

Rackham Symphony Choir
and
The Detroit Opera House
present

**TOO
HOT
TO
HANDEL**

The Jazz Gospel Messiah



TEACHING GUIDE



Sponsored by Mack Avenue Records and Detroit International Jazz Festival

Who is Handel & Why Is He So Hot?

BORN IN HALLE, GERMANY in 1685, Handel grew up under the watchful eyes of his parents. While his mother encouraged his musical gifts, Handel's father tried to discourage him from pursuing such a difficult occupation and would have preferred he study law. Regardless, Handel began to **compose** music at the age of 9.

Following work abroad in Italy, Handel returned to Germany, accepting the position of court composer to the Elector of Hanover. He finally settled in England which he considered home. At various times, he was severely criticized by the English social organizations and businesses for his music—some even considered it offensive.

Handel's most famous work, *Messiah*, was enthusiastically received following its première in Dublin but it became the subject of great controversy following its London début. Was it possible to create a piece of music about religion and still remain respectful? Yes, and Handel proved it in his oratorio, *Messiah*.

An oratorio is a musical composition for voices and instruments that has a religious theme, often telling a sacred

story without using costumes, scenery or dramatic staging.

At the age of 52, he suffered a stroke which temporarily stopped him from playing music or performing. But Handel continued to compose music and was very passionate about giving aid to the Foundling Hospital, a children's home. It was less like a hospital as we know it today and more like a hospitality house for youth.

In 1751 his vision started to fail in one eye. The cause was unknown and progressed into his other eye as well. He died eight years later, in 1759, in London. His last performance he ever attended was his own, *Messiah*.



ENSURING DETROIT'S FUTURE AS A HOTBED OF GREAT MUSIC OPPORTUNITIES — FOR STUDENTS OF ALL AGES, ALL YEAR



George Bohannon performs with DSA Jazz Ensemble at DJF 2010.

Visit detroitjazzfest.com to learn about upcoming master classes and events.



32ND ANNUAL DETROIT INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL SEPTEMBER 2-5, 2011

KF John S. and James L. Knight Foundation
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THE KRESGE FOUNDATION



Messiah with a Twist

TOO HOT TO HANDEL grew from an idea to realization in the hands of Gary Anderson and Bob Christianson, who created this gospel-jazz adaptation of *Messiah* in 1992. The sensational new appeal of *Too Hot To Handel* has been met with the same enthusiasm as it was when the ink was fresh in 1742.

That sense of excitement in Handel's *Messiah* prompted conductor Marin Alsop to suggest giving it a new twist. Alsop, in collaboration with Anderson and Christianson, envisioned *Messiah* in a way that captures a fresh feel and thrill, while still retaining Handel's classic **Baroque** themes.

"It's a great story, but I also think that it requires some kind of audience participation. It becomes an active listening experience, when you're allowed to stand up or clap your hands," says Alsop, who wanted to relax the perception of a quiet, polite classical audience and turn the performance into a participatory event.

The creative team of Alsop-Anderson-Christianson decided their adaptation would encompass jazz, gospel, rock and funk—to "*break the classical sound barrier.*" The result is a swinging performance of the traditional oratorio.

Study Guide content provided in part by Auditorium Theatre, Chicago.

What Should You Listen For?

The basic **melodic** and **harmonic** outline of *Messiah* is imitated throughout the piece.

There is much **ornamentation** of the music—a practice common in Handel's time. In *Too Hot To Handel*, this **improvisatory** style was extended freely to include **scat**, **bends**, **backbeats**, **gospel** and **jazz** improvs – even improvisation by various instrumentalists (not limited to just the voice).

The **recitatives** (a style of singing that is close to the rhythm of natural speech) with their improvisatory style in *Messiah* have been expanded to **call and response** improvisations (a single leader makes a musical statement, and then the chorus responds together) over a gospel organ and piano accompaniment.

What Will You Hear?

RACKHAM SYMPHONY

CHOIR: a 100 member Metropolitan choir, under the direction of Suzanne Mallare Acton, sings *Too Hot to Handel*. The diverse members come from all corners of southeast Michigan

SOPRANO & MEZZOSOPRANO SOLOS: with gospel and R&B (rhythm and blues) influences. For both roles you will hear more pop than classical. They have trained voices with wide ranges and outstanding control.

A TENOR SOLO: is quite a demanding role. It requires a classically trained tenor who is multitalented in all musical genres. He will branch into gospel, jazz/scat and R&B styles with flexibility.

These singers are of varied backgrounds. They are able to turn this 250 year old masterpiece into a jazz gospel celebration.



Did You Know?

A typical symphony orchestra consists of four groups of similar musical instruments, generally appearing in the musical score in the following order:

WIND INSTRUMENTS

Woodwinds: flute, clarinet, oboe, bassoon

BRASS: trumpet, French horn, trombone, tenor saxophone, tuba

PERCUSSION

INSTRUMENTS Gong, mallets, xylophone, bass drum, snare drum, timpani, drumsticks, padded beater

STRINGED

INSTRUMENTS Violin, guitar, cello, bass, harp, bow

Orchestra instrumentation for *Too Hot to Handel* includes 5 saxes, 3 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani and percussion. The rhythm section includes a Jazz Piano, Hammond B3 organ, Electric guitar, Electric Bass guitar, Bass, Drumset and Strings.

History of Jazz

BEFORE 1850 MUSIC based on traditional African folk songs was being sung not only in Africa, but by Africans taking the **Middle Passage** to America. Through the 1850s and the Civil War era, song became an essential way for enslaved Africans to communicate while working in the cotton fields of the south.

After the Civil War, and **Emancipation** in 1863, blacks were free but maintained the tradition of song in their homes, churches and communities. Many of the African American slave **spirituals** that had been sung on plantations continued to be passed down from generation to generation through **oral tradition**. **Blues** began to take shape in the early 1900s, while **Ragtime** and marching band music were also becoming very popular all over the country.

But no one in the country was creating sounds like those which were coming out of New Orleans. This new sound was influenced by traditional African and French Creole music. In the **1920s**, jazz influences crept into cities like Kansas City, New York, and Chicago. The **Roaring Twenties** influenced all aspects of modern society.

The Charleston became one of the most popular dances and songs of the century. While it developed in African-American communities in the USA, the Charleston is most frequently associated with **flappers** and the **speakeasy**.

Young women would dance alone or together as a way of mocking the “drys,” or citizens who supported the **Prohibition** amendment, as the Charleston was then considered quite a provocative dance.

In the **1930s**, Swing was King! **Swing** music differed from what had previously been popular in a number of ways. The **arrangements** are simpler, more emphasis was placed on horn/wind type instruments and, most importantly, there was a complete lack of a string section.



History of Jazz

Additionally, there was an overriding tendency to **improvise** the **melody**. The music was snappy and daring.

It wasn't until the **1940s** that **Bebop (Bop)** came to the top. Bebop artists liked exploring advanced **harmonies**, complex **syncopation**, altered **chords**, and chord substitutions, and the bop generation advanced these techniques with a more freewheeling and often relaxed approach.

In the **1950s** **Funk** and **Cool Jazz** took over. The **1950s** also saw the widespread popularization of **gospel** music. Gospel music became more mainstream in the later part of the decade. Performers began adding influences from **R&B** to make a more dance-able sound. Early in the next decade, the lyrics were secularized (removing the religious element), resulting in **soul** music.

Doo wop, a complex type of vocal music, also became popular during the **1950s**. With the addition of gospel inflections, doo wop's polished sound and romantic **ballads** made it a major part of the 50s music scene.

Modal and **Free Jazz** thrived in the 1960s. In a modal jazz song, improvisations are based on individual scales or modes rather than on the overall key of a piece. The result is a song that contains fewer chord changes and allows more time and freedom for melodic improvisation. In essence, it's about a return to melody. Classic modal jazz often has a cerebral, cool and meditative feel to it. However, unlike West Coast cool jazz, the shifting tonal center and lack of melodic resolution generates a tension and searching quality to the music. These two elements combine to give the music an ambiguous and mysterious feel.

In the 1970's, Jazz combined with Rock to form Jazz-Rock or Fusion and in the 1980s, the Contemporary Jazz age began. The roots of Hip-Hop emerged in the 80s and took shape in the 1990s.

Focus on the Artists

Rodrick Dixon

RODRICK
DIXON
FILMED

in 2010 the
PBS special
“Hallelujah
Broadway” in Prague.
The DVD and CD were
released in September by
EMI/Manhattan records.

Mr. Dixon’s other extensive
television credits include
the PBS specials: US

Air Force 60th Anniversary Gala,
Cook, Dixon & Young *Volume
One*, Washington Opera Gala at
Constitution Hall, *The Mark Twain
Awards* Honoring Whoopi
Goldberg at Kennedy Center
and *My Favorite Broadway: The
Love Songs* at City Center.

In 2010, Rodrick Dixon made
his Sydney Festival debut as
Oedipus Rex directed by Peter
Sellars, joined the Metropolitan
Opera roster, returned to the
Cincinnati May Festival and
appeared in concert with Madison
Opera. In July 2010, Albany
Records released a new classical CD
titled “*Recorded Music of the African
Diaspora*.” Mr. Dixon performs the
tenor role in the song cycle titled “*Of
Visions and Truth*” composed by Olly



Rodrick Dixon

W. Wilson. This is the 8th
year of appearances in the
production of “*Too Hot to
Handel*.” Rodrick Dixon is
very happy to return to the
Rackham Symphony Choir,
Detroit Opera House and
Auditorium Theatre in
Chicago under the baton of
Suzanne Acton. Visit [www.
tenorroddixon.com](http://www.tenorroddixon.com).



Alfreda Burke

Alfreda Burke

SOPRANO
ALFREDA BURKE’S

vocal artistry has been
described as “*volup-
tuous, creamy and
luxuriant*”
(*Howard
Reich, Chicago
Tribune*). She has

appeared in concert
throughout North
America and in
Europe; filmed
2010 Prague

PBS special, *Hallelujah Broadway*
and recorded it on EMI/Manhattan
Records label (Czech National
Symphony Orchestra Studios).

Focus on the Artists

Ms. Burke made her Carnegie and
Orchestra Hall debut in Strauss’
Elektra with the Chicago Symphony
Orchestra led by Daniel Barenboim.
Highlighted performances include
the Chicago Symphony at Ravinia
under Erich Kunzel, Detroit Opera
House, Rackham Symphony Choir
under the baton of Suzanne Acton,
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra,
Prague Symphony Orchestra, Umbria
Music Festival (Italy), TodiMusicFest
(USA), Lancaster Festival, Grant
Park Music Festival, Millennium
Park Gala, Kennedy Center,
Chicago Opera Theater, Auditorium
Theatre (*Too Hot to Handel*), Chorus
Angelorum and Chicagoland Pops
Orchestra, among others.

Ms. Burke performed in the National
Tour of Jerome Kern’s *Show Boat*
at the Kennedy Center and Auditorium
Theatre directed by Harold Prince.
Her recordings include her solo CD,
From the Heart (2002); *Hallelujah
Broadway* (2010, EMI). Ms. Burke
recorded and performed the Chicago
Olympic 2016 Bid Anthem, “*I Will
Stand*” (2008). Upcoming 2010-12
engagements include Alex North’s
Negro Mother, Beethoven *Mass in
C*, *Hallelujah Broadway* airings and
national tour.

Alfreda Burke is delighted to return
to Rackham Symphony Choir and
Detroit Opera House’s production of

Too Hot to Handel for the eighth year.
She received Master and Bachelor
of Music degrees from Roosevelt
University and currently serves on
the RU CCPA Advisory Board. Visit
www.sopranoalfredaburke.com.

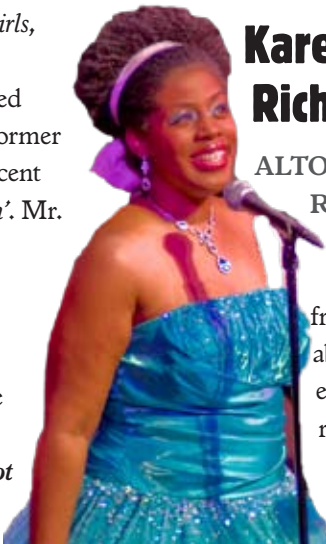


Alvin Waddles

Alvin Waddles

A NATIVE OF DETROIT , **Alvin
B. Waddles, III** began studying
the piano at the age of eight. He
continued his studies at Interlochen
Arts Academy and the University Of
Michigan School Of Music. He has
worked in the Detroit and Ann Arbor
Public Schools as well as the Music
Ministries of several churches; among
them, the historic New Bethel Baptist
Church, Hartford Memorial Baptist
and Hope United Methodist where
he has served as the Director of Music
since 1995. He has been musical
director and/or pianist for numerous
theatrical productions including: *The*

Wiz, The Color Purple, Dreamgirls, Chorus Line, West Side Story, Sophisticated Ladies and received rave reviews as a featured performer in the Detroit Music Hall's recent production of *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Mr. Waddles has delighted Detroit music lovers with performances in a variety of musical events including the Detroit International Jazz Festival, the Detroit Festival of the Arts, annual productions of "*Too Hot to Handel*" and his own Fats Waller Revue.



Karen Marie Richardson

Karen Marie Richardson

ALTO KAREN MARIE

RICHARDSON'S

voice has been declared "A gift from God, and her ability to express every facet of rejection through the subtlety of her musicality is simply gorgeous." (Rebecca

Sarwate, Edgechicago.com). Gracing the stage of the Detroit Opera House once again after making her debut in *Too Hot To Handel* 2009, she feels music is the basis of her many attributes. Her radiant vocal talents have appeared in many facets including theatre, music, as well as voice-overs. Recent theatrical acquisitions include *Ragtime the Musical* at Drury Lane Oakbrook featuring Quentin Earl Darrington, *The Mistress Cycle* at Chicago's Auditorium Theatre, *Buddy: The Buddy Holly Story* at Drury Lane Theatre, and *Hairspray the Musical* at Fireside Theatre of Wisconsin. She is currently independently working on her solo music project, in which she will fuse the genres of Jazz, Soul, and Pop to

In March 2011 he will return to the Detroit Opera House to perform Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* with Suzanne Acton and members of the Michigan Opera Theater Orchestra.

Mr. Waddles has been blessed to work with some of the world's finest musicians including Robert Shaw, Margaret Hillis, Brazeal Dennard, Minister Thomas Whitfield, Aretha Franklin, Anita Baker, Placido Domingo, Marcus Belgrave, Jack Jones, Haley Westenra, Stephanie Mills, Tramaine Hawkins and Cook, Dixon and Young (formerly of Three Mo' Tenors) for whom he serves as musical director and pianist.

create a new sound. Karen Marie's eloquent speaking voice was utilized to assist the visually impaired to vote for Chicago's 2009 city elections. In addition, her singing talents were utilized for *Luster's Silk Smooth Touch radio campaign*. She received a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in Musical Theatre from Millikin University.

Suzanne Mallare Acton

FROM OPERA TO HANDEL'S

Messiah to contemporary jazz, conductor Suzanne Mallare Acton is recognized for her versatility and dynamic style.

For Michigan Opera Theatre, Ms. Acton's conducting credits include: *West Side Story, The Barber of Seville, Music Man, The Pirates of Penzance, The Mikado, Die Fledermaus, La Traviata, The Daughter of the Regiment, La Bohème, El Capitan, and The Tender Land*. Additional conducting credits include *My Fair Lady* and *La Traviata* for Dayton Opera, *The Merry Widow* and *Madame Butterfly* for Artpark, and *Tosca* for Augusta Opera. Ms. Acton has served as guest conductor

for The Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Birmingham-Bloomfield Symphony Orchestra, Lake St. Clair Symphony Orchestra, the Lexington Bach Festival, and the Saginaw Bay Symphony Orchestra.

As a leader in the Michigan art scene,

Ms. Acton is known for her bold repertoire and ventures into multimedia programming. As artistic/music director of Rackham Symphony Choir, she has presented *Carmina Burana* with the Eisenhower Dance Ensemble at the

Macomb Theater for the Performing Arts, *African Sanctus* with the English composer David Fanshawe, and the Detroit premiere of *Voices of Light*, a work for soloists, orchestra, choir and the historic silent film "The Passion of Joan of Arc" at the State Theater, with composer Richard Einhorn.



Suzanne Mallare Acton

Too Hot Glossary

ARRANGEMENT: a version of music adapted for playing or singing in a different manner, or the scoring of such a version.

BAROQUE: highly ornamented music of the 17th century written by composers such as Bach, Handel, Vivaldi and Telemann.

BEBOP: fast jazz music with complex harmonies and melodies. Charlie Parker was the most famous exponent of the style.

BLUES: a type of popular music developed from African American folk songs in the early 20th century consisting of mainly slow and sad songs often performed over a repeating harmonic pattern.

CALL AND RESPONSE: a single leader makes a musical statement and then the chorus responds together.

COOL JAZZ: jazz with a light tone and relaxed character, popular in the mid-20th century, especially on the West Coast of the United States.

FIGURED BASS: a bass part of a musical composition, typically baroque or classical, in which the notes have numbers written above them to indicate which chords to play.

FOLK SONG: a traditional song that has been passed down orally.

FUNK: popular music that derives from jazz, blues, and soul and is characterized by a heavy rhythmic bass and backbeat.

FUSION: the merger, or the resulting blend, of musical styles or elements from more than one tradition.

GENRE: one of the categories, based on form, style or subject matter, into which artistic work of all kinds can be divided.

GOSPEL: highly emotional vocal music that originated among African American Christians in the southern United States and was a strong influence in the development of soul music.

HARMONY: a combination of notes that are sung or played at the same time. Changing harmony is one of the most characteristic

features of Western music, providing momentum and richness to the melody.

HIP HOP: a form of popular culture that started in African American inner-city areas, characterized by rap music, graffiti art, and break dancing.

IMPROVISE: to perform, compose something, especially a sketch, play, song, or piece of music, without any preparation or set text to follow.

JAZZ: popular music that originated among black people in New Orleans in the late 19th century and is characterized by syncopated rhythms and improvisation. Jazz originally drew on ragtime, gospel, black spiritual songs, West African rhythms, and European harmonies.

MELODY: the primary and most recognizable part in a harmonic piece of music.

MEZZO SOPRANO: a woman whose singing voice is between a soprano and a contralto in range.

ORAL TRADITION: a community's cultural and historical background preserved and passed on from one generation to the next in spoken stories and song, as distinct from being written down.

ORATORIO: a musical composition for voices and instruments that has a religious theme, often telling a sacred story but not using costumes, scenery, or dramatic staging. Messiah is an example of this genre.

ORNAMENTATION: the addition of a note or set of notes that embellishes a melody or harmony.

RECITATIVES: a style of singing that is close to the rhythm of natural speech, used in opera for dialogue and narration.

SCAT: a style of jazz singing that uses nonsense syllables to approximate the sound of a solo instrument.

SOPRANO: the highest register of singing voice a woman, girl, or boy can have.

Too Hot Glossary

SPIRITUAL: a religious folk song, especially one arising from African American culture.

SYNCOPIATION: a rhythmic technique in music in which the accent is shifted to a weak beat of the bar.

SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: a large orchestra that includes wind, string, and percussion instruments and plays symphonies and other works scored for these instruments.

TENOR: the highest natural male singing voice, or a man whose voice is in the register.

Detroit Opera House History



THE DETROIT OPERA HOUSE is the home of Michigan Opera Theatre, the State of Michigan's premiere opera company, which, through its commitment to producing the very best professional productions from the grand opera, opera, operetta, musical theater, ballet and arts education programming, serves as a statewide cultural resource.

The vision of internationally recognized impresario Dr. David DiChiera, the Detroit Opera House offers an essential, vibrant contribution to the quality of life for Detroit area residents and to communities throughout the region. This dynamic cultural resource exemplifies artistic excellence.

Since its opening in 1996, the Detroit Opera House has offered Southeast Michigan the finest arts and cultural performances, concerts, and entertainment. By presenting culturally significant productions relative to the diverse populace of the region, such as *"Porgy and Bess,"* *"Anoush,"* *"King Roger,"* *"Dead Man Walking"* and the world premiere production of *"Margaret Garner,"* the Detroit Opera House and Michigan Opera Theatre have brought the magic of live theatre to thousands of people.

The Student Matinee Program

PART I

Sinfony

Comfort Ye

Every Valley

And The Glory Of The
Lord Shall Be Revealed

Thus Saith The Lord

But Who May Abide The
Day Of His Coming

And He Shall Purify

Behold, A Virgin Shall Conceive

O Thou That Tallest Good
Tidings To Zion

For Behold, Darkness Shall
Cover The Earth

The People That Walked In Darkness

For Unto Us A Child Is Born

There Were Shepherds
Abiding In The Field

And Suddenly There Was
With The Angel

Glory To God

Intermission

PART II

Rejoice Greatly

Then Shall The Eyes Of
The Blind Be Opened

He Shall Feed His Flock

His Yoke Is Easy

Behold The Lamb Of God

Surely He Hath Borne Our Grievs**

All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray

Behold, I Tell You A Mystery

The Trumpet Shall Sound

The Lord Gave The Word

Why Do The Nations
So Furiously Rage

Hallelujah!

** *with David Vaughn, bass baritone*

*Music on loan from the archives of the
Concordia Orchestra, Marin Alsop,
founding music director and conductor.*

Preparing for the Show

SEEING A LIVE SHOW is different than watching a movie or television. The performers in a live show can hear what you are saying and doing in the audience! They can even feel the energy in the room and tell if you are ready to engage in the live show by actively watching and listening. Please actively engage in the production and be a courteous audience member.

It's ok to **laugh, clap and respond to performers** during the show! These are all good ways to let the performers know that you appreciate their talents and work. Performers will often perform better for audiences who feel engaged in the performance.

Listen and watch the performers carefully. Be sure to also notice the design choices (sets, costumes and lighting).

Please do not talk, whisper, unwrap candy or make loud noises during the production. Our theatre has some of the **best acoustics in the world**. The performers and fellow audience members can hear everything!

Sit in your **assigned seats**; please do not move to empty seats.

Running, jumping and climbing over or putting feet on the backs of the seats is strictly prohibited.

Absolutely **no photography or recording** is permitted in the theatre (including camera phones).

Please be **respectful** to our ushers, theatre patrons and the theatre itself.

Food, drinks and gum are not allowed into the theatre.

Many of our performances have a no **late seating** policy. If you arrive after the scheduled start time for the show, you will be seated at the discretion of the theatre staff. If latecomers are allowed to enter the theatre, you will typically be seated in the upper balcony so you do not disturb the performers or fellow audience members.

Cell phones, pagers and anything that makes noise must be turned off during all performances. Please do not **text-message** during the performances. All cell phones, blackberries and hand-helds should be turned off or simply left at home.

Finally, we have found that a good experience at the theatre includes arriving **20 minutes early**. For most shows late seating is not permitted.



Rackham Symphony Choir

RACKHAM SYMPHONY CHOIR has created unique opportunities for students throughout Southeastern Michigan to experience choral music.

The choir brings the joy of music to students through master classes; collaborations with arts organizations and other choral ensembles and school choirs; as well as special performances for young people.



RACKHAM
SYMPHONY
CHOIR

Rackham has also created innovative educational programs specifically for young audiences that weave choral and instrumental music in with other art forms including narration, puppetry and film.

In 2007 Rackham launched the High School Intern Program as an initiative of the Suzanne Mallare Acton Artistic Fund.

In response to overwhelming interest and the declining budgets for arts in the schools, we have doubled the size of our internship class for the 2010-11 season.

Selected through audition, interns receive weekly private vocal lessons and train with the choir under Maestra Suzanne Mallare Acton, RSC's Artistic and Music Director and Assistant Music Director and Chorus Master of Michigan Opera Theatre. As a member of the choir they perform large scale choral works, accompanied by professional orchestras and are mentored by choir members. Our final performance of our season features these students and benefits the artistic fund.

Rackham also accepts high school students for general membership by audition and waives dues for these members. Four new student members joined the choir for the 2010-11 season.

RSC programs are made possible through the generosity and support of funders including the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, the Kresge Foundation, Erb Foundation, The Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan, and numerous individual donors.



To make a donation or learn more about bringing a student outreach program to your school, visit www.rackhamchoir.org.