

ONE HUNDRED TWENTY-SIXTH SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Zell Music Director

Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

Thursday, December 1, 2016, at 8:00

Friday, December 2, 2016, at 8:00

Saturday, December 3, 2016, at 8:00

Nicholas Kraemer Conductor and Harpsichord

Amanda Forsythe Soprano

Chicago Symphony Chorus

Duain Wolfe Director

Music by George Frideric Handel

Zadok the Priest, Coronation Anthem No. 1, HWV 258

CHICAGO SYMPHONY CHORUS

Concerto grosso in B-flat Major, Op. 6, No. 7

Largo—

Allegro

Largo—

Andante

Hornpipe

Laudate pueri Dominum, HWV 237

AMANDA FORSYTHE

CHICAGO SYMPHONY CHORUS

INTERMISSION

Silete venti, Motet, HWV 242

AMANDA FORSYTHE

Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV 351

Overture

Bourrée

La Paix

Menuet 2

Menuet 1

Menuet 2

La Réjouissance

These performances are generously sponsored by the Nancy Lauter McDougal and Alfred L. McDougal Charitable Fund.

Saturday evening's concert is sponsored by ITW.

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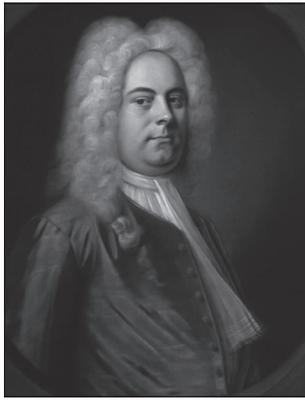
George Frideric Handel

Born February 23, 1685; Halle, Saxony, Germany
Died April 14, 1759; London, England

Zadok the Priest, Coronation Anthem No. 1, HWV 258

Although King George II of England is said to have hated all poets and painters, he was quite fond of music, especially the works by Handel, whom he asked to write anthems for his coronation in 1727. Fifteen years later, his name and Handel's were again famously linked when the king stood up during the Hallelujah Chorus at one of the first London performances of *Messiah*, inaugurating a tradition that continues to this day. (We've never known for sure why he got up—it recently has been suggested that he was merely confused about the time of the intermission.)

When George I died on June 11, 1727, his only son was named king three days later. Although every monarch since William the Conqueror had been crowned in a spectacular ceremony at Westminster Abbey, the coronation itself wasn't actually discussed by the Privy Council until August 11. The date of October 4 was



Portrait of Handel attributed to Balthasar Denner, ca. 1726. National Portrait Gallery, London, England

picked, and then, when high tides were forecast for the neighborhood of the abbey that week, it was postponed until October 11.

The composer of the Royal Chapel normally would have been expected to provide the coronation music, but William Croft, who held the position, died on August 4, one week before planning began. Although Maurice Greene was named his successor on September 4, five days later it was announced that Handel would write new music for the ceremony, a decision that later was rumored to have been the king's alone.

Over the next few days, as Handel's deadline loomed, the order of the service, as well as the actual events, was debated and settled, and then argued and revised. The final version, based on the 1714 coronation of Queen Anne, was reached only on September 20. (Handel, who was a foreign visitor in London in 1714, may have attended Queen Anne's crowning. He only became an English citizen in 1727; acceptance of his application was one of the last parliamentary acts of George I.)

Always a fast worker, Handel managed to finish his compositions by the end of September. He wrote four new anthems to be performed along with traditional works by earlier English composers, including Orlando Gibbons, William Child (who had been organist for three previous coronations), and Henry Purcell (the greatest of all English composers and another former Westminster Abbey organist). The actual

COMPOSED

September 1727, for the coronation of George II of England

FIRST PERFORMANCE

October 11, 1727; Westminster Abbey, London, England

INSTRUMENTATION

mixed chorus and an orchestra consisting of two oboes, two bassoons, three trumpets, timpani, organ, harpsichord, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

5 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

June 2, 3, and 5, 2005, Orchestra Hall. Chicago Symphony Chorus (Duain Wolfe, director), Sir Andrew Davis conducting

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

April 12, 2008, Orchestra Hall. Chicago Symphony Chorus, Duain Wolfe, chorus director and conductor

service on October 11 apparently was somewhat chaotic—there was considerable confusion about the sequence of events, despite a printed program—and the music didn't go smoothly, partly because the performers, placed on two specially built platforms separated by the altar, couldn't see or hear each other adequately. Archbishop Wake, possibly irked that the king had picked Handel, annotated his copy of the program like a modern-day music critic: "The Anthem all in confusion," he wrote. "All irregular in the Music." Handel's new anthems made a great impression nonetheless, and eventually they were recognized as the crowning glories, so to speak, of the distinguished tradition of coronation pieces. *Zadok the Priest*, the anthem performed to open this week's concert, has, in fact, been performed at every coronation ceremony since.

Handel's anthems, written in haste but also under the powerful inspiration of composing for a historic occasion, demonstrate his gifts for achieving a magnificence and spectacle that's rare in music of such substance and detail. For all their obvious

ZADOK THE PRIEST

Zadok the priest, and Nathan the prophet, anointed Solomon King.
And all people rejoic'd and said: God save the King, long live the King,
 may the King live forever!
Amen. Alleluia.

—*After I Kings 1:39–40*

Concerto grosso in B-flat Major, Op. 6, No. 7

Unlike his contemporaries Bach (born just nineteen days later), Vivaldi, and Telemann, Handel has never gone out of fashion. His oratorio *Messiah* has helped to keep his name alive, of course. But other pieces, such as the majestic aria "Ombra mai fu" from the opera *Serse* (better known to amateur pianists and greatest-hits record producers as Handel's Largo), the lively set of pieces he wrote to accompany an

brilliance and festivity, each is remarkably varied. The justly famous *Zadok the Priest* is a relatively short, continuous masterwork that builds dramatically from a stately orchestral introduction to the great choral outburst of "Zadok the priest," and on to a thrilling climax of "God save the King." The final alleluias are no less stirring than the ones that brought the king to his feet fifteen years into his reign. ■



Coronation portrait of King George II by Charles Jervas, ca. 1727. National Portrait Gallery, Beningborough Hall, Yorkshire, England

evening of fireworks, and his engaging suites of *Water Music*, also have been widely performed, even in times when baroque music was neither well known nor appreciated.

Handel was among the most popular composers of his day and, particularly after he visited London in 1710 and then moved there for good in 1712, he commanded a huge following and was in great demand both as a composer

and performer—he excelled on organ and harpsichord—for the rest of his life. (After he became a British subject, he started spelling his name George Frideric Handel rather than Georg Friederich Händel, which is how it appears on his birth certificate.)

Reared in northern Germany, where he received a thorough music education (and became a friend of Telemann), and later trained in the operatic business in Italy, Handel arrived in London an unusually cosmopolitan composer. Determined to make a name for himself with London’s opera-going public, he succeeded with his first attempt, *Rinaldo*, which not only included much dazzling music (some of it borrowed from works he had written in Italy), but also real spectacle as well, including, in one aria, the release of a flock of sparrows that set the audience buzzing. Opera after opera, hit after hit followed. But by the late 1730s, Handel realized that the London public was losing interest in Italian opera. In 1738, he decided to conclude his career as an opera composer; *Serse*, with its popular largo, was supposed to be his last opera. It wasn’t quite, as it turned out, but Handel had decisively shifted his attention to oratorio and instrumental music.

On October 29, 1739, the *London Daily Post* advertised twelve “Grand Concertos” by Handel, which would be printed on “good Paper” and delivered to subscribers in April. One hundred subscribers replied, enough to fund the undertaking, and the following spring Handel’s op. 6 was released, quickly becoming one of his most popular works. Handel was not only prolific; he was fast. Apparently he composed the entire set—twelve concertos, each with four to six movements, for a combined total of sixty-two movements—in a single month. (And, despite Handel’s reputation as an avid recycler, who was particularly apt to reuse older material on a tight deadline, ten of the concertos in this collection

appear to be almost entirely new.) The set was consciously modeled on the op. 6 collection of concerti grossi by Arcangelo Corelli, which had become a hit with London audiences after its publication in 1714. (Handel fell under the spell of Corelli’s music while he was living in Rome.) Eleven of Handel’s concertos are even scored for Corelli’s preferred solo ensemble (the concertino) of two violins and cello set against an orchestra entirely of strings. Like Bach’s *Brandenburg* Concertos, the set as a whole is not only a brilliant distillation of the various kinds of music of its day, but it also shows its composer at the peak of his powers.

Each of Handel’s twelve concertos has its own form and personality. The seventh concerto, in B-flat major, which is performed this week, is the only one in the set scored for a full ensemble of strings, with no soloists. Its five movements are all concise—none more so than the opening Largo, which, at just ten measures, acts almost as an introduction to the more substantial Allegro. That movement, remarkably, is a fugue on a theme that at first seems to be nothing but a single repeated note. It is followed by an expressive Largo, with rich harmonic complexity; a genial, straightforward Andante; and, to conclude, a lively, syncopated hornpipe. This concerto has long had many admirers, although none more unexpected than Arnold Schoenberg, who “freely transcribed and developed” the score as a concerto for string quartet and orchestra, complete with winds, brass, and percussion—a misguided attempt to find common ground between the glory of baroque music and the musical revolution of the early twentieth century. Ironically, it is in Schoenberg’s unorthodox arrangement that Chicago Symphony audiences first encountered this music, conducted by music director Frederick Stock, in 1936. ■

COMPOSED

October 1739

INSTRUMENTATION

strings and harpsichord continuo

APPROXIMATE**PERFORMANCE TIME**

15 minutes

FIRST PERFORMANCE

Date unknown

These are the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s first performances.

Laudate pueri Dominum, HWV 237

Silete venti, HWV 242

Handel set off for Italy in August 1706, and like many important composers after him, including Mendelssohn and Berlioz, the experience changed the music he wrote for the rest of his career. He arrived in Italy at the age of twenty-one and stayed three-and-a-half years. Moving between Florence, Rome, Naples, and Venice, Handel found music of an expressivity, lyricism, and depth of passion he did not know. In Rome, where he spent most of his time from late in 1706 until early 1710, the public theaters were closed by papal decree (the ban was lifted in 1709), and so he could not encounter first-hand the uniquely splendid Italian breed of opera as frequently as he wished—he had already become devoted to the form working at the Hamburg Opera—nor did he have the opportunity to compose operas there himself. But like the Italian composers he admired, emulated, and learned from, Handel satisfied his operatic cravings by writing in other forms of officially sanctioned vocal music, including Latin motets and cantatas, of which he composed nearly one hundred during his Italian travels. It was only once he moved to London that his great outpouring of Italian opera could begin.

Raised as a strict Lutheran, Handel began to compose music for the Roman Catholic liturgy soon after he arrived in Italy. He made his extraordinary talents known almost at once in

this most musically rich of countries. In January 1707, the Roman diarist Valesio wrote: “In this city there has arrived a Saxon, who is an excellent harpsichordist and composer and today displayed his skill on the organ at the church of San Giovanni.” By April he had composed *Dixit Dominus*, a magnificent setting of Psalm 110; it is Handel’s earliest surviving manuscript. On the eighth of July, Handel signed his name to the autograph of *Laudate pueri Dominum*, the impressive setting of Psalm 112, scored for soprano and chorus with orchestra that is performed on this week’s concert.

Laudate pueri Dominum confirms that Handel was not only extravagantly gifted as a composer, but that he also was a quick study. Written only a few months after Handel settled in Italy, the score is a compendium of Italian musical forms and techniques, all absorbed and mastered by the newcomer Saxon. The work is a succession of arias, with and without chorus, surrounding a single movement for chorus alone, accompanied only by winds. The first movement is grand and festive, featuring the interplay between solo instruments and the entire ensemble characteristic of the concerto grosso, and eventually blossoming from a virtuosic soprano solo into music for full chorus. Handel writes arias of diverse kinds and textures—one

Laudate pueri Dominum, HWV 237

COMPOSED

completed July 8, 1707

INSTRUMENTATION

solo soprano, mixed chorus, two oboes, strings, organ, basso continuo

APPROXIMATE**PERFORMANCE TIME**

17 minutes

FIRST PERFORMANCE

date unknown

These are the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s first performances.

Silete venti, HWV 242

COMPOSED

circa 1723–25

INSTRUMENTATION

solo soprano, two oboes, bassoon, strings, harpsichord, organ, basso continuo

APPROXIMATE**PERFORMANCE TIME**

25 minutes

FIRST PERFORMANCE

date unknown

These are the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s first performances.

LAUDATE PUERI DOMINUM

Aria and Chorus:

Laudate pueri Dominum;
laudate nomen Domini.

Aria:

Sit nomen Domini benedictum
ex hoc nunc, et usque in saeculum.

Solo and Chorus:

A solis ortu usque ad occasum
laudabile nomen Domini.

Aria:

Excelsus super omnes gentes Dominus,
et super caelos gloria ejus.

Chorus:

Quis sicut Dominus Deus noster,
qui in altis habitat,
et humilia respicit
in caelo et in terra?

Aria:

Suscitans a terra inopem,
et de stercore erigens pauperem:
ut collocet eum cum principibus,
cum principibus populi sui.

Aria:

Qui habitare facit sterilem in domo,
matrem filiorum laetantem.

Solo and Chorus:

Gloria Patri, gloria Filio,
et Spiritui Sancto.
Sicut erat in principio, et nunc,
et semper,
et in saecula saeculorum.
Amen.

PRAISE THE LORD, YE SERVANTS

Praise the Lord, ye servants;
O praise the name of the Lord.

Blessed be the name of the Lord
from this time forth for evermore.

The Lord's name is praised the sun from the
rising up of unto the going down of the same.

The Lord is high above all nations
and his glory above the heavens.

Who is like unto the Lord our God,
that hath his dwelling so high,
and yet humbleth himself to behold
the things that are in heaven and earth?

He taketh up the simple out of the dust,
and lifteth the poor out of the mire;
That he may set him with the princes,
even with the princes of his people.

He maketh the barren woman to keep house,
and to be a joyful mother of children.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Ghost.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be;
world without end.
Amen.

—*Psalm 113 (Latin Vulgate, Psalm 112)*

accompanied by nothing but the plain harmonies of the basso continuo, another that pair the singer in eloquent duet with the solo oboe, echoing and elaborating on her music. The choral writing is sometimes florid and rousing, but also sometimes starkly plain and chordal. With the final chorus, Handel, the great word-painter, returns to the music with which he started: “As it was in the beginning.”

Handel composed the motet *Silete venti* long after he had settled in London—it was written in the 1720s, probably shortly before the Coronation Anthems—but it is music thoroughly indebted to his Italian sojourn. (There is also conjecture that he composed in slightly later, during his return to Italy in 1729.) Like much Italian vocal music written for the church, it owes a great deal to the opera house, in its sense of drama and implied action, its colorful and descriptive writing, and in the

SILETE VENTI

Recitative:

Silete venti, nolite murmurare frondes,
quia anima mea dulcedine
requiescit.

Aria:

Dulcis amor, Jesu care,
quis non cupit te amare;
veni, transfige me.
Si tu feris, non sunt clades:
tuae plagae sunt suaves,
quia totus vivo in te.

Recitative:

O fortunata anima,
O jucundissimus triumphus,
O felicissima laetitia.

Aria:

Date sarta, date flores;
me coronent vestri honores;
date palmas nobiles.
Surgent venti et beatae spirent
almae fortunatae auras caeli fulgidas.

Aria:

Alleluja.

virtuosity of the vocal line. The entire opening stretch of music is as theatrical as anything in Handel’s own operas. Handel begins with a grand symphonic overture, formal and stately at first, followed by a brilliant and driving Allegro, and then, against all expectations, brought to a complete halt by the soprano: “Silence,” she sings, dispersing the musical storm in the span of a single measure of music. What follows is music of freedom and contemplation—an eloquent stretch of accompanied recitative—followed by a lovely, flowing aria over the steady tread of a walking bass line. There is still a sense of drama, but it is all in the notes on the page: listen to what happens to the vocal line at “veni transfige me” (come transfix me). The next aria unfolds in gently rolling waves of coloratura for the soprano—unbroken strings of sixteenth notes and precisely poised acrobatics. There is a dazzling and tempestuous middle section. The finale is a grand display of solo fireworks on a single word, Alleluia. ■

BE SILENT, YOU WINDS

Be silent, you winds, and do not murmur,
you branches, because my soul is resting
in sweetness.

Sweet love, dear Jesus,
who does not desire to love thee;
come, transfix me.
If you strike me, there are no injuries:
your strokes are sweet,
because I live totally in you.

O blessed soul,
O happiest triumph,
O most fortunate joy!

Give garlands, give flowers;
may your honors crown me;
give noble palms.
Let the winds arise and the blessed spirits
breathe the resplendent breezes of heaven.

Alleluia.

Music for the Royal Fireworks, HWV 351

The music Handel composed for a lavish fireworks display in 1749 was perhaps his greatest public success in London. (The first London performances of *Messiah* in 1743 and 1745 failed to generate much excitement, despite the triumph of the Dublin premiere in 1741.) King George II, long a great admirer of Handel's music, turned to Handel to write the official music for an elaborate outdoor celebration of the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the treaty that brought a temporary end to the War of Austrian Succession. Handel agreed at once, and although he disapproved of the king's edict that there should be no "fidles" (stringed instruments), he complied, in the name of political correctness, and then added them to the score for all subsequent performances.

Handel also had argued against the idea of a public rehearsal, although it turned out to be one of his greatest triumphs. The run-through (without fireworks), held in the Spring Gardens at Vauxhall, drew a crowd of 12,000 and caused one of London's first traffic jams. ("So great a resort occasioned such a stoppage on London Bridge that no carriage could pass for three hours," *The Gentlemen's Magazine* reported.) The official event itself, held in Green Park the following week, was less than a complete success, despite the brilliance of Handel's score and the participation of a blockbuster orchestra that featured some sixty wind instruments. Following the overture, a salute of 101 brass cannon launched the fireworks display, which first lit

up the sky and then set fire to a lavish Palladian pavilion, more than 100 feet long and 114 feet high, that was created especially for the festivities by Chevalier Servandoni, scenic designer to the French court. "What contributed to the awkwardness of the whole," a London reporter later wrote, "was the right pavilion catching fire and being burnt down in the middle of the show." (Servandoni was later arrested for drawing his sword on the comptroller of fireworks.) Spectacle and disaster overshadowed one of Handel's grandest works.

When Handel conducted the score a month later, in a concert at the Foundling Hospital, he had no fireworks to worry about, he could use the violins he had always wanted, and his music was at last the center of attention. The *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, as this score has come to be known, quickly became one of his most popular works. The overture is one of Handel's grandest, with a magnificent introduction followed by a spirited fugal allegro. The remaining numbers—short dances and character pieces—are less spectacular but no less brilliant: a minor-key bourrée, a charming evocation of peace, two minuets—one sober and ceremonial, the other appropriately festive—and finally, music of rejoicing. ■

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987.

COMPOSED
1749

FIRST PERFORMANCES

April 14, 1749; Green Park, London, England

May 27, 1749; Thomas Coram's Foundling Hospital, London, England. The composer conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

three oboes, bassoon and contrabassoon, three horns, three trumpets, timpani, harpsichord, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

16 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

December 5 and 6, 1930, Orchestra Hall. Frederick Stock conducting (arranged by Sir Hamilton Harty, Overture)

July 30, 1936, Ravinia Festival. Werner Janssen conducting (Overture)

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCES

July 22, 1988, Ravinia Festival. Edo de Waart conducting

October 27, 28, 29, and 30, 2005, Orchestra Hall. Nicholas McGegan conducting