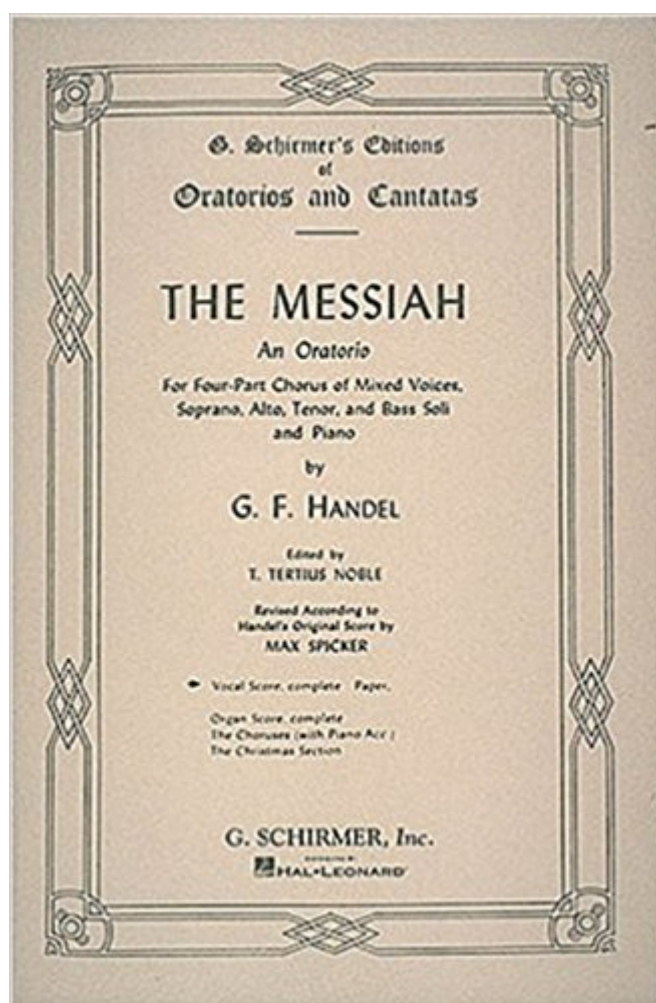


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# The Messiah: An Oratorio For Four-Part Chorus Of Mixed Voices, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, And Bass Soli And Piano



## Synopsis

THE MESSIAH, Handel's most successful and best known oratorio, was composed in the year 1741 in twenty four days, from August the 22d to September the 14th. It was first performed at a concert given for charitable purposes at Dublin, Ireland, on April the 13th, 1742, Handel conducting the performance in person. As the centuries have passed, a considerable number of vocal scores have, of course, been made after Flandel's partition; notably that by Dr. Clarke (Whitfield Clarke, 1809)., and a later one by Vincent Novello. Their value, however, was more or less doubtful, their character being rather that of transcriptions in pianoforte style, with not infrequent arbitrary or capricious aberrations, than a faithful and exact reduction of the orchestral score. Neither have the more recent editions of vocal scores based on the Mozart orchestra score, with its many contrapuntal charms, quite fulfilled expectations, as they materially increased the difficulty of the piano part. Hence, a vocal score which should be in every way reliable and practical has become a matter of prime necessity. The present edition agrees at every point with Handel's original score, as it follows the facsimile edition of this latter with most careful exactitude. Slight deviations from the original, which in the course of many years have obtained almost traditional authority, are inserted in small notes in every case, the professional artist being left free to employ them or not, at his discretion.

## Book Information

Paperback: 264 pages

Publisher: G. Schirmer, Inc. (November 1986)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0793505070

ISBN-13: 978-0793505074

Product Dimensions: 0.8 x 7 x 10.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (147 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #18,860 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #1 in [Books > Humor &](#)

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## Customer Reviews

Last April, I reviewed a brilliant coffee table book, My Ideal Bookshelf, which prompted me to select my own Top-10 list of favorite books. One treasure on my all-time Top-10 list is The Messiah: An

Oratorio, by G.F. Handel. So in this review I'm re-gifting what I shared in my 1984 Christmas card about that poignant experience. DO-IT-TOGETHER MESSIAH • Is this seat taken? • I asked, fumbling over his feet in the section marked • for basses. • No. Do you sing bass, too? Have you ever done this before? I hope so, because this is my first time, • he laughed nervously. • Mine too, • I smiled, showing him my mint condition vocal score, all 252 pages. • Good, • I thought, and then worried about who would sit on my left. Probably some pompous virtuoso with bushy raised eyebrows, who would sneer every time I missed a note. It was almost 7:30 p.m. on this freezing Chicago Friday. The tickets were three bucks a head and over a thousand voices were clearing their throats in the Norris Cultural Arts Center auditorium in St. Charles, Illinois. On stage, the incessant whining and percussion bursts of the Elgin Symphony Orchestra tuned-up for this annual event. The crowd hushed as polite applause began in the soprano section and then, like a football stadium wave, spread over to us basses, as we honored the arrival of the evening's four soloists. • Good planning, • I thought, noting that the alto had a red gown and the soprano had chosen a Christmas green formal. The bass and tenor, of course, wore routine tails with collars that accentuated their double chins, and it seemed to me, prevented full-throated swallowing. Our celebrity conductor, Margaret Hillis, followed to the thunder of grateful applause.

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