The New Messiah: A Neo-Baroque Approach to Ornamentation in the Performance of Paul Ayres's Messiah

Todd Jared Turner

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.memphis.edu/etd

Recommended Citation

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by University of Memphis Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of University of Memphis Digital Commons. For more information, please contact khggerty@memphis.edu.
THE NEW MESSIAH: A NEO-BAROQUE APPROACH TO ORNAMENTATION IN THE PERFORMANCE OF PAUL AYRES’S MESSIAH

by

Todd Jared Turner

A Dissertation
Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Musical Arts

Major: Music

The University of Memphis
May 2023
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to offer my sincerest gratitude to each and every person who has invested their time and energy in both my academic and musical endeavors. Thanks are due in particular to my doctoral committee: Prof. Mary Wilson, Prof. Benjamin Wayne Smith, and Dr. Josef Hanson, for their support; to Dr. Janet Page, for assistance finalizing the formatting of this document; and especially to my committee chair and voice teacher, Dr. Randal Rushing, for guiding me through this process for the past three years.

I must also thank my family: Todd, Shanon, Hayden, and June Turner; Christi and Dillon Noffsinger; and my extended family for supporting me not only throughout this process, but also in everything that I do. In addition, to every colleague I have performed with and learned from along the way, thank you.

Thank you to composer Paul Ayres, both for writing this wonderful music and for being an invaluable resource; and conductor Sanford Dole, for offering insight into the production of this work. I so appreciate your willingness to participate in interviews and answer my countless questions about every aspect of Messyah.

To Dr. Alex Benford, thank you for your time and wonderful piano playing throughout my time in Memphis. It has been such a pleasure to perform with you. To cellist Roberta Dos Santos, thank you for joining us in presenting excerpts from Messiah and Messyah. It has been an unforgettable learning experience.

Lastly, this project would not have been possible without the financial support of Germantown Presbyterian Church and the Dr. Jerold Teachev Scholarship Fund. Thank you for supporting my research.
ABSTRACT

Turner, Todd Jared. DMA. The University of Memphis. May 2023. The New Messiah: A Neo-Baroque Approach to Ornamentation in the Performance of Paul Ayres’s Messyah. Major Professor: Randal Rushing, DMA.

Handel’s Messiah has remained in performance since its premiere in Dublin in 1742, making it a cornerstone of the musical canon for instrumentalists and vocalists alike. Though there are now standardized versions of the oratorio in publication, each performance remains unique through the addition, deletion, and transposition of movements, in addition to variances in instrumentation and ornamentation practices. Paul Ayres, a composer, conductor, and keyboard player, has taken this idea of unique performances to the extreme by rewriting the oratorio, bestowing upon it a new name: Messyah.

Ayres’s Messyah is a work in fifty-one movements scored for soloists, choir, string orchestra, keyboard instruments, percussion, and brass. The composer synthesizes Handelian and Baroque styles with modern techniques in order to create a new genre, the Neo-Baroque oratorio, through a variety of approaches, including musical quotation, melodic and rhythmic manipulation, transposition, addition of choral passages, and reorchestrations. The result is a work that rests on a Baroque foundation while simultaneously building upon it. The performer must select appropriate ornamentation that further bridges the gap between the two eras of music history rather than distracts from the work itself.

The author aims to offer suggestions for both compulsory and optional ornamentation for the Messyah soloist by consulting resources on Baroque performance practice and elaborating upon them to balance the traditional and novel styles present in the Neo-Baroque oratorio. The author will also recommend insertions of various embellishments in both cadential and phrasal figures; these include the appoggiatura, anticipation, cadenza, melisma, slide, trill, and further
melodic and rhythmic manipulations. The resulting guide will highlight the analysis of the arias and recitatives scored for the tenor soloist, as well as of additional movements that have been performed by the tenor but may normally be scored for other voice types.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>List of Musical Examples</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Copyright Permission Letters</td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paul Ayres’s <em>Messyah</em></td>
<td>xii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Frideric Handel’s <em>Messiah</em></td>
<td>xiii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The Birth of <em>Messyah</em> – Background and Beginnings</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statement of Research Objectives</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Background</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inception, Insight, and Interpretations</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The Tenor Solos of Part I</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comfort Ye</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Every Valley</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The Tenor Solos of Part II</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All They That See Him</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behold and See</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He Was Cut Off</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>But Thou Didst Not Leave His Soul in Hell</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unto Which of the Angels</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>He That Dwelleth in Heaven</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thou Shalt Break Them</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Two Additional Arias for Tenor</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thou Art Gone Up on High</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I Know That My Redeemer Liveth</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Conclusion</td>
<td>85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix A: IRB Approval</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appendix B: Biography of Composer Paul Ayres</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Musical Example</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1. Unconventional notation in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 1</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2. Unison key change in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 2</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3. Text painting in solo tenor line from <em>Comfort ye</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 21 – 24</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4. Common-tone key change and written-in ornamentation in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5. Tenor duet in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6. Introduction to <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version II) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 1 – 9</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7. Ayres’s instructions for the vocalist to ornament in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8. Use of the <em>appoggiatura</em> in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 3</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9. Two options for vocal ornaments in <em>Comfort ye</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, m. 8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.10. Written-in ornamentation in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 2</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11. Written-in cadential ornamentation in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, p. 3</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.12. Ornamentation recommendation for <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version II) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 18 – 21</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.13. Written-in ornamentation (<em>appoggiature</em>) in <em>Comfort ye</em> (Version II) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 56 – 61</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.14. Introduction to <em>Every valley shall be exalted</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 1 – 5</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.15. Repetition of motives in the tenor voice in <em>Every valley shall be exalted</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 6 – 11</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.16. Tone clusters in the accompaniment of <em>Every valley shall be exalted</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 18 – 20</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.17. Expanded vocal range in <em>Every valley shall be exalted</em> (Version I) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 23 – 26</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2.18. Alteration of the vocal line in Every valley (Version II) from Messiah, mm. 6 – 7; 35 – 37
2.19. Expanded vocal ranges due to text painting in Every valley (Version II) from Messiah, mm. 62 – 67; 73 – 78
2.20. Appoggiature at the final cadence of Every valley (Version I) from Messiah, mm. 74 – 75
3.1. Repetition of text in All they that see Him from Messiah, mm. 9 – 11
3.2. Written-in ornamentation (appoggiatura) in All they that see Him from Messiah, mm. 5 – 6
3.3. Ornamentation suggestion (appoggiatura) for All they that see Him from Messiah, m. 7
3.4. Ornamentation suggestion (slide) for All they that see Him from Messiah, mm. 8 – 9
3.5. Metric modifications in Thy rebuke hath broken His heart from Messiah, mm. 7 – 13
3.6. Rhythmic displacement in Behold and see from Messiah, mm. 1 – 3
3.7. Written-in ornamentation (appoggiatura) in Behold and see from Messiah, mm. 8 – 9
3.8. Ornamentation suggestion (appoggiatura) in Behold and see from Messiah, m. 7
3.9. Written-in appoggiatura and cadential figure in He was cut off out of the land of the living (Version I) from Messiah, mm. 3 – 5
3.10. Chord-by-chord comparison of the recitative He was cut off out of the land of the living by Handel and Ayres, mm. 1 – 5
3.11. Disruption in the vocal line of He was cut off (Version II), mm. 5 – 8
3.12. Attaca transition from He was cut off (Version II) to But thou didst not leave His soul in hell, mm. 9 – 10
3.13. Introduction to But thou didst not leave His soul in hell from Messiah, mm. 1 – 9
3.14. Introduction to But thou didst not leave His soul in hell from Messiah, mm. 1 – 3
3.15. Written-in ornamentation in *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* from *Messiah*, mm. 10 – 21

3.16. Additional measures in *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* from *Messiah*, mm. 38 – 46

3.17. Ornamentation recommendations in *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* from *Messiah*, mm. 22 – 26

3.18. Suggested ornamentation (repeated pitches) in *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* from *Messiah*, mm. 39 – 40

3.19. Suggested ornamentation (melisma) in *But thou didst not leave His soul in hell* from *Messiah*, m. 42

3.20. Vocal lines in *Unto which of the angels*, mm. 5 – 7

3.21. Unique instrumentation (suspended cymbal) in *Unto which of the angels* from *Messiah*, mm. 8 – 10

3.22. Suggested ornamentation (*appoggiatura*) in *Unto which of the angels* from *Messiah*, mm. 13 – 14

3.23. Two-voice *appoggiatura* in *He that dwelleth in Heaven* from *Messiah*, mm. 4 – 5

3.24. Use of octave leap as a cadential figure in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 12 – 23

3.25. Cadenza in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 48 – 52

3.26. Written-in cadential ornamentation (*appoggiatura*, trill, and anticipation) in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 18 – 23

3.27. Ornamentation suggestion (passing tone) in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 26 – 27

3.28. Written-in *appoggiature* in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 30 – 41

3.29. Ornamentation suggestion (passing tone) in *Thou shalt break them* from *Messiah*, mm. 38 – 40

4.1. Melismas in Handel’s and Ayres’s versions of *Thou art gone up on high*, mm. 47 – 58; 41 – 52

4.2. Written-in ornamentation (*appoggiatura*) in the *obbligato* line of *Thou art gone up on high* from *Messiah*, mm. 1 – 5
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.3.</td>
<td>Written-in ornamentation (anticipation) in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 32 – 33</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4.</td>
<td>Suggested melismatic ornamentation (<em>appoggiatura</em>) in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 45 – 48</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5.</td>
<td>Suggested ornamentation (<em>appoggiatura</em>) in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, m. 70</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6.</td>
<td>Suggested ornamentation (slide) in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 58 – 60</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7.</td>
<td>Suggested ornamentation (turn) in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 80 – 81</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.8.</td>
<td>Suggested rhythmic alterations in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, m. 89</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.9.</td>
<td>Suggested cadenza in <em>Thou art gone up on high</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 104 – 106</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.10.</td>
<td>Rhythmic variation in the accompaniment of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Version V) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 7 – 9</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11.</td>
<td>Octave displacement in the accompaniment of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Version V) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 23 – 25</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.12.</td>
<td>Syncopation of embellished melodic line of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 131 – 137</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.13.</td>
<td>Syncopation in the accompaniment of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 147 – 155</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.14.</td>
<td>Final return to the gospel section of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 206 – 209</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.15.</td>
<td>Improvisatory ending of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 210 – 215</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.16.</td>
<td>Final return to Baroque style of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 223 – 226</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.17.</td>
<td>Written-in ornamentation (<em>appoggiatura</em>) in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 18 – 24</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.18.</td>
<td>Written-in <em>appoggiature</em> in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messiah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 72 – 77</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number</td>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.19.</td>
<td>Ornamentation suggestion (<em>appoggiatura</em>) for <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 164 – 165</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.20.</td>
<td>Written-in anticipation in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 141 – 143</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.21.</td>
<td>Written-in ornamentation (unprepared trill) in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 32 – 38</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.22.</td>
<td>Ornamentation suggestion (cadential figure) in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 52 – 53</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.23.</td>
<td>Suggested ornamentation (passing tone) in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 148 – 150</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.24.</td>
<td>Suggested ornamentation (<em>messa di voce</em>) in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 193 – 196</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.25.</td>
<td>Notated cadenza transition in <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 206 – 209</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.26.</td>
<td>Notated cadenza at the end of <em>I know that my Redeemer liveth</em> (Fuchsia/Messyah version) from <em>Messiah</em>, mm. 227 – 230</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER

PAUL AYRES’S MESSYAH

From: Paul Ayres
To: Todd Jared Turner
Date: 07:37 AM, February 24, 2023
Subject: RE: Permission to use score excerpts

This email reply gives permission to include excerpts from the Messiah score in your dissertation!

Paul
COPYRIGHT PERMISSION LETTER

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL’S MESSIAH

From: Christine Quentin
To: Todd Jared Turner
Date: 09:50 AM, February 28, 2023
Subject: RE: Kontaktanfrage aus Kontaktformular Homepage Bärenreiter-Verlag

Dear Mr. Turner,

Many thanks for your quick reply. Of course we can give the requested permission to use a few measures from the pieces of Händel’s Messiah free of charge. Please give the usual sources.

Best wishes,

Christine Quentin
CHAPTER 1

THE BIRTH OF MESSYAH: BACKGROUND AND BEGINNINGS

Introduction

Handel’s Messiah has remained in performance since its premiere in Dublin in 1742. In the years leading up to and directly following Handel’s death, the score was constantly being adapted for new soloists, ideas, and venues. Each performance was at least marginally different, as solos were transposed, added, and deleted based on the singers available. Despite standardization of the score through years of research efforts, each performance of this oratorio remains unique, whether it be in movements performed, instrumentation used, or ornamentation practices. One composer has taken this claim to heart by re-writing the oratorio. Paul Ayres is a composer, conductor, and performer who works in and around London, England, UK.1 Ayres suggests that this re-written version, titled Messyah, constitutes a performance more similar than not to the original when looked at this way.2

Ayres’s re-writing of Messiah synthesizes the genre of the Baroque oratorio with modern compositional elements; as a result, the use of Baroque ornamentation is not only implied, but encouraged. This project should serve as a guide to developing one’s own ornaments by including recommendations on ornamentation, background information on this piece, and comparisons to the masterwork that inspired it. Messiah quotes its predecessor and then elaborates on each quotation by altering its compositional elements, which requires an understanding of both innovative and canonical styles. Furthermore, the re-writing includes new versions of several arias which are now scored for tenor.

---

1 Further biographical information may be found in Appendix B, p. 91.

This project to analyze *Messiah* as a Neo-Baroque work is the first of its kind. There are many sources on ornamentation and performance practice, but they do not address the performance of modern music composed in historical styles. In addition, this project may serve as a basis for further research involving the re-writing of works or the synthesis of both modern and traditional styles of composition and performance.

**Literature Review**

There is very little published material, scholarly or otherwise, concerning Ayres’s *Messiah*. Much of the literature needed to develop background information on this piece elaborates on vocal performance practice from the Baroque through the present; in addition, there are several readings on Handelian singing and the oratorio itself. These readings give insight on how the presence of particular singers in certain performances affected which movements were performed or even rewritten. For example, Brown suggests that there was one performer of each voice type that dominated the performances of *Messiah* during Handel’s lifetime, allowing the composer to adjust each aria for their vocal strengths (and weaknesses).  

This author also draws comparisons between *Messiah* and the oratorios that followed it, which were composed for the same singers that continued to perform the masterpiece.

There are also several recently composed sources that explore the history of ornamentation while simplifying it into a digestible format. In one guide, Mark Crayton concentrates on offering explanations and musical notations for the terms used and recommends instances where they might be useful; for example, in the return of the A section of a da capo

---


Crayton also gives useful rules for performers while elaborating on the historical context of music in the Baroque. This resource also has a reading list for further research on singing music from that time period; this was helpful for locating additional materials.

The development of vocal techniques and performance practice is highlighted in Martha Elliott’s guide to stylistic singing. Each chapter is devoted to a specific time period or genre, from the Baroque through twentieth-century nationalism and living composers. The chapter on the late Baroque era includes information on scores and notation, modern editions, tempo, articulation, rhythmic alteration, legato, vibrato and breath, pitch, period instruments, and recitative; it also includes a section on Handel’s Messiah and its Italian influences. This handbook offers an overview of Baroque performance practice that is useful for developing ornamentation and recommendations for performances of Messiah.

Because Messiah is so closely related to Handel’s Messiah, it is important to look at research materials concerning the original. Larson, in a very comprehensive chapter concerning version changes in Messiah, claims that Handel’s motivations for revising the oratorio were heavily affected by changes in soloists between performances. The lack of named characters in this piece, an innovative decision at the time, facilitates aria changes and revisions with ease, as there are no characteristics or genders attached to any movement.

The composer-performer dynamic plays a large role in pieces such as this one, where multiple generations of composers are involved. Bernard D. Sherman’s interviews with

---

5 Ibid., 14.


7 Ibid., 53–77.

composers, specifically the discussion on Handel with Nicholas McGegan, are helpful in terms of realizing intentions and performance practice. They discuss the balance between tasteful ornamentation and excessive decoration, offering advice on interpreting what is written in a unique, but accurate way. This interview concludes with the idea that because performers do not have the luxury of working with Handel, one must sing what is on the page to an extent.9 This observation is part of what makes working with Ayres an incredible opportunity: there are ample chances to adjust and discuss.

The only publications concerning Messiah that were found at the time of writing of this project were program notes and performance reviews of several of the five large-scale performances of Messiah, four of which were in California. The performances in San Francisco, California, US, which were the second through fourth performances of portions of the work itself, attracted a fair amount of media attention. Joshua Kosman, a music critic for the San Francisco Chronicle, wrote an article to introduce the third performance, which was the first performance of the full work. This article also includes quotes from the composer about the work itself and its inspirations in order to attract attention to the concert.10

The program notes for the world premiere of the completed version of Messiah in 2017 offer insight from someone who has both deeply analyzed the work and been involved in the compositional process with the composer. They were authored by the Bay Choral Guild’s conductor Sanford Dole, who was a part of every full performance in the United States and conducted three out of four of those events. The 2017 program notes also include quotes from

---


the composer, which assist in understanding how this work is presented to the public. Ayres highlights Handel’s own re-arrangements as well as the adaptations and arrangements by other composers, speaking to the adaptability and resiliency of Baroque music as a whole.\textsuperscript{11}

Although there are no published interviews with composer Paul Ayres or conductor Sanford Dole, the author conducted several Zoom meetings and exchanged numerous e-mails with both, who graciously discussed every detail of Messiah that later resulted in this project.

\textbf{Statement of Research Objectives}

The purpose of this study is to offer guidelines for the performance practice of Paul Ayres’s Messiah, a re-written version of Handel’s Messiah. The author developed these guidelines by assessing current research on appropriate Baroque ornamentation as well as modern oratorio performance practice. In addition, background information regarding the piece’s inception will be introduced to assist the audience in developing an appropriate level of knowledge of the piece. This information was acquired through interviews with the composer concerning the motivation for writing the piece and includes suggestions for additional ornamentation and stylistic elements as well as interviews from conductor Sanford Dole. This project culminated in a document that includes ample background information, a comparison between selected arias from each oratorio, and suggestions for ornamentation and other performance practices by synthesizing Handel’s Baroque influence and Ayres’s Neo-Baroque compositional style.

\textbf{Background}

Messiah was a continuous compositional project for Paul Ayres, beginning right before the turn of the twenty-first century in 1997 and extending until the most recent performance in

2017. The project itself began with a single piece embedded within a larger program: *I know that my Redeemer liveth*, first performed by *Music of the Fuchsia*. This duo of Rosemary Forbes-Butler, soprano, and the composer on piano performed “classical cabaret, often including Baroque songs recast into twentieth-century musical idioms.”12 By 2002, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* had become a standard finale for the duo, but it was not until 2006 that *Messyah* was truly born.

The premiere of *Messyah* took place at St. George’s Church, Hanover Square, Mayfair, London, England, UK, in May 2006 as a part of the London Handel Festival and London Festival of Contemporary Church Music. However, this performance was only partially complete, including twenty-five selected movements, most of which are choral ensembles (Table 1.1). There are two instances in which Ayres combines two movements into one longer passage: the first includes *Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)* and *There were shepherds abiding in the field*; and the second, *And suddenly* and *Glory to God*. This results in a reduction of twenty-three movements worth of Handel’s *Messiah* into twenty-one tracks. Ayres was also restricted by the maximum capacity of the CD, which was reduced to seventy-four minutes of audio; in the composer’s words, “something had to go…”13

---


13 Paul Ayres, e-mail to the author, January 16, 2023.
Table 1.1. Inclusion of movements by year in full performances of Paul Ayres’s *Messiah*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Year of Performance</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Sinfonia (Overture), Version I</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Comfort ye, Version I</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Every valley shall be exalted, Version I</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. And the glory of the Lord</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Thus saith the Lord</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. But who may abide</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. And He shall purify</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Behold a virgin shall conceive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. O thou that tellest</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. For behold, darkness shall cover</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. The people that walked</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) and There were Shepherds</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* And the angel**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. And suddenly and Glory to God</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14. For unto us</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15. Rejoice greatly</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16. Then shall the eyes of the blind</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17. He shall feed His flock</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18. His yoke is easy</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Part 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19. Behold the Lamb of God</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20. He was despised</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21. Surely He hath borne our griefs</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22. And with His stripes</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23. All we like sheep</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24. All they that see Him</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25. He trusted in God</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26. Thy rebuke</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27. Behold and see</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28. He was cut off out of the land of the living, Version I</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* He was cut off, Version II</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29. But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30. Lift up your heads</td>
<td>*</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31. Unto which of the angels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32. Let all the angels</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33. Thou art gone up on high</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34. The Lord gave the word</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1.1, continued. Inclusion of movements by year in full performances of Paul Ayres’s
*Messyah*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Year of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Part 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movement</th>
<th>Year of Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>46. Then shall be brought to pass and O death, where is</td>
<td>2006: *</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total # of Movements: 24, 26, 41, 44, 51


** In the 2006 CD recording, *And the angel* is its own track. In the 2008 Soundcloud recording, it is paired as seen in the score.
The modest instrumentation of the premiere included a string quartet, double bass, percussion, piano, and organ paired with an ensemble of fifty-eight vocalists, which included members of the Queldryk Chamber Choir. Queldryk is a “freelance conducting project” of the composer. This large choir allowed Ayres’s double- and triple-choir passages to be executed strongly, as is evident in the CD recording of the premiere. By the time of the premiere, Ayres had settled on the first change: *I know that my Redeemer liveth* was now performed by tenor Tom Raskin rather than a soprano, though the CD credits *Music of the Fuchsia* for its first performance. Because this performance was conducted by the composer, the preparation of the choir should accurately represent a valid interpretation of *Messiah*.

Though this movement normally falls toward the end of a performance of *Messiah* or *Messyah*, Ayres reorders the movements to better fit the experience of a CD. Table 1.2 shows the carefully crafted CD recording order. Ayres’s strategy is to begin with something “quite strong and attention grabbing,” selecting *And He shall purify* to place as the opening track. This composer also chooses to continue to build momentum at the end of the recording through the progression of *Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) / There were shepherds abiding in the field, And the angel said unto them, And suddenly / Glory to God, and For unto us a Child is born.*

---


15 Paul Ayres, *Messyah: A Re-written Version of Handel’s Messiah*, with the Queldryk Chamber Choir and Solaris String Quartet, conducted by Paul Ayres, recorded May 7, 2006, MCPS, CD.

16 Paul Ayres, Zoom interview with author, October 13, 2022.
Table 1.2. Track list of Paul Ayres’s *Messyah* CD recording

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>And He shall purify</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Surely He hath borne our griefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>And with His stripes we are healed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>All we like sheep</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>All they that see Him</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>He trusted in God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Thy rebuke hath broken His heart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Let us break their bonds asunder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>The Lord gave the word</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Lift up your heads</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Hallelujah!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Since by man came death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I know that my Redeemer liveth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Blessing and honour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Amen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Sinfonia (Overture)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>The people that walked in darkness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Pifa (Pastoral Symphony) / There were shepherds abiding in the field</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>And the angel said unto them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>And suddenly / Glory to God</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>For unto us a child is born</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Paul Ayres, *Messyah: A Re-written Version of Handel’s Messiah*, with the Queldryk Chamber Choir and Solaris String Quartet, conducted by Paul Ayres, recorded May 7, 2006, MCPS, CD.*
The process of considering whether the *Sinfonia (Overture)* should start the recording eventually resulted in a second version of the piece, but not before the US premiere at Old St. Mary’s Cathedral, San Francisco, California, US, conducted by Sanford Dole on December 21, 2008. Dole heard excerpts from the 2006 premiere recording and contacted Ayres, who had completed seven new movements in the two-year gap between performances, bringing the grand total to twenty-eight.\(^\text{17}\) This connection fostered a twenty-five movement premiere which included each of these new movements along with several revisions, but omitted the famous *Hallelujah* chorus (Table 1.1). The performance, now available in excerpts on SoundCloud, was the beginning of the combination of the movements *Pifa (Pastoral Symphony, There were shepherds)*, and *And the angel*, which were included in separate tracks in the CD (Table 1.2).\(^\text{18}\)

Dole remained in contact with Ayres due to the enthusiasm and enjoyment surrounding the premiere, commissioning several additional movements and performing the work again exactly one year later, on December 21, 2009. The Sanford Dole Ensemble website refers to the 2009 performance including these movements as the “world premiere of the completed work and live recording,” although the oratorio did not involve all of the original movements from *Messiah* at that time.\(^\text{19}\) This commission involved a visit from the composer, including a pre-concert talk and interview with the conductor. At this time, forty-three movements were complete, thanks to Dole’s commission, though not all were performed (Table 1.1). The full 2009 recording is unavailable to the public as of the time this document was written. Luckily, another year later, Dole decided to perform *Messyah* again, this time with one additional

\(^{17}\) Sanford Dole, Zoom interview with author, December 7, 2022.


movement: the first version of *Why do the nations*, bringing the total to forty-four movements. Excerpts from this performance, which took place on December 20, 2010, at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music Concert Hall, San Francisco, California, US, are available on Paul Ayres’s YouTube profile.²⁰

It was not until 2017 that *Messyah* was performed in its entirety. All fifty-one movements were included in performances on December 8, 9, and 10, 2017, by the Bay Choral Guild and Redwood Symphony in California (Table 1.1). Sanford Dole was again involved with this premiere per an invitation from Dr. Eric Kujawsky, the founder and music director of the Redwood Symphony, who had developed an interest in *Messyah*. Dole, artistic director of the Bay Choral Guild, had experience conducting the piece as well as preparing the choir while additionally maintaining a working relationship with the composer. When Dole reached out to Ayres this time, there was good news: *Messyah* had been completed and was ready for its full premiere.²¹

Although each of the five concert performances of *Messyah* have taken place in the last twenty years, it has proven difficult to collect programs and recordings even from the most recent performance in 2017. At the time of this writing, neither the Redwood Symphony nor the Sanford Dole Ensemble have program or audio archives.²² Thus, there is unfortunately no public record of the performers or forces involved in most performances of this work. The most comprehensive source of information is the “*Messyah* performances” page of Paul Ayres’s

---


²¹ Dole, interview.

²² Chris Moropoulos, e-mail to the author, December 10, 2022; Dole, interview.
website, which includes dates, locations, ensembles, and movement additions.23 The only program with performer information located by the author is for the 2017 Redwood Symphony concert, which validates the claim that it was the premiere of the full work; however, there are no publicly accessible recordings from this performance.24

There is no doubt that Sanford Dole was heavily involved in Messiah’s completion, but several other choirs commissioned movements as well. In 2008, And the glory of the Lord was commissioned and performed by Wartburg College, Waverly, Iowa, US. Several years later, in 2013, Andrew Shenton of the Boston Choral Ensemble, Boston, MA, US, commissioned a new scoring of For unto us. In addition to the full performances and commissions, there have also been several presentations of excerpts from Messiah. In 2014, soprano Lois Johnston sang the New Zealand premieres of Thou art gone up on high and How beautiful are the feet, the only two pieces sung outside of the US or UK. Though Messiah was first performed in the UK, several movements commissioned by Sanford Dole had not yet been performed in the country; premieres of How beautiful are the feet of Him, But thou didst not leave, and O thou that tellest, along with performances of And the glory of the Lord, Hallelujah, He shall feed His flock, and Thou art gone up on high took place in 2015 with the Queldryk Choral Ensemble and soloists William Petter, William Vann, and Fenella Humphreys.25 The most recent performance, the first of any kind since 2017, was on February 27, 2023. This performance was a lecture recital presented by the author, including excerpts from both Messiah and Messyah. The author also commissioned Version V of I know that my Redeemer liveth and presented the world premiere

23 Paul Ayres, “Messyah Performances.”
24 Paul Ayres, e-mail to the author, December 27, 2022.
25 Ayres, e-mail to the author.
with pianist Dr. Alex Benford and cellist Roberta Dos Santos at the University of Memphis in Memphis, TN, US.

**Inception, Insight, and Interpretations**

Though Ayres was not present for the 2017 performances, the composer did contribute to the program notes, which contain a crucial revelation regarding the work: “Now, if one can alter almost all aspects of a written piece (dynamics, tempo, instrumentation, phrasing, language) it seems but a small step, and not at all revolutionary, to change some of the notes, too.”

There are also references to several conversations in which patrons questioned whether there was a need to re-write Handel, with responses including that Ayres “just wanted to do it” and that “imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.”

These quotes give important insight into the mind of Messiah’s composer. Paul Ayres is not working to upstage Handel; rather, this composer wants to offer a new take on a work that has been performed consistently for over 250 years. When composing, Ayres thinks of music in an abstract way, understanding that no matter the composer’s intent, it can and will be interpreted differently by each performer. This work was not written for performance by any particular group or with any voice in mind. Though Sanford Dole did commission the completion of the work, it was neither written specifically for those choirs, nor was it written for those that Ayres conducted. Instead, each piece is approached individually, resulting in self-contained sections rather than movements that depended on or referenced one another. This approach is not unlike that of Handel’s in Messiah; however, the two oratorios are unified in

---


27 Ibid.

28 Ayres, interview.
different ways. The movements of Handel’s *Messiah* are connected by the overall stylistic elements and the continued use of text painting techniques throughout. Ayres uses a variety of compositional styles in *Messyah*, referencing both Baroque and more modern approaches. In this way, this piece is unified by its quotations and manipulations of the original material rather than by one overall compositional technique or style.

It is evident that although Ayres has a specific idea in mind when composing, it does not necessarily result in an expectation for each performer to follow exactly what is on the page.\(^{29}\) Ayres’s notation achieves a sense of novelty in each performer not by restricting, but by promoting freedom of interpretation. Though the ideas may seem mutually exclusive, this flexibility is a result of specific notation, which includes instructions in terms of both prose and markings (such as dynamics and articulations). Conversations with conductor Sanford Dole offer the viewpoint that further embellishment may not be necessary; however, solo preparation was left to the singers themselves in the US productions.\(^{30}\) The result was a group of performances that had individuality in approach and did indeed include vocal ornaments.

In addition, the performance of *Messyah* as a Neo-Baroque oratorio requires singers to be historically informed; this involves a mastery of the source material. In movements in which Ayres directly quotes Handel, it is necessary to include ornamentation appropriate to the original melody. The novelty of Ayres’s *Messyah* lies not only in the inclusion of different compositional techniques, but also in the juxtaposition between those techniques and familiar Baroque elements.

\(^{29}\) Ayres, interview.

\(^{30}\) Dole, interview.
CHAPTER 2
THE TENOR SOLOS OF PART I

“Comfort Ye”

Background and Analysis

Comfort ye is the first movement of both Messiah and Messiah in which the audience hears the voice. While Handel selected a solo tenor for this moment, Ayres decides to feature the whole tenor section in Version I of this movement, which was first performed in 2006 according to program archives; despite its completion by the premiere, it was not included in the original CD recording. It was later revised, with the premiere of Version II taking place at the 2010 performance. The second version is more abbreviated; it is scored for solo tenor rather than soli and does not include the lengthy introduction that both Handel and Ayres had previously used.

This first version, last revised in 2008, establishes the groundwork for the audience to expect to hear familiar material in a non-traditional manner. Ayres mixes traditional notation with a non-traditional approach, in which each note is labeled with an Arabic numeral, i.e. “1” (Musical Example 2.1). This notation is accompanied with the following instructions:

On the conductor’s direction, instruments are instructed to play their first note or chord (no 1), then the first two (nos 1 and 2), then the first three, and so on. As many keyboard instruments as available should be used: piano (sonorous, with lots of pedal), organ (8’ stops only and 16’ pedal ad lib.) [possibly more than one player on organ, each on a different manual], harmonium, harpsichord, even harp and guitar could join in. The music is slow and piano (players choose their own speed, varying the tempo, using rubato and adding pauses ad lib.) The effect should be restful, soporific even. Instruments are independent of each other. After establishing this gentle blanket sound-world of E major (let the instruments play for at least one minute), invite the tenor voices (as many as are available) to sing, in free time, while the instruments continue. When all, or most, of the voices have reached the pause on “iniquity” one bar [measure] before letter A, conduct a molto crescendo for instruments and voices. The next downbeat indicates that the music continues (without a break) from letter A, subito piano, in conventionally notated style.¹

One should note in particular the independence of the instruments in terms of tempo as well as the instruction to “let the instruments play for at least one minute,” both of which are much more recent developments in the history of composition.\(^2\) Ayres has kept several elements of Handel’s composition intact: the time signature of 4/4, key signature of E major, instrumentation (excluding the opportunity for additional keyboard players), orchestration, articulation, and even the melody. The primary difference is in the execution of this piece, which includes aleatory, or “undetermined,” elements of duration.\(^3\) This *Comfort ye* is less an accompanied recitative and more so an innovative choral meditation.


\(^2\) Ayres, “Comfort Ye (Version I).”

As the instruments slowly work their way through Ayres’s quote of Handelian material, a feeling of comfort and even drowsiness is achieved by the lilting repeats (the composer uses the terms “restful,” “soporific,” “gentle,” and “blanket” to describe the desired “sound-world”). The voices then enter in “free time”; their instructions read, “very freely, with loads of rubato.” This interpretation matches exactly with the text; the Cambridge Dictionary defines the term “comfort” as “a pleasant feeling of being relaxed and free from pain.” The solo tenor leads the way through while the rest of the section follows, creating opposing effects of both unity and chaos as the shared melody is sung at differing tempos and begun at different times.

The result of Ayres’s instructions is a much longer introduction that gradually shifts into the first section; the vocal entrance will occur mid-phrase rather than in the pause after the first cadence. As the soli approaches the end of the text that constitutes the end of Handel’s first section of the recitative, the melody reaches a dissonant climax: each tenor is to hold the fermata E-sharp until they have all arrived at the word “iniquity,” at which point they should move forward in unison. This E-sharp is then respelled as an F-natural, which is sustained while the accompaniment shifts to the key of F major at rehearsal marking A (Musical Example 2.2). While Handel used an applied chord on an unprepared, sustained melodic dissonance to depict the word “iniquity,” Ayres chooses to take it a step further (Musical Example 2.3). As the tenors arrive on the dissonance one by one, they do not reach harmonic consonance with the instruments; rather, they continue to build tension as each voice reaches the fermata. Handel may have resolved to a major chord built on scale degree two, but Ayres resolves to the key of flat-II

---

4 Ayres, “Comfort Ye (Version I).”
5 Ibid.
rather abruptly in the orchestral accompaniment. The comforting melody returns, this time in the new key, as the tenors continue to progress to the end of this vocal phrase over a repeat of the opening material by the orchestra; this is the first point of the movement in which all players and singers are in rhythmic unison.

This unison, however, does not last long; after one phrase, the vocal ensemble is reduced to two *a capella* tenors. Though the most recently completed phrase began in E major and ended in F major, the *a capella* entrance is a quote of Handel’s material transposed down a half-step to B-flat major (Musical Example 2.2). Ayres uses these three measures to insert another key change, using a respelled common tone in the melody; as the tenors trill and descend to B-flat, the melody enters on an A-sharp over an accompaniment in F-sharp major beginning at rehearsal marking B (Musical Example 2.4). At this point, Ayres is quoting material in a key quite distant from home; Handel progressed in the dominant of the original key and worked to a cadence in A major, while Ayres is progressing in a way that treats F-sharp major as the home key, but works toward E major beginning at rehearsal marking C.

While this final section uses the same chord progression as Handel, transposed down by a fifth from B major to F-sharp major, it is scored for tenor duet rather than solo. The original melody is nestled in the second tenor voice, except for in the third bar after rehearsal marking C, in which it is given to the first tenor in order to preserve the pitch contour (Musical Example 2.5). This movement ends with a strong cadence in E major, preparing the audience for the arrival of the next aria in the same key.

very big crescendo & very long pause until all have reached this point

A Medium tempo in strict time
[all TENORS]

2 TENORS only

simile

concerto


The second version of this recitative premiered in 2010 alongside new editions of the overture as well as *Every valley*. It uses a different compositional style to create some of the same effects as the first version. Rather than repeating segments of a whole melody, Ayres uses compositional fragments and shorter measures to achieve a disjunct feel, changing the time signature to 2/4 rather than 4/4. Although the Handelian rhythmic motives are again retained, the quotation of full phrases in the accompaniment is avoided, in direct opposition to this version’s predecessor. For example, the introduction to the piece is written in a style similar to Handel’s in terms of rhythm and harmony, although it includes no direct quotations. Several figures can be identified as being excerpted from the original material, but they are not quoted; instead, they are reassembled to create a new, more angular melody (Musical Example 2.6).


In contrast to the first version, the compositional styles of Version II imply a motivation more to use Handelian material in a new way rather than to depict the emotion of the original
movement. This change results in a patchwork that feels more unsettling than comforting, especially for listeners who are familiar with Messiah. Although there are instances where the voice may rest for a moment while the orchestra continues, or vice versa, there is not a full beat of silence until the penultimate measure of the movement. The overlapping of the vocal entrances with the orchestral cadences creates a continuous forward motion, leaving time to absorb neither the text nor the melodic figures. This motion is further amplified by the juxtaposition of the driving eighth note rhythms in the accompaniment with the longer notes of the vocal line.

While Handel used the orchestra both to introduce and punctuate the vocal line, Ayres avoids any strong sense of resolution or rest within this version of the piece. In historically informed performances of Messiah, and of the recitatives in particular, it is widely accepted that most vocal entrances should occur after a brief pause following the instrumental cadence. Ayres’s notation does not appear to lend itself to the same interpretation; the recording of this movement supports this style of straightforward performance. This combination of Baroque elements and ornaments alongside modern compositional techniques is the basis of the Neo-Baroque concept.

The differences in compositional styles between Versions I and II of Paul Ayres’s Comfort ye results in two unique end products. Version I, in which the composer dives into the true meaning of the text, ends up being much longer than the second. The official performance recording is four minutes and thirty-six seconds long; in contrast, the second version lasts only

---

two minutes and forty seconds. Though Version II includes Handel’s entire original vocal line, rests are omitted within and between each phrase. This version is sixty-one measures in 2/4 time, while Handel’s is thirty-seven measures in 4/4 time, making it slightly longer in terms of duration if performed at about the same tempo.

One of Ayres’s compositional fingerprints in Messiah is the tendency to amplify or modify key elements of Handel’s original movements. In Version II of Comfort ye, the dotted eighth – sixteenth – quarter note motive is selected to be included as a unifying feature of this modified composition; Ayres even uses this selection in places that Handel did not, such as at the beginning of the movement (Musical Example 2.6).

Ornamentation

As previously stated, the novelty of Messiah lies in its synthesis of modern elements with a Baroque structure; therefore, the inclusion of Baroque stylistic elements is compulsory. This obviously crossed the composer’s mind in both versions of Comfort ye. The first version even includes a direct instruction to “ornament” (Musical Example 2.7). Both versions also include written-in ornaments, another hallmark of Ayres’s oratorio; for example, an appoggiatura is added on the final word of the text in both movements (Musical Example 2.8). Because these movements contain written-in ornamentation, the singer must carefully analyze the score in order to insert new ornaments in a way that both complements pre-existing embellishments as well as unifies the Baroque and modern elements. In addition, the ornaments should not overcomplicate a melody that has already been modified to the point that it is unrecognizable; if the composer intended for the melody to be that distant from Handel’s, it would be written that way. Each

---

movement of *Messiah* is composed in a way that toys with the original compositional techniques rather than tossing them; it is the performer’s duty to strengthen the connection rather than to further divide the two entities. It is also worth recalling that from the beginning, Ayres instructs the tenors to sing “very freely, with loads of rubato.” This will obscure the melody, but will affect the duration more so than pitch, complimenting the techniques used in the orchestra.


The first instance in which ornamentation is specifically requested is in the fourth measure after the vocal entrance; measures are unnumbered in this movement due to the novelty of notation (Musical Example 2.7). Because this version is an almost direct quotation of

---

9 Ayres, “Comfort Ye (Version I).”
Handel’s material, ornaments should recall the Baroque style. There are two common ornaments performers may choose from for this first insertion, both shown in Musical Example 2.9. Because this ornament should ideally be repeated by the entire section, the solo tenor will have to take the vocal prowess of their section into account. Ayres does not embellish another phrase until the text “Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem.” At this point, Handel’s composition of the same movement is recalled as melodic gaps continue to be filled, creating a downward stepwise motion; this is mirrored a few measures later on the same text (Musical Example 2.10). This same technique is used to embellish the next two phrases, in the fifth measure before and fourth measure after rehearsal marker A; as well as the recitativo secco section towards the end of the piece, though these are also examples of the appoggiatura. Ayres’s written-in ornamentation gives the performer a large hint on which ornaments the composer feels truly represent the Baroque style of singing; the inclusion of further embellishments strengthens this foundation.


Ayres includes the quintessential Baroque cadential figure leading into rehearsal marker B (Musical Example 2.11). This figure includes a combination of the appoggiatura, trill, and
anticipation in that order. As aforementioned, the section of secco recitative beginning at rehearsal marker C includes several written-in passing tones on strong beats, creating appoggiature. These can be seen in the second and fifth measures after letter C as well as in the penultimate measure of the piece.


Due to the prevalence of written-in ornaments in addition to the scoring of multiple voices, there is not much additional ornamentation that should be used in Version I of Comfort ye. These embellishments must be thought out and rehearsed meticulously, rather than improvised, if the whole section is to execute them well. Because the second version is scored for solo tenor, the degree of ornamentation may lie somewhere in between the carefully planned first version and Handel’s freer composition. For example, the first phrase should neither be extended nor heavily ornamented because of the driving effect of the accompaniment. The first opportunity for ornamentation that may parallel that of the Handelian recitative is in measure 12, in which passing tones and an appoggiatura may be added, as in the second option for ornamentation in Musical Example 2.9. As the sentence concludes, the singer may add an appoggiatura and trill in measure 20, on the text “saith your God,” by inserting an E-natural on the second beat and trilling before arriving on the downbeat of the following measure (Musical Example 2.12). An additional slide may be added between the trill and downbeat. Passing tones may also be added
in measures 42 and 43. Ayres again inserts written-in ornamentation in this version of Comfort ye, including the appoggiatura in measures 32, 41, 54, and 59 (Musical Example 2.13).


“Every Valley”

Background and Analysis

Following the pattern of the previous recitative, Ayres composed two versions of the first tenor aria in Messiah: Every valley shall be exalted (Version I) and Every valley (Version II). Version I was composed after both the UK and US premieres, for the Sanford Dole Ensemble’s second performance of the oratorio in 2009; it is paired with the initial version of Comfort ye. Version II premiered in 2010 alongside the second version of Comfort ye. Both versions are scored for tenor duet, though the ranges approach the countertenor and bass-baritone ranges in the second. The instrumentation is also unique: the earlier composition includes strings, organ, and piano, recalling the multiple keyboards of Comfort ye; while the latter is a capella, in contrast to the string quartet scoring of the first movement.
The first version of this aria is similar to the accompanying recitative in that Ayres quotes Handelian material in both the voice and orchestra while making adjustments that distance this composition from the original yet create parallels in interpretation. The first instruction for the orchestra reads, “always play rather freely: the note-lengths are just a way of showing a gradual ‘speeding up’ into the trill; slow down slightly at the end of the trill, and make a slight crescendo and diminuendo within the phrase, each time.” The referenced “note-lengths” are shown in Musical Example 2.14. This notation, paired with the aforementioned instructions, is yet another inclusion of the Baroque style in the new oratorio. The introduction of this movement is indicative of the compositional style which Ayres will continue to use: a method of extracting Handelian motives and reinterpreting them in a more innovative setting. The Tenor I line almost directly quotes the source material; it is only manipulated to fill the space between phrases by either repeating or omitting measures.

Musical Example 2.15 shows a repeat of measure 9 where Handel allowed the voice to rest. Ayres uses this imitative configuration in an effort to take the original composer’s text-painting even further, creating an echo between the voices to depict distance between the performers, as if they are singing into the mountains and valleys mentioned in prose. As the vocal lines become more complex and melismatic, the accompaniment is reduced to tone clusters in the keyboard, senza violins (Musical Example 2.16). The echoes also distort the original vocal line, resulting in a range that is expanded downward to B-natural below the staff and upward to B-natural above the staff (Musical Example 2.17). Though the voices quote the same material, the distortions allow only a handful of instances where the voices are in rhythmic or melodic unison; this aversion further supports the idea of a compositional echo.

---


Medium tempo (\( \dot{\text{J}} = \text{about } 92 \))

VIOLINS first violin only

VIOLINS I & II

always play rather freely: the note-lengths are just a way of showing a gradual ‘speeding up’ into the trill; slow down slightly at the end of the trill, and make a slight crescendo and diminuendo within the phrase, each time

with pedal \( \text{p} \) trill between all notes


The second version of this tenor aria, titled *Every valley*, premiered in 2010 alongside the revamped *Comfort ye*. It is *a capella*, scored only for two male voices. Ayres specifically instructs singers to create an echo with the following text: “whatever Voice I chooses, Voice II must repeat.” The performance instruction for the second voice reads, *lontano*, meaning “distant.” In this movement, the second voice imitates the first almost exactly; in addition, there are only two phrases in which the melody is altered. These include the second occurrence of the word “exalted,” as well as the return of the A section (Musical Example 2.18).


As mentioned previously, Handel used the melody of the aria to depict the text; Ayres takes this idea further in this second version of this aria, making the melody even more angular as the piece moves forward. The melismas are modified to include octave jumps while also

---

expanding the range outward to encompass three octaves by both including instructions for the performers to use *falsetto* and writing well below the staff (Musical Example 2.19). This aria encompasses the largest vocal range of the movements of *Messiah*.

*Ornamentation*

As the purpose of this study is to offer advice to the performer in regard to adequate use of ornamentation, the discussion of movements in which much further embellishment may not be appropriate is crucial. *Every valley shall be exalted* (Version I) and *Every valley* (Version II) both fall within this category due to their complicated melismas. However, Ayres encourages the performer to approach this movement from a Neo-Baroque perspective by including specific written-in ornamentation, including the cadence combination of the trill and anticipation. The performer may add an *appoggiatura* from above to complete this sequence; for example, adding an E-natural on the third beat of bar 73 in the Voice II part (Musical Example 2.19). An *appoggiatura* may also be added in Version I, on the downbeat of measure 75 in both voices, to keep consistency throughout the oratorio (Musical Example 2.20).

CHAPTER 3
THE TENOR SOLOS OF PART II

“All They That See Him”

Background and Analysis

One of the hallmarks of Ayres’s Messiah is the inclusion of a soloist alongside the choir throughout the piece. Handel only does this in one movement, but Ayres does it in several, including the recitative All they that see Him. This selection premiered in the UK in 2006 and has since remained a part of every full performance. The vocal line doubles the orchestral texture on neutral syllables meant to represent the mob that targeted the Messiah. Ayres offers the following initial instructions regarding the performance of this movement:

chorus - sing “ha” or “na” (or any other suitable sound) on each note; there should be vigorous hocketing between altos and tenors; sopranos - you can provide a background of muttering sounds, ad lib. start mp, then poco a poco crescendo; the effect should be of an angry crowd or a lynch mob: self-righteous, indignant and mocking; take care though - this music is not supposed to sound humorous.¹

The addition of the choir in this movement recalls other moments in Handelian oratorio, in which the soloists and choir are often characters themselves. Messiah has narrowly remained an exception to this structure even in its reconstruction by Ayres, although this moment comes close to altering that structure. While the choir is used to create the effect of “an angry crowd or lynch mob,” they are not specifically portraying those characters onstage.

Ayres quotes Handel’s vocal and orchestral lines and then reiterates them with the chorus. The modern-day composer then takes it a step further, instructing the soloist to repeat the text (Musical Example 3.1). This repetition continues twice more in the score before Ayres

introduces an aleatoric element that is not dissimilar to that used in Version I of *Comfort ye*. The instructions read as follows:

by now the music should be fairly loud – keep going, and start getting wilder (ie not so much the written notes as shouted jeers); tenor soloist can carry on repeating his tune, faster each time; individual singers could call out mocking phrases like “Hey, King of the Jews,” “He trusted in God to deliver him,” “Save yourself, Messiah,” “if He delight in him,” “rot in hell,” “bastard” *ad lib*; instrumentalists should get wilder, ie change their note(s) and become part of the angry mob sound but only to the extent that these produce the desired effect – if it sounds silly and Monty Pythonesque, try something else! then segue [25] *He trusted in God* and carry on the muttering/laughing/singing/shouting until each voice/instrumental part has an entry in this next movement (ie so that the first Bass melody of *He trusted in God* is hardly heard underneath the crowd).²

These instructions result in a nonspecific outcome by nature, despite being specifically written.

In this way, Ayres has built a bridge between the Baroque complexities of Handelian composition and modern twenty-first century idioms. It may be argued that though Handel composed each genre in an almost formulaic manner, *Messiah* was meant to be an innovative oratorio of the most dramatic fashion to reflect the severity of the subject matter. Ayres continues this legacy by using a carefully prescribed modern compositional technique to expand upon the original composer’s intentions rather than masking them with a falsely novel interpretation.


Ornamentation

The vocal line of this *recitativo accompagnato* includes several written-in ornaments, namely the Handelian favorite: the *appoggiatura*. Examples of this may be seen in the first

---

² Ayres, “All They That See Him.”
phrase (Musical Example 3.2). An additional instance that lends itself to use of this ornament is the second beat of bar 7; the interval between the descending B-flat triad may be filled in with sixteenth notes (Musical Example 3.3). If the singer would like to include an additional embellishment, a slide or “shake” would work well at the beginning of the phrase, “and shake their heads,” to reflect the text as well as distinguish the vocal line from the orchestral texture; an appoggiatura may also be added at the end of the same phrase on the word “their” (Musical Example 3.4).


Musical Example 3.3. Ornamentation suggestion (appoggiatura) for All they that see Him from Messiah, m. 7. Excerpt modified from Paul Ayres, “All They That See Him,” Messiah, score, 2006, p. 4, http://www.paulayres.co.uk. Reproduced with permission.

After the first iteration of the text is completed, the vocal line becomes more syncopated. These shorter note values and driving rhythms are not conducive to further ornamentation in some instances. However, when the soloist is allowed to repeat the melody *ad libitum* at the conclusion of the piece, the aforementioned ornamentation may be reintroduced.

“Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart”

**Background and Analysis**

In order to offer a wide range of styles in *Messiah*, Ayres decided to include one additional orchestral movement: *Thy rebuke hath broken His heart*. There is only one version, scored for string quartet, which premiered in 2006. This movement, number twenty-six of fifty-one, quotes Handel’s original, but does not include a soloist. Ayres also uses the technique of shortening durations in order to keep things moving forward; for example, rephrasing to include 2/4 bars underneath sustained notes, such as in measure 9 (Musical Example 3.5). Because there is no vocal line, the ornamentation of this movement will not be discussed in this document.

“Behold and See”

Background and Analysis

Behold and see did not premiere until 2009, three performances after its accompanying recitative, when it appeared alongside the following three movements. There is only one version of this piece, which uses the familiar technique of quoting alterations of Handelian material. While Handel used separation of the voice and orchestra to depict the loneliness of the text, Ayres uses the silence in between the same figures that the combination of these parts creates to depict the same emotion in a different way. The composer does this by shifting the vocal line back in time one beat, or one quarter note, shown in Musical Example 3.6; otherwise, both lines in this movement are identical to the original.


Ornamentation

Ayres includes several trills for the instrumental lines; in particular, the violin is instructed to trill at both the opening and closing cadences, which would be customary in a historically prepared performance. The composer also writes in several appoggiature for the voice; the first is in the second bar, while the sequence in measures 8 and 9 contains the next two (Musical Example 3.7). Modern performance editions of Handel’s Messiah, such as the
Bärenreiter, include these suggestions in the score. One more embellishment may be added by the singer: an appoggiatura on the final beat of bar 7, which was not included by Ayres (Musical Example 3.8). Each of these ornaments should truly sound like a lean on each note, representing the heaviness of the subject matter. Too much further embellishment will take away from the reverence this movement is meant to offer.

Musical Example 3.7. Written-in ornamentation (appoggiature) in Behold and see from Messiah, mm. 8 – 9. Excerpt from Paul Ayres, “Behold and See,” Messiah, score, 2009, mm. 8 – 9, http://www.paulayres.co.uk. Reproduced with permission.


“He Was Cut Off”

Background and Analysis

The first version of this recitative premiered in 2009, alongside both its accompanying aria and the previous movement. Version I, titled He was cut off out of the land of the living, is more similar to Handel’s recitative than not; the vocal line is directly quoted, except for the addition of an appoggiatura in the final measure (Musical Example 3.9). The differences in this movement lie in the harmonic progression, which is less than tonal in nature. Ayres adjusts one

---

3 George Frideric Handel, Messiah (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2020).
(or rarely, two) voices in each chord to disrupt the tonality the ear expects when one is familiar with Handel; however, the vocal line remains the same, anchoring the new piece within its original Baroque framework. Musical Example 3.10 shows a chord-by-chord comparison of both movements.

This movement is similar to others in Messiah in that it includes an ornament at the vocal cadence (Musical Example 3.9). Version I of this movement is the only true recitative in Ayres’s oratorio; it contains important instructions on how the composer wishes for such movements to be interpreted. The final two chords are placed after the vocal line has concluded, and each has the duration of a dotted quarter; in common time, this is syncopated. It is a modern way of notating a singular stylistic element of Baroque performance practice: a Neo-Baroque conceptualization.

The second version of this movement offers a completely different and much more literal interpretation, from the shortened title, He was cut off, to the interrupted phrases that conclude the movement. The melodic contour of the vocal line recalls Handel’s original composition, but Ayres has again used metrical editing and shifting to create a different product. This vocal line, combined with the driving eighth note figures in the accompaniment, creates senses of urgency and unease. Material is then repeated in a fashion similar to All they that see Him; however, Ayres does not wait until the phrase has been completed in this movement. Rather, fragments of the original recitative begin to appear in distorted rhythms; the voice freezes in the middle of each phrase (Musical Example 3.11). The performer is eventually cut off, and the piece proceeds directly into But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell (Musical Example 3.12).

Musical Example 3.11. Disruption in the vocal line of *He was cut off* (Version II), mm. 5 – 8. Excerpt from Paul Ayres, “He Was Cut Off (Version II),” *Messiah*, score, 2017, mm. 5 – 8, http://www.paulayres.co.uk. Reproduced with permission.


*Ornamentation*

This recitative is one of the shortest movements of *Messiah*, with the first version lasting only five measures and the second just ten. As a result, there are fewer opportunities for ornamentation than in other movements. Although Version I already contains an *appoggiatura* in the final measure, there are other instances where it would be appropriate for the singer to add additional ornaments, including the second and fourth measures. Version II also contains a written-in *appoggiatura* in measure 3; another may be added in the next phrase, on the first beat of measure 5 (Musical Example 3.11).

*But Thou Didst Not Leave His Soul in Hell*

*Background and Analysis*

*But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell* is a welcome, though abrupt, return to functional tonality when following Version I of *He was cut off out of the land of the living*. If the performance follows Version II, it is a more gradual shift, but remains stark nonetheless. Ayres’s
re-written version of this movement appears in the key of G minor rather than in Handel’s triumphant A major; it is then marked for performance at a “medium slow” tempo and “medium dynamic level.” These elements project a different emotion than the original composition from the downbeat of the piece, which begins with a five-measure bass ostinato before introducing the solo line with which Handel starts the original piece (Musical Example 3.13). The ostinato is scored for keyboard, cello, and double bass, and lasts for the duration of the piece. Ayres builds this figure by extending the sequence that Handel introduces in the first measure (Musical Example 3.14). While Handel shifts to cadential motion in the dominant key after one measure, Ayres continues the pattern for two and a half more measures until reaching the tonic pitch once more. It is at this point that Ayres inserts Handel’s violin soli in the minor mode, which is quite jarring for the Messiah expert (Musical Example 3.13). If the mood had not yet been completely established by the ostinato, it is solidified by this minor melody.

In addition to the more sorrowful emotions brought out by the choice of key, a sense of anticipation is created by delaying the vocal entrance until bar 10, five measures later than in Handel’s composition. This is compounded by the extension of the violin melody by two beats; the voice then enters on beat three of the following measure rather than on the downbeat (Musical Example 3.15). As the movement continues, Ayres continues to modify phrases in terms of varied entrances, durations, and structures, while retaining Handel’s rhythmic and melodic integrity. For example, the following phrase is shortened by one measure due to the exclusion of the repetition of the text “nor didst Thou suffer”; despite this cut, the next entrance comes even earlier, interrupting the soli rather than trailing it (Musical Example 3.15). In a similar manner to the introduction, Ayres returns to inserting figures within phrases rather than

---

excluding them at the end of the movement: the final vocal phrase includes an extra iteration of the text “Thy Holy One” (Musical Example 3.16). After one last repeat of the ostinato line, the piece concludes at measure 46, making this version three measures longer than Handel’s.

*But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell* contains the most written-in ornamentation of the tenor arias in *Messiah*. This is due to the degree of musical paraphrasing that Ayres uses in this movement; for example, the violin *soli* is riddled with trills not only at cadential points, but also in the middle of each interjection, just as in the Handelian composition. The *soli* also includes a handful of *appoggiature* and trills, such as at the cadence from bar 10 to 11 (Musical Example 3.15). Despite the change of mode and modifications to phrase length and melodic contour, the vocal line involves similar embellishments to the violin *soli*. These begin as early as the end of the first phrase, in which an anticipation is placed on the final beat of bar 12 (Musical Example 3.15). Further use of the anticipation can be found throughout the vocal line, but the singer must evaluate the piece and decide where to include the *appoggiatura* and trill.

*Ornamentation*

Although Ayres does not exclude Handel’s original ornaments, there is room left to include further embellishment in order to bridge the Baroque and modern styles to elevate the piece in a Neo-Baroque performance. However, because the novelty of this movement lies in the modification from the familiar key of A major to the distant G minor, it is important not to stray too far from the notated vocal line. That being said, the three key ornaments emphasized in this document (the *appoggiatura*, anticipation, and trill) may and should be used in this aria; there are also instances in which filling in melodic gaps and adjusting the rhythm may be useful techniques.

Medium slow (\( \dot{q} = 66 \))

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>medium dynamic level (none specified in Handel's score)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SOLO INSTRUMENT(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(unison violins in Handel's original)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HARPSICHORD (or PIANO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slightly arpeggiate right hand, ad lib.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cello and double bass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>also play the ostinato bass line</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(parts not shown in score)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


29. Air

*Andante largo*
The first and second pages of this movement should remain largely unembellished, as they serve to introduce the listener to the text and melody. The only ornament the author recommends in this section is the combination of the appoggiatura and trill on the second beat of bar 18, after the completion of the text “But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption” (Musical Example 3.15). The singer may begin to add passing tones at the third vocal entrance, beginning on the second beat of bar 22; this ornament
will recall Handel’s earlier coloratura in bar 14 on the same text (Musical Example 3.17). This phrase is also conducive to anticipations leading into the third beat of bars 23 and 24; to continue varying the structure, the singer may also embellish following two measures by varying the rhythm and repeating pitches of the melody (Musical Example 3.17).


As the movement continues and the melody becomes more scalar, occasionally moving alongside the bass ostinato, further passing tones may be used to fill in the few moments where there are vocal arpeggiation. The figures in which these fills do not naturally flow, such as the leaps in bars 34, 39, and 40, call for the aforementioned technique of pitch repetition (Musical Example 3.18). Finally, in order to set apart the concluding cadence from those that precede it, a melisma may be added on beat two of bar 42, again recalling the sixteenth note coloratura (Musical Example 3.19).


“Unto Which of the Angels”

**Background and Analysis**

*Unto which of the angels* exists in one version that premiered in 2017. It is another example of a recitative that has been expanded to include members of the choir; while the voice types are flexible in this movement, they are written in the same octave as the tenor soloist.

Though the solo line is scored for tenor, the other two lines may be performed by soloists, a section, or the full chorus (Musical Example 3.20). However, these voices do not appear at the beginning of the piece. Rather, Ayres quotes Handel’s original recitative before expanding upon it, a familiar compositional technique. When the tenor soloist reaches the text “Thou art my Son,” the mood of the movement changes. Ayres instructs the singer to perform “*molto*
espressivo, full of joy, wonder, and love.” The text, referencing the Son of God, is then repeated several times by the soloist while the chorus enters on the same text.

The composer keeps the recitative instrumentation for the majority of this movement: two violins, viola, violoncello, double bass, and piano. However, a suspended cymbal is added at the climax toward the end of the piece, when each voice is sustaining the word “Son” (Musical Example 3.20). At this point, each instrumental voice fades out until the solo tenor is left alone with the keyboard for the final phrase.


Ornamentation

Because this piece depends on the unity of the voices to proclaim the text, ornamentation is less effective and therefore less necessary; it may also create another layer of complexity that clouds the audience’s understanding of the composer’s intentions. The only addition the writer recommends is an appoggiatura in the final measure, creating a tritone leap from the C-sharp to an F-natural before resolving to E-natural (Musical Example 3.22).

---


“He That Dwelleth in Heaven”

Background and Analysis

This movement, which premiered in 2017, has also been revoiced; Handel composed this recitative for tenor, but Ayres has arranged it for tenor and bass duet. The tenor quotes Handel while the bass simultaneously performs the same quote transposed a tritone down, creating a terrifying effect. The accompaniment has been reduced to solo viola, instructed to play “with very harsh tone (overpressure).”

Musical Example 3.23 shows Ayres’s hallmark written-in appoggiatura in the penultimate measure.


Ornamentation

Because ornaments are supposed to further emphasize the meaning of the text as well as reflect the mood of the performance, it is important to evaluate each movement individually. The unsettling effect of this duo recitative lies in the rhythmic unity between the voices, which may be disrupted by further ornaments. Because Ayres already included a cadential ornament, there is no need to adjust it further.

---

“Thou Shalt Break Them”

Background and Analysis

_Thou shalt break them_ occurs in the same segment of Ayres’s *Messyah* as it would in Handel’s *Messiah*: between _Let us break their bonds asunder_ and the _Hallelujah_ chorus. It is number forty of fifty-one, and although the score notes that it was completed in 2008, it did not premiere until several years later in 2010. This movement is scored for solo tenor voice and untuned percussion, so it is effectively _a capella_ in terms of orchestral support for the voice. In this way, the singer must be extremely confident in the vocal line so that it does not stray into a higher or lower key, which would likely inhibit performance for even the most well-trained singer due to the wide range.

The vocal line of this movement is again a direct quote of Handel’s original material, not unlike _Behold and see, I know that my Redeemer liveth_, and the first versions of _Every valley shall be exalted_ and _He was cut off_. As aforementioned, Ayres has stated that selected characteristics or motives from each original movement are modified in _Messyah_. In this case, the octave leap in the vocal line, which first appears in bar 12, is chosen; Ayres emphasizes this by adding it as a cadential figure at the end of the phrase in bar 21 (Musical Example 3.24).

The conclusion of this movement continues in like fashion, quoting Handel except for the final cadenza (Musical Example 3.25). This cadenza includes the octave leap introduced by Handel and exaggerated by Ayres in its most extreme form: a leap downward of two octaves rather than one. Before the final leap, however, the singer must ascend to the top of the range by means of a two-measure melisma.

---


**Ornamentation**

Although this movement is effectively *a capella*, the singer should still be cognizant of the melodic and harmonic structures present within the piece. In addition, one must not forget the Baroque inspiration of the piece; because the melody is preserved, ornaments should accent that style rather than challenge it. This is a concept that is prevalent in *Messiah* from start to finish. In some cases, such as in this aria, the ornaments the singer chooses must also complement those of the composer. Ayres does not stray away from written-in ornamentation in this version of
Thou shalt break them. The most obvious example is the aforementioned final cadenza; however, this example is not the first. Ayres fills in the descending triad in measure 20 to recall the Handelian sixteenth note melismas from earlier in the phrase (Musical Example 3.25). The singer should also pay careful attention to the trills at the cadences in bars 20 and 42. Ayres notates them almost exactly as they should sound by approaching them from above and leading out of each occurrence with an anticipation of the final note (Musical Example 3.26). The Neo-Baroque performer may elaborate on this notation with further stylistic choices that should include, at the very least, beginning the trill from above and increasing its speed alongside its duration.


Because Ayres has already embellished the first and final phrases with melismas, the singer should search elsewhere for further sections to ornament, such as the middle section of the piece, which begins at bar 26. Musical Example 3.27 shows this vocal entrance ornamented with a syncopated passing tone, which prepares the listener for the same technique used by Handel in bar 30 (Musical Example 3.28). Both phrases that follow this entrance include Handel’s melodic embellishments; the singer should focus on rhythmic development so as not to overcomplicate the vocal line. The best way to accomplish this is to again assess the ornaments and figurations used by the original composer. The arpeggiations on the word “potter’s” are already riddled with
use of the *appoggiatura*, which occur on the second beat of each measure (Musical Example 3.28.). The third measure of this sequence includes an extra passing tone in the first beat by means of an eighth note followed by two sixteenth notes, rather than the two eighth notes seen in the earlier arpeggiations. In this case, the singer may again introduce Handel’s ornament a bit earlier (Musical Example 3.29).

Ornamentation is about customization above all else: the singer is adding an additional line in combination with the melody and text, and although there are traditional approaches, each performance should be unique. Ayres has a strong opinion that no performance of *Messiah* is identical.\(^8\) Each performance of *Messiah* thus far has supported that hypothesis, as the circumstances involved different performers, movements, and venues, leading to variances in performance style.


CHAPTER 4
TWO ADDITIONAL ARIAS FOR TENOR

“Thou Art Gone Up on High”

Background and Analysis

_Thou art gone up on high_ premiered in 2009, at the second performance by the Sanford Dole Ensemble in San Francisco, California, US, and has been a part of each subsequent performance of the work. It is scored for solo voice, solo instrument _obbligato_, piano, and an optional bass instrument (Ayres recommends string bass or cello) to double or cover the left hand of the piano part. Although there are no recordings or other archival material from the premiere, the publicly accessible recording from 2010 includes a jazz ensemble with a mezzo-soprano vocalist, trumpet _obbligato_, piano, string bass, and drumkit; Dole recalls using the same ensemble for the performances of 2009 and 2010.¹

This aria recalls Handel’s original melody and structure while reinterpreting them in a new genre: the instrumentation of the expanded jazz trio coupled with a change in time from 3/4 to 9/8 results in a much different feel than in _Messiah_. Both the vocal and instrumental lines are adjusted to fit this new metric marking by transforming the abundance of straight eighth and quarter note rhythms into swing motives. By retaining the contour and most of the pitches of the vocal melody, the composer is able to seamlessly unify the Handelian aria with the Neo-Baroque style.

Ayres decided to follow Handel’s lead and start this piece in D minor; however, when the original piece begins to include phrases in the dominant key area, Ayres shifts instead to the

ⁱ Paul Ayres, “Thou Art Gone Up on High (from _Messiah_) Handel/Ayres,” performed by the Sanford Dole Ensemble, conducted by Sanford Dole, recorded on December 20, 2010, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oYxSu0JODYY; Sanford Dole, e-mail to the author, February 17, 2023.
dominant of the key a whole step above, E minor. This feat is accomplished by editing the melisma (Musical Example 4.1). While Handel begins each flourish at successively higher pitches separated by a step, Ayres inserts a leap of a third at bar 47, then extends the melisma by one phrase to land in the new key. This technique of extension is used again at the end of the piece, returning to D minor through a repetition of the phrase “that the Lord God might dwell among them.”


Handel:

\[\text{God might dwell} \]

\[\text{among them, might dwell among them.}\]

Ayres:

\[\text{among them, that the Lord God might dwell}\]

\[\text{Thou art gone up on high}\]

*Thou art gone up on high* is structurally identical to Handel’s original composition other than the two additions previously described. This may be due in part to the timeline of the
premiere; Ayres’s earlier compositions within Messiah tend to be more similar to those in Messiah than not. As the composer continued to expand the repertoire, new compositional techniques were required in order to sustain a sense of novelty and individuality over the course of the oratorio. For example, the instrumentation of this piece is unique when compared to other movements, which normally involve the entire string section coupled with the keyboard. The Sanford Dole Ensemble performances of 2009 and 2010 used a trumpet for the solo instrument, further strengthening the connection to jazz and distancing this aria from the original. It is also worth noting that in these performances, the aria was transposed down a step to C minor to better accommodate the mezzo-soprano soloist and trumpet, shifting the ranges into a more accessible area for both parties.

Although there are indeed elements that make this rewritten movement unique, the written-in ornaments ground it within the Handelian Baroque framework. The most prevalent of these are the anticipation, appoggiatura, and trill, as in most other movements. The appoggiatura is introduced immediately in the obbligato line; as the melody descends, the passing tones are displaced by an octave, accenting them and recalling this ornament (Musical Example 4.2). The solo instrumental line also introduces the listener to both the trill and the anticipation, which are found at the cadence in bar 11. The trill is only present in this solo line; this makes the obbligato a bridge between the jazz influences of the accompaniment and vocal line and the Baroque foundation, which is accented by the combination of this ornament with the appoggiatura and anticipation at the cadence. This cadential ornamentation is a hallmark of the Baroque period and should be treated as an indispensable connection between the older and more modern styles.

---

2 Paul Ayres, “Thou Art Gone Up on High (from Messiah) Handel/Ayres.”

SOLO INSTRUMENT

Unlike the trill, the anticipation is an essential part of the notated vocal line. This embellishment generally occurs at the end of a section; for example, the first is at the end of the A section, at the pickup to bar 33 (Musical Example 4.3). Anticipations are also included after the key change, in bars 52 – 53 as well as at the last cadence of the vocal line in bars 105 – 106.


Ornamentation

Thou art gone up on high is an aria with ample ornamentation opportunities for the singer. Because Ayres has already included the cadential and melismatic occurrences of anticipation, appoggiatura, and trill, the singer should look for additional embellishments to strengthen the Neo-Baroque interpretation. Numerous opportunities lie in the numerous repetitions of the melismas and text, as well as in the final vocal cadence. For example, after the text “that the Lord God might dwell among them” is first presented, it is immediately repeated melismatically. Because the composer has not included any ornamentation here, the singer may add appoggiature on the downbeat of each measure of this melisma, spanning from measures 46 to 49 (Musical Example 4.4). Another instance that lends itself to use of the appoggiatura is the

61
introduction of the text “gifts for men,” during which the voice and accompaniment are in unison; this embellishment sets the voice apart and emphasizes the differences between the good “men” and “enemies” who are able to accept the gifts of salvation (Musical Example 4.5). The vocal part may also be distinguished from the drone of the instrumental lines by use of a slide, recommended on the downbeat of bar 60 (Musical Example 4.6).


As aforementioned, the Handelian influence on the melismas in this aria is undeniable, resulting in numerous opportunities to ornament. The first melisma on “received” should remain untouched in order to establish a baseline for both the performer and listener. The repetitions of this melisma, which occur on the word “dwell,” may be rhythmically and melodically altered. The singer may add a turn on the octave displacements of the first repeat of this melisma in bars 77 – 84 (Musical Example 4.7). This text is repeated twice before the end of the piece: the next iteration is used as a transition to a broader setting, in which the instrumental lines shift to arpeggiating and then sustaining chords under the vocalist; and the final is at the concluding cadence of the vocal line. The first of these is a simplified version of the melisma used in the introduction. It has been rhythmically altered to advance the swing quarter – eighth pattern rather than sustain notes, avoiding hesitations in the vocal line; the singer may further modify these rhythms to amplify the sense of novelty by reversing the swing pattern (Musical Example 4.8). The last occurrence of this text is used as a transition between the arpeggiated chords and return to the introductory material in the instrumental line; the composer has written a vocal descent. However, when this aria is sung by the tenor voice, this descends into the lower range of the voice; furthermore, it prepares the audience for the piece to end. Because this phrase is followed by the quick, chromatic obbligato, the singer should include a cadenza of some sort. The writer recommends an ascent rather than descent; an example may be found in Musical Example 4.9.


“I Know That My Redeemer Liveth”

*Background and Analysis*

*I know that my Redeemer liveth* appears as movement forty-two of fifty-one in *Messiah*, in a similar position to that of Handel’s setting; this movement is forty of forty-seven in the Bärenreiter score and forty-five of fifty-three in the Novello.³ Although it falls toward the end of the oratorio, in Part III, it was the first movement of *Messiah* that Ayres rewrote. As aforementioned, Version I of *I know that my Redeemer liveth* premiered in 1997 by the duo *Music of the Fuchsia* (Rosemary Forbes-Butler, soprano, and Paul Ayres, piano).⁴ This duo presented a chance for Ayres to “play around” with different styles, incorporating modern

---


musical idioms into works from earlier musical periods. The recitals, which ran from 1998 to 2003, balanced typical performances of well-known repertoire interspersed with improvisations and rewrites by Ayres, the composer-pianist.⁵

The earliest performances of *Music of the Fuchsia* contained a skeleton of what would become the fully fleshed Version IV of *I know that my Redeemer liveth* performed in the US premiere. In 1997, prior even to those performances, Ayres invited Forbes-Butler to improvise on Handel’s original melody over a slower, reduced accompaniment.⁶ Table 4.1 shows the development of the piece thereafter.

Table 4.1. Timeline of versions of *I know that my Redeemer liveth* from *Messyah*, including voice type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year of Performance</th>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Soloist Voice Type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1997</td>
<td>I</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1998</td>
<td>II-A</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>II-B</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>III</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2017</td>
<td>IV</td>
<td>Soprano</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>V</td>
<td>Tenor</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


As the improvised melodies by the vocalist became more standard and the accompaniment evolved, the piece became more intriguing to the composer, who did not yet intend for this piece to exist as a catalyst to *Messyah* at the time. The next year, in 1998, Version II-A of the movement was presented, which was expanded to include choral and brass parts, at

---


⁶ Paul Ayres, zoom interview with the author, October 13, 2022.
St. Peter's Church, Ealing, London, UK, where Ayres was once director of music. Forbes-Butler was also the soloist for this performance. However, *Music of the Fuchsia* continued to perform Version I in their duo recitals, as Version II-A was composed for larger forces.

After the duo stopped performing regular recitals in 2003, *I know that my Redeemer liveth* remained unperformed until 2006, when Ayres programmed it for the premiere of *Messiah*. This enrichment of Version II-A, henceforth referred to as Version II-B, includes the addition of string parts in order to incorporate it more smoothly into the full oratorio. Despite the reconstructed instrumentation, both of these variations of Version II retain the involvement of the piano, an important element of the gospel sound Ayres creates as the piece moves forward. Version II-B is the first version available on audio recording, present on the CD from the 2006 premiere conducted by the composer. Apart from the expansion of the instrumental ensemble, there is also a change in voice type: Ayres selects a tenor, Tom Raskin, to perform this movement for the premiere. This decision further distances Ayres’s composition from the performances of Handel’s, in which this piece is performed by a soprano; in the composer’s words, it was made “a little more unexpected and different.”

In the year between the UK and US premieres of *Messiah*, Ayres again made adjustments to this movement, this time reorchestrating it for a brass quintet. This arrangement, performed for wedding in 2007, is referenced as Version III by the composer, but it was the

---


8 Ayres, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth (Fuchsia/Messiah Version).”


10 Paul Ayres, e-mail to the author, December 28, 2022.
fourth version performed.\textsuperscript{11} This performance returned to use of a soprano soloist, and was conducted by John Rutter.\textsuperscript{12}

The next version of \textit{I know that my Redeemer liveth} to be publicly performed is Version IV, described by the composer as a “slightly re-orchestrated” version for the 2008 US premiere by the Sanford Dole Ensemble.\textsuperscript{13} This reorchestration has held its position in the \textit{Messyah} performances of 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2017, and includes solo voice, piano, organ/keyboard, bass guitar, percussion, trumpet, string quartet, and SATB choir. The 2008 performance, available on SoundCloud, features Helene Zindarsian as the soprano soloist.\textsuperscript{14} The recordings from 2010 available on YouTube also include a soprano soloist; this was confirmed in an interview with Dole.\textsuperscript{15}

The final version of this aria, Version V, was commissioned by the author of this document. It is a re-orchestration of the first version and is scored for solo voice, cello, and piano. It premiered on February 27, 2023, at the University of Memphis, Memphis, TN, US in a lecture recital performed by the author, cellist Roberta Dos Santos, and pianist Dr. Alex Benford. This version retains every element of Ayres’s original, but includes additional lines for the cello, especially building up to the return of the gospel section toward the conclusion of the movement.

\textsuperscript{11} Ayres, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth (Fuchsia/Messyah Version).”
\textsuperscript{12} Paul Ayres, e-mail to the author, January 14, 2023.
\textsuperscript{13} Ayres, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth (Fuchsia/Messyah Version).”
\textsuperscript{14} Paul Ayres, \textit{Messyah}, with the Sanford Dole Ensemble, conducted by Sanford Dole, recorded December 21, 2008, SoundCloud, https://soundcloud.com/user544579843; Sanford Dole, e-mail to the author, February 5, 2023.
Although there are six versions of this movement that have been performed, the original has been most widely performed. The full score of *Messyah* includes both Versions I and IV; the former is referenced as the “Fuchsia/Messyah version,” while the latter is referred to simply as Version IV. In both available recordings, Version IV is used; however, the first is still available in its duet form, and has been revised as recently as 2020 according to the score. The vocal lines are identical, with Version IV being excerpted from the primary version and then expanded by orchestration, rather than simply being an orchestrated copy of its predecessor.

Ayers’s version of this movement is written in the key of E major, which is the same as Handel’s original; however, the vocal range is extended by a minor third from G-sharp up to the B-natural above the staff. Because of this extended range, the use of a high voice, soprano or tenor, is necessary, although Ayres simply scores the movement for solo voice and piano. The tempo marking is also adjusted; Handel uses *larghetto*, slightly quicker than the slowest marking of *largo*, while Ayres speeds the movement up to a “medium tempo” of about one hundred beats per minute (bpm). The rewritten movement begins at a more reserved dynamic marking of *piano*, shifting to *mezzo piano* when the voice enters, while Handel dictates a strong *forte*. In addition, Ayres has added instruction for both the piano and voice: “delicately, no pedal (harpischord style)” for the former, and “light classical style” for the latter.

Apart from the changes in dynamic and tempo, the first fifty-three measures of *I know that my Redeemer liveth* are an almost direct quote of Handel’s *Messiah*. The harmonic rhythm and structure are identical; the few changes are rhythmic or melodic and do not affect the overall

16 Ayres, “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth (Fuchsia/Messyah Version).”

17 Ibid.

feel or form of the piece. For example, Ayres will occasionally either straighten or dot Handel’s rhythms, as in measures 7 and 13 (Musical Example 4.10). The octave placement of the accompaniment is also revised, specifically in measures 8 and 9, to avoid descending to the bottom of the bass clef early in the piece; the composer waits until measure 16, two measures prior to the vocal entrance, to approach the bass G-sharp. Ayres uses this same octave displacement technique after the first vocal phrase in measures 23 and 24, avoiding the bass F-sharp until measure 34, nine bars after Handel introduces it (Musical Example 4.11). Before reintroducing the text of the incipit, Ayres retreats to the middle of the keyboard rather than expanding the range outward as in the original (mm. 36 – 39).

As the movement continues, the composer begins to stray away from the Handelian structure by omitting and rearranging phrases. For example, Ayres abandons the third iteration of “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” moving forward to “And though worms destroy this body.” This phrase, which begins in bar 61, begins identically to the inspirational material; however, Ayres again forges a new path by only sparingly using sections of the original, skipping the text which had already been set. While it is at this point in Handel’s composition that the voice approaches the apex of the melody, Messiah delays this arrival until several phrases later on the text “for now is Christ risen” (m. 119); this moment is a prime example of text painting, in which the melody reaches the top G-sharp on the word “risen.” Ayres’s next phrase again begins by quoting Handel before inserting an applied dominant of the dominant; as the voice holds scale degree two, a half cadence builds suspense rather than suggests a conclusion. It is at this point that the movement breaks free of Handel’s style and becomes something completely different. Ayres instructs the singer to sing “freely” in “Gospel style,” while the pianist should “use pedal and change style of playing… (Gospel style).”

![Rhythmic Variation](image)


![Octave Displacement](image)
The gospel section, beginning at measure 131, remains connected to Handel’s original piece by retaining the pitches of the melody. However, it is immediately distanced by an abrupt metrical change, from triple to duple meter; as the tempo slows to seventy bpm, there is a shift to a broader feel of two in the vocal melody despite the 4/4 marking. Both the vocal and piano lines are heavily embellished; the composer introduces neighbor tones in the melody and emphasizes them by using syncopated rhythms, especially in bars 134 – 136 (Musical Example 4.12). The accompaniment, which widely used patterns of half note – quarter note or straight quarter notes in the first section, is now syncopated and littered with chromatic passing tones; this is also shown in Musical Example 4.12.

After the gospel chorus, Ayres again depicts a change in style; this time, it is that of a “jazz waltz” (m. 148). Portions of the original movement are again quoted (Handel’s mm. 39 – 53), but in a time signature of 9/8 rather than 3/4; this marking again allows for syncopation in the accompaniment that separates Ayres’s style from Handel’s (Musical Example 4.13). The sustained words “stand,” “latter,” and “earth” are also elongated, further distinguishing this re-written movement from the original. As this section continues, the composer inserts the spoken text “And though worms destroy this body” (mm. 168 – 171), offering another variation in style. The jazz portion continues until another transition begins at bar 205; the vocalist begins to sustain a B-natural below the staff on the word “sleep.” As the tempo slows to prepare the listener for another shift in style, the singer slides up to the highest pitch in the piece, a B-natural above the staff. To connect the jazz waltz that is coming to a close and the gospel style that is approaching, Ayres slows the tempo with a rallentando and has the singer drop the text to sing an “ah” vowel on the highest note before re-entering on the text of the incipit: “I know that my Redeemer liveth” (Musical Example 4.14). The return to the gospel style, though brief, is innovative: the composer instructs the vocalist to “improvise freely!” while the accompanist “may sing here (ad lib.!)” (Musical Example 4.15). However, the piece does not end here; Ayres concludes with the note, “back to light classical style” on the text “He shall stand upon the earth” (Musical Example 4.16).


Ornamentation

Ornamentation in this movement should bridge the gap between the Baroque and the gospel and jazz styles by including elements of the former throughout each section in the same fashion that the composer does. Because the novelty of *Messiah* is its inclusion of a Baroque skeleton within a broader body of musical styles, careful attention should be paid to assessing appropriate ornaments. *I know that my Redeemer liveth* begins with modified quotations, musical paraphrases, of Handel’s composition. In this section, typical Baroque ornamentation should be implemented, the most common of which include the *appoggiatura*, *anticipation*, and *trill*. Although more elaborate embellishments should be reserved for repeated and transitional material (i.e., the B section or repeat of the A section in a *da capo* aria), these three ornaments may and should be inserted as early as possible, as they are more often compulsory stylistic elements rather than personal additions.

The suggestion that these embellishments should be used is supported by the inclusion of instructions by the composer as well as notation within the piece. As aforementioned, the marking for the accompanist reads, “delicately, no pedal (harpischord style),” which references the keyboard instrument of the earlier time period. The singer’s marking is to sing in a “light
classical style,” which may be interpreted as a contrast to the later gospel and jazz styles rather than a reference to the Classical period of music history.

The *appoggiatura*, an accented non-chord tone, is now included in most modern performance editions of the *Messiah* score (Musical Example 4.17). Ayres does not notate these in the score, but neither did Handel; it is not a stretch to include them at the ends of phrases. The first example of such an inclusion may occur in bar 22, on the repeated G-sharps on the text “liveth”; the singer should replace the first note with an A-natural. When the phrase is repeated and expanded on the next page, the singer should place an *appoggiatura* on G-sharp on the same text. As the Baroque section of the movement proceeds, the melody of the incipit continues to lend itself to this ornament, as in measure 89. The composer, in Handelian quotation, also includes this ornament in direct notation, such as in the sequence of measures 73 – 74 and the downbeat of bar 121 (Musical Example 4.18). Other phrases that are conducive to an *appoggiatura* include the downbeat of bars 76 and 89 and the second beat of bars 84 and 110.

Though the melody is heavily embellished in the next section of the movement, there are moments where an *appoggiatura* may accent the connection to the Baroque style within the gospel elements. The first is the statement of the text “I know that my Redeemer liveth.” Adding an *appoggiatura* to this phrase supports the connection that is already forged by usage of Handel’s melody, recalling the beginning of the movement. To do so, the singer may place an A-natural on the downbeat of bar 134.

Though this seems like a passing tone from the pitch at the end of the previous measure, the *appoggiatura* should be related to the main structure of the melody (the extended A-natural on “liveth”) rather than the neighbor tone (the B-natural). This same ornament may be used on the repetition of this phrase. Before this point, however, Ayres has inserted another example of a
written-in *appoggiatura* on the downbeat of bar 135, an F-sharp approached by a leap upward and resolving downward by step to E-natural. The last moment in this gospel section where the singer may feel compelled to add this ornament is in measure 142, as they approach the E-natural.


As the movement switches to the “jazz waltz style,” the melody recalls its simpler Baroque roots over a consistently driving accompaniment. The decision to include ornamentation
will again reflect the marriage of a new style with an older model. The *appoggiatura* should continue to appear in each iteration of the text “I know that my Redeemer liveth,” which is included in the introductory phrase of this section (Musical Example 4.12). This ornament should also be used on the next page, at the end of the phrase “upon the earth,” to fill in the third between A-natural and F-sharp in bar 163 (Musical Example 4.19). Toward the end of this section, one may also use an *appoggiatura* on the first beat of bar 200.

At the return of the gospel style used previously, the composer allows the singer to improvise. However, there is a melody line that may either be sung by the accompanist or the singer who does not wish to improvise. As this is a direct quote of earlier material, the *appoggiatura* should again be used on the text of the incipit that constitutes the first two phrases of this section. As the movement concludes and shifts “back to light classical style,” there is one final written-in *appoggiatura* in bar 226 (Musical Example 4.16). There are several other instances in the score where this ornament will be used in tandem with other embellishments; this will be discussed alongside those particular insertions.


The anticipation is another ornament that may be used to connect Ayres’s twenty-first century compositional style with Handel’s Baroque writing. Ayres, quoting Handel, includes examples of written-in anticipations, such as in the last beats of bars 17, 34, 52, 60, 110, 143,
163, 165, 167, 226, and 229 (Musical Example 4.20). It is important to note that only one of these embellishments naturally falls within the gospel section of the piece; it occurs at measure 143. In order not to convolute the melodic line of this section, one must consider not only the ornaments that have already been used, but also the accompaniment. For example, at measures 134 and 138, a singer may be inclined to add an anticipation in addition to the *appoggiatura*; in order to achieve this stylistically, they should then expand the last syllable of “liveth” to a duration of two beats instead of one. However, this would result in an overlap with new figurations in the accompaniment, rendering it more distracting than effective. As a result, the singer must make a decision on which ornament to include, selecting that which they deem most appropriate. Due to the aforementioned obstacle of compatibility between the melodic and rhythmic elements and the accompaniment, the *appoggiatura* is the best choice for including Baroque ornaments in the gospel section.


Despite the decision not to insert non-written anticipations into the gospel or jazz waltz sections, there remains ample opportunity for further ornamentation. One such ornament, often used in conjunction with the *appoggiatura* and anticipation, is the trill. Ayres has included this
Handelian ornament in the introduction played by the piano and continues to do so throughout. The most obvious places to insert the trill are those that will work in tandem with the appoggiatura and anticipation, the first of which occurs in bar 34. The singer should begin beat two with a rearticulation of the B-natural on the second syllable of “upon” before trilling downward to the A-sharp; this results in an unprepared trill (Musical Example 4.21).\textsuperscript{19} Ayres also places this ornament in measures 77 and 84, but then leaves it up to the singer to include the appoggiatura and anticipation without instruction. This notation is compatible with what one would expect from Handel, the Baroque composer, who would rely on the singer to incorporate common stylistic elements.\textsuperscript{20}


![Musical Example 4.21](image)

There are several additional instances where the combination of the appoggiatura, anticipation, and trill is necessary to retain the Baroque influence in cadential figures, though none of which were specifically notated by Ayres. This combination should be used in measure

\textsuperscript{19} Mark Crayton, “The Down and Dirty Guide to Baroque Vocal Ornamentation,” typescript, 2016, used with kind permission of the author.

53; the performer will sing a G-sharp on beat two before moving downward to the F-sharp and trilling between the two notes (Musical Example 4.22). Other cadences that imply use of these ornaments include those in measures 110, 126, 163, and 229.


Because Ayres has expanded this movement by repeating sections of Handelian material as well as including insertions of gospel- and jazz-influenced structures, there are a multitude of phrases; this results in the aforementioned cadential ornaments dominating the movement. However, there are still ornaments that may be used within phrases to accent the Neo-Baroque connections. For example, the singer may insert a passing tone in the last beat of bar 149; this will unify the rhythms between the voice and accompaniment as well as offer a new melodic element to a phrase that has been repeated several times (Musical Example 4.23). The addition of an upper neighbor tone in measure 198 achieves the same effect. In contrast, as both the vocal line and accompaniment settle into the dotted quarter waltz rhythm, a slide may be used to offer distinction between the two.

Although each embellishment discussed thus far has involved changing pitches, the singer may also choose to use dynamic or rhythmic ornaments. The *messa di voce* has been a fundamental exercise of performers for centuries and held a position of popularity in the Baroque era.\(^\text{21}\) This technique, involving a crescendo immediately followed by a decrescendo, may be included as an ornament on sustained notes. The population of sustained notes is concentrated in the jazz waltz; measures 153 – 155, 156 – 158, 160 – 162, and 174 – 176 would all lend themselves to effective use of the *messa di voce*, as would measures 193 – 196, which house the longest-held note of the piece (Musical Example 4.24). However, this ornament is one that should be more often reserved for moments of high emotion; it is possible to shape the phrases of the jazz section in relation to each other without including a *messa di voce* on each sustained note. Specifically, the longest-sustained note of this section, “sleep” in measures 193 – 196, would be a justifiable use. It allows the voice to continue to truly sing through this phrase while the accompaniment dances around it in a higher register.

*I know that my Redeemer liveth* has two notated cadenzas, which are both rather conservative in terms of length and extravagance. The first is a bridge between two sections as well as two stanzas of the piece: the text “the first fruits of them that sleep” in the jazz waltz section and the return to the incipit in the gospel style (Musical Example 4.25); while the second is at the conclusion of the piece, in the return “back to light classical style” (Musical Example 4.26). The ornamentation in this piece should complete this link between the styles of Baroque oratorio, gospel singing, and the jazz waltz in a way that compliments the composer’s existing figures and embellishments.


CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Paul Ayres’s *Messyah*, a re-written version of *Messiah*, is novel in its purpose to reinterpret the work by bridging the gap between the Baroque style of Handel and modern compositional techniques. The resulting work creates a genre of its own: a Neo-Baroque oratorio. This is accomplished by a variety of approaches, including musical quotation, melodic and rhythmic manipulation, transposition, addition of choral passages, and reorchestrations. The use of musical quotation is most evident in the arias *Comfort ye* (Versions I and II), *Every valley* (Versions I and II), *Behold and see, Thou shalt break them*, and *I know that my Redeemer liveth* (Versions I – V). Melodic and rhythmic manipulations are used in tandem with transposition in both *But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell* and *Thou art gone up on high*, and as standalone techniques in *He was cut off*. Choral passages are added in the recitatives *Comfort ye* (Version I), *All they that see Him*, and *Unto which of the angels*, as well as in the aria *I know that my Redeemer liveth*. Reorchestrations and revoicings are evident in almost every movement, but are accentuated in the duet of *He that dwelleth in Heaven*. In addition, the work is kept fresh by the inclusion of modern genres, such as the gospel and jazz stylings present in *I know that my Redeemer liveth* and *Thou art gone up on high*.

This myriad of compositional styles results in an enigma for the performer who is familiar with Handel’s original oratorio. While *Messyah* includes evidence of written-in ornamentation influenced by the Baroque period, each movement must be analyzed for areas in which further embellishments will continue to strengthen the connection rather than distract from the performance or convolute Ayres’s additions. The use of cadential figures, including the combination of the *appoggiatura*, trill, and anticipation, is an example of a compulsory ornament
due to the expectations associated with the Baroque framework. Other elements, such as slides, melismas, manipulations of rhythm and pitch, and cadenzas, may be used at the discretion of the performer in order to further embellish each movement.

The author of this document narrowed the scope to concentrate on the arias and recitatives of *Messyah* that have already been performed by the tenor voice so that a comprehensive guide to ornamentation could be developed. However, this guide to ornamentation and performance does not only apply to these movements. Ayres both recycles methods used in these movements as well as utilizes new processes in the remaining portions of the oratorio; as a result, the discussed embellishments may also be used as inspiration for further individualization. Furthermore, there is no reason that the movements that have not yet been performed by tenor should not be, as demonstrated by the inclusion of several arias originally composed for mezzo-soprano and soprano in this document.

Paul Ayres wrote *Messyah* not as an attempt to replace *Messiah*, but with the goal of honoring one of the most-performed works of the canon by reinterpreting it. By pairing a Baroque foundation with a variety of modern mediums, Ayres has fashioned a work that builds upon Handel’s original composition. This pairing is further strengthened by the addition of common Baroque ornaments by the performer, even in movements that draw inspiration from genres other than the oratorio. In this way, the soloist should consult their knowledge of Handel’s *Messiah* in order to solidify their presentations of the only Neo-Baroque oratorio: *Messyah*, which more than deserves a position in the musical canon.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


Handel, George Frideric. Messiah (Kassel: Bärenreiter-Verlag, 2020).


APPENDIX A
IRB APPROVAL

IRB #: PRO-FY2023-215
Title: The New Messiah: A Neo-Baroque Approach to Ornamentation in the Performance of Paul Ayres's Messyah
Creation Date: 12-6-2022
End Date:
Status: Approved
Principal Investigator: Todd Turner
Review Board: University of Memphis
Sponsor:

Study History

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Submission Type</th>
<th>Review Type</th>
<th>Decision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Exempt</td>
<td>No Human Subjects</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Study Contacts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member</strong> Todd Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member</strong> Todd Turner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Member</strong> Randal Rushing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX B

BIOGRAPHY OF COMPOSER PAUL AYRES

Paul Ayres was born in London, studied music at Oxford University, and now works freelance as a composer & arranger, choral conductor & musical director, and organist & accompanist. He has received over one hundred commissions, and his works have been awarded composition prizes in Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, New Zealand, Poland, Russia, Spain, Switzerland, the UK and the USA. Paul particularly enjoys "re-composing" classical works (Purcell, Bach, Handel, Fauré) and "classicizing" pop music (jazz and show tunes, The Beatles, Happy Hardcore).

Paul conducts City Chorus and London College of Music Chorus (at the University of West London), accompanies Concordia Voices, and is associate accompanist of Crouch End Festival Chorus. He has led many music education workshops for children, and played piano for improvised comedy shows and musical theatre. Please visit www.paulayres.co.uk to find out more.1