

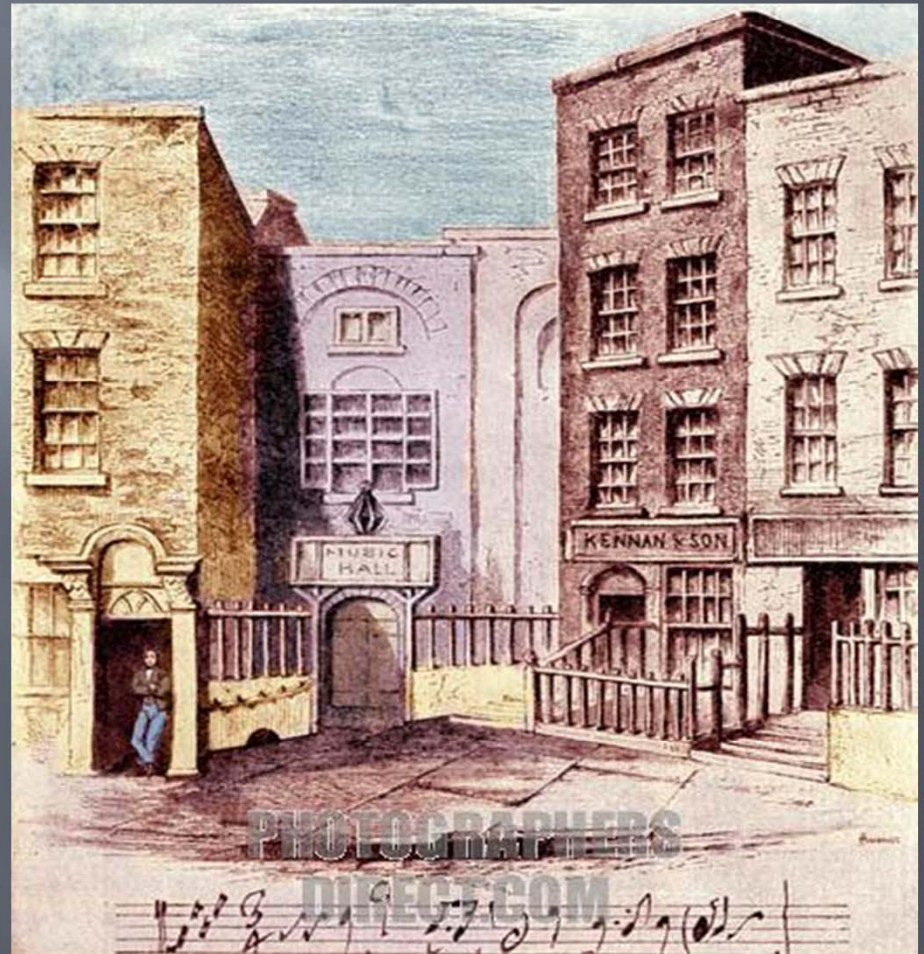
ORATORIO

for ever and ever Hallelujah Halle
Kings for ever and ever and He Shall reign
Kings and He Shall reign
Kings for ever and ever and He Shall reign Hallelujah Halle

George Frederick Handel and site of MESSIAH premiere, 13th april 1742



Frontispiece: George Frideric Handel by Thomas Hudson, 1747
(Staats-und Universitätsbibliothek, Hamburg)



1600



1742



2011

Messiah

- ▣ an extraordinary well-chosen libretto, biblically and theologically, using bible texts alone (notably only brief use of gospel).
- ▣ Direct influence on Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, Mendelssohn, all of whom wrote Oratorios. V. many less famous composers too....
- ▣ After first performance, was heavily criticised in London as being 'sacrilegious', 'scandalous' because performed in a theatre rather than church.... [London jealousy ??, ambivalence of 'religious activity' v. 'entertainment']

“Messiah”

By far the best-known of all Oratorios ---

Handel’s best and most successful ---

Largely thought to be the most ‘sacred’ of all sacred music, in feeling, expression, in theme and presentation ---

Among oratorios, having the best overall balance of choral and solo parts

“Summit” of Oratorio development since early 1600s ---

“inspiration” or model for most oratorios ever since ---

YET.....

In many details unique, different from past and future models

- ▣ has no Narrative or Narrator as found in earlier models
- ▣ has no series of incidents, historical/mythical ...
- ▣ has no “persons” as main singers
- ▣ is not a “history” of Christ or the Messiah ---- (doesn’t describe Jesus’ birth, passion or resurrection)
- ▣ unlike much music and composers, has never gone out of fashion

“Oratorio” (Italian)

Latin: ORATORIUM = prayer-room

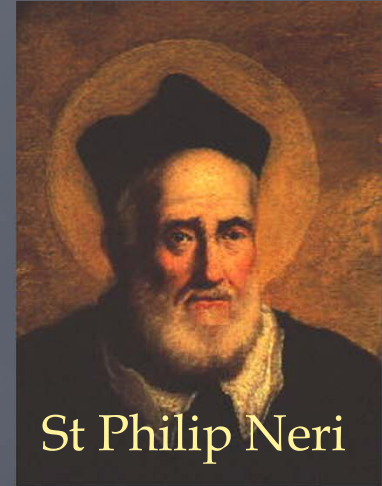
English ORATORY

see: Dormitory Refectory Lavatory
Laboratory Conservatory Depository

What is AUDITORIUM ?

The Oratory

Popular title for the Institute of the Oratory,
an organisation of Catholic priests founded
by St Philip Neri (1515-1595)



Members of the Institute known as “Oratorians” They
spread through Italy, into France: today there’s an
Oratory in London and one in Birmingham (England)

Eveningtime “Spiritual Exercises” in their Oratories
included singing and dramatising biblical stories and
theological or moral teaching.....>>> early development
of “Oratorio”

Oratory



Oratory of church in Rome where Carissimi produced many of his oratorios



ORATORIO

USUALLY NOT COUNTED
AS ORATORIOS:

Masses,
Requiems,
Motets, Anthems,
Cantatas,
Passions,
Poem-settings [like 'Stabat
Mater' 'Regina Coeli' 'Dies
'Dies Irae',]

In general:

- ▣ Oratorios are large works, for chorus, soloists, narrator, orchestra
- ▣ On a religious, biblical, theme
- ▣ Sung on stage, no acting, no costumes

Liverpool Oratorio (1991)

[Mary Dee]

The world you're coming into

Is no easy place to enter

Every day is haunted by the echoes of
the past.

Funny thoughts and wild, wild dreams
will find their way into your mind

Heinrich Schutz: History of the birth of Jesus

The angel to the shepherds in the fields....

Angel and Evangelist [St Luke ch2: vv1-21]

The host of angels.....

J.S.Bach: Christmas Oratorio

[part 4: New Year's Day]

Part 4: on New Year's Day (The Name of Jesus)

Bass Recitative & sopranos Arioso

- Immanuel, oh sweet word! My Jesus is my shepherd, my Jesus is my life.

My Jesus as given himself to me.....

- Jesu Thou my dearest life, bridegroom of my soul.....
- Even in death shalt thou be dearest of all to me.....

["Echo" Aria]

- Come then, thy name alone shall be in my heart !.....
- Jesu my joy and bliss, my hope, treasure and lot.... Praise thee My Lord Jesu

Giacomo Carissimi

From "Jephthe" [Judges 10 - 12]

LAMENT of JEPHTE's DAUGHTER

**"Weep you valleys,
grieve you mountains,
and bewail with the
affliction of my heart.**

(echo: Bewail !)

Behold I die a virgin.....



SOME ORATORIO COMPOSERS (pre-1742) noted

c.1550	Emilio de Cavalieri	1602
c.1554	Giovanni Gabrieli	1612
1571	Michael Praetorius	1621
1567	Claudio Monteverdi	1643
1585	Heinrich Schutz	1672
1605	Giacomo Carissimi	1674
1639	Alessandro Stradella	1682
1643	Marc Antoine Charpentier	1704
1660	Alessandro Scarlatti	1725
1678	Antonio Vivaldi	1741
1681	Georg Philip Telemann	1767
1685	George Frederick Handel	1759
1685	J.S.Bach	1750

Joseph Haydn

The Creation



Scene 1: In the beginning.....

Raphael & chorus

Scene 4: Sun, moon, lights in the firmament, 'The Heavens are telling'

Uriel (recitative)

Chorus, Gabriel, Uriel
Raphael

Some post-1742 Oratorio composers

1732	Joseph Haydn	1809
1756	Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart	1791
1770	Ludwig von Beethoven	1827
1809	Felix Mendelssohn	1847
1842	Arthur Sullivan	1900
1857	Edward Elgar	1934
1913	Benjamin Britten	1976

A. Scarlatti : The Martyrdom of St Cecilia

Recitative (Counselor):

Cecilia hurries with quick step to
her father's house.....

Cecilia: Friend, to who do you come ?

Counselor: Alas that you ask me. Take
this, lady.....

Nurse: What torment is mine.....

Cecilia: Silence. I want to read...the letter.....

So let it be: I am a Christian. Go to, executioner

I will lay bare my neck



A. Scarlatti : The Martyrdom of St Cecilia

(ARIOSA) CECILIA, NURSE



Cecilia:

Highest Father, eternal Son, holy
Love.....,

Nurse:

You can still change your mind...

Cecilia:

I believe, I hope, I love, and I
don't fear the danger. Instead,
death increases my desire.....

Beethoven : Christ on the Mount of Olives

THE TAKING OF CHRIST (CARAVAGGIO)



Conflict

Chorus of soldiers coming
to arrest Christ,

Chorus of disciples,
frightened

Jesus resigned, accepting
Father's will

Mendelssohn : St Paul

FROM PART 1

Recitative:

“...as he journeyed to Damascus.....
fell to earth.... heard a voice.....

Chorus:

“Saul, why are you persecuting
me ?

Paul:

“Who are you, Lord ?

Chorus:

“Arise, go into the city.....

CHORUS: “Arise, shine, for thy
light has come.....

CHORUS: “Wachet auf !” Awake!”



Edward Elgar



“The Dream of Gerontius”

Poem by Cardinal Newman about the death of an old man, and his soul being taken into God's presence

Edward Elgar



“The Dream of Gerontius”

[soul]

“But hark! a grand mysterious
harmony; It floods me like
the deep and solemn sound
of many waters

[angel]

And now the threshold as we
traverse it, utters aloud its
glad responsive chant:

Edward Elgar

“The Dream of Gerontius”

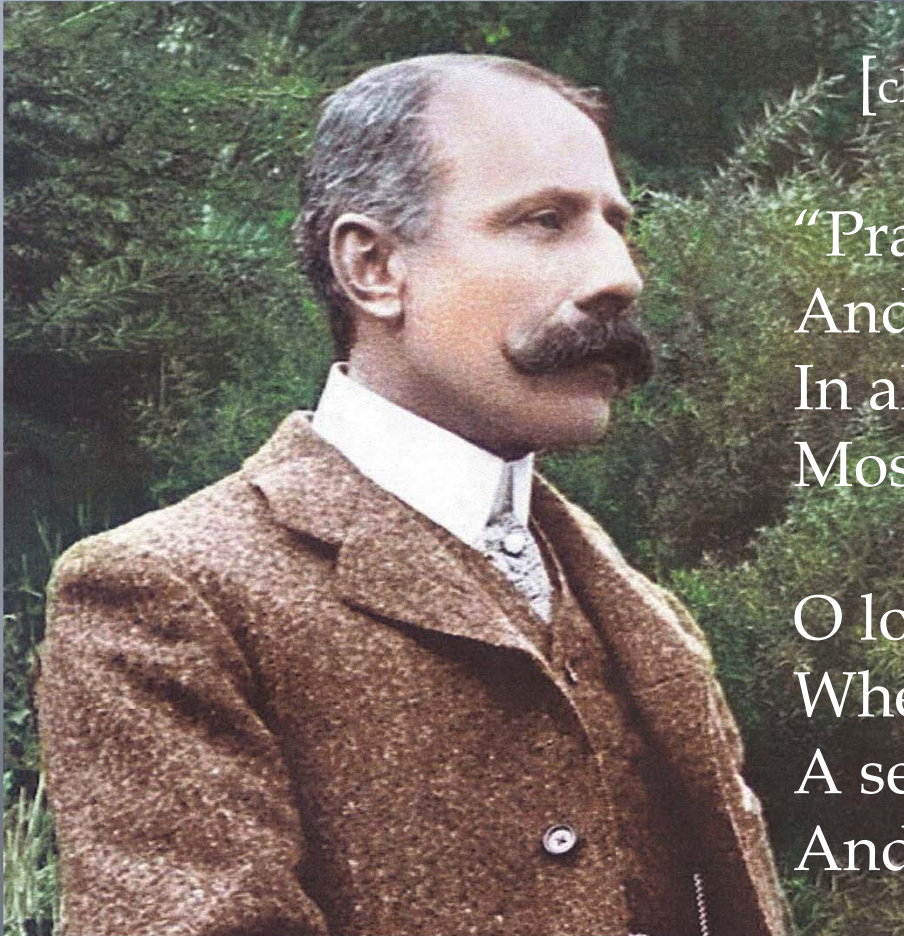
[choir of Angelicals]

“Praise to the holiest in the height,
And in the depth be praise
In all His words most wonderful,
Most sure in all His ways!

O loving wisdom of our God!
When all was sin and shame,
A second Adam to the fight
And to the rescue came

“

.....



Site of MESSIAH premiere

