

Singing *Messiah*, Then and Now: How Handel's Singers Influenced *Messiah*'s Composition and Inform Modern Performances

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AUDIENCES DO NOT FLOCK TO CONCERT HALLS to look at staff paper—every great work, no matter its magnificence in conception, requires performers to bring it to life. And yet, when studying works in the canon of Western classical music, the significance of the performer is often overlooked. George Frederic Handel's (1685–1759) *Messiah* (1741) is perhaps the most popular piece of classical music ever composed, a reputation that was built with and through performers, both singers and instrumentalists, who undoubtedly influenced the work in the minds of the composer and his audiences. This article examines four of those performers and the music written for them in *Messiah* and Handel's other works to explore the unique abilities that defined their voices. Understanding how those qualities impacted *Messiah* in composition and beyond can reshape our modern performances and our conceptions of performers' roles in shaping the Western canon.

GIULIA FRASI

Soprano Giulia Frasi (fl. 1740–c.1772) has been called Handel's last prima donna.¹ She first sang for Handel in 1749 and was his principal soprano until he died in 1759. He wrote roles specifically for her in his later oratorios, including the title roles in *Susanna* (1749) and *Theodora* (1750). Frasi was hailed as an expressive singer and capable actress, and her clear voice and excellent English diction made her an ideal soprano for oratorio.² Since starting work with Handel in 1749, Frasi sang in every performance of *Messiah* under the composer's direction.³ Although the original soprano arias were obviously not written for her, Giulia Frasi's talents still influenced the work in significant ways.

Before 1751, all but one performance of *Messiah* involved multiple sopranos.⁴ The reason underlying this choice is unknown; perhaps Handel wanted different vocal colors for different sections, perhaps he did not feel he could entrust the entirety of the work to one soprano. Frasi was one of only two sopranos to sing the whole role under the composer's direction, and she did so in nearly every performance from 1752 on. As a result, we now conceive of the soprano

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- ru - sa - lem; be - hold, thy King com - eth un - - to thee,
 - ru - sa - lem: Denn sieh! dein Kö - nig kommt her - - zu dir,

Example 1. G. F. Handel, “Rejoice greatly,” from *Messiah*, mm. 64–67.⁵

work in *Messiah* as a singular role. Frasi also popularized the 4/4 version of “Rejoice greatly, o daughter of Zion,” which was originally written in 12/8 meter (Example 1). The new, more virtuosic version was written for the 1749 season, the first season in which Handel employed Frasi.⁶ It’s likely that he wrote the common time version with her in mind, although his manuscripts do not make that explicit. Regardless, Frasi was the first soprano to perform the version that is still beloved today.

Susanna also premiered in 1749, the title role of which was explicitly meant for Frasi. *Susanna*’s arias therefore provide an interesting case study to evaluate Handel’s perception of Frasi’s vocal abilities and how Handel might have envisioned applying her talents in *Messiah*. These arias written for Frasi differ from many of Handel’s other soprano arias. Handel often takes his sopranos as high as B₅, and keeps them generally above D₄, but Frasi’s Handelian range extends from B₃ to A₅. Especially considering Baroque pitch, this range is what we expect from the modern mezzo soprano. The tessitura of these arias sits lower too, often in and around the *primo passaggio* (Example 2).

It is therefore no surprise that in our modern *Fach* system, many arias written for Frasi fall within the domain of dramatic sopranos or mezzos.⁸ Indeed, some of the most acclaimed performances of these roles have been given by mezzo sopranos, as, for example, Lorraine Hunt-Lieberman.⁹ Handel, with his exquisite knowledge of the voice, would have composed these arias only for a singer with considerable facility, beauty, and strength in her lower notes.¹⁰ Even acknowledging the differences between modern and Baroque ideas of registration, it is difficult to imagine that these arias could have been composed for a light soprano voice.¹¹ Based on Handel’s music for her, it is likely that today Frasi’s voice would be classified as a full lyric or perhaps even dramatic soprano.

If, however, we think of Frasi as a modern dramatic soprano, it is difficult to imagine that the common time version of “Rejoice greatly” could have been composed with her voice in mind. The same twentieth century voice pedagogues that call “If guiltless blood be your intent” a dramatic soprano aria classify “Rejoice greatly” as an aria for coloraturas.¹² Pedagogues of the eighteenth century, however, particularly Pier Francesco Tosi, stress the importance of training all voices, regardless of size, to sing rapid coloratura, as it was required not just by “Rejoice greatly,” but by much of the music of that period.¹³ Although the tessitura and range of “Rejoice” differ from Handel’s other work for Frasi, the demands for vocal agility are quite similar, as excerpts from “Guilt trembling” and “Rejoice greatly” demonstrate (Example 3).¹⁴

Modern audiences are often more likely to encounter lighter voices, such as those of Kathleen Battle or Emma Kirkby, singing the soprano solos in *Messiah*. This predilection for lighter voices seems to have developed alongside a focus on historical performance practice, and yet it runs counter to what is known about Giulia Frasi, the soprano Handel chose most often to perform this work.

GAETANO GUADAGNI

For just a handful of performances of *Messiah*, between 1750 and 1755, Handel employed Gaetano Guadagni (1728–1792) as his alto soloist.¹⁷ Guadagni was one of the last great castrati and would go on to premiere the role of Orfeo in Gluck’s *Orfeo ed Euridice*.¹⁸ His “full and well-toned countertenor voice”¹⁹ inspired audiences and Handel alike. In 1750, Handel rewrote “But who may abide” and “Thou art gone up on high” specifically for Guadagni.²⁰ At this point in his career, Guadagni was a complete novice in oratorio, which may explain Handel’s choice to employ another alto soloist alongside Guadagni for the 1750 performance.²¹ And yet, even as an untested artist in this genre, Handel composed two new settings for his voice. Whether this was due to an astoundingly beautiful voice and impeccable technique or perhaps the more practical concern of providing a singer of Guadagni’s caliber with enough arias, these new settings make Guadagni’s appeal and skill as a performer clear. His versions of these arias are

Largo e piano (♩ = 63)

And if to fate my days must run, O right-cous heaven,
O right-cous heaven, thy will be done, thy will be done!

Example 2. G. F. Handel, “If guiltless blood be your intent,” from *Susanna*, mm. 40–48.⁷

a)

to vir-tues aid,
in der Ge-fuhr,

b)

re-joice . . . great-ly,

Example 3. G. F. Handel, a) “Guilt trembling spoke my doom,” from *Susanna*, mm. 59–61;¹⁵ b) “Rejoice greatly,” from *Messiah*, mm. 71–76.¹⁶

the most popular today and were used in the Foundling Hospital performances through the end of Handel's life, although in transposition.²² Despite his relatively short tenure with Handel, Guadagni is the only singer whose name appears on any *Messiah* manuscripts. Additionally, since these arias were previously sung by the bass soloist and then later transposed for the soprano, Guadagni's presence forever altered the scope of *Messiah* for not only future alto soloists, but also sopranos and basses.²³

The timbre and capabilities of the castrato instrument are an enigma to modern listeners. There is but one extant recording of castrato Alessandro Moreschi, and it is of course impossible to extrapolate from a single voice the qualities inherent to all castrati.²⁴ But despite our inability to clearly imagine his tone, information about Guadagni's voice abounds both in contemporaneous accounts of his performances and in the music that was written for him. He was known as an exceptional actor—one reviewer stated that he had no equal on the European stage.²⁵ By 1753, after having studied English declamation with Charles Burney, it was said that he performed better in English than in his native Italian.²⁶ His skill at negotiating the registers of his voice is specifically noted, and the music that Handel wrote for him requires exquisite control and coordination of vocal registration.²⁷ Handel composed the role of Didymus in *Theodora* (1750) for Guadagni, and the vocal demands of this role closely match those of the Guadagni setting of "But who may abide."²⁸ By examining the demands of these arias, written by the same composer quite possibly in the same year, we can discern some of the skills and qualities unique to Guadagni's voice.

Despite his own preference for syllabic singing rather than highly melismatic arias, Guadagni's voice must have been sufficiently, if not exceptionally, flexible.²⁹ Nearly all of Handel's arias for him call for ostentatious runs and melismas (Example 4).

Handel exploits Guadagni's talent for negotiating the registers of the voice in multiple ways. Both in the role of Didymus and in Guadagni's *Messiah* arias, the singer is required to execute melismas that quickly traverse a large range. Note that in both Example 4 excerpts the runs span at least an octave and a third in two measures or less. These arias also present the singer with a different kind of registration challenge: phrases with

isolated high notes, approached and departed by large leaps (Example 5).

Handel's arias for Guadagni also regularly feature heavy orchestration in the B sections, with reiterated notes in all the strings. These passages tend to align with heightened emotion in the text and often include a shift in mode or tonal center (Example 6). Guadagni's apparent ability to contend with these thick textures indicates his lower and middle voice was strong. Note that the runs in "But who may abide" require that the singer perform such feats of registration and agility in the context of this relatively thick orchestration.

Both of the new settings for Guadagni, "But who may abide" and "Thou art gone up on high," require these talents in ways that previous versions did not. The original "But who may abide" tested the range and registration of the bass soloist, but required far less agility. The increased demands for flexibility, plus the frenetic orchestration made possible by a large instrument, yield the raging text painting of the "refiner's fire" that is unique to the Guadagni version. The range and tessitura of both arias were altered to suit Guadagni's low voice.³⁶ The original bass version of "Thou art gone up on high" maintains a high tessitura for the bass. But the revision for Guadagni allows him to sit comfortably in his middle octave for the majority of the aria, which seems to shift the affect of the piece from one of triumph and might to comfort and peace. Both Guadagni revisions feature lines that traverse the range of each piece in unexpected and thrilling ways, undoubtedly inspired by Guadagni's skillful vocal technique.

JOHN BEARD

The "first star tenor of the London stage"³⁷ was also Handel's star tenor. John Beard (c.1717–1791) sang more Handel roles under Handel's direction, and more *Messiah* performances, than any other singer.³⁸ Except for those in 1749 and 1750, John Beard sang the tenor role in *Messiah* in every performance under Handel's direction from 1745 to the composer's death in 1759.³⁹ He was an audience favorite, with some calling him the "finest English singer of the age."⁴⁰ Charles Burney, in his *History of Music*, praised his conduct, musical knowledge, and "intelligence as an actor."⁴¹ Beard's training in music began early—as a boy chorister at the Chapel

a)

b)

Example 4. G. F. Handel, a) “The raptur’d soul,” from *Theodora*, mm. 24–26;³⁰
 b) “But who may abide,” from *Messiah*, mm. 69–74.³¹

Royal—and he was thus known as an excellent musician and sight-reader. He left the Chapel Royal choir in October of 1734 after his voice changed, and he made his debut as a tenor under Handel’s direction in *Il Pastor Fido* just two weeks later.⁴² In one letter recounting the performance, Handel was said to be “full of [Beard’s] praises.”⁴³ This was the start to a beautiful working relationship, and Handel went on to write 28 roles in operas and oratorios specifically for Beard.⁴⁴

Among these 28 roles, however, the tenor work in *Messiah* is not one, at least explicitly. While we know that Handel generally wrote for specific singers, the two Guadagni arias are the only pieces of *Messiah* with a specific name attached.⁴⁵ Handel composed most of his oratorios for a specific set of singers hired well in

advance for London premieres, but *Messiah*’s premiere took place in Dublin.⁴⁶ Whether or not this premiere locale was Handel’s intention at the outset of composition is still debated, but it seems clear that Handel did not know who the first *Messiah* soloists would be during the composition process.⁴⁷ Even so, Handel was not in the practice of writing for generic tenors; he very likely had a specific voice in mind.⁴⁸ Perhaps it was Beard, not just because he was arguably Handel’s favorite tenor, but also because immediately after completing *Messiah*, Handel set to work on *Samson* (1741), in which the title role was explicitly meant for Beard.⁴⁹ Furthermore, Handel likely anticipated London performances, particularly because Charles Jennens, *Messiah*’s librettist, intended the work for the London Lenten season.⁵⁰ Who

a)

b)

Example 5. G. F. Handel, a) “The raptur’d soul,” from *Theodora*, mm. 80–81;³² b) “But who may abide,” from *Messiah*, mm. 122–123.³³

else but John Beard’s voice could have been in Handel’s ear as he wrote “Every valley”?

Vocally, it seems that John Beard was capable of almost anything. Handel’s writing for him varies greatly in terms of tempo, range, coloratura, melody, and style. Perhaps his versatility is why Handel so clearly enjoyed working with Beard. However, a few patterns emerge when comparing the arias for Samson and the tenor work in *Messiah* that hint at a connection between these two roles. In many places, Handel seems to prefer short phrases for Beard. Certainly his music contains extended phrases, but they are generally full of coloratura. The long, languid lines that often appear in Handel’s music are difficult to find in *Samson* or in the tenor work from *Messiah*. On the contrary, very short phrases, often of just a measure, occur in Beard’s arias regardless of affect or the phrasing of the text—in many cases Handel breaks up a sentence to create this effect (Example 7).

Handel’s arias for Beard are also replete with large, dramatic leaps. This kind of vocal motion occurs particularly often in the role of Samson, and it requires a specific coordination and skill from the singer. *Messiah*’s tenor arias often demand this feat (Example 8).

Handel’s music for Beard was often heroic; in addition to premiering the role of Samson, Beard was also the first Judas in *Judas Maccabeus*.⁵⁷ *The Grove Book of Opera Singers* goes so far as to state that these leading male roles set for Beard helped establish the natural male voice as dominant over castrati in London.⁵⁸ One could argue that there is no hero in *Messiah* besides the titular savior, but the tenor arias present an undeniable air of triumph and strength. The tenor is the first to speak to the audience in “Comfort ye my people” and “Every valley shall be exalted.” He welcomes and calms the listener, pardons Jerusalem, and then victoriously heralds impending salvation. In “Thou shalt break them,” he threatens the kings of the earth who “take

a)

b)

Example 6. G. F. Handel, a) “The raptur’d soul,” from *Theodora*, mm. 90–92;³⁴ b) “But who may abide,” from *Messiah*, mm. 66–70.³⁵

counsel together against the Lord” with resolute and righteous retribution.⁵⁹ In “O Death where is thy sting?” our hero returns one last time, in duet with the alto, to proclaim victory on our behalf. The placement and tone of these arias present the tenor as the audience’s guide and protector, and no tenor was more trusted, both by Handel and by London audiences, than John Beard.⁶⁰

THEODORE REINHOLD

Theodore Reinhold (d. 1751), sometimes known as Henry Theodore, at other times as Thomas, became Handel’s principal bass soloist in 1736.⁶¹ He sang with

the composer until his own passing in 1751, a tenure that included every London performance of *Messiah* during his lifetime.⁶² As was true for John Beard, the bass role in *Messiah* was not expressly written for Reinhold, even though he was Handel’s principal bass at the time. *Samson*, however, contains two arias written for explicitly for Reinhold. These arias, sung by the character Harapha the Giant, bear remarkable similarities to the bass arias in *Messiah*, and these similarities, in conjunction with the unusual location of *Messiah*’s premiere, suggest that the bass role in *Messiah* may have been written with Reinhold’s voice in mind, despite the lack of explicit designation.

a)

b)

c)

Example 7. G. F. Handel, a) “Total eclipse,” from *Samson*, mm. 13–17;⁵¹ b) “Thus when the sun from’s wa’ry bed,” from *Samson*, mm. 9–12;⁵² c) “Behold and see,” from *Messiah*, mm. 7–12.⁵³

The first of the *Samson* arias is a triumphant declaration in the major mode with bold arpeggiated chords and scalar melismas, in a style akin to “Why do the nations so furiously rage together” (Example 9). The

chord progressions and structure are quite similar. Both arias, at least in their original conceptions, are in ABA form, with the main theme repeated twice in the A section, the second time with a modulation. The

a)

find to heart, or head, or breast! but will a se - cret pas - sage find in to the
 lein in Haupt und Brust und Herz! sie dringet auf - ge - hei - mem Pfad bis in der

b)

ves - sel, Thou shalt dash them in pie - ces, in

Example 8. G. F. Handel, a) “Torments, alas,” from *Samson*, mm. 29–38;⁵⁴ b) “Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron,” from *Messiah*, mm. 22–25.⁵⁶

B sections of both arias are relatively short and set in the relative minor.

The comparison between Harapha’s second aria, “Presuming slave” and “The people who walked in darkness” is uncanny. Both arias, set in the minor mode, feature a tonally wandering melodic line and unison orchestration (Example 10). These arias from *Samson* and *Messiah* are undeniably musically similar, but they are sung by completely different characters and serve very different dramatic purposes. Harapha is a Philistine guard who scorns the God of Israel, and “Presuming slave” is his attempt to humiliate Samson in the third act. The bass arias in *Messiah* project a holy, even prophetic persona, and “The people who walked in darkness” foretells Christ’s birth in Part 1 of *Messiah*. The subject matter, function, and characters of these arias—written mere weeks apart from each other—are unrelated. What else could possibly connect them but their intended singer?

Reinhold is the most elusive of the four singers presented here. He is rarely discussed by music historians of the time, and they do little more than list his roles or

mention him in passing while detailing the work of other singers. Most of what is known about his voice must therefore be discerned from studying the music that was written for him. His range in his Handelian work was G₂–F₄—the same range of the bass solos in *Messiah*.⁶⁷ As for his timbre, here again *Samson* affords an excellent opportunity for analysis. *Samson* has two bass roles, but Reinhold was cast as Harapha the Giant, the lower of the two—likely indicating a larger, deeper voice.⁶⁸

Beyond his vocal technique, Reinhold gained a reputation as an excellent actor, especially after his portrayal of the Dragon in Lampe’s *The Dragon of Wantley*.⁶⁹ Handel made great use of Reinhold’s talent as an actor by casting him in a variety of roles, from Pharaoh in *Joseph and his Brethren* to the title role in *Hercules*.⁷⁰

SO WHAT?

Two qualities seem to unite all four of these singers. The first is the size of their voices. In recent decades, as more scholars and performers have focused on Baroque performance practice, a bias toward lighter voices in Handelian work has developed. But many of the vocal

a)

such a foe, scorn such a foe, Though I could
end thee at a blow, Though I could end thee at a blow, Though

b)

na - tions so fu - riously rage to - ge - ther? why

Example 9. G. F. Handel, a) “Honor and arms,” from *Samson*, mm. 15–18;⁶³ b) “Why do the nations so furiously rage together,” from *Messiah*, mm. 16–18.⁶⁴

lines in *Messiah* seem destined for lower, larger voices by their tessitura, their orchestration, and their character. Frasi, Guadagni, Beard, and Reinhold likely bore a greater resemblance to Eileen Farrell or Jon Vickers, who gave famous *Messiah* performances in the twentieth century that are now thought to be historically inaccurate.⁷¹ My intent is not to suggest that light lyric voice types should not sing *Messiah*—modern performances prove constantly that it can be artfully done. Rather, the idea is that no voice should be considered too operatic or heavy to perform *Messiah*, as long as it can move as the music demands.

Secondly, Frasi, Guadagni, Beard, and Reinhold all garnered praise as actors. Some say the narrative of *Messiah* is difficult to discern, others say it does not exist, but it can be no coincidence that Handel’s most influential soloists for this work excelled at telling stories.

Handel was a dramatist, who took great care with his libretti. Records of his conversations with his librettist, Charles Jennens, indicate that they squabbled over even the smallest changes to Jennens’s original draft, such as whether or not it was appropriate to use “them” rather than the scriptural “him” in the aria “How beautiful are the feet of them.”⁷² To Handel and Jennens, every word pulled from scripture was an important part of the story, but modern singers and audiences alike are so saturated in this music that these performances can become “park and bark”⁷³ affairs. Handel made it clear in whom he chose to deliver this music to his audiences that *Messiah* is a story and should be well told.

The degree to which these voices inspired Handel in his composition of *Messiah* is unknowable. Nevertheless, Frasi, Guadagni, Beard, and Reinhold were more than just fortunate singers who happened to find themselves

a)

b)

Example 10. G. F. Handel, a) “Presuming slave,” from *Samson*, mm. 65–70;⁶⁵ b) “The people that walked in darkness,” from *Messiah*, mm. 18–21.⁶⁶

adjacent to history. These four undoubtedly shaped *Messiah* in the eyes of its earliest audiences and therefore deserve some credit for its success. Repeatedly choosing these singers and their specific talents was not an accident, but rather a statement about *Messiah*'s message and how it should be delivered and received. Understanding the singers Handel chose, the original vessels of *Messiah*, illuminates more of Handel's intention, and reminds us of the power of the performer.

NOTES

1. Ruby Hughes, *Handel's Last Prima Donna: Giulia Frasi in London* (CHSA0403 2018).
2. David Vickers and Annette Landgraf, *The Cambridge Handel Encyclopedia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 244–245.
3. Watkins Shaw, *A Textual Companion to Handel's Messiah* (London: Novello Publishing Limited, 1965), 70–72.
4. *Ibid.*
5. George Frederic Handel, *Messiah* (Wiesbaden: Breitkopf und Härtel, 2018), 86.
6. George Frederic Handel, *Susanna* (New York, NY: Kalmus, 1999), Preface. Typically, Handel wrote all his oratorios for each season in the preceding summer. Shaw, 115.
7. *Ibid.*, 134.
8. Some pedagogues, such as Berton Coffin, assert that there is no real difference between dramatic and mezzo sopranos. Berton Coffin, *Singer's Repertoire* (New Brunswick, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1956), 290. Sergius Kagen, *Music for the Voice* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1968), 199.
9. Richard C. Miller, *The Structure of Singing: System and Art in Vocal Technique* (New York: Schirmer, 1986), 135. Operabaroque, “Joyce DiDonato, Haendel, Susanna, “Lead Me, Oh Lead Me to Some Cool Retreat . . . Crystal Streams in M,” YouTube, September 12, 2017; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ozwIuhCTDDU> (accessed January 12, 2019). Anthony Tommasini, “Lorraine Hunt Lieberson, Luminous Mezzo, Dies at 52,” *New York Times*, July 5, 2006; <https://www.nytimes.com/2006/07/05/arts/music/05hunt.html>.

10. Barbara M. Doscher, "He Wrote for Specific Voices," *Journal of Singing* 52, no. 1 (September/October 1995): 33.
11. Correct registration was, of course, conceived of differently in the Baroque period. The modern emphasis on blending the registers was not part of their aesthetic, and so singers likely approached work in and around the *passaggi* in very different ways. Furthermore, it is unlikely that Handel's singers habitually lowered their larynxes, as our modern understanding of bel canto technique dictates. However, while pedagogic practice may have been different, the anatomic, physiologic, and acoustic principles that govern the function of the voice have not changed since Handel's day. So, while Frasi may not have ever explicitly referred to her *primo passaggio*, the physiological shift that occurs in women's voices around F₄ was still there. Regardless of laryngeal position, a lighter voice would have been less audible in the middle and lower range in which many of Frasi's arias reside. Miller, 134–144.
12. Coffin, *Singer's Repertoire*, 76.
13. Berton Coffin, *Historical Vocal Pedagogy Classics* (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2002), 1–10.
14. Handel wrote the 4/4 version over the existing bassline, leaving the chord structure and general melodic contour intact. The higher range and tessitura likely stems from Handel's original conception of this aria, rather than any attempt to cater to Frasi's vocal abilities.
15. Handel, *Susanna* (1999), 202.
16. George Frederic Handel, *Messiah* (New York, NY: Novello, 1902), 68–69.
17. Shaw, 65.
18. Vickers and Landgraf, 275.
19. Charles Burney, *A General History of Music: From the Earliest Ages of the Present Period* (London: Printed for the Author, 1782), 275.
20. Shaw, 116.
21. *Ibid.*, 70.
22. *Ibid.*, 93, 121–126.
23. *Ibid.*, insert.
24. Alessandro Moreschi, "Ave Maria," in *The Record of Singing 1899–1952*, EMI Classics (SIGCD457, 2009).
25. Laura Macy, *The Grove Book of Opera Singers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), 206.
26. *Ibid.*, 205.
27. Patricia Howard, *The Modern Castrato: Gaetano Guadagni and the Coming of a New Operatic Age* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 194.
28. Vickers and Landgraf, 275.
29. Macy, 206. Howard, 194.
30. George Frederic Handel, *Theodora* (New York, NY: Kalmus, 1985), 36.
31. Handel, *Messiah* (1902), 22.
32. Handel, *Theodora* (1985), 39.
33. Handel, *Messiah* (1902), 24..
34. Handel, *Theodora* (1985), 40.
35. George Frederic Handel, *Messiah* (New York, NY: G. Schirmer, 1912), 91.
36. When Handel gave Guadagni music originally composed for a female alto, he often lowered the key. He also wrote a low G for Guadagni in "But who may abide," and later had to revise the setting slightly to offer other altos the opportunity to sing this measure up the octave. These things indicate that, at least when compared to female altos, Guadagni's voice sat very low at this time in his life. Howard, 202–204.
37. Vickers and Landgraf, 84.
38. Macy, 32. Shaw, 70–72.
39. Richard Lockett, *Handel's Messiah: A Celebration* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1992), 146.
40. Macy, 33.
41. Burney, 1010.
42. Vickers and Landgraf, 85.
43. David Vickers, "Where'er You Walk," Essay in accompanying booklet (Signum, 2016).
44. Vickers and Landgraf, 84.
45. Doscher, 33. Shaw, 59–72.
46. Doscher, 34. Lockett, 46.
47. *Ibid.*
48. Doscher, 33.
49. George Frederic Handel, *Samson* (New York, NY: Kalmus, 1985), Preface. Vickers and Landgraf, 84–85.
50. Lockett, 67.
51. Handel, *Samson* (1985), 46.
52. *Ibid.*, 226.
53. Handel, *Messiah* (1902), 112.
54. Handel, *Samson* (1985), 38.
55. *Ibid.*
56. Handel, *Messiah* (1902), 146.
57. Vickers and Landgraf, 85.
58. Macy, 33.
59. This phrase is used in "Why do the nations rage," but the syntax of the libretto makes it clear that the pronoun "them" which is used in "Thou shalt break them" refers to this group of people. *Ibid.*, 190–191.
60. Burney described Beard as "constantly possessing the favor of the public." Doscher, 35.

61. Vickers and Landgraf, 535.
62. Shaw, 70–72.
63. Handel, *Samson* (1985), 165.
64. Handel, *Messiah* (1902), 133.
65. Handel, *Samson* (1985), 209.
66. Handel, *Messiah* (1912), 44.
67. Vickers and Landgraf, 535.
68. Berton Coffin classifies arias for this role as bass arias, rather than baritone arias. Coffin, *Singer's Repertoire*, 831. Macy, 404. Vickers and Landgraf, 535.
69. Reinhold's portrayal of the Dragon so delighted King George II that he reportedly kept Queen Caroline up late into the night describing his escapades, despite the fact that she was unwell. Queen Caroline died just a few days later, and thankfully Reinhold wasn't held responsible. Luckett, 148.
70. Macy, 404.
71. These performances also featured larger orchestras than what Handel originally conceived, so larger voices may have been employed in these settings simply to contend with a robust orchestra, and charges of inaccuracy are certainly partially related to the orchestration.
72. Luckett, 84
73. "Park and bark" is a colloquial phrase used to describe a performance that is devoid of any emotional expression. It refers to singers who "park" themselves in one spot without moving and "bark" the melody without any phrasing or nuance.

Dr. Kirsten Brown is a soprano, voice pedagogue, and voice researcher. She has a BM and MBA from Stetson University, MM in Vocal Pedagogy/Performance from Westminster Choir College, and an EdD in the College Teaching of Music from Teachers College, Columbia University. She is an adjunct professor in the Communication Sciences and Disorders department at Iona College and teaches voice privately.



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