Integrating Handel's Oratorios into the Middle School Repertoire: Arranging for Middle School Choirs

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Integrating Handel's Oratorios into the Middle School Repertoire:
Arranging for Middle School Choirs

"Submitted to the Faculty of the Department of Music at Longwood University in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Science in Education."

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Abstract

As a choral teacher of middle school students, one of the most difficult tasks is finding music that suits their young voices. When a choral director wants appropriate music for young voices composed by George Frideric Handel, the challenges increase. In many situations, music arranged for two-part and three-part choirs can be used in place of the original composition. Although the vocal parts are adapted to fit the special requirements of the young vocalist, the general tone of the composition is similar.

To adapt these original compositions to the middle school choral repertoire, the previous arranger’s techniques were observed and analyzed. Then, three different choruses were arranged implementing these techniques. When arranging each piece, the focuses were to keep the style true to Handel’s own and to simplify the music enough for these young singers. The presentation of these techniques can be used as a resource for any middle school choir director in need of arranging music to meet the needs of their choir.

When analyzing previously arranged choruses, the specific techniques used were extracted. These techniques focus on the limited abilities and special requirements of the middle school choir. Transposing the chorus down helped the range to be more appropriate for a younger singer. Choosing other notes from the chord structure prevented extreme skips between pitches, notes out of the students’ range, and poor voice leading practices. The simplification of rhythms prevents students from misunderstanding rhythms that are less familiar. Examples and clear explanations are given on implementing these techniques and others.
When choosing the arranged music, the decision was based on the abilities of and the requirements for middle school vocalists. Three choruses were analyzed. Linda Spevacek arranged “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around” for two-part treble choir. “Hallelujah, Amen” from Judas Maccabaeus, arranged by Russell Robinson, is a three-part mixed vocal selection. Sherri Porterfield arranged “Swell, the Full Chorus” for three-part choir and John Leavitt arranged this chorus for two-part treble voice. The analysis of these choruses set the foundation to arrange the other choruses.

This thesis includes arrangements of three different oratorios, so there would be variety of techniques used in the arranged choruses. The chorus from Messiah is “And He Shall Purify.” This chorus has complex melismatic phrases often used by Handel and is a good example of how to simplify music. In Saul, “May No Rash Intruder” is used to show diversity of vocal parts and texture. “Mourn, Israel” is the final arranged chorus from Solomon, which has a variety of part entrances and portrays Handel’s great ability of showing emotion through music.
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Introduction

As a choral teacher of middle school students, one of the most difficult tasks is finding music that suits their young voices. It is even more of a challenge to find music composed by George Frideric Handel that is appropriate for two-part and three-part choirs. To adapt three of Handel’s choruses to the middle school choral repertoire, the previous arranger’s techniques were analyzed and observed to understand the techniques used for arranging for young voices. Then, three other Handel choruses were arranged using these techniques. When arranging each piece, the focuses were to keep the style true to Handel’s own and to simplify the music enough for these young singers. By using this information, any director of a middle school choir will be able to arrange music to accommodate the special needs of their singers.

The Oratorio

In the beginning of the 17th century, the church inadvertently urged the development of a new genre by restricting certain types of performances. Since secular music was prohibited during certain public performances, Handel started composing oratorios using librettos from the Bible. This sacred genre made a good impression on those who desired an operatic genre, as opera was considered “an affair of the state” and was censored (Burrows 35). Due to the political and religious considerations of a theatrical production, the performances originated in the worship halls called “oratories,” but Handel soon convinced these authorities that oratorios should be performed in theaters.

As described by Russell Robinson, “An oratorio is a sacred work for chorus, soloists, and orchestra.” Emily Crocker stated that it is a story or drama from the Bible that is set to music, but unlike opera, it is performed without scenery, sets or costumes. As Handel developed the
English oratorio, he gave each movement a specific dramatic job in the oratorio. The overture is an introduction to a section of the oratorio and performed by instruments. Recitatives are usually short solos that advance the plot and lead into the aria. Handel used the aria to showcase particular solo voices. Finally, the choruses are used as a dramatic feature of the piece. Handel composed for double choirs and single choirs. He created contrast by using various dynamics, several types of textures, depicting a wide span of emotions, and using varying combinations of voices.

**Handel's Choruses**

An integral part of Handel’s oratorios is the chorus. As Handel composed the choruses for his oratorios, he was “freed from the structural constraints of the formal aria” (Hicks). By composing the chorus without structural constraints, he was able to compose the type of music he wanted to help convey his thoughts. Thus, he gave the chorus a significant role to these larger works. By allowing the chorus greater significance, it gained a dramatic character by using formal devices such as melismatic phrases for important words and word painting for equally important ideas (Herbage 89).

While Handel was composing these oratorios, he spent part of his time in England. During this time, Handel had access to a multitude of London’s choirs making it possible to explore the capabilities of choirs (Cudworth 35). This can be seen in his choruses requiring double choirs and other choral elements. Therefore, he expanded the idea of the chorus in the oratorio.
Requirements for the Middle School Choirs

The middle school choir director is teaching young adolescents about music; therefore, the director must have some understanding about the young singers' voices including changes and limitations of the voice including range, volume, and timbre. “The period of adolescence for the normal boy is from eleven (11) to fourteen (14), and with the girls from ten (10) to thirteen (13) years of age” (Sunderman 43). Both males and females experience a change in the voice, however, the males usually have a more dramatic change. In a study of a boys' choir, “…boys mentioned the phenomenon of ‘losing notes’ in the middle of their voices, thus creating gaps in which they couldn’t sing” (Kennedy 268). This change is unique to each person.

The choir director needs to be specific in the selection of music according to the voicing available in the choir. Emily Crocker gives a clear guide on choosing one over the other for a particular group. Choirs that contain unchanged voices should sing music for treble choirs. These include soprano and alto or it could also be represented in music written for part I and part II. Three-part mixed voicing “is best for choirs with a limited number of male voices or a choir with most or all of the male voices in the changing mid-voice II or II-A category” (Crocker 36). Music composed for soprano, alto, and baritone can be appropriate for a middle school choir, but the director must not assume the ranges will meet the student’s requirements. A choral director can choose music containing part I, part II, and part III instead of the soprano, alto, and baritone voicing. For the purpose of this thesis, two-part and three-part music will be arranged even though there are other combinations that can be used.

As adolescent singers develop their voices, their range will increase. However, choir directors should choose music with a limited range to meet the needs of the choir. There are a variety of vocal combinations to accommodate these needs. The vast majority of music is
written for a combination of soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. There are other names for voices, but these four are the basic. However, younger voices have not fully matured, so it can be difficult to place a singer in one of these categories. Therefore, music can be composed for part I, part II, and part III. By using these designations, the director can place the singers in an appropriate singing range. The suggested ranges for part I spans from C⁴ to G⁵. This range is for students capable of singing higher notes. From B-flat⁴ to C⁵ is a suitable range for part II. Singers who have a mid-range voice are suggested for this part. Part III extends from the G³ to the E-flat⁴ (Sunderman 48). This is predominately used for male voices that have not changed yet. Example 1 shows these ranges.

Example 1: Suggested Ranges for Middle School Singers

The changing male voice is a difficult area for many choral directors. An avid arranger and conductor, Linda Spevacek, states how she approaches the boys’ voice ranges. “First of all, the range has to be appropriate, especially for the boys changing voice. I work within the range of F³ to D⁴ first....with the extension down to E³...(rare E-flat³ and only if soft and in unison with the treble). Then the upper range of D⁴ (with E-flat⁴ and F⁴ as cue notes)” (Spevacek). The extension and cue notes are not used often because they tend to be out of the normal range used for the changing male voice. Some males will be able to sing those notes, so it is acceptable to
use in a few cases. These notes can also be given as an optional division for those male voices capable of singing those notes. In any case, an arranger is advised to use these notes infrequently. Example 2 denotes the particular range that Linda Spevacek uses for changing male voice.

Example 2: Appropriate Range for the Changing Male Voice used by Spevacek

When arranging music for middle school choirs, there should be a few new concepts to challenge students. A choral director should select music “with melodic, rhythmic, and harmonic problems which challenge his choir. At the same time he should not choose music which is too difficult to be performed acceptably” (Sample, 48). When arranging music, the director should consider specific musical concepts such as wide skips, sustaining pitches or phrases for long periods of time, complex rhythms, and complex melodic phrases. Emily Crocker suggests music should be chosen based on the guideline that it “is well crafted, with appropriate ranges, good voice-leading, well-prepared interval leaps, and interesting vocal lines” (Crocker 36). To do this, the choir director “…must have some knowledge of the experience of its members” (Sample, 46).
A choral director should know the capabilities of the group. These abilities consist of the students' vocal range, knowledge of music theory, singing experience, and others. To challenge students, it is wise to choose music that is just beyond the difficulty level of their previous music and the musical concepts should build from one selection of music to the next. However, students will become overwhelmed with too many challenges possibly leading to negative and unwanted effects. The ultimate goal is a balance of ideas students comprehend with challenges of new concepts.

Analysis of Music

Three choruses are analyzed to retrieve techniques from previous arrangers. This information gives the basic standard for arranging for younger voices. Since there are many arranged selections from Handel's composition, a list was compiled. I chose three arrangements that were acceptable for middle school choir. The first analyzed arrangement comes from *Solomon*, “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around.” This chorus was arranged by Linda Spevacek. Russell Robinson arranged “Hallelujah, Amen,” from *Judas Maccabaeus*, for three-part mixed choir and two-part mixed choir. The final arranged selection is “Swell the Full Chorus” from *Solomon*. Sherri Porterfield and John Leavitt arranged this chorus. The analysis of these two pieces gives insight on how the same chorus can be arranged two different ways.

Analysis of “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around”

The original form for “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around” is a binary form. The voices have imitative entrances. Handel composed this chorus for solo and chorus where the soloist introduces the melody at the beginning of the chorus, and then the chorus continues to sing the
rest of the chorus. The end of the chorus is a homophonic texture of both section A and B with the accompaniment concluding the chorus by playing one phrase of the A section. The text developed in the A section is “Music, spread thy voice around” and the B section is comprised of the text “Sweetly flow the lulling sound.” Handel puts emphasis on the word “sweetly” by repeating it before or after the B section phrasing. He does not do this with any other word from the text.

In Linda Spevacek’s arrangement of “Music, Spread Thy Voice Around,” the piano gives an introduction before the choir sings. After the piano introduction, a soloist or small group of singers introduces the melody. Spevacek continues with the chorus in an imitative fashion between part I and part II of the A section. This is a shortened version of Handel’s chorus because the B section is not developed as much as the A section. The chorus repeats the A section, sings the B section, then sings the ending. She states, “This is a shortened version of the original and was adapted so that choirs with limited rehearsal time and various levels of ability would still be able to study and experience this glorious piece of music” (Spevacek 8). The chorus ends similarly as Handel’s did with the return to everyone singing the original melody and the accompaniment ending the chorus with section A.

Handel composed this chorus in the key of G. The range of soprano 1 and soprano 2 is D\(^4\) to G\(^5\). The alto’s range is from the A\(^3\) to the C-sharp\(^5\). The tenors have a range of A\(^3\) to the G\(^4\). The range for basses is A\(^2\) to D\(^3\). Spevacek changes the key signature to F major. The range for part I is from C\(^4\) to F\(^5\) and part II ranges from C\(^4\) to D\(^5\). When looking through each of the melodic lines, part II is generally composed of lower notes and rarely sings the D\(^5\) in this given range. Examples 3a and 3b show the ranges for each chorus.


Spevacek’s arrangement is a good example of why the meter should be changed to suit the students’ needs. “This arrangement was set in 3/4 time, as opposed to the original 3/8 time, for ease of reading” (Spevacek 8). When teaching middle school students, music should include notation that is familiar to students unless the teacher is incorporating new musical notation in the students’ repertoire. Also, music should be kept in a familiar format such as the quarter note receiving the beat. Therefore, students will be more comfortable singing familiar notation. In this piece, sixteenth notes are used sparingly as pick up notes. Spevacek also includes eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, dotted-quarter notes, and dotted-half notes.

Spevacek uses soprano I for part I, and part II combines the alto, tenor, and bass part, however, most of part II is from the bass line. The vocal lines are not changed from the Handel’s composition except for the final return to the A section. Spevacek arranges a new voice line for part II. She creates good voice leading for this new vocal line from notes within the chord.
structure given by Handel; however, the rhythm is different to prevent a contrasting rhythmic section. She also changes the pitches in m. 89 to prevent part II from singing an interval over an octave. To do this, part II sings the rhythm of the dotted-quarter note followed by three eighth notes and sing a third below part I.

This arrangement of the chorus includes a few other techniques applicable to the middle school singer. For example, the interval of a fourth is the widest skip in any of the voice parts. Also, the dynamic range is from piano to mezzo forte. “Young inexperienced singers may have a difficult time with passages that are fortissimo. It would cause the voice too much strain” (Wilson 18). Music containing multiple dynamics can be complex for middle school students who have less control of their voice.

Analysis of “Hallelujah, Amen”

“Hallelujah, Amen” is the last chorus from Judas Maccabaeus. Handel composed this chorus in a ternary form. The A section is imitative while the B section is homophonic. In the beginning of the A section, the basses start with the melody. The tenors and the altos repeat the melody starting on the dominant. The basses re-enter with the sopranos. There is a transition between the A section and the B section lasting less than a measure, so Handel gives the contrasting section impact by having changing the texture of the B section to homophonic. The transition between the B section and the last A section is an intertwining of melodies using a polyphonic texture. The return to the A section is short. Handel attaches an ending portion of the A section.

In Robinson’s three-part mixed arrangement of this chorus, the form is structurally the same; however, Robinson changes the voice parts. Part III sings the bass line. Part II sings the
tenor line and part I sings the alto part. Robinson does not use Handel’s soprano melody line. Robinson uses part I as the fifth of the chord in the harmony and the bass line serves as the root of the chord.

In Robinson’s two-part arrangement of this chorus, he stays with in the form that Handel created. To change this arrangement into a two-part choir, Robinson arranged each voice part to cover important vocal lines from Handel’s chorus. To begin the A section, part I sings the bass. As part II enters with the tenor line, part I changes to the alto line. The entrances continue to alternate throughout the entire chorus.

Handel’s range for soprano is $A^4$ to $G^5$, the alto is from $B^3$ to $A^4$, the tenor is from $G^3$ to $G^4$, and the bass is $D^3$ to $E^4$. In Robinson’s three-part arrangement, part I’s range is from $F^4$ to $F^5$, part II is from $B$-flat$^3$ to $B$-flat$^4$, and part III’s range is from $F^3$ to $D^4$. Robinson’s two-part arrangement of this chorus allows part I to sing from $D^4$ to $F^5$. Part II ranges from the $B$-flat$^3$ to the $D^5$. Part I has the interval of a fifth as the widest skip between notes. Part II has the widest skip of a fourth. These ranges are shown in examples 4a, 4b, and 4c.

![Example 4a: Handel, Judas Maccabaeus: “Hallelujah, Amen,” Soprno, Alto, Tenor, Bass](image-url)


Robinson’s use of dynamic markings portrays the idea of the music. The A section is *mezzo-forte* and then to put great emphasis on the contrasting B section increased the dynamics to *forte*. Within the B section, the contrast of the “with cherubim and seraphim harmonious join,” is met with the drastic change to *mezzo-piano*. Robinson uses dynamics with specific function throughout his arrangement. The dynamics function as an element that gives importance to a section of music or creates an atmosphere. He uses dynamics similarly in his three-part arrangement.

Handel composed this chorus in the key of D. Robinson transposes this piece up to the key of F. By doing this, he allows each voice to stay in a comfortable range in both the two-part and the three-part arrangements.
Analysis of “Swell the Full Chorus”

Handel composed “Swell the Full Chorus” from *Solomon* for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass. This chorus is in ternary form using a *D.S. al Fine* at the end of the B section to return to the A section. The original starts with the chorus singing on the down beat on measure one; however, this piece was given an eight measure introduction using the accompaniment used later in the music. Handel composed this piece to be a homophonic choral piece for SATB. Sherri Porterfield, one arranger of this chorus, begins her arrangement with an introduction of four measures. Then, she follows Handel’s ABA form with the *D.S. al Fine* form. She arranges this piece for three-part mixed voice. In John Leavitt’s arrangement, the introduction is eight measures; although, he uses the original meter notated by Handel. The original meter is 6/4 time. The Kalmus edition of Handel’s work as well as Porterfield’s arrangement was changed to 3/4 time. Leavitt arranges his piece for SA. He omits one measure before m. 42 where the sopranos have a transition from the A section to the B section.

Handel composed this chorus for soprano, alto, tenor, and bass in the key of D. The soprano line ranges from F-sharp⁴ to G⁵. The alto line remains between C⁴ and B⁴. Tenors sing from A³ to F⁴. Finally, the basses sing from A² to E⁴. Both arrangers composed the music to the key of B-flat. Porterfield keeps the ranges of the parts within an octave, except for Part I which is an octave and a fourth. Part I is from C⁴ to the F⁵. Part II is from the B-flat to A⁴. Part III is from the F³ to the E-flat⁴. In comparison, part I in Leavitt’s arrangement ranges from the E⁴ to F⁵. Part II starts at C⁴ and goes to B-flat⁴. Unlike Porterfield, Leavitt keeps the ranges for both parts less than an octave. Examples 5a, 5b, and 5c show the variations of ranges used by Handel, Porterfield, and Leavitt.
Since the ranges for each part changed, the arrangers adjusted each voice part accordingly. Porterfield and Leavitt chose notes that tended to make better voice leading for the ranges they had chosen for each part and to make the part more interesting for the singer. Leavitt uses Handel’s soprano line in his arrangement for soprano with some exceptions. In m. 22, he avoids a skip of a seventh by taking the note up a fifth, so the skip is only a third. He does this in m. 41 as well. By taking the soprano up a third in m. 49, he allows the altos to have the melody; however, this is only one measure out of the entire piece. The alto part is not similar to any voice that Handel used in his composition; however, it is in the same style as the other
voices. Leavitt develops the alto part from the accompaniment which is similar to the accompaniment used in the Kalmus edition. Spevacek uses the soprano line from the A and B sections as Handel composed it. The arranged alto part is not a previously written voice part of Handel’s. Porterfield uses the accompaniment as a guide to the voice leading. Her baritone line follows the line of the tenor, but some notes are changed to suit the range of the baritones.

Leavitt alters the text to allow the music to be more general. Instead of using the text “to Solomon’s praise,” Leavitt chooses “all voices we raise.” This alteration makes the music usable for general performances by eliminating words that are specific to a person or place. He also uses more common words that students will know such as using “joy” compared to “rouse.” Leavitt changes the majority of the text in a same fashion. Porterfield follows the text the Handel used.

In the original, the dynamic used in the A section is expressed as *forte* and then the B section is *piano*. There are no other dynamic markings beyond *piano* and *forte*. Porterfield uses *mezzo-forte*, *forte*, and *fortissimo*. This can cause some problems in the young choir. By requiring students to sing the majority of the piece at *fortissimo*, their voices will be strained. In Leavitt’s arrangement, *forte* and *mezzo-forte* are used for dynamic markings. This is an appropriate expectation of students in this group because students are capable of these dynamic ranges.

**Implementation of Techniques**

The previous analyses have given adequate techniques used in arranging music for middle school choirs. When applying these techniques, there are many possibilities to consider. To understand the implementation of these techniques, I will arrange three different choruses and
use these techniques. It is important to remember that each choir is unique and their special needs should be addressed. However, this thesis supplies generalizations for all middle school choirs.

By addressing the various techniques used by the previous arrangers, these new arrangements will be appropriate for middle school choirs. Some elements to consider during this process are the key signature, ranges for each voice, simplifying rhythms, sound voice leading and others. The accompaniment for the arrangements is from the edition that I am using. The only changes made to the piano accompaniment are to suit the stylistic simplification of the rhythm and the shortening of the entrance. There are more techniques mentioned in each of the following sections.

**Arrangement of “And He Shall Purify”**

*Messiah*, composed in 1741, consists of three parts. The first part describes the prophecy Messiah’s birth. The second part encompasses the passion story and crucifixion and the third part is of his resurrection. “And He Shall Purify” is the second chorus in part I

Arranging “And He Shall Purify” presented many obstacles to address. This chorus is a good example of how to arrange a more complex chorus for younger singers. First, the form of the piece remains similar to the original. The arrangement is voiced for two-part treble containing soprano and alto. By choosing a smaller number of voices an arranger does not have to simplify the vocal line excessively. However, vocal lines must not be more complex than what the middle school singer can comprehend. The soprano voice is arranged between the E⁴ and E⁵ and the alto voice settles between the B³ to C⁵. Example 6a shows Handel’s ranges, while example 6b demonstrates how the ranges can be altered to suit fewer voice parts. It is necessary
to take into consideration the difficulty of the rhythm when addressing the range of each part.

Students should be limited to a few challenges, so I felt I should choose a wider range or a more complex rhythm, but not both.


The original chorus is in the key of g minor. This chorus is arranged in the key of e minor, so the sopranos did not have to sustain extremely high notes. It also allowed the alto part to remain in a comfortable range of the voice. In some places, the notes were changed, so the voice part would not strain for a note that was out of its range. To do this, notes were chosen from the chord or from other vocal parts that Handel had written. In doing so, I have been careful to maintain good voice leading techniques. Example 7a shows the original, while example 7b shows the change for the alto voice.
The simplification of the rhythm was necessary to make this chorus appropriate for middle school singers. The sixteenth note melismatic phrases extend to eight sets of sixteenth notes or more creating long, complex phrases. When phrases are long and complex, middle school singers will have a difficult time with clarity of the notes and sustaining the length of the phrase. Depending on the tempo, students may also have difficulty with pitch accuracy and singing at the speed of the tempo. To account for these various needs, the new rhythm used contains eighth note melismatic patterns based on the original. The first two notes of the sixteenth note pattern are the notes of the eighth note pattern. Notice that the pattern is consistent throughout the entire piece. Example 8a shows the original sixteenth pattern while example 8b shows the change to the eighth note pattern.
Alterning the rhythm in the voice part can lead to a disjointed accompaniment, especially if the piano played the previous melismatic rhythm. This problem can be alleviated by changing the piano part to fit the new rhythm or having the piano play chords. The style of the piece will dictate what type of accompaniment is appropriate. In this case, Handel used the accompaniment to play the rhythm of the voice part to bring out the importance of the section. In some measures, the piano is already playing an accompaniment that is independent from the melody. For situations like these, there is no need to change the accompaniment. In examples 9a and 9b, the comparison between the piano parts can be made. Example 9a has a piano accompaniment that was the original, but the vocal line has been altered which causes conflict within the piece. By changing the piano accompaniment to suit the next vocal line, this conflict can be resolved which can be seen in example 9b.
Example 9a: Handel, Arr. Neely, *Messiah*: “And He Shall Purify,” mm. 15-17, Soprano, Alto, and unaltered piano accompaniment

One of the more difficult obstacles to address was how to create the same feeling as the four part harmony in a two-part treble piece. In this case, each voice part addresses multiple fugal entrances. The entrances that were in the middle of continuing parts were not as significant because they did not stand out as much. It was more important for the vocal lines to have a completed phrase, so the imitation of the fugue can be heard throughout the vocal line. Handel demonstrates his four voice fugal entrances in example 10a, while example 10b presents the fugal entrances with two voices.
Example 10a: Handel, Messiah: “And He Shall Purify,” mm. 11-19, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass
When deciding to use certain types of textures, one should look at the music and decide what is most appropriate. Handel uses four part harmony to contrast the imitative sections; however, a middle school choir does not have the same abilities as a full adult choir. In sections that are louder, unison can be a useful technique to allow the choir to give an important section contrast. Since all students are singing in unison in mm. 21-25 as shown in example 11b, it gives this section more impact as well as providing a better opportunity for the choir to sing forte.

Example 11a shows how Handel composed this contrasting section for four voice parts.
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and He shall
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and He shall
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, and He shall
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, in righteousness,
that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness, in righteousness, in righteousness,

Example 11a: Handel, “And He Shall Purify,” mm. 21-25, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass

Example 11b: Handel, Arr. Neely, “And He Shall Purify,” mm. 21-25, Soprano and Alto

Arrangement of “Mourn, Israel”

In 1738, Handel started the oratorio Saul. It begins with David slaying Goliath and then King Saul welcomes David into his kingdom, inviting him to marry his first daughter. Saul soon becomes jealous of David’s approval in the kingdom and threatens to kill him. Saul welcomes David back with a change of heart. Then, his jealousy occurs again and Saul tells his son, Jonathan, to kill David. Jonathan refuses. To regain the people’s recognition, Saul and Jonathan go to war, but are killed on the fields of Gilboa. Thus, David is made king.
“Mourn, Israel” follows the “Death March” in part III of Saul. Saul and his son, Jonathan, have both been killed at Gilboa in a war against the Amalekites. This chorus depicts the slaughtered men that lay on the fields. The people of Saul’s kingdom are saddened at the lost of their king.

When deciding to choose “Mourn, Israel,” there were a several features of the music that helped lend it to this type of arranging. First, the chorus was comparatively shorter than other choruses that Handel wrote. When arranging for middle school choirs, the arranger must keep in mind that an adolescent has a shorter attention span than an adult. Therefore, the music should be kept at a reasonable length. This piece also allows voices to enter at different times in an imitative fashion in various intervals. The next feature of the original piece is that it has ranges that are relatively narrow and it was in an acceptable key signature for the students to sing. There were several opportunities for the inner voices to be independent. Finally, this piece is a good example of Handel’s ability of showing emotion through his compositions.

The arrangement of “Mourn, Israel” starts at the Largo assai section instead of the Largo e staccato. The two main reasons for doing this are to not have students wait too long for their entrance and not have students change key signatures in the beginning of the piece. Since Handel composed this piece in the key of c minor and the ranges were suitable for middle school singers, the arrangement’s key signature was not altered. In the arrangement, as shown in example 12b, part I has a range from the D⁴ to the E-flat ⁵, part II maintains an octave from C⁴ up to the C⁵, and part III has a range of a fifth starting on the F³ to C⁴, suitable for adolescent boys whose voices have not fully changed, while example 12a shows the original voice parts and ranges.
To keep part III in a range of a fifth, the part had to be changed from the original that had a range of an octave and a second. First, the notes from $F_3$ to the $D_4$ were established as the set limits for this part, since this range is comfortable for most changing voices. Then, any note that was outside of this set of range was either taken an octave up or changed to another note in the chord. If there was another note chosen, then it would have to follow good voice leading tendencies. Example 13a gives the original bass part from mm. 47-50, while example 13b shows the arranged part III from mm. 47-50.
Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain.

Example 13b: Handel, Arr. Neely, Saul: “Mourn, Israel,” mm. 47-50, Part III

Since it was written for three parts instead of four parts, there were some adjustments made to the voicing. The entrances of the voices were rearranged to suit the building effect of the music. The second voice entrance was given to part II and was taken down an octave. Part I has the third entrance and then part II completes the vocal introduction. Example 14a shows the original entrance pattern while example 14b shows how it was arranged.

Example 14a: Handel, Saul: “Mourn, Israel,” mm. 9-13, Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass

Example 14a and 14b also show the change of the rhythm from a dotted eighth note and sixteenth note rhythm to straight eighth notes. This provided one way to simplify the rhythm, since the harmonies were more complex. This piece has both dotted quarter notes and dotted eighth notes; however, simplification of the rhythm will avoid confusion of rhythms for students that are still learning one rhythm from the other.

Handel composed this piece with a few instances of parallel fourths. However, this is a technique that should be avoided for middle school choirs and for choirs that do not contain all voice parts. To avoid parallel fourths in these sections, part II did not move with part I, but they maintain the first note for the duration of the beat. The original was written for soprano, alto, and tenor to sing. This is shown in m. 17 in example 15a, Handel’s composition, and example 15b, the arranged.
Example 15a: Handel, *Saul*: “Mourn, Israel,” m. 17, Soprano, Alto, and Tenor

An arranger must bear in mind when parts are excluded from the original so are the factors of the chord. Therefore, one problem was the sounding of an open fifth in the chorus parts. In mm. 19-20, the tenor sings the third of the chord in the original, so the arranged piece had to change to meet this requirement. Part II took on the role that the tenor played by having two notes changed to the third of the chord. For this particular section in the music, the quality of the chord moves from major to minor within two beats, so part II has to adjust accordingly. Example 16b shows how this technique was used to change the music from example 16a.

Example 16a: Handel, Saul: "Mourn, Israel," mm. 19-20, Alto and Tenor

The vocal dynamics were left to the discretion of the arranger, since Handel did not write dynamics for this piece. The general scheme was to start mezzo piano, build to a climax of forte, and end on piano. Since this has an imitative style for the majority of the piece, the parts were kept equal in dynamics. However, in m. 23, part I is given a phrase on its own, so that phrase was the beginning of the forte section.

For the ending, the singers on part I have an optional division for m. 45. This allows them to cover the whole chord as presented in the original. Also, the original did not have any piano accompaniment for the singer’s final phrase. In the arrangement, a piano reduction of the parts was given to help the singers to rehearse.

Arrangement of “May No Rash Intruder”

The final arranged piece comes from Solomon. Handel composed this oratorio in 1748. In this oratorio, Solomon is a great king of the land and he is married to Queen Sheba. The conflict between two women over one baby brings out King Solomon’s fair and just ruling. “May No Rash Intruder” ends the Part I when King Solomon and Queen Sheba retire for the night.

In “May No Rash Intruder,” a choral director has many options to be able to arrange this piece for a variety of choruses. This particular chorus allows sections that can be sung by a solo, soli, and different part combinations. There are also opportunities to change the sections within each part, so each part can have the ability to sing that section. The parts allow for voice leading opportunities beyond what is written.
In the original, the accompaniment uses 20 measures for an introduction. To reduce this length to be more suitable for the middle school choir, the introduction was shortened to the first four measures and combined into the accompaniment for m. 21, so the transition is smoother. In example 17a, Handel presents the introduction to his chorus, while in example 17b reveals the altered introduction.
Example 17a: Handel, Solomon: “May No Rash Intruder,” mm. 1-21, piano introduction

In general, this piece is a half step lower than the other arrangements. Since the key signature was transposed from the key of G to the key of F, part I stays between C⁴ and F⁵. Part II encompasses notes ranging from the A⁴ to the B-flat⁵. Part III ranges from the E-flat⁢³ to C⁴. Example 18a shows the ranges for “No Rash Intruder” as composed by Handel, while example 18b shows the arranged ranges.

Example 18a: Handel, *Solomon*: “May No Rash Intruder,” Ranges for Soprano 1, Soprano 2, Alto, Tenor, and Bass

From mm. 5-13 of the arranged piece, part I is given an optional solo or soli section. This is to provide the music with some variety. Also, this section has a few technically challenging sections that would be easier to have a small part of the group focused on it instead of the whole group. This option will give the choral director the ability to choose students that are more capable to sing in this section compared to some students that may not be able to sing the rhythm correctly or sing the range in the way it is written.

There are two soprano lines in Handel’s composition. These two parts mostly sing in unison. However, when they are not in unison, the second soprano line imitates the first or harmonizes a third from the first. In the arranged piece from mm. 27-31, part I follows the second soprano line. The first soprano line was omitted from the arrangement.

Measures 31-33 show the soprano parts are being omitted and the alto, tenor and bass parts take over. The tenor part is a monotone, rhythmic pulse while the alto and bass parts alternated between two notes. To simulate this in the arranged part from m.15 through m. 17, part I takes that alto line, part II is doubled a third lower, and part III represents the monotone, rhythmic pulse. However, in mm. 24-27 in the arranged piece, part I is omitted and part II and part III switch these parts. Then, part II becomes the monotone, rhythmic pulse while part III sings the alternating notes. Thus, part I is given ample opportunity to prepare for the imitative entrance that begins on m. 27. Examples 19a and 19b show the two different ways to use texture in the section previously mentioned.
Ye zephyrs, soft breathing, their slumbers prolong.

While

Ye zephyrs, soft breathing, their slumbers prolong.


Handel wrote dynamics for this chorus. Thy dynamic choices work well for a middle school choir. *Forte* and *piano* are among the first dynamics introduced and are the easiest for the choir to perform. To help the choir, the accompaniment follows the same dynamic markings.
The ending was changed in several ways to accommodate the middle school choir. First, the rhythm of the first soprano was left out, so the two eighth note rhythm was the same in each part. Then, the harmonies were changed to fit to the voice ranges that were pre-selected before the arrangement started. To show the variation, example 20a shows the original ending phrase for the voices, while example 20b demonstrates the applied changes.

Example 20a: Handel, Solomon: “May No Rash Intruder,” mm. 63-64, Soprano I, Soprano II, Alto, Tenor, and Bass
As with “Mourn, Israel,” the concept of a full chord should be presented in the music whenever possible. Example 20b shows how the final chord was arranged to present the tonic, third, and fifth of the chord. Be aware that this concept should present itself throughout the piece of music. It is not limited to the final cadence of the chorus. In m. 26 of the arranged piece, part II moves down to an A\(^3\) instead of staying on C\(^4\) as seen in example 21b. This allows part III to alternate between the same two notes. The reason behind this alteration is to avoid the sound of an open fifth. There are various other places where an open fifth can occur when arranging a piece. It is advisable to observe the music horizontally and vertically to locate places that may forgo these observations on first glance. Since Handel composed for more voice parts, he was able to cover more notes from the chord, shown in example 21a.
Example 21a: Handel, *Solomon*: “May No Rash Intruder,” m. 42, Alto, Tenor, and Bass


**Conclusion**

As presented in this thesis, arranging music is a beneficial way for choral directors to add to the repertoire available for their students. The choral director who needs to arrange for their chorus can learn many new techniques by analyzing the techniques used in previously arranged music. As the choir directors continuously works with a choir, they will learn the capabilities and needs of the students. The choir director can arrange a piece of music to suit those needs to
make it possible for those students to sing the selected piece. This allows the director to introduce students to various styles and genres of music that would otherwise be unavailable. It also makes the selected music more appropriate for the student by making changes to the range, length, number of vocal parts, dynamics, text, rhythm and other elements of the music.

Arranging music to suit the needs of the choir allows the choral director to challenge students with particular musical elements instead of the many music elements used in a given piece. Allowing students to focus on fewer musical elements, students will be able to learn the concept with a higher success rate than when there is a compilation of many new items. By giving students these opportunities, the students become better musicians because their knowledge about music has been expanded. Hopefully, this will allow students to transfer the challenge of the given music to the next selection of music and learn the new concept for that selection.

In conclusion, there are many possibilities for the choral director who arranges for their group. However, it is the director's responsibility to give the students music that is appropriate for their needs. If we want music to continue to grow in our students' lives, we need to present them with music that is meaningful, well-chosen, appropriate, and diverse. We should strive for creativity and challenges beyond what are available to us, but work toward a level that is continually rising. Our dedication and effort put into these choirs are the foundation of the next generation of music educators; therefore, we should take it seriously and with exuberant enthusiasm. Enjoy the experience of arranging music for your choir.
Appendix A: “And He Shall Purify”

And He Shall Purify

Two-part with piano accompaniment

Composer: G.F. Handel
Arranger: Maya Neely

And He shall purify, and He shall purify the sons...
And he shall purify - arrangement
And he shall purify arrangement

And to the Lord an offering of righteousness, of righteousness, And He shall...
And he shall purify - arrangement

S  \(\text{purify} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \)

A  \(\text{purify, And He shall purify, And He shall purify, And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \)

Pno.  \(\text{purify, And He shall purify, And He shall purify, And He shall purify, And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \quad \text{And He shall purify.} \)
And he shall purify arrangement

S

A

Pno.

S

A

Pno.

S

A

Pno.

Neely 44
Appendix B: “Mourn, Israel”

Mourn, Israel
From Handel’s Saul
Composer: G.F. Handel
Arranger: Maya Neely

Three-part mixed
with piano accompaniment

Largo assai $J = 88$

Part 1

Part 2

Part 3

Piano

Composer: G.F. Handel
Arranger: Maya Neely
Mourn, Israel

Mourn, thy beauty lost,
Mourn, thy choicest youth on Gilboa, on Gilboa slain,
Mourn, Mourn,

How have they fairest hopes been crossed, what

2

1

Pno.
Mourn, Israel

plain! Mourn, Israel, mourn, thy beauty lost,

Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain,
Mourn, Israel

Mourn, Mourn, Mourn,

Mourn, Mourn, Mourn,

Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain.

Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain.

Thy choicest youth on Gilboa slain.
Appendix C: “May No Rash Intruder”

May No Rash Intruder

Three-part mixed voice
with piano accompaniment

Composer: G.F. Handel
Arranger: Maya Neely

Part I: Andantino

Part II

Part III

Piano

From Handel’s Solomon

Opt. solo/soli

May

 Solo

No rash intruder disturb their soft hours; to form fragrant pil-lows, awake O ye flowers! You
Neely 50

No Rash Intruder

[Music notation and text]

ze- yrs soft breathing, their slumbers prolong, while night...
No Rash Intruder

While night-in-gales lull them to sleep with their song.

Ye zephyrs, soft breathing, their slumbers pro-long.
No Rash Intruder

While night-in-gales lull them to sleep, with their song.

While night-in-gales lull them to sleep, with their song.

While night-in-gales lull them to sleep, with their song.
No Rash Intruder

Neely 53

I

night-in gales _ h lll them, While night-in gales _ h ll them

II

night-in gales _ h ll them to sleep with their song.

III

night-in gales _ h ll them to sleep with their song.

Pno.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.

Pno.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.

sleep with their song. Ye ze- ph yrs, soft breath-ing their slum bers pro-long.
No Rash Intruder

I: sleep to sleep with their song.
II: sleep to sleep with their song.
III: sleep to sleep with their song.
Pno. (accompaniment)
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