

George Frideric
HANDEL
Messiah

ORATORIO in THREE PARTS

Vocal Score based upon the Deutsche Händelgesellschaft Edition

Edited by Frideric Chrysander

Adapted and with an Introduction by Nicholas McGegan

IN the spirit of Virgil's exhortation: *Paulo Maiora Canamus*—"lift our voices to a higher level," a communion that we may not rise to alone—Arion Press is honored to present a unique edition of *Messiah*, George Frideric Handel's masterful oratorio in three parts.

Since its Dublin premiere in 1742, *Messiah* has been performed all over the world among an international commune of choruses and orchestras. Handel spent nearly a decade on *Messiah*, resulting in multiple versions of the same piece. Here, Arion Press offers an adapted, complete vocal score by legendary conductor Nicholas McGegan, OBE, presented in its most popular version used in performance today.

McGegan, a renowned musician and conductor who has brought so much of Handel and early music to the world's stages, has contributed a riveting historical introduction, that describes the ascent, the surprising risks, and the longevity of the work that has defined an English language and music tradition for centuries.

In this epoch-changing year of 2021, Arion Press' *Messiah*, speaks to the endurance of melody, the depth of loss and rebirth, and the power of many voices joined as one.

In a word that says everything about our dangerous ecstatic humanity: *Hallelujah!*

PROSPECTUS

PREPARING THE SCORE FOR 21ST CENTURY AUDIENCES

To generate the musical score, Arion Press collaborated with Bay Area music engraver Rowan O’Neal, a composer and musician in his own right. Over a six-week period, the team, under the direction of Maestro McGegan, scrutinized the vocal and keyboard reduction currently in common usage not only to refine the existing score but to correct errors and inconsistencies which had accrued, having passed down from publication to publication over time.

In the process, the musical notation software, Sibelius, was tweaked and hacked in order to create continuity between the 21st-century digital realm of the score proper—printed from over 200 individual polymer plates—and the analog world of metal typefaces printed by traditional letterpress on Arion’s 1950s-era Miller TW two-cylinder press.

In its historical collection, the Press maintains an array of Giambattista Bodoni’s Baroque-era faces, including several drawers of irreplaceable foundry types cast at the Bauer Typefoundry (*Bauersche Gießerei*). Originally designed not long after *Messiah*’s debut, these letterforms—easily recognized by the chiaroscuro of their delicate serifs and thick strokes—are considered among the first so-called “modern” types.

Bodoni was a prodigious punchcutter and type designer whose thousands of steel punches used for fabricating type, hand-carved by the artisan himself, are now preserved at the *Museo Bodoniano* in Parma, Italy where he worked under the patronage of the Duke. It was there that a group of 20th-century type designers including Sumner Stone, Adobe’s first Director of Typography, studied the originals and adapted them for Bodoni Twelve, the digital typeface chosen to complement both the Bauer and the Monotype Bodoni cast onsite in the M&H typefoundry expressly for the project.

HAND LETTERING

With the Bodoni types in place, we next turned to renowned letter carver and longtime friend of the press, Christopher Stinehour, to draw custom lettering for titles that would bring an interpretation of the 18th-century Baroque into play for contemporary audiences.

Christopher’s work will be familiar to long-time subscribers and San Francisco residents alike as he not only drew the lyre pressmark which has appeared in many Arion publications but has carved stone inscriptions for notable Bay Area locations, including The Legion of Honor and Immigrant Point Overlook in The Presidio as well as the University of California, Berkeley’s School of Law and Haas School of Business.

PROSPECTUS

The lyre pressmark, shown here on the last page, is derived from an early sketch drawn by him for the redesigned Arion pressmark.

After a couple of weeks of silent invention, Christopher responded with more than a dozen varied approaches to the lettering, each as enticing as the next. Ultimately, we agreed on an exuberant design which, according to one recent visitor, “looks as though it is singing.” Christopher’s lettering appears printed in a joyous periwinkle blue ink on the title and half-title as well as on the half titles for each of the oratorio’s three parts. And it appears stamped in foils on the covers of the book’s various editions.

Chris was born and raised a printer’s devil in Lunenburg, Vermont in the storied printing house founded by his father at The Stinehour Press which produced books for, among other distinguished clients, the Museum of Modern Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Guggenheim, Getty, and Whitney Museums. After moving to San Francisco in 1975, he learned the craft of cutting letters in stone from the British stone carver, David Kindersley. Today he lives and continues to work from his home in Berkeley, California.

NICHOLAS MCGEGAN

“An expert in 18th-century style” (*The New Yorker*), Nicholas McGegan has dedicated five decades to conducting for stage and recording. The 2019-2020 season marked the end of his thirty-four year tenure as Music Director of Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Chorale, for which he now serves as Music Director Laureate. He is currently Principal Guest Conductor of the Pasadena Symphony and Hungary’s Capella Savaria.

McGegan’s approach—intelligent, infused with joy, and never dogmatic—has led to appearances with many of the world’s major orchestras, including Cleveland, Chicago, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, Hong Kong, Sydney, and the Royal Concertgebouw, and regular collaboration with choreographer Mark Morris on numerous projects. His discography includes more than 100 releases spanning five decades, including more than forty with Philharmonia Baroque and Chorale, and close to twenty with Capella Savaria, who appointed him Principal Guest Conductor for Life in 2019.

THE ARION PRESS EDITIONS OF MESSIAH

The Arion *Messiah* is limited to 300 copies for sale and, in keeping with recent tradition, it is offered in variant bindings: a Limited Edition of 200 copies plus 26 lettered *hors commerce*, and a Deluxe “Performance” Edition of 100 copies plus 5 printer’s proofs.

PROSPECTUS

The book is 11¾ h x 8¼ w inches, 248 pages, and printed by letterpress on Magnani Ingres, a lightly laid 90 gsm Italian mouldmade sheet with a slight deckle at the fore edge.

Limited Edition copies are Smyth-sewn and machine-bound in full midnight blue crepe with textured blue endsheets and gold foil stamping on the front cover. They are presented in five-piece handmade slipcases with blue-flecked silken yellow cloth over the top and bottom and the same textured blue endsheet paper over the side panels.

The 100 Deluxe “Performance Edition” copies are suitable for on-stage presentation and designed with performers in mind. They are bound with supple matte black goatskin spines and black shantung cloth sides, with titling stamped both in gold on the spine and in a subtle, sleek matte black foil on the front and rear covers. The books are sewn by hand with linen thread over linen tapes, and the handsewn headbands are two-toned black and ivory silk, evoking musical staves, or a keyboard. Cream-colored endsheets feature a debossed diamond pattern. These Deluxe copies are presented in five-piece handmade slipcases covered in full mohair cloth with leather spine labels and titling stamped in gold.

Limited Edition: \$595 with subscription (\$850 retail).

Deluxe Edition: \$1,200 with subscription (\$1,500 retail).



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