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3CD

AN INTRODUCTION TO
HANDEL'S

Messiah

A LISTENER'S GUIDE IN WORDS AND MUSIC
PRESENTED BY GRAHAM ABBOTT

From the acclaimed ABC Classic FM program *Keys to Music*





KEYS TO MUSIC first went to air on ABC Classic FM on 1 February 2003, and it rapidly became a very popular part of the network's weekly schedule. The program is designed to demystify the wonderful world of music for all, to provide a 'way in' for music lovers to better understand and enjoy the music they love, and to introduce them to new sounds and concepts in an enjoyable way.

Presented by leading Australian conductor and music educator Graham Abbott, *Keys to Music* covers music from ancient times to the present day. While the focus is very much on the Western classical tradition, some programs have included music from non-Western cultures, and even rock and pop music have been heard from time to time, to illustrate universal principles and inspirations which have brought about music across the spectrum.

The original versions of Graham Abbott's introduction to Handel's *Messiah* were broadcast in December 2003. Due to popular demand the programs were broadcast again (in slightly revised versions) in December 2004, and it is the revised versions which are now made available here.

It is highly appropriate that the first commercially available *Keys to Music* programs should be Graham Abbott's introduction to *Messiah*. As one of the most passionate and enthusiastic Handelians in Australia, Graham knows this work perhaps like no other musician. In December 2004 he conducted the work for the 60th time, and his knowledge of Handel's music – as scholar and performer – is justly acclaimed. These three programs reflect his love for Handel and his music, combined with his trademark down-to-earth approach which provides new insights for the professional and amateur music lover alike.

An Introduction to Handel's Messiah

Part One (Disc 1) looks at the historical background to Handel's work, and the vital role played by Charles Jennens, who compiled the text. The meaning and structure of the text of *Messiah's* first part is then explained, along with an overview of Handel's music. Part One of *Messiah* deals with the prophecies of the coming of the Messiah, his birth, and his life's work.

Part Two (Disc 2) continues the analysis of the text and music, looking at the second part of *Messiah*. This section covers the Messiah's death, resurrection and ascension, and then describes the spreading of the Messiah's message into the world. Part Two concludes with the triumph of God over those who reject the Messiah's message.

Part Three (Disc 3) discusses the text and music of the oratorio's third part, which deals with the life of faith for those who believe the Messiah's message, and concludes with a gigantic hymn of praise to the Messiah. In addition, the program looks at what happened to *Messiah* after the composer's lifetime. Arrangements by Mozart and others are heard, including a rare 1926 recording from the Crystal Palace in London, featuring thousands of performers under the baton of Sir Henry Wood.

CD1

Part One

1	Introduction	4'43
	Overture	
2	The Text	3'09
3	The coming of the Messiah: Isaiah	5'11
	• Comfort ye	
	• And the glory of the Lord	
4	The coming of the Messiah: the minor prophets	7'33
	• Thus saith the Lord	
	• But who may abide	
5	The coming of the Messiah: Isaiah revisited	4'01
	• O thou that tellest	
	• For behold, darkness	
6	The birth of the Messiah	16'46
	• For unto us a child is born	
	• Pifa	
	• There were shepherds	
	• And lo, the angel of the Lord	
	• And the angel said unto them	
	• And suddenly there was with the angel	
	• Glory to God	
	• Rejoice greatly	

7	The life of the Messiah	11'34
	• He shall feed His flock	
	• His yoke is easy	
8	Conclusion	0'43
CD2		
Part Two		
1	Introduction	0'36
2	The death of the Messiah	8'51
	• Behold the Lamb of God	
	• He was despised – excerpt	
3	The Passion choruses	14'54
	• Surely He hath borne our griefs	
	• And with His stripes	
	• All we, like sheep	
	• All they that see Him	
	• He trusted in God	
	• He was cut off	
4	The resurrection and ascension of the Messiah	11'48
	• But Thou didst not leave	
	• Lift up your heads	
	• Unto which of the angels	
	• Let all the angels	
	• Thou art gone up on high	
5	The propagation of the Gospel	2'27
	• The Lord gave the word	

6	The rejection of the Gospel	4'44	5	The vision of eternity	8'53
	• Why do the nations			• Worthy is the Lamb	
	• Let us break their bonds asunder			• Amen	
7	The victory of the Messiah over the enemies of the Gospel	8'40	6	Handel and <i>Messiah</i>	2'44
	• He that dwelleth in heaven		7	Mozart and <i>Messiah</i>	3'56
	• Thou shalt break them			• Du zerschlägst sie mit dem Eisenszepter (Thou shalt break them)	
	• Hallelujah!		8	The Crystal Palace performances	5'30
8	Conclusion	0'43		• And the glory of the Lord	
CD3			9	Sir Malcolm Sargent and <i>Messiah</i>	5'37
Part Three				• There were shepherds	
1	Introduction	0'50		• And lo, the angel of the Lord	
2	The individual's life of faith	6'56		• And the angel said unto them	
	• I know that my Redeemer liveth			• And suddenly there was with the angel	
3	The resurrection of the faithful	9'55	10	Sir Thomas Beecham, Sir Eugene Goossens and <i>Messiah</i>	5'21
	• Behold, I tell you a mystery			• Hallelujah!	
	• The trumpet shall sound – excerpt		11	Conclusion	0'34
	• Then shall be brought to pass				
	• O death, where is thy sting?				
	• But thanks be to God				
4	The believer's confidence	2'53			
	• If God be for us – excerpt				

Musical examples taken from the following recordings:

CD1 **1-8**; CD2 **1-8**; CD3 **1-5**

George Frideric Handel 1685-1759

Messiah – excerpts

Sara Macliver *soprano*

Alexandra Sherman *alto*

Christopher Field *countertenor*

Paul McMahon *tenor*

Teddy Tahu Rhodes *bass*

Cantillation

Orchestra of the Antipodes

Antony Walker *conductor*

CD3 **7**

George Frideric Handel

arr. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Der Messias – excerpt

Peter Schreier *tenor*

Austrian Radio Symphony Orchestra

Charles Mackerras *conductor*

CD3 **8**

George Frideric Handel

arr. Michael Costa and Henry Wood

Messiah – excerpt

Handel Festival Choir and Orchestra

Henry Wood *conductor*

CD3 **9**

George Frideric Handel

arr. Malcolm Sargent

Messiah – excerpts

Isobel Baillie *soprano*

Huddersfield Choral Society

Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra

Malcolm Sargent *conductor*

CD3 **10**

George Frideric Handel

arr. Eugene Goossens

Messiah – excerpt

Beecham Choral Society

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

Thomas Beecham *conductor*



Graham Abbott

Sydney-born Graham Abbott is a graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium and was a fulltime high school Music and English teacher prior to being awarded the ABC / Willem van Otterloo Conducting Scholarship in 1985. He studied with Myer Fredman at the Sydney Conservatorium Opera School and taught at that institution until his appointment as Conductor-in-Residence at the Elder Conservatorium of Music at the University of Adelaide in 1986. He was Musical

Director of Adelaide Chorus (now Adelaide Philharmonia Chorus) from 1986 to 1992 and made his professional orchestral debut with the Adelaide Symphony Orchestra in 1987. Since then he has been a frequent guest conductor with all six Symphony Australia network orchestras. He has also conducted the Hunter Orchestra, Orchestra Victoria, the Adelaide Chamber Orchestra, the Queensland Philharmonic, the Canberra Symphony, the Australian Classical Players and various new music and early music ensembles. Abbott was Associate Conductor of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra from 1993 to 1997. He was also Musical Director of Melbourne Chorale from 1994 to 1997.

Whilst his repertoire in orchestral, concert and operatic fields spans almost every conceivable period and style, Graham Abbott is most respected as a conductor of, and enthusiast for, the music of Handel. He has conducted *Messiah* with every Symphony Australia orchestra, and with many other organisations as well, and has given first Australian performances of major Handel works such as *Athalia*, *Ariodante*, *Agrippina* and *La Resurrezione*.

On the operatic stage, Graham Abbott's repertoire encompasses many of Handel's operas, including *Julius Caesar*, *Alcina*, *Ariodante*, *Agrippina* and *Orlando*. Other operas include *The Marriage of Figaro*, *La traviata*, *Il trovatore*, *Don Pasquale* and *Pelléas et*

Mélisande. He was Assistant Conductor for the Australian premiere season of John Adams' *Nixon in China* at the 1992 Adelaide Festival and in 2001 and 2002 was Music Advisor to Chamber Made Opera in Melbourne.

In 1997, Graham Abbott was the acting Chorus Master of the Chorus of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra. Guest conducting engagements during this time included *Messiah* with the Edinburgh Royal Choral Union, and orchestral programs with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra in Glasgow and Edinburgh, and with the Ulster Orchestra in Northern Ireland. In 1998 he returned to Scotland twice to conduct performances that included the Dvořák *Stabat Mater* in Edinburgh.

A respected teacher, Graham Abbott is often involved in educational projects throughout Australia, and he has undertaken similar work in the UK. He conducted Camerata Australia, under the auspices of Youth Music Australia, in concerts in Sydney and Jakarta in 1992, and conducted at National Music Camp in 1991 and 1995. He regularly works with tertiary institutions as a conductor, tutor, speaker and examiner. He was the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra's Education Consultant in 2000, then held the post of Education Manager in 2001. He was Artistic Advisor to the MSO's Education Program in 2002 and 2003.

Graham Abbott has had many years' experience as a pre-concert speaker for the Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras. He has developed a reputation as an engaging and entertaining educator, capable of opening the world of music to the untrained music lover. He has taught modules for teachers, community-based musicians and high school students in the Symphony Australia Conductor Training program since 2002 and is highly sought-after as a conducting teacher and workshop director. Since 2002 he has been a member of the national panel for Stage 2 of the Symphony Australia Young Performers Awards.

Since 2003 he has been producer and presenter of *Keys to Music* on ABC Classic FM. During 2003 he conducted a large number of concerts with the Adelaide and Melbourne Symphony Orchestras, as well conducting for the Brisbane Chorale, the Queensland Performing Arts Trust and a number of educational institutions. In 2004 he conducted the Adelaide, Melbourne and West Australian Symphony Orchestras, in addition to conducting *The Creation* and *Don Pasquale* for Opera Queensland and the Dvořák *Stabat Mater* with the Prague Chamber Orchestra for the Perth Festival.

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Informative and entertaining, *Keys to Music* has rapidly become ABC Classic FM's most listened-to program. Whether you are a relative newcomer to classical music or have an extensive CD collection at home, Graham Abbott's acclaimed program brings music to life, getting you inside the mind of composers and players to hear the familiar and the unusual in a brand new way.

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