, especially Handel’s audiences. With Bach it’s much easier, because you know that he was writing in a certain church, in a particular town, for a select congregation of incredibly educated people following a very specific line of religious thought at a pivotal moment in religious history: it is a precisely prescribed area. By contrast, Handel was working with a range of librettists, setting everything from English text by Milton to Italian libretti, some old, some new, to appeal to a wide and diverse

audience. It’s a much broader church, there are many different facets of his music and many more unknown elements.

The work received mixed reactions at the time. The first two parts, L’Allegro and Il Penseroso, are chock full of images of sounds and sights, which Handel suggests in his music: laughing, hunting, birdsong, the moon rising, a ploughman whistling, and many more. Some people loved Handel’s pictorialism, whilst others thought it rather banal and juvenile.

Of course this is exactly the same problem that Haydn had 60 years later when setting Thomson’s epic poetry for *The Seasons*.

Is The Seasons one of the few successors to L’Allegro? Did Haydn know the piece?

We don’t know, but they are incredibly close. Whenever I conduct the glorious ending to part one of *L’Allegro*, I’m always struck by the arresting similarity to the final chorus of *Summer* in *The Seasons*: it’s almost impossible to imagine that Haydn didn’t know the earlier work. However, although we know Haydn heard *Israel in Egypt* and *Messiah*, and perhaps a few other works, I don’t believe there is any evidence of *L’Allegro* being performed in the late 18th century.

Although Handel’s setting is full of musical imitation, he is in fact very selective in the face of a riot of images. Take the tenor aria ‘Let me wander’, for instance. There are so many sounds described in that short section alone: the ploughman whistling, the milkmaid singing, the mower whetting his scythe; but it has been set as a very simple siciliana, painting the generic mood but not the specific imagery.

This is indicative of a terseness of musical expression in the work which I find quite extraordinary, and which is one of its great strengths. Although Penseroso's bird aria is of somewhat epic proportions, almost everywhere else Handel seems driven to be concise. Many of these short arias are tellingly precise, painting the Arcadian world as one of simplicity.

Do you see any inheritance from Purcell, where often the most ravishing tune appears only fleetingly, never to return?

There are obvious similarities to Purcell, but is that simply because Purcell and English 17th century repertoire are all but synonymous, and is this just a very English work? Perhaps it is Milton that defines the overall character of the work, more than any musical debt to Purcell?

Of course much of this work seems a very long way from opera.

Yes, Handel seems determined to avoid the operatic style: there are no anger arias or seduction arias. Often the music is not only short, but overtly simple in conception; there is great emphasis on brief, scalic phrases which gives it a close affinity to the natural idiom of folk melody. This is another reason that it is likened to Purcell. However, Handel is evidently profoundly serious about the text that he is setting. The lack of vocal melisma focuses the image in syllabic lines and the result is that he writes in a much more assertive way, refusing to compose indulgent roudades. There's very little repetition of the text, except for rare moments of interesting dramatic import: he is absolutely focused on preserving the purity of the poetry.

The conspicuous and surely deliberate exception to that is the Penseroso aria 'Sweet Bird' in which the soprano dialogues with the nightingale-flute, maybe almost humorously suggesting competitive Italian opera divas.

In Handel's operas and oratorios, there is usually a crystal clear distinction between recitative, aria and chorus so that expressions of emotion are quite self-contained. One of the features of this work is a great fluidity in formal structure. Just as one might expect an aria to develop from a first to a second section, or into a da capo, suddenly it is interrupted by a chorus which then flows straight into another aria. The lack of narrative thread means there is virtually no straight recitative. Instead we are transported in an almost dream-like trance from one state to another.

As you have intimated, this can be a disconcertingly fluid work for an audience: there is no clear definition between movements, no logical succession to the flow of arias. Many of the usual conceits and forms have been abandoned. The role of the chorus, for example, is interesting. It generally serves to amplify emotions, either with a direct repetition, the extension of an aria, or even (for example, at the end of part one) by effectively completing the preceding aria. That is unusual and takes some adjusting to.

However, I think the dramatic structure of this first version of *L'Allegro* does have a certain clarity which I hope this recording might help to restore. The original performance had just one female singer for Penseroso, whilst Allegro was sung by three singers, all male, which at least underlines the basic characterisation.

Like all the best art L'Allegro is about art. Some of these texts examine the power of music. What is music for, what does it do? Here, as in Alexander's Feast, Handel uses solo instruments (flute, horn, cello) to illustrate and amplify the power of music: he is concerned with the human response to music. There's also a great deal of dance in the musical language. Il Moderato is almost bare of images by comparison with the first two parts, but it does still have the central image of dance; like the rest of the work, it is infused with motion.

Yes, we've barely mentioned the third part, Jennens' *Il Moderato*. It has always been traditional to dismiss Jennens' epilogue. In the 18th century, hardly surprisingly, Jennens' prose suffered comparison to Milton, and a particular wag referred to it as 'Il Moderatissimo'. In fact the more I look at part three, the more impressive I feel it is. It not only leads to the unification of the two temperaments in the justly famous duet 'As steals the morn', but culminates in a chorus of extraordinary solemnity. Handel sets this not with trumpets and drums but as an almost learned chorus where the melodic material alludes to the Lutheran chorale, a musical form that would barely have been known in London at this time. Jennens may have been vain and pompous but he certainly knew how to feed Handel's imagination.

Yes, and it's in a wonderfully solemn G minor too, isn't it? Handel's friend and contemporary Johann Mattheson, a leading music theorist of his time, writes very interestingly about this key: "G minor is almost the most beautiful key because it not only combines the rather serious qualities of D minor with spirited loveliness but also

brings in an uncommon grace and kindness through which being so thoroughly flexible it is suited for the tender as well as the refreshing for the yearning as well as the diverting in short for both moderate complaints and tempered joyfulness." Isn't that wonderful?

Yes - it's an almost perfect description of an ideal Moderato character.

One big change that sets Il Moderato apart from the preceding two parts is that it's prescriptive, not descriptive. L'Allegro and Il Penseroso explain what life is like for these people, how they feel, how they react, what they're seeing, what they're experiencing: in no sense do they preach. Il Moderato, however, is absolutely telling you how to live your life.

I think that Allegro and Penseroso are simple representations of our human capacity for happiness and sadness. The moral of the story for me is indeed quite obvious: that human beings should live freely within the range of our emotions whilst keeping an eye on Jennens' 'golden mean'. In Handel's music there is nothing shameful in the ebullience of Allegro, nor is there anything pathological in the reflectiveness of Penseroso. If music often expresses sadness much more easily than happiness, part of the genius of this piece is how Handel gives Allegro's music such charm that it isn't outweighed by the glorious expressivity of Penseroso's music. This is 18th century philosophy, but it's also 18th century therapy, isn't it? There is a beautiful elegance in the entertainment also being enlightening.

This duality of purpose was no accident. Although Handel, as we've already noted, wanted to entertain his audience, Jennens and Harris were very concerned that this, the greatest composer that they and the world had ever known, should not be diverted to unworthy projects. Handel was to produce high art that must be philosophical and educational, in the most enlightening sense.

We are indeed in the age of enlightenment. One of this work's great attributes is that it can be brilliantly cheerful or painfully and beautifully sad. But it is refreshingly free of the 18th century tendency to over-moralise. Even *Il Moderato* has a gentleness and kindness to it: I think a lot of that comes from the subtlety of Handel's music. It is not just a collection of great arias. The work's close alignment with 18th century thought reveals how very important a work this is.

Ruth Smith is a renowned Handelian scholar, much of whose work has centred on the cultural background of the oratorios, as represented in their librettos. Her book, Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth Century Thought (Cambridge University Press, 1995) has been widely acclaimed. She has an international reputation as a lecturer and broadcaster on such subjects and has advised Paul McCreech on many of his Handel recordings.

Handel *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato* 1740



Although Handel only performed *L'Allegro* 13 times between 1740 and 1743, he continually tinkered with the structure of the oratorio, adding arias and altering the order of movements before eventually replacing *Il Moderato* in its entirety. The autograph is consequently a rather messy document full of scorings out, additional leaves, and appendices; even the first performance of *L'Allegro* contained modifications from the music prematurely published by Walsh.

The structure of the 1740 performances can be readily elucidated; the autograph is clarified by both the printed wordbook that accompanied these performances and several fair manuscript copies that derive from the original version. There remains some fine detail for which the sources are equivocal. A *da capo* of 'Populous cities please me then' is either present, missing, or crossed out in various manuscripts; it is here restored. The truncated *da capo* ritornello of 'Sweet bird' may be surprising to modern ears, but its presence is unanimous across the sources. Likewise the air 'Come, but keep thy wonted state' elides into the chorus 'Join with thee calm Peace and Quiet' without the expected final soprano phrase and orchestral ritornello added by Handel for later versions.

The orchestration of the score is at times more problematic, requiring practical decisions to resolve conflicts between the musical sources. The instrumentation of Handel's bass line is, as ever, unclear and the use of oboes in the ritornellos of several arias is also uncertain. The archival orchestral parts prepared under the

supervision of Jennens for his private library provide a certain amount of guidance as to the use of the wind, but they are not necessarily to be taken at face value, as they often differ from what is explicitly marked in Handel's autograph and the contemporary manuscript scores. The autograph and one manuscript copy also call for a 'Basson Grosso' during the short chorus 'There let the pealing organ blow'; however, the presumably substantial bass of Handel's new pedal organ in the Theatre Royal probably made this soon redundant. The sparse opening of the first recitative was originally scored solely for the bassi – bassoons, cellos, and basses – the rest of the orchestra only being added in later performances. The conflicting source material for the wind writing in *L'Allegro* presumably reflects the *ad libitum* function of these instruments and their inclusion has been treated with freedom.

Further questions of instrumentation surround the cello and the carillon. The mellifluous cello solo in 'But O! sad virgin' most likely demands a small instrument with an upper fifth string, not merely because of the technical demands of the high writing, but also because of the character of the aria. In common with the other solos Handel wrote for his principal cellist, Francisco Caporale, the cello represents music in its mythical state. A lyrical quality is present in all these obbligatos; 'But O! sad virgin' uniquely requires a fleetness and lightness of timbre that is naturally provided by the thinner treble strings of a small cello. Surviving English instruments from the 1720s by Barak Norman and contemporary iconography support the use of such an instrument in this air.

The only extant music for the carillon in *L'Allegro* is notated on paper associated with Handel's 1741-2 visit to Dublin. The instrument, first used by Handel in 1738 for *Saul*, does not appear in either the autograph or contemporary manuscript copies of *L'Allegro*. The second 1740 Walsh printing of the songs, however, includes the cryptic marking, 'Sym' at the beginning of bar two of 'Or let the merry bells ring round', coinciding with the music in the later Dublin manuscript. This marking seems most likely refer to the carillon, suggesting its use from the earliest performances.

THE THREE CONCERTOS

Handel wrote no overture, as each part of *L'Allegro* was prefaced by a new concerto. These were given considerable prominence in the advertisement carried by *The London Daily Post* for the first performance:

LINCOLN'S-INN FIELDS.

Never perform'd before.

AT the Theatre-Royal in Lincoln's Inn

Fields, this Day, will be perform'd

L'Allegro il Penseroso ed il Moderato.

With two new CONCERTO's for several Instruments

And a NEW CONCERTO on the ORGAN.

The wordbook for the 1740 performances suggests that the concertos were very much an integral part of the oratorio: 'PART the FIRST... A NEW CONCERTO for several instruments... RECITATIVE, accompany'd'.

The 'two new CONCERTO's for several Instruments' were taken from the set of 'TWELVE GRAND CONCERTOS' composed in the Autumn of 1739 and later numbered Op.6 by Handel's publisher, Walsh. These concertos were first performed throughout the 1739-40 season, although it is not known which concertos were performed on which evening. Two manuscript copies of *L'Allegro* contain a concerto grosso prepended to the work. Anthony Hicks has previously drawn attention to a copy in the British Library, which includes a manuscript score for the D major concerto, Op.6, No.10. Another manuscript source, part of the Coke Collection, inserts a Walsh print of the basso continuo from the G major concerto, Op.6, No.1. Colin Coleman, however, has dated this part to the late 18th century. Neither of these manuscripts include a concerto grosso before part two, or a copy of the organ concerto before part three.

The decision to perform the G major concerto, Op.6, No.1, before part one and the E minor concerto, Op.6, No.3, before part two was guided by the relationship between the keys of the opening movement of each part and those of the concertos. In the oratorios for which Handel composed an overture, he overwhelmingly favours music in the same key as the subsequent vocal movement. The organ concerto that precedes part three is similarly in the same key as the opening movement. Certainly the G major concerto has much lively

Allegro-like music and likewise the E minor concerto has many wistful, Penseroso-like moments. This recording thus recreates, perhaps for the first time, the substantial role that instrumental music played between the parts of Handel's oratorios and similar works.

The 'NEW CONCERTO on the ORGAN' is certainly the work now known as Op.7, No.1. This concerto presents conundrums to the player on a number of levels: discrepancies in manuscript and printed version, several moments simply marked 'Org. ad lib', and a significant pedal part, unique amongst Handel's organ works. This last would not in itself be problematic but for the fact that British organs of the day generally lacked pedals and the pipes to go with them. What instrument did Handel play, then, in the Lincoln's Inn Fields Theatre in February 1740? There is information about two comparable theatre instruments (Jordan's organ at Covent Garden Theatre and Byfield's at Drury Lane) but neither had pedals, instead being furnished with typical English long-compass keyboards down to GG. It is also known anecdotally that Handel enjoyed going to play the organ at St Paul's Cathedral where there were indeed some pedals, perhaps reminding him nostalgically of instruments in his native Halle. Could it have been that Handel's German pedal prowess and an innately inventive streak prompted him to rig up an instrument specially for the occasion? Certainly the virtuoso pedal part in Op.7, No.1, played out literally before their eyes, would have been a wow to the audience in Lincoln's Inn Fields theatre, unused to such podal exertions.

For this recording we have had to imagine what such an organ might have been like. The 2004 William Drake organ of Deptford parish church recreates an organ of 1745 (indeed some of the case and pipes survive from this date), voiced in the style of Jordan and Byfield. Such an organ, with its colourful reed stops and pungent Cornet, seems to suit this most kaleidoscopic and demonstrative of concertos, especially in the 'trio' section, marked explicitly for the very unenglish texture of two manuals and pedal. The Deptford organ has a full set of modern pedals, which have been exploited freely, even introducing pedal solos into the several ad libitum passages. For practical reasons, a large chamber organ is used for continuo in all the choruses with the exception of 'There let the pealing organ blow' and its associated improvised fugue. This instrument is the 2001 Goetze and Gwynn organ made for the Handel House Trust, based on those of Richard Bridge and Thomas Parker, who built the chamber organ which belonged to Charles Jennens and which still exists in close to its original condition today.

Christopher Suckling and William Whitehead 2015



CD I PART THE FIRST

I-5 CONCERTO GROSSO OP.6, NO.1 IN G MAJOR

6 *L'Allegro Tenor*

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

Hence! loathed Melancholy!

Of Cerberus, and blackest midnight born,

In Stygian cave forlorn,

'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy!

Find out some uncouth cell,

Where brooding darkness spreads his jealous wings,

And the night-raven sings:

There, under ebon shades, and low-brow'd rocks,

As ragged as thy locks,

In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.

7 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*Hence! vain deluding Joys,
Dwell in some idle brain,
And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,
As thick and numberless
As the gay motes that people the sun-beams;
Or likest hovering dreams,
The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train.*

8 L'Allegro Treble

AIR

*Come, thou goddess, fair and free,
In heav'n yclep'd Euphrosyne;
And by men heart-easing Mirth;
Whom lovely Venus at a birth,
With two sister-graces more,
To ivy-crowned Bacchus bore.*

9 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR

*Come rather, goddess, sage and holy;
Hail, divinest Melancholy!
Whose saintly visage is too bright
To hit the sense of human sight;
Thee bright-hair'd Vesta, long of yore,
To solitary Saturn bore.*

10 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR & CHORUS

*Haste thee, nymph, and bring with thee
Jest, and youthful jollity;
Quips, and cranks, and wanton wiles,
Nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles,
Such as hang in Hebe's cheek,
And love to live in dimple sleek;
Sport, that wrinkled care derides;
And laughter, holding both his sides.*

11 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR & CHORUS

*Come and trip it as you go,
On the light fantastick toe.*

12 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*Come, pensive Nun, devout and pure,
Sober, steadfast, and demure;
All in a robe of darkest grain
Flowing with majestic train.*

13 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR & CHORUS

*Come, but keep thy wonted state
With even step, and musing gait;
And looks commercing with the skies,
Thy wrapt soul sitting in thine eyes.*

*Join with thee calm peace and quiet,
Spare fast, that oft with gods doth diet.*

14 L'Allegro Tenor & Treble

RECITATIVE

*Hence loathed Melancholy!
In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell.
But haste thee, mirth, and bring with thee
The mountain nymph, sweet liberty.*

*And if I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew.*

15 L'Allegro Treble

AIR

*Mirth, admit me of thy crew;
To live with her, and live with thee,
In unreprieved pleasures free:
To hear the lark begin his flight,
And singing, startle the dull night:
Then to come, in spite of sorrow,
And at my window bid good morrow.*



16 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*First, and chief, on golden wing,
The cherub contemplation bring;
And the mute silence hist along,
'Less Philomel will deign a song;
In her sweetest, saddest plight,
Smoothing the rugged brow of night.*

17 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR

*Sweet bird, that shun'st the noise of folly,
Most musical, most melancholy!
Thee, chauntress, oft' the woods among,
I woo, to hear thy even-song.*

*Or, missing thee, I walk unseen,
On the dry smooth-shaven green,
To behold the wand'ring moon
Riding near her highest noon.*

18 L'Allegro Bass

RECITATIVE

*If I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew!*

19 L'Allegro Bass

AIR

*Mirth, admit me of thy crew,
To listen how the hounds and horn
Chearly rouze the slumb'ring morn,
From the side of some hoar hill,
Thro' the high wood echoing shrill.*

20 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR

*Ofi' on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off Curfeu sound,
O'er some wide water'd shore,
Swinging slow, with sullen roar:
Or if the air will not permit,
Some still removed place will fit,
Where glowing embers, through the room,
Teach light to counterfeit a gloom.*

21 L'Allegro Tenor

RECITATIVE

*If I give thee honour due,
Mirth, admit me of thy crew.*

22 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR

*Let me wander, not unseen,
By hedge-row elms, on hillocks green,
There the plowman near at hand,
Whistles o'er the furrow'd land;
And the milkmaid singeth blithe;
And the mower whets his scythe;
And every shepherd tells his tale
Under the hawthorn, in the dale.*

23 L'Allegro Treble

AIR & CHORUS

*Or let the merry bells ring round,
And the jocund rebecks sound,
To many a youth, and many a maid,
Dancing in the chequer'd shade;

And young and old come forth to play,
On a sunshine holiday,
'Till the live-long day-light fail.
Thus pass'd the day, to bed they creep,
By whispering winds soon lull'd asleep.*

PART THE SECOND

24-28 CONCERTO GROSSO OP.6, NO.3 IN E MINOR

29 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*Hence vain deluding Joys,
The brood of folly, without father bred;
How little you bested,
Or fill the fix'd mind with all your toys!
O! let my lamp, at midnight hour,
Be seen in some high lonely tow'r,
Where I may oft' outwatch the bear,
With thrice-great Hermes, or unsphere
The spirit of Plato, to unfold
What worlds, or what vast regions hold
Th'immortal mind, that hath forsook
Her mansion in this fleshly nook.*

30 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR

*But O! sad virgin, that thy power
Might raise Musæus from his bower;
Or bid the soul of Orpheus sing
Such notes, as, warbled to the string,
Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
And made hell grant what Love did seek.*

31 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE

*Thus, Night, oft' see me in the pale career,
'Till unwelcome morn appear.*

CD 2 – I L'Allegro

CHORUS (*with Bass*)

*Populous cities please us (me) then,
And the busy humm of men;
Where throngs of knights, and barons bold,
In weeds of peace high triumphs hold;*

*With store of ladies, whose bright eyes
Rain influence, and judge the prize
Of wit, or arms, while both contend
To win her grace, whom all commend.*

2 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR

*There let Hymen oft' appear
In saffron robe, with taper clear,
And pomp, and feast, and revelry,
With masque, and antique pageantry;
Such sights as youthful poets dream
On summer-eves, by haunted stream.*



3 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*Me, when the sun begins to fling
His flaring beams, me, goddess, bring
To arched walks of twilight groves,
And shadows brown, that Sylvan loves:
There, in close covert, by some brook,
Where no profaner eye may look,*

4 Il Penseroso Soprano

AIR

*Hide me from day's garish eye,
While the bee, with honey'd thigh,
Which at her flow'ry work doth sing,
And the waters murmuring,
With such concert as they keep
Entice the dewy-feather'd sleep:
And let some strange mysterious dream
Wave at his wings, in airy stream
Of lively portraiture display'd,
Softly on my eyelids laid.
Then, as I wake, sweet music breathe
Above, about, or underneath,
Sent by some spirit to mortal's good,
Or th'unseen genius of the wood.*

5 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR

*I'll to the well-trod stage anon,
If Johnson's learned sock be on;
Or sweetest Shakespeare, fancy's child,
Warble his native wood-notes wild.*

6 L'Allegro Treble

AIR

*And ever against eating cares,
Lap me in soft Lydian airs:
Sooth me with immortal verse,
Such as the meeting soul may pierce
In notes, with many a winding bout
Of linked sweetness long drawn out;
With wanton heed, and giddy cunning,
The melting voice through mazes running,
Untwisting all the chains that tie
The hidden soul of harmony.*

7 L'Allegro Tenor

AIR & CHORUS

*These delights if thou canst give,
Mirth, with thee I mean to live.*

8 Il Penseroso Soprano

RECITATIVE

*But let my due feet never fail
To walk the studious cloister's pale;
And love the high embowed roof,
With antic pillar's massy proof;
And story'd windows richly dight,
Casting a dim religious light.*

9 Il Penseroso

CHORUS (with Soprano)

*There let the pealing organ blow
To the full-voic'd quire below,
In service high, and anthem clear;
And let their sweetness through mine ear,
Dissolve me into extasies,
And bring all Heav'n before mine eyes.*

10 Il Penseroso

ORGANO AD LIBITUM & CHORUS (with Soprano)

*These pleasures, Melancholy, give,
And I with thee will chuse to live.*



PART THE THIRD

11-15 ORGAN CONCERTO OP.7, NO.1 IN B FLAT MAJOR

16 Il Moderato *Baritone*

RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D

*Hence! boast not, ye profane,
Of vainly fancy'd, little tasted pleasure,
Pursu'd beyond all measure,
And by its own excess transform'd to pain.*

17 Il Moderato *Baritone*

AIR, RECITATIVE ACCOMPANY'D AND CHORUS

*Come, with native lustre shine,
Moderation, grace divine;
Whom the wise God of nature gave,
Mad mortals from themselves to save.
Keep, as of old, the middle-way,
Nor deeply sad, nor idly gay;
But still the same in look and gait,
Easy, cheerful, and sedate.*

*Sweet temp'rance in thy right-hand bear,
With her let rosy health appear;
And in thy left contentment true,
Whom headlong passion never knew.
Frugality by bounty's side,
Fast friends, tho' oft as foes bely'd;
Chaste Love, by reason led secure,
With joy sincere, and pleasure pure;
Happy life from Heav'n descending,
Crowds of smiling years attending.*

*All this company serene,
Join to fill thy beauteous train.*

18 Il Moderato *Soprano*

AIR

*Come, with gentle hand restrain
Those who fondly court their bane;
One extreme with caution shunning,
To another blindly running.
Kindly teach, how blest are they
Who Nature's equal rules obey;
Who safely steer two rocks between,
And prudent keep the golden mean.*

19 Il Moderato *Tenor*

RECITATIVE

*No more short life they then will spend,
In straying farther from its end;
In frantick mirth, and childish play,
In dance and revels night and day;
Or else like lifeless statues seeming,
Ever musing, moping, dreaming.*

20 Il Moderato *Tenor*

AIR

*Each action will derive new grace
From order, measure, time and place;
'Till life, the goodly structure, rise
In due proportion to the skies.*

21 L'Allegro & Il Penseroso *Soprano & Tenor*

DUET

*As steals the morn upon the night,
And melts the shades away,
So truth does fancy's charm dissolve,
And rising reason puts to flight
The fumes that did the mind involve,
Restoring intellectual day.*

22 Il Moderato

CHORUS

*Thy pleasures, Moderation, give;
In them alone we truly live.*



BIOGRAPHIES

GABRIELI CONSORT & PLAYERS

Gabrieli are world-renowned interpreters of great vocal and instrumental repertoire spanning from the renaissance to the present day. Formed as an early music ensemble by Paul McCreesh in 1982, Gabrieli has both outgrown and remained true to its original identity. Over 30 years, the ensemble's repertoire has expanded beyond any expectation, but McCreesh's ever-questioning spirit, expressive musicianship and a healthy degree of iconoclasm remain constant features and continue to be reflected in the ensemble's dynamic performances. Their repertoire includes major works of the oratorio tradition, virtuosic *a cappella* programmes of music from many centuries and mould-breaking reconstructions of music for historical events.

Today, at the heart of Gabrieli's activities is the development of a pioneering education initiative in the Gabrieli Young Singers Scheme. This partnership with leading UK youth choirs has enabled Gabrieli to work extensively with teenagers from across the UK in intensive training programmes focused on recording major works of the oratorio repertoire and performances for such prestigious promoters as the BBC Proms.

Gabrieli aims to create inspirational and thought-provoking performances which stand out from the crowd. It has long been renowned for its many award-winning recordings created during a 15 year association with Deutsche Grammophon. In 2010, Paul McCreesh established his own record label Winged Lion which has already released six extremely diverse recordings. As a smaller ensemble they have recorded *A Song of Farewell* (music for mourning

and consolation, including the *Requiem* of Herbert Howells), *A New Venetian Coronation 1595* (which revisited an earlier acclaimed recording of music by Giovanni and Andrea Gabrieli and won a Gramophone Award in 2013), and most recently *Incarnation* (juxtaposing medieval polyphony and 20th/21st century choral music, including Britten's *A Boy was Born*). They continue to enjoy a strong artistic association with the Wrocław Philharmonic Choir, recently re-named the National Forum of Music Choir, with whom they have recorded three spectacular large-scale oratorios, including Berlioz *Grande Messe des Morts* (BBC Music Magazine Award 2012), Mendelssohn *Elijah* (Diapason d'Or de l'Année 2013) and most recently Britten's *War Requiem* (BBC Music Magazine Award 2014).

PAUL MCCREESH

Paul McCreesh has established himself at the highest levels in both the period instrument and modern orchestral fields and is recognised for his authoritative and innovative performances on the concert platform and in the opera house. Together with the Gabrieli Consort & Players, of which he is the founder and Artistic Director, he has performed in major concert halls and festivals across the world and built a large and distinguished discography both for Deutsche Grammophon and more recently for his own label, Winged Lion.

McCreesh is well-known for the energy and passion that he brings to his music-making and guest-conducts many major orchestras and choirs, including most recently the Leipzig Gewandhaus, Berlin Konzerthausorchester, Bergen Philharmonic and Sydney Symphony. The larger choral repertoire, such as Britten's *War Requiem*, Brahms' *German Requiem* and Haydn's *The Creation* and *The Seasons*, features increasingly in his work. He has established a strong reputation in the field of opera conducting productions of Handel, Gluck and Mozart at leading European opera houses.

McCreesh is passionate about working with young musicians and enjoys established collaborations with Chetham's School of Music and many youth orchestras and choirs, both in the UK and internationally. He was Artistic Director of the Wratistavia Cantans Festival Wrocław, Poland from 2006 to 2012 and was Director of Brinkburn Music (in Northumberland, UK) from 1993-2013. In 2013 he assumed the position of Principal Conductor and Artistic Adviser at the Gulbenkian Orchestra, Lisbon.

Gillian Webster has had a varied and diverse career since first coming to prominence as principal soprano with the Royal Opera Covent Garden where she established a reputation in such roles as Euridice, Pamina, Katya Kabanova, La Contessa, Michaela and Mimi, roles which she has also sung in houses throughout Europe.

Her repertoire ranges from Vivaldi to Mozart, Mahler and Wagner, but her real love is music of the baroque period. In recent years, she has sung many Handel oratorios and cantatas under the baton of Paul McCreesh, as well as operatic roles including Agrippina and Gismonda with English Touring Opera, and Ginevra with Marc Minkowski and Les Musiciens du Louvre.

Webster's other great musical passion lies in the chamber music repertoire and she has enjoyed various collaborations with the Wanderer Trio and the Arpeggione and Talich Quartets, singing works from Schubert to Schoenberg.

GILLIAN WEBSTER

JEREMY OVENDEN Jeremy Ovenden studied at the Royal College of Music, London and privately with Nicolai Gedda. Renowned as a stylish and intelligent interpreter of a wide range of repertoire, he is particularly highly regarded for his performances of Handel and Mozart (including *Tamerlano* for La Monnaie, Brussels and Dutch National Opera and *Così Fan Tutte* for the Royal Opera, Covent Garden and Staatsoper, Berlin).

Ovenden's wider repertoire includes music by Monteverdi, Bach, Haydn, Britten, Szymanowski and Henze. He has appeared with the London Philharmonic, London Symphony and the BBC Scottish Symphony orchestras, and with Deutsches Symphonie Orchester, Berlin and performed at the BBC Proms and Salzburg Festival.

Ovenden has recorded widely and in 2011 he released a critically acclaimed recording of Mozart arias entitled *An Italian Journey* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Peter Harvey arrived at Magdalen College, Oxford to study French and German and although he soon afterwards changed course to music, his love of languages has always remained at the heart of his singing. Particularly known for his performances of baroque music, his extensive discography includes a great many works by JS Bach. His recordings of solo bass cantatas with John Eliot Gardiner are highly acclaimed, as are his various St Matthew Passion recordings - from the minimalist to the traditional.

Harvey works with all of the major period ensembles, including Gabrieli Consort & Players, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, Academy of Ancient Music, Bach Collegium Japan and Netherlands Bach Society. He also directs his own Magdalena Consort, a chamber ensemble of singers and instrumentalists which particularly focuses on achieving heightened expression in the performance of 17th and 18th century music. Harvey is returning increasingly to the song repertoire and his recent recording of Schubert *Winterreise* (Linn) has been widely acclaimed.

PETER HARVEY

ASHLEY RICHES Ashley Riches is one of the leading baritones of the younger generation. He read English at Cambridge University, where he sang in the Choir of King's College. He subsequently studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, from where he was quickly accepted onto the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera, Covent Garden. He has sung a wide and diverse range of operatic roles, most recently in *L'Ormindo* at the Globe Theatre. He has already enjoyed an extensive concert career, performing regularly with the Academy of Ancient Music, Arcangelo, Gabrieli Consort & Players, Philharmonia Orchestra, Polyphony and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Riches' recordings include Bach's St Mathew Passion with the Academy of Ancient Music, Poulenc songs with Graham Johnson and Mercury in Daniel Purcell's *The Judgment of Paris*.

Laurence Kilsby won the BBC Radio 2 *Young Chorister of the Year* competition in 2009 following the finals in St Paul's Cathedral. A number of high profile performances followed, including broadcasts on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 4 and appearances at Symphony Hall, Birmingham, and the Royal Albert Hall, one of which was broadcast on Sky Arts.

LAURENCE KILSBY

Laurence was a chorister in the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum under Benjamin Nicholas and is now a Music Scholar at Dean Close School, Cheltenham where he studies singing with Bronwen Mills. This is the last recording that 15 year old Laurence made as a treble; he is currently singing tenor in his school choir, and recently sang the tenor solos in the Bach Magnificat at the Pittville Pump Rooms, Cheltenham. Laurence hopes to further his vocal studies when he leaves school.

WILLIAM WHITEHEAD

William Whitehead is one of the acclaimed organists of his generation. Winner of the 2004 International Organ competition in Odense, Denmark, he now travels the world giving concerts, and has become a sought-after teacher. Recent concert venues have included the Berliner Dom, Westminster Cathedral, the Festival Toulouse les Orgues and the Chapel Royal of the Tower of London. He appears as an organist on over 20 recordings, over half of them in a solo capacity. Most recently, he recorded a programme of Restoration and Georgian English music on the recently restored historic organ in Southall, London.

Whitehead is currently seeing through to completion a major Europe-wide project to complete Bach's *Orgelbüchlein* with new compositions: the *Orgelbüchlein* Project. This will be published in due course by Peters Edition.

SOPRANO

Susan Gilmour Bailey
Alicia Carroll
Susan Hemington Jones
Charlotte Mobbs
Ruth Provost
Emma Walshe
Elizabeth Weisberg

ALTO

Lucy Ballard
David Clegg
Polly Jeffries
Kim Porter
Benjamin Turner

TENOR

Guy Cutting
Nicholas Madden
George Pooley
Tom Robson
Richard Rowntree

BASS

Richard Bannan
Robert Evans
Christopher Sheldrake
Greg Skidmore
William Townend

VIOLIN I

Catherine Martin¹
Tuomo Suni
Sarah Bealby-Wright
Ellen O'Dell
Holly Harman
Ann Monnington
Kirra Thomas

VIOLIN II

Oliver Webber¹
Julia Black
Benjamin Sansom
Laura Cochrane
Rebecca Miles

VIOLA

Rachel Byrt
Stefanie Heichelheim
Emma Alter
Thomas Kirby

CELLO

Christopher Suckling¹
Anna Holmes
Vladimir Waltham
Natasha Kraemer

DOUBLE BASS

Timothy Amherst
Antonia Bakewell

FLUTE

Katy Bircher

OBOE

Katharina Spreckelsen
Alex Bellamy
Hannah McLaughlin²
Lars Henriksson²

BASSOON

Alastair Mitchell
Zoe Shevlin
Rebecca Hammond²

HORN

Richard Bayliss

TRUMPET

David Hendry
Robert Vanryne

TIMPANI

Adrian Bending

HARPSICHORD

Jan Waterfield

ORGAN / CARILLON

William Whitehead

ARCHLUTE

Paula Chateaufneuf

GABRIELI

CONSORT & PLAYERS

¹ *Soloists Op.6, No.1 & No.3*

² *Op.7, No.1*

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The Observer

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Handel

L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato

1740

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