

# Georg Friedrich Händel, *Messiah* (1741)

## Abstract

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Georg Friedrich Händel (1685-1759) was born in Halle in the Duchy of Magdeburg, which was part of the Electorate of Brandenburg. His many compositions include operas, oratorios, anthems, and organ concertos. A gifted organ player himself, Händel became one of the most famous composers of the Baroque era. Having received his musical education in Halle, he worked as a musician and composer in Hamburg and Italy before moving to London in 1712, where he became director of the newly founded Royal Academy of Music. In 1723, King George I (the Elector of Hanover who had ascended to the British throne) named him royal court composer. Händel became a British subject in 1727.

In the 1740s he began to concentrate on composing English-language oratorios. His best-known oratorio, *Messiah*, was composed in the summer of 1741 and had its premiere in Dublin in 1742. The text consists entirely of biblical verses and is mostly based on the King James Bible. The verses were selected by Charles Jennens, a wealthy arts patron and friend of Händel's. While the premiere was a success, later performances in London drew criticism for performing a sacred oratorio in the decidedly worldly setting of a concert hall. Regular performances, including charity concerts, began again in the 1750s however, and today, Händel's *Messiah* is one of the most frequently performed choral works in Western music. The excerpt featured here is the famous "Hallelujah" chorus.

## Source

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Source: The Great Choruses from Handel's "Messiah." The Ambrosian Singers and the English Chamber Orchestra conducted by Sir Charles Mackerras, Angel Records, 1971. Available from the Internet Archive, Unlocked Recordings [urn:discogs:release:8142832], [https://archive.org/details/lp\\_the-great-choruses-from-handels-messiah\\_georg-friedrich-hndel-the-ambrosian-singer](https://archive.org/details/lp_the-great-choruses-from-handels-messiah_georg-friedrich-hndel-the-ambrosian-singer)

Recommended Citation: Georg Friedrich Händel, *Messiah* (1741), published in: German History in Documents and Images, <<https://germanhistorydocs.org/en/the-holy-roman-empire-1648-1815/ghdi:audio-5027>> [July 16, 2024].