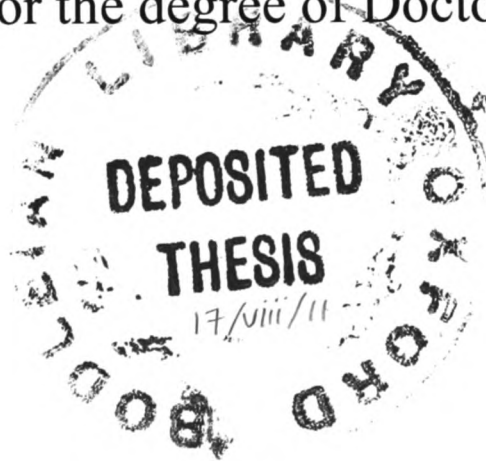


NINETEENTH-CENTURY ENGLISH ORATORIO FESTIVALS:
CHRONICLING THE MONUMENTAL IN MUSIC

Christine Andrews
Lady Margaret Hall
University of Oxford

A dissertation submitted to the Faculty of Music in fulfilment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy



Michaelmas Term 2009 [i.e. 2011 - LTS = 15/ii/11]

Abstract

Nineteenth-Century English Oratorio Festivals: Chronicling the Monumental in Music

Christine Andrews
Lady Margaret Hall, University of Oxford

Doctor of Philosophy in Musicology
Michaelmas 2009

Oratorio festivals were an important cultural feature of nineteenth-century English society. These massive musical events lasted for three or four days and some involved up to 4,000 musicians and 83,000 in the audience. This dissertation advances the hypothesis that the oratorio festivals, and the grand new buildings in which they were staged, coalesced to create a musical monumentalism in a society steeped in the (mainly Protestant) Christian sentiments of the day. In particular, the dissertation contends that a central premise of nineteenth-century musical thought was that the musical value of a performance was directly in proportion to the size of the performing forces and the audience.

A framework devised mainly from Stephen Little's definition of monumental art (2004) is used as a critical tool to examine from a new perspective aspects of nineteenth-century oratorios such as 'physical scale', 'breadth of subject matter', and 'ambition to be of lasting significance'. Furthermore, this dissertation argues that a complex ideology of an English musical monumentalism underpinned the concatenation of circumstances that allowed oratorio festivals to flourish at this time.

The spectacle of the Crystal Palace in London and the Great Handel Triennial Festivals it housed are contrasted with the provincial festivals, such as those of Bristol, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Leeds. The analyses of the latter rely on substantial original material uncovered from rich primary source documents about the provincial oratorio festivals and the buildings in which they were held. Musical scores themselves, including some of Sir Michael Costa's orchestral manuscripts, are also examined as monuments. A comprehensive study of these festivals is well overdue and this study will aim to understand why these events grew to such a mammoth size at this time.

Acknowledgements

The generous support of the Australian Federation of University Women/ Queensland Chapter has made this study possible. The AFUW/Q Freda Bage Fellowship has paid most of the overseas student fees. In England, the Hussey Bequest from the Faculty of Theology, travel awards from the Faculty of Music, several bursaries from Lady Margaret Hall, and an R. M. A. (Royal Musical Association) Fellowes Bursary assisted with costs connected with undertaking travel to a number of archives and with presenting the research findings at conferences. I would like to express my sincerest gratitude to all the donors who provided funds to support this important work.

On a practical level, my warmest thanks go to my supervisor, Dr Roger Allen, who patiently and consistently waded through this thesis, sometimes adding humorous comments such as ‘Did Victorians really use split infinitives?’ His boundless enthusiasm for the topic was an inspiration. My college advisor Dr Susan Wollenberg, who provided valuable advice and feedback throughout my studies, and kind support when I required it, also deserves special thanks. I am indebted further to a number of willing readers including Else Shepherd, Dr David R. M. Irving, Dr Helene van Klinken, and Dr Judith Bager for their generosity and tenacity in proof-reading my drafts.

Above all, I dedicate this dissertation to my daughter Connie living ten hours ahead on the other side of the world ‘Down Under’, who has had to survive without her Mum for three years.

Contents

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements.....	iii
Contents	iv
List of Figures	vi
List of Musical Examples	viii
List of Tables	ix
Introduction.....	1
0.1 An English musical monumentalism	3
0.2 Definitions of English oratorio	4
0.3 The tradition of the oratorio in England	6
0.4 The rise of oratorio festivals in England.....	14
0.5 Parameters and description of the archival sources	19
0.6 A note on structure.....	20
1 An Historiographical Survey of Nineteenth-Century Oratorio.....	24
1.1 The state of research	26
1.2 The significance of oratorio festivals.....	32
1.3 The context of the research question	33
2 A Context for Nineteenth-Century Oratorio Festivals:	
An Ideology of English Musical Monumentalism	40
2.1 Monumentalism: defining the concept.....	42
2.2 A context for nineteenth-century oratorio festivals	51
3 The Provinces	61
3.1 The rise of Victorian Town Halls and culture	62
3.2 The Leeds Festivals.....	66
3.2.1 The Leeds Town Hall and inaugural festival.....	66
3.2.2 The Leeds Festivals from 1874.....	73
3.3 Manchester Festivals.....	85
3.3.1 Manchester Free Trade Halls	87
3.3.2 Oratorio festivals and performances in Manchester	89
3.4 Birmingham Festivals	105
3.4.1 The First Triennial Festival of 1784	106
3.4.2 The Birmingham Town Hall.....	114
3.4.3 The Birmingham Triennial Festival in 1834.....	119
3.4.4 Mendelssohn at the Birmingham Festival and the premiere of <i>Elijah</i>	122
3.4.5 Michael Costa's <i>Eli</i> premiered at the 1855 Birmingham Festival	128
3.4.6 Gounod's <i>Redemption</i> at the 1882 Birmingham Triennial Festival	132
3.4.7 Elgar's <i>Dream of Gerontius</i> at the Birmingham Festival of 1900.....	135
3.5 Bristol Festivals	140
3.5.1 The Colston Hall.....	146
3.5.2 The first Triennial Festival in 1873	150
3.5.3 The second Bristol Triennial Festival 1876	154
3.5.4 The third Bristol Triennial Festival of 1879	156
3.5.5 The fourth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1882.....	158
3.5.6 The fifth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1885.....	160
3.5.7 Bristol Triennial Festivals of 1888, 1890 and 1893.....	162
3.5.8 The ninth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1896.....	163

3.6	Liverpool Festivals.....	166
3.6.1	St George's Hall.....	170
3.6.2	Large-scale oratorio performances in St George's Hall	179
3.6.3	The last Triennial Festival of 1874	183
4	The Grand Spectacle of the Crystal Palace	187
4.1	The Spectacle of the Crystal Palace.....	188
4.2	A Monumental Symbol.....	190
4.3	Music at the Opening of the Great Exhibition	193
4.4	The Crystal Palace Moves to Sydenham	196
4.5	Music at the Second Opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham	198
5	The Rise of the Great Triennial Handel Festivals in the Crystal Palace	201
5.1	The Trial Handel Festival of 1857.....	204
5.2	Handel Commemoration Festival 1859	212
5.3	The First Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1862.....	218
5.4	The Second Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1865	224
5.5	The Third and Fourth Great Triennial Handel Festivals (1868, 1871).....	227
5.6	The Fifth Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1874	230
5.7	Some later Handel Triennial Festivals.....	232
6	Costa's Handel Arrangements: a Musical Monument.....	238
6.1	Instruments of the day used to 'improve' a score	242
6.2	Some excerpts of monumental music	247
6.2.1	<i>Messiah</i> , 'Hallelujah' Chorus	247
6.2.2	<i>Israel in Egypt</i> , 'He gave them hailstones'	254
6.2.3	<i>Messiah</i> , 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'	260
6.2.4	<i>Israel in Egypt</i> , 'And Israel saw that great work'	266
7	Towards an English Musical Monumentalism.....	271
7.1	Comparison of the festivals examined.....	272
7.1.1	Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1830s	275
7.1.2	Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1850s	296
7.1.3	Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1870s	311
7.2	Towards an ideology of English musical monumentalism.....	317
8	Concluding Remarks	323
8.1	General findings.....	323
8.2	Limits of the study	325
8.3	Implications for further research.....	326
8.4	Significance of the study.....	328
	Bibliography	331
	Manuscripts.....	331
	Newspapers and nineteenth-century journals	333
	Primary sources.....	341
	Secondary literature	345

List of Figures

Figure 3.1: Leeds Town Hall, 1858.	67
Figure 3.2: Report on <i>Elijah</i> at the Leeds Town Hall inauguration.	71
Figure 3.3: Ticket for opening oratorio, <i>Elijah</i> , at Leeds Town Hall.	72
Figure 3.4: Proposal for a choral amalgamation in Leeds, 20 September 1860	74
Figure 3.5: Section of an engraving of the 1880 Leeds Triennial Festival.	78
Figure 3.6: People involved in the Leeds Triennial Festival, 1880.	79
Figure 3.7: The Festival Principals.	80
Figure 3.8: <i>Punch</i> articles illustrating the festive spirit of the Leeds Music Festival.	81
Figure 3.9: Leeds Festival 1886, with Dvořák and the seated conductor Sullivan.	83
Figure 3.10: A print of the Peterloo Massacre, 16 August 1819, Manchester.	86
Figure 3.11: The New Free Trade Hall, Manchester opened in 1856.	88
Figure 3.12: A Liverpool advertisement for the Manchester Festival of 1828.	90
Figure 3.13: Tribute to Maria Malibran on her deathbed in Manchester, 1836.	93
Figure 3.14: Poster for the Grand Musical Festival held at Easter in the	96
Figure 3.15: Great Choral Meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Workmen	98
Figure 3.16: Poster for performance of <i>Elijah</i> in April 1847 at the Free Trade Hall.	101
Figure 3.17: Oratorio Night, Manchester Free Trade Hall, ?1885.	104
Figure 3.18: The ‘Scheme’ for the 1823 Birmingham Triennial Festival.	110
Figure 3.19: A print for sale at the 1826 performance of <i>Messiah</i> in Birmingham.	111
Figure 3.20: Ticket to the Operatic Selection for the 1829 Birmingham Triennial Festival	113
Figure 3.21: The Birmingham Town Hall.	115
Figure 3.22: The Grand Birmingham Organ with its decorated casing.	118
Figure 3.23: Detail of ticket to an evening performance Birmingham Festival 1834.	120
Figure 3.24: Interior of the Birmingham Town Hall during the first festival in 1834.	121
Figure 3.25: Mendelssohn’s drawing of the Birmingham Town Hall in 1840.	124
Figure 3.26: Festival Programme for <i>Eli</i>	130
Figure 3.27: Receipts of 1882 Birmingham Festivals published.	134
Figure 3.28: Autographed programme of <i>Dream of Gerontius</i> from its premiere	137
Figure 3.29: Programme for the Grand Bristol Festival in 1814.	143
Figure 3.30: Inside of the 1814 Bristol Festival word-book of <i>The Creation</i>	144
Figure 3.31: Bristol 1837 word-book for the Grand Performance of Sacred Music	145
Figure 3.32: The Colston Hall: Two Monumental Facades.	147
Figure 3.33: ‘Completion of Colston’s Hall’, <i>Bristol Mercury</i> , 14 September 1867.	148
Figure 3.34: The Colston Hall Exterior at the first Triennial Bristol Festival.	151
Figure 3.35: Programme cover for the first Bristol Triennial Festival in 1873.	152
Figure 3.36: ‘Peers by the score and MP’s almost by the hundred’.	153
Figure 3.37: Bristol town coat of arms included on festival word-books.	155
Figure 3.38: Pull-out gallery plan included in programmes from 1879.	157
Figure 3.39: Detail of word-book for <i>Redemption</i> , Bristol Triennial Festival 1882.	159
Figure 3.40: Comparative attendance at Bristol Triennial Festivals 1873-1885.	161
Figure 3.41: Roofless Colston Hall after the fire of September 1898.	165
Figure 3.42: Liverpool Festival 1836: Premiere of <i>St Paul</i> in England.	167
Figure 3.43: St George’s Hall Liverpool.	170
Figure 3.44: Performance of the first oratorio in St George’s Hall, Liverpool.	174
Figure 3.45: Print published for the inauguration of St George’s Hall.	175
Figure 3.46: Programme of <i>Messiah</i> for the inauguration of St George’s Hall, 1854.	176
Figure 3.47: Distinguished soloists in <i>Messiah</i> at St George’s Hall, 1854.	177
Figure 3.48: Advertisement for a performance by the Liverpool Festival Choral Society.	180
Figure 3.49: A Liverpool 1847 ‘Undress’ Programme with a performance of <i>Elijah</i>	182

Figure 3.50: Programme cover of the last Liverpool festival in 1874.....	184
Figure 3.51: An entrance display at St George's Liverpool.	186
Figure 4.1: The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, 1851.....	188
Figure 4.2: The supposed effects of the Great Exhibition.	192
Figure 4.3: Opening of the Great Exhibition.	194
Figure 4.4: The opening ceremony of the Crystal Palace, 1851.....	196
Figure 4.5: The reopening of the Crystal Palace on 10 June 1854 by Queen Victoria.....	198
Figure 5:1: The Trial Festival at the Crystal Palace, 1857.	205
Figure 5:2: 'Comparative Dimensions of the Principal Orchestras of the Country'.	210
Figure 5:3: Comparison of roofs around the country used for Great Musical Festivals.....	211
Figure 5:4: A letter to the editor of <i>The Times</i> from a chorister, 22 June 1859.....	215
Figure 5:5: A list of the origins of performers included in the 1859 <i>Book of Words</i>	216
Figure 5:6: The <i>solidly roofed in</i> Great Transept of the Crystal Palace, 1862.	223
Figure 5:7: Recording <i>Israel in Egypt</i> on Edison's wax cylinders in 1888.	233
Figure 5:8: Programme cover of the Handel Festival in the Diamond Jubilee, 1897.....	235
Figure 5:9: Women in the orchestra at the Handel Festival, 1891.....	236
Figure 6.1: Distin's Monster Drum.....	245
Figure 6.2: Distin's Monster Drum in Perspective.	246
Figure 7.1: Malibran and Catalani's 'tiresome' ornaments in 1830.	288

List of Musical Examples

Musical Example 3.1: The original 1846 score of Mendelssohn's <i>Elijah</i>	127
Musical Example 6.1: Costa's 'Philistines! Hark!', <i>Eli</i>	240
Musical Example 6.2: Mozart's arrangement of 'Halleluja', <i>Messias</i>	251
Musical Example 6.3: Costa's Arrangement of 'Hallelujah Chorus', <i>Messiah</i>	252
Musical Example 6.4: Handel's conducting score of 'Hallelujah' Chorus.	253
Musical Example 6.5: Händel Ausgabe edition 'He gave them hailstones'	256
Musical Example 6.6: Costa's arrangement 'He gave them hailstones'	257
Musical Example 6.7: Handel's conducting score 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'	262
Musical Example 6.8: Händel Ausgabe edition 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.....	263
Musical Example 6.9: Costa's arrangement 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.....	264
Musical Example 6.10: Costa's arrangement 'And Israel saw that great work'	267
Musical Example 6.11: Händel-Ausgabe edition of 'And Israel saw that great work'.	268

List of Tables

Table 3.1: Comparison of length, breadth and height of concert venues in 1858 England ...	68
Table 3.2: Works commissioned for the Birmingham Triennial Festival	132
Table 5.1: Available numbers involved in Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace.	218
Table 5.2: Comparison of performers at various oratorio festivals 1784-1862.....	220
Table 6.1: Comparison of scoring of the ‘Hallelujah’ Chorus from Handel’s <i>Messiah</i>	250
Table 6.2: Comparison of the opening bars of ‘He gave them Hailstones’	255
Table 7.1: Interior dimensions of new monumental buildings in the 1830s.....	276
Table 7.2: Size of oratorio festivals in selected locations in the 1830s.	278
Table 7.3: Comparison of size of halls investigated in the 1850s.	297
Table 7.4: Comparison of festivals during the 1850s.	299
Table 7.5: Comparison of the size of halls investigated in the 1870s.....	312
Table 7.6 Comparison of festivals during the 1870s.	314

Introduction

And so the oratorio goes on, the assemblage paying a grave and decorous attention to the music, and bearing themselves far more like a congregation than an audience ... And when, at the first bar of the sublime 'Hallelujah Chorus', the hearers all *stand up*, the singers in the orchestra all seem to me like priests. In truth, I think that to hear an oratorio chastens and purifies the mind, and that we go away from those performances wiser and better men.¹

The nineteenth century has often been described as the 'Age of Oratorio' in England; a time when choral societies flourished, and massed performances of mainstream oratorios such as *Messiah*, *The Creation*, and *Elijah* reached iconic status. The Three Choirs Festival dating from around 1715 provided a model for many provincial festivals of this era.² Civic competition and charitable causes were features typical of these events.

The vast numbers involved in the Crystal Palace Handel Triennial Festivals, the first of which was held in 1859 in London, were astonishing, with over 3,000 performers and 20,000 in the audience. The Crystal Palace that housed these performances was originally a monumental exhibition building that helped bring England back to international prominence. As a gauge of the huge public interest in these events, it was reported that over 500 journalists alone were present at one such festival.³

Large-scale three or four-day festivals were also held in the provinces, where grand new concert and town halls were erected in fast-growing industrial towns. Each festival seemed designed to supersede its predecessors – newspapers and journals throughout the country reported in detail on the profits, audience, and musician numbers as well as on the usual list of soloists, conductors, and works performed and commissioned.

¹ George Augustus H. F. Sala, *Twice Round the Clock; or, The Hours of the Day and Night in London* (London, 1859), 294-5.

² The precise origins of the Three Choirs Festival are unknown. The festival was an annual 'meeting' that took place alternately in the cathedrals of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford.

³ *Daily News*, 20 June 1868.

These huge events formed an integral part of the religious fabric of nineteenth-century English society and are worthy of investigation to shed light on the broader issues of nineteenth-century musical life, and to raise questions about the underlying ideologies that allowed the festivals to flourish and to expand to such huge proportions. Participation in and attendance at an oratorio performance was considered analogous to attending a church service. This perspective was that of none other than Richard Wagner, who observed after his visit to England in 1855 on the ‘almost weekly’ oratorio performances in Exeter Hall:

[O]ratorio performance attracts the public far more than the opera; there is a further advantage in that attendance at such an oratorio is the equivalent of going to church. Everybody in the audience holds their Handel piano score in the same way that church goers hold their prayer-books.⁴

The reverence of attendees at the oratorio was a peculiarly English affair. Jim Obelkevich explains the idiosyncratic nature of the Victorian English and their oratorio:

Judged by continental standards, the musical life of the Victorians was inevitably found wanting; England was dismissed by the Germans as the ‘land without music’. Yet if English music did not fit the continental pattern, it was vigorous enough in its own terms. With choral societies instead of orchestras, oratorio instead of opera, England was the only country in Western Europe where religious music took precedence over secular.⁵

While oratorio festivals became a fundamental and important part of English cultural and social life in the nineteenth century, surprisingly little has been written about them. Given the enormous scope of primary source materials available, it behoves present-day musicologists to revisit this subject and reconsider it in greater depth. This chapter addresses the research question and provides some background information to English oratorio and festivals.

⁴ Richard Wagner, *My Life* (London: Constable, 1994), 634-5.

⁵ James Obelkevich, ‘Music and Religion in the Nineteenth Century’, in Raphael Samuel, Jim Obelkevich, and Lyndal Roper (eds.), *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987), 551-2.

0.1 An English musical monumentalism

This study advances the hypothesis that nineteenth-century English oratorio festivals and the grand new buildings that staged them, coalesced to create a musical monumentalism. It will be argued that these festivals represented monuments not only to social and economic 'progress' but also to the past, including the idolisation of the 'mighty Handel' and his oratorios. To elaborate further, it will be contended that a complex ideology of monumentalism in the macro-society of nineteenth-century England was reflected in the micro-society of the grand oratorio festivals. These assertions, in order of increasing complexity, about the concept of monumentalism and its influence on nineteenth-century oratorio festivals will be applied to focus and support the argument built throughout the dissertation.

Monumentalism is such a pervasive concept in the study of nineteenth-century European culture that musicological studies undertaken today can sometimes be in danger of sinking into a morass of related literature and issues that may obscure the topic at hand. For this reason, this dissertation will establish several thematic and methodological boundaries. The focus will be on monumentalism rather than on the other 'isms' of nationalism, imperialism, jingoism, or romanticism. These other ideologies are also very pertinent to nineteenth-century musical studies and closely related if not intersecting with the construct of monumentalism. Although the examination of such complementary ideologies is a tempting aspect peripheral to the argument, and might reveal some directions for further discussion, this will be left for future research.

To develop the argument of monumentalism and place it into a diachronic perspective, it is necessary first to clarify the various definitions of the oratorio genre in England, provide an overview of the tradition of its performance, and examine the rise of the English festival movement from its origins to the present day.

0.2 Definitions of English oratorio

In England, definitions of oratorio have changed little since Handel's time. Robert Maddison wrote in 1763 that

an *Oratorio* then is a *Poem*, accompanied with *music*, where, unencumbered with the absurdity of a *dramatic exhibition*, they jointly affect the mind, by a representation of some great and interesting subject, impressed with all the force of their combined powers. I say unencumbered with a *dramatic exhibition*, because an *Oratorio* if *acted* immediately becomes an *Opera*...

Maddison further comments wittily that 'an *oratorio* is a sort of sober, solemn entertainment; which, by way of *mortification* in *Lent*, is served up to the public on *fish* and *soup* days'.⁶

By late Victorian times, a definition by William Rockstro appears in the first edition of Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1879) and describes oratorio in a similar vein:

A Sacred Poem usually of a dramatic character, sung throughout by Solo Voices and Chorus, to the accompaniment of a full Orchestra, but – at least in modern times – without the assistance of Scenery, Dresses or Action.⁷

Annie W. Patterson refers to this definition in the preface of her book published in 1902 and claims her book is the first 'in English' to deal with the subject of oratorio 'connectedly'.⁸ A contemporary definition of oratorio by Howard E. Smither, who has published a comprehensive series of volumes on oratorio,⁹ can be found in the two most recent editions of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1980, 2001):

⁶ Robert Maddison, *An Examination of the Oratorios Which Have Been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London: G. Kearsly, R. Davis, J. Walter, 1763), 3-4.

⁷ William Rockstro, 'Oratorio', in George Grove and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (eds.), *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians: A.D. 1450-1880*, 4 vols. (2; London: Macmillan, 1879), 533.

⁸ Annie W. Patterson, *The Story of Oratorio* (London: Walter Scott, 1902), vii.

⁹ Howard Smither is author of four comprehensive volumes titled *A History of the Oratorio* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977-2000).

An extended musical setting of a sacred text made up of dramatic, narrative, and contemplative elements. Except for a greater emphasis on the chorus throughout much of its history, the musical forms and styles of the oratorio tend to approximate to those of opera in any given period, and the normal manner of performance is that of a concert (without scenery, costumes or action).¹⁰

It is interesting to note that the first definition in 1763 describes oratorio as a ‘Poem’ and ‘entertainment’, the second in 1880 as a ‘Sacred Poem’ and the third in 1980 as ‘an extended musical setting’. While reflecting broadly similar content, the descriptions reflect subtle differences in the view of the genre at these points of time since the mid-eighteenth century. The use of the word ‘poem’ in the earliest definition denotes an emphasis on the narration of a story. The added use of ‘sacred’ in the Victorian definition seems to illustrate the importance of the religious aspect of this ‘poem’ in that era. In the latest definition there is no mention of a ‘poem’ but more emphasis on the ‘musical setting’, which could indicate that the story and sacred nature of the genre have now become less prominent features than the music. Surprisingly, the 2001 definition does not encompass contemporary secular ‘oratorios’ that include humanist works and social commentaries.¹¹

The boundaries are very blurred indeed between sacred cantata, passions, opera, and oratorio both in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and today. The generic labels applied to many works are hotly debated. For instance, Bach’s Passions are generally labelled as ‘passion-oratorio’ while his *Christmas Oratorio* is generally regarded as a series of sacred cantatas.¹² Elgar’s *Dream of Gerontius* is often referred to as an oratorio, but the *Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music* states that it is not.¹³ Many authors regard Handel’s

¹⁰ Howard E. Smither, ‘Oratorio’, in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 18; London: Grove, 2001), 503-28.

¹¹ *New Grove* discusses twentieth-century oratorio but the immediate definition makes no considerations of these new directions.

¹² Howard E. Smither states that of the three works Bach labelled as oratorios, ‘None of the three is an oratorio in the sense in which the term was normally used in the period’ in *A History of the Oratorio Vol. 2* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina, 1977), 154.

¹³ See ‘Oratorio’ in *The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music*, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy (5th edn., Oxford Paperback Reference; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 532.

Semele with its non-religious subject as opera, but Kurt Pahlen in his comprehensive text describes it as oratorio.¹⁴ Sometimes the defining features of oratorio seem to be the manner in which the work is performed and its dramatic sacred content, and yet other more recent ‘oratorios’, including Michael Tippett’s *Child of our Time* and Sally Beamish’s *Knotgrass Elegy* are secular social commentaries. Stravinsky’s *Oedipus Rex* and others are described as ‘opera-oratorio’. Winton Dean neatly sums up this dilemma of whether or not to label a work as an oratorio by stating that ‘the historian surveying the whole field [of oratorio] engages in a kind of aesthetic blind man’s bluff’.¹⁵

To add to the confusion, the term oratorio is used to mean a concert performance of oratorio excerpts (sometimes with arias and choruses removed and replaced by other music) or a musical festival consisting of several oratorio performances with added concerts of secular music. The ambiguous term ‘oratorio’ cannot be summed up in one single definition, as it needs to be qualified by reference to a host of exceptions or contradictions. For the purpose of establishing one of the parameters of this dissertation, it will be simplest and least confusing to label a work as an oratorio if it is referred to as such in the relevant nineteenth-century festival programme

0.3 The tradition of the oratorio in England

When the oratorio is viewed within the socio-cultural framework of its day, the features discussed in the definitions above become even more apparent. In the time of Handel, English, as opposed to Italian, oratorio was written for the first time.¹⁶ This development came about due to the decline in the financial success and the public appeal of Italian opera,

¹⁴ Kurt Pahlen et al., *The World of the Oratorio: Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, Te Deum, Stabat Mater and Large Cantatas*, trans. Judith Schaefer (Aldershot: Amadeus Press, 1990), 151.

¹⁵ Winton Dean, *Handel’s Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 3.

¹⁶ The oratory society (from the Latin *oratio*, a prayer) was founded in Italy in the sixteenth century and held religious meetings for the congregation conducted in the vernacular. It was the custom after Vespers that an oratorio *vespertino* was performed. Italian oratorio evolved further to performances held throughout Lent in Italy. While Handel composed Italian oratorio on his stay in Rome in 1707, a new Protestant genre of English oratorio was created by Handel when he arrived in England. His oratorios drew on a style which was a mixture of Italian operatic arias and recitatives; German Passion music; the English anthem; and influence of the French dramatic choral tradition with its tragic outcomes.

a foreign importation that was once fashionable.¹⁷ Ruth Smith gives an insightful explanation of why English oratorio came into existence within the society of the day:

The groundplot for Handel's oratorios had been laid out in advance ... [In the eighteenth century] the depiction of history was the noblest form of painting; epic was the highest form of literature; the Old Testament was the greatest repository of the sublime; religious music was music at its best and the 'grand chorus's' were the 'most noble pieces ...' Oratorio which combined all these was waiting to happen.¹⁸

While the cultural and financial seeds may have been ripe for Handel to devise his first 'staged' oratorios in English, the politics of the times prevented this when the Bishop of London, Edmund Gibson, ruled against the staging of sacred dramas.¹⁹ Handel had grasped the idea of musically narrating Biblical text to the public as sacred 'entertainment' and making it financially viable. The audiences generally received these oratorios as 'unprecedented, unequalled expressions of the religious sublime'.²⁰ However, many social and religious reformers, especially Puritans, regarded theatres as places of evil influence from which people had to be redeemed. Many viewed the theatre as no fit place to meditate on sacred texts, and some went so far as to describe oratorio as 'blasphemous'.²¹ On the other hand, satire of the time gives a good insight into social views generally held towards oratorio. Lowell Lindgren discusses a number of burlesques of the day that described

¹⁷ Lowell Lindgren, 'Oratorios Sung in Italian at London, 1732-82', paper given at the International Symposium *L'Oratorio Musicale Italiano e i Suoi Contesesti*, Perugia, 18-20 September 1997, 520. Lindgren documents in this article the antagonism at the time towards foreigners including Handel. 'The university had invited "one Handel ... a foreigner ... to perform". He and his "lousy crew" which included "a great number of foreign fiddlers" were given the Sheldonian Theatre free of charge ...', quoted from Thomas Hearne (*Reliquiae*, 778) in Lindgren, 'Oratorios sung in Italian', 521. Handel's 'lousy crew' reportedly collected £4,000.

¹⁸ Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 170.

¹⁹ This is not surprising as since Elizabethan times, plays based on Holy Scriptures were banned from stage performances. See Murray Roston, 'The Handelian Compromise', in *Biblical Drama in England: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968), 181-97.

²⁰ Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 168.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 81-107. See Chapter 3, 'Music, Morals and Religion'. See also the letter to the *Universal Spectator* quoted also by Henry Raynor, *A Social History of England* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972), 284-5.

oratorio as ‘roaratorio’, referring to the roaring excesses of ‘out-landish Singsters’ who were heard ‘squeeking’, ‘bawling’, and ‘yelling’ in ‘excessive noisy’ oratorio performances.²²

While English oratorio was ‘waiting to happen’, performances of this new genre did not immediately become a strong and accepted feature of English society. Gradually, with charity performances and changes in social attitude towards sacred ‘entertainment’, the churches embraced this new genre. The appeal of the genre is not difficult to understand. The oratorio had respectable sacred subject matter and a structure that was more varied than *opera seria*. The major roles that were given to choruses reflected the choral tradition of the churches, which had a congregational appeal that followed both Anglican and other emerging denominations. The demands on the solo singers were modest in comparison to the pyrotechnic displays of vocal technique required in the opera. Church choirs and amateur choral societies could usually undertake a competent performance of the chorus of the oratorio. The demands on the audience were also less with oratorios sung in the vernacular. The fact that this genre was sung in English and was ‘comprehensible to those without a classical education’ made it the perfect vehicle to suit the ‘rapidly expanding public sphere’ of eighteenth-century England.²³ Perhaps most importantly, there was no costly financial gamble, as was the case with opera productions. Oratorios were relatively inexpensive to produce.²⁴

Handel’s *Messiah* has been described as the ‘linchpin composition that began the oratorio’s great migration from secular entertainment to full-fledged sacred rite’.²⁵ The famous Handel Commemoration of 1784 with its massive forces in Westminster Abbey and its performance of *Messiah* were well documented at the time by Charles Burney.²⁶ It

²² Lindgren, ‘Oratorio Sung in Italian at London, 1732-82’, 523-5.

²³ Tim C. W. Blanning, *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 274.

²⁴ Julian Herbage, ‘The Oratorios’, in Gerald Abraham (ed.), *Handel: A Symposium* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 131.

²⁵ Charles Edward McGuire, *Elgar’s Oratorios: the Creation of an Epic Narrative* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), 12.

²⁶ Charles Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, and the Pantheon, May ... and June ... 1784, in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785).

created a fashion for oratorio performances on a massive scale throughout England into the following century. While much can be made of *Messiah* performances in Victorian times, Eva Zöllner gives a detailed historical account of the English oratorio in the post-Handelian period.²⁷ She notes that the tradition of annual Lenten oratorio performances created by Handel has escaped general notice. This tradition was continued without a break from 1760 until well beyond the turn of the century, and she documents these performances in detail. Oratorio was to remain an important religious and social force well into the twentieth century. Charles McGuire explains that

[f]rom the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the First World War, the oratorio was Britain's most important and accessible musical genre. Because of the high aesthetic and spiritual value assigned by critics and audience alike to George Frederic Handel's *Messiah* and Felix Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, by the time Elgar composed his first oratorio for a major music festival, many considered the oratorio to be more a sublime spiritual and moral exercise than mere musical entertainment.²⁸

By Victorian times, the development of amateur choral societies deepened the exaltation of oratorio and made it an integral feature of the moral fibre characteristic of that society.²⁹

The definition discussed earlier emphasised the sacred nature of the genre at this point John Caldwell comments that

[t]he combination of a morally uplifting social activity with the desire to give concert-going the aura of virtue resulted in the Victorian oratorio, performed by amateur choral societies (usually with a professional or semi-professional orchestra) and attended by a self-satisfied bourgeoisie. Their primary focus was the provincial music festival, though in due course the major centres could count on the permanent availability of a choral society capable of a high level of music-making.³⁰

²⁷ Eva Zöllner, *English Oratorio after Handel: the London Oratorio Series and its Repertory, 1760-1800* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2002).

²⁸ McGuire, *Elgar's Oratorios*, vi.

²⁹ The Victorian sense of 'moral fibre' refers to the inner strength and determination to respond ethically in difficult situations. The muscular Christianity movement was particularly concerned with the 'moral improvement of mankind'. One way to develop moral fibre was through singing. Attendance at church, reading of the *Bible* and books such as *Pilgrim's Progress* also developed 'moral fibre'.

³⁰ John Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music: Volume 2 from c.1715 to the Present Day*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999), 211.

. Reginald Nettel observes that ‘religion held together the greatest mass opinion in the nineteenth century, and little progress could have been made by any musical body that ignored demand for works of a Christian flavour’.³¹

Victorian attitudes towards every aspect of music were infused with and even suffocated by religion and morality. Cyril Erlich forcefully depicts these attitudes in his description of oratorio:

Their most intense manifestation was the oratorio, attendance at which was tribal rite, demonstrating piety and respectability; a form of religious observance at which applause was an irreverence and the audience made up for lack of musicality by its submission to orthodoxy.³²

An economic effect of the ‘tribal rite’ was to provide a regular and devout audience and employment of musicians, with many singers building their careers on the oratorio circuit. Numerous provincial festivals raised money for charity.³³ The Festivals nearly always included performances of the stalwart oratorios: Handel’s *Messiah*, Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*, and Haydn’s *Creation*. The choirs at these Festivals were amateur, which resulted in lowering costs and at the same time provided a large paying audience of relatives and friends.³⁴ This is still an aspect that is important in the survival of choral societies and festivals today. Oratorio composers such as Mendelssohn reached cult status, which is illustrated by the fact that nearly sixty pages were devoted to his works in the first edition of

³¹ Reginald Nettel, *The Orchestra in England: a Social History* (St Clair Shores, Mich: Scholarly Press, 1972), 159.

³² Cyril Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 68.

³³ The Three Choirs festival dates from around 1715, Manchester Festival from early 1900s, Birmingham Triennial from 1768 (but its great period began in 1834 when it displaced the festival at York). Only after the 1880s was the triennial system established which lasted until 1970. Sheffield, Bristol, North Staffordshire at Hanley, and Norwich had major festivals. Oxford festivals are discussed by Susan Wollenberg, ‘The Oxford Commemorations and Nineteenth-Century British Festival Culture’, in Bennett Zon and Peter Horton (eds.), *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 3 vols. (3; Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003), 225-49.

³⁴ For a humorous description of the dress of the amateur choristers, particularly of the ladies’ hats required in the ‘house of God’, see Barbara Young, *In Our Dreaming and Singing: the Story of the Three Choirs Festival Chorus* (Wootton Almeley: Logaston Press, 2000), 87-88. Many of these hats verged on the fancy dress with their heaps of flowers, feathers, and netting often obscuring the view of the conductor.

Grove's *Dictionary of Music and Musicians*.³⁵ It was also apparent at the celebrations of Handel's centenary of his death when a massive 2,765 singers and 460 instrumentalists performed *Messiah* at the Crystal Palace in 1859.³⁶

With such large-scale performances, oratorio was becoming increasingly open to all classes. By the end of the nineteenth century, the mass appeal of oratorio performance was further enhanced with improved education and the adoption of tonic sol-fa sight singing method.³⁷ The popularity of the tonic sol-fa system not only provided a large number of proficient amateur singers in the festival societies but also created larger and better-educated audiences. Financially this was a time of free enterprise and expansion, and the rise of music publishers such as Novello made oratorio scores available to all for a fraction of the previous cost.

One of the main reasons why the oratorio genre continued to flourish and be disseminated through late Victorian England was that the middle classes encouraged singing to build moral character in themselves and the working classes. Participation in an oratorio festival was regarded as a moral duty.³⁸ Singing oratorio was seen as a way of promoting 'muscular Christianity' that was promoted as a cultural ideal of Anglo-Saxon vigour and virtue.³⁹ For many, performing in an oratorio festival provided not only entertainment but also a means of moral advancement and perhaps eventually social equality.

The promotion of harmony and self-improvement through singing was seen not only in Workmen's Singing Classes held in many industrial towns but also by the efforts of

³⁵ George Grove, J. A. Fuller-Maitland, and Edmund R. Wodehouse, 'Mendelssohn', in *A Dictionary of Music and Musician* (2, 1879), 253-310. Beethoven had only 47 pages devoted to him.

³⁶ 'The Great Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace', *Musical Times and Singing-Class Circular*, 9 /197 (1 July 1859), 75.

³⁷ Schoolteacher Sarah Glover developed the system in the 1830s; later, John Curwen promoted the tonic sol-fa method throughout England. For a full discussion see Derek Hyde, *New Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-Century English Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), 86-140.

³⁸ Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (4; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 267.

³⁹ Donald E. Hall, *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 175.

women, such as Mary Wakefield who founded a competitive choral festival in Kendal in 1885. Her philosophy for promoting the festival is quoted in Newmarch's memoir:

“Musical festivals form a social platform whereon everyone, irrespective of religion, politics, class, or education, can meet freely with a common cause, ideal and interest ... Politics, religious questions, class, and education are often separators; music ... makes for union”.⁴⁰

This festival, like many others, was profoundly conscious of class but provided chances of mobility through potent symbols attached to music in respectable environs. Such symbols included ownership of a piano, music lessons for children, attending the oratorio, and membership of concert societies.

While the majority of English society in the Victorian era embraced these new symbols of success and respectability, a small but active contingent of the public still objected to oratorio on social and religious grounds, especially if performed in a church. As early as 1838, the Reverend Francis Close delivered a strong attack on the festivals and stated that they should not take place in the cathedrals for the following reasons:

1. The interruptions of the services by the workman's hammer.
2. Admission to the cathedral by purchase, as to a public amusement.
3. The engagement of the services of the opera and the stage to produce the finest instrumental and vocal effects for the gratification of the taste of the audience.
4. The levities and improprieties of a Fancy Dress Ball appended to these religious amusements.⁴¹

Yet another priest, the Rev. Clayton, preached a sermon in 1842, ‘Oratorios unsuited to the House of Prayer, and Inconsistent with a Christian Profession’, in which he ‘dwelt on the inappropriateness of inviting opera singers and other theatrical people to take part in sacred

⁴⁰ Rosa Newmarch, *Mary Wakefield: a Memoir* (London: Atkinson & Pollitt, 1912), 86. This quotation is directly from Mary Wakefield, but no source is provided in Newmarch's text.

⁴¹ Harold Watkins Shaw, *The Three Choirs Festival: The Official History of the Meetings of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, c. 1713-1953* (Worcester & London: Ebenezer Baylis & Son, 1954), 55.

music. Such individuals, he contended, were not in the habit of giving serious thought to the awful subject of salvation'.⁴²

While some devout fundamentalists objected to oratorio, there were on the other hand virulent critics such as Bernard Shaw who, by the late nineteenth century, was attacking the sanctimonious character of oratorio and the seemingly Puritanical public attitudes of the public.⁴³ Shaw complained of the Victorian public that

[t]here is an intermediate class in England, which keeps up the demand in the oratorio market. This class holds that the devil is not respectable ... but it deals with him the kingdom of the fine arts. Thus in literature it gives him all the novels ... In music it gives him everything that is played in the theatre, reserving everything for the vapidities of the drawing room and the solemnities of the cathedral for itself. They will not open a novel of Boisogobey's because novels are sinful: but they will read with Zest and gloating how The Converted Collier beat his mother ... It is just the same with music. It is wrong to hear the Covent Garden orchestra play *Le Sommeil de Juliette*, but if Gounod writes just such another interlude and calls it *The Sleep of the Saints* before the *Last Judgement*, then nothing can be more proper than to listen to it in the Albert Hall. Not that Gounod is first favourite with the Puritans. If they went to the theatre, they would prefer a melodrama opera with plenty of blood in it. That being out of the question, they substitute an oratorio with plenty of damnation.⁴⁴

A hundred years since Shaw's comment, social attitudes have changed immensely. Church attendance has dropped dramatically over the last half-century and the influence of the church has become minimal in everyday life.⁴⁵ Declining church attendance has contributed

⁴² Eric David Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1964), 188.

⁴³ Even Elgar expressed hostility toward the Three Choirs Festivals: 'A Three Choir Festival always upsets me-the twaddle of it, and the mutual admiration. I should clearly like to see a clever man get in and upset the little coterie of Three Choirs hacks'. Kettle further comments: 'These are not the words of Harrison Birtwistle or Simon Rattle but Edward Elgar, no less, writing in 1898'. See Martin Kettle, *The Guardian*, 23 August 2002.

⁴⁴ Bernard Shaw, 'Oratorios', in Louis Crompton (ed.), *The Great Composers: Reviews and Bombardments* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961), 28. The article was originally published in *The World*, 25 June 1890 and later in George Bernard Shaw, *Music in London, 1890-94*, 3 vols. (1; London: Constable, 1932), 21-2.

⁴⁵ See these texts which vividly illustrate the issue: Peter Brierly, *'Christian' England: What the Church Census Reveals* (London: MARC Europe, 1991); Peter Brierly, *The Tide is Running Out* (London: Christian Research, 2000).

to a critical decline in the number of choral societies.⁴⁶ However, the semi-professional choruses attached to professional orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra (LSO), BBC, and the Hallé Orchestra have continued to flourish, and large-scale performances regularly occur in larger concert venues and churches. A renewed interest in oratorio today is evident in the public's CD collections that have increased along with the rise of the 'authentic' performance practice movement since the 1960s.⁴⁷ Christopher Hogwood, a champion of the early music recording movement and historically informed performance practice, more recently suggested that it was time to expand the market to recreate music authentically in other areas such as that of Victorian music using ophicleides and grand orchestral forces.⁴⁸

The broad background discussion from the first English oratorio performances in the time of Handel to the present day provides an overall perspective in which to place the oratorio festivals of the nineteenth century.

0.4 The rise of oratorio festivals in England

Some background information is also necessary to understand the rise of festivals in which grand oratorio performances were to become the central feature in the nineteenth century.

The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians defines 'Festival' as

[a] generic term, derived from the Latin *festivitas*, for a social gathering convened for the purpose of celebration or thanksgiving. Such occasions were originally of a ritual nature and were associated with mythological, religious and ethnic traditions. From the earliest times, festivals have been distinguished by their use of music, often in association with drama. In modern times, the music festival, frequently

⁴⁶ David Temple, conductor of London's innovative Crouch End Festival Chorus is quoted as saying: 'The state of choral societies in UK is critical, if not grave ... Causes include lack of church attendance, a pitiful amount of singing in schools and a desire for instant gratification'. (*The Daily Telegraph*, 12 December 2001, 21).

⁴⁷ Roderic Dunnett, 'Seven Ages of Oratorio', *Church Times*, 1 February 2004.

⁴⁸ The name of this now defunct brass instrument comes from compounded Greek words that mean giant serpent with keys. See Reginald Morley-Pegge, Philip Bate, and Stephen Weston, 'Ophicleide', in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, 3 vols. (2; London: Macmillan, 1984), 819-22. Christopher Hogwood et al., 'Recordings of Purcell, Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn: a Survey of the Past, an Assessment of the Present, and Speculation about the Future', paper given at Purcell, Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn: Anniversary Reflections, New College, Oxford, 28 March 2009.

embracing other forms of art, has flourished as an independent cultural enterprise, but it is still often possible to discover some vestige of ancient ritual in its celebration of town or nation, political or religious philosophy, living or historical person. The competitive music festival has also retained combative features reminiscent of festival events of former times.⁴⁹

Long before the arrival of Handel in Britain, there was a history of festivals with religious and competitive overtones from the earliest times. Examples include the Welsh Eisteddfod and the Irish 'feis'. Display and procession in both court and religious festivities were also evident from the earliest times throughout Europe.⁵⁰ In England, the Sons of Clergy, founded in 1655, held annual festivals to raise money for its 'distress'd members', by performances in St Paul's Cathedral. Purcell's *Te Deum* and *Jubilate in D* were regularly performed, and in later years, Handel's music became a central feature.⁵¹

According to William Husk, musical festivities had been held from as early as the sixteenth century on 22 November to celebrate St Cecilia's Day.⁵² In 1683, however, the Musical Society initiated annual celebrations, with a choral church service, and a sermon preached often in defence of cathedral music. A large number of musicians usually performed an anthem with orchestral accompaniment. Purcell dedicated the first of his St Cecilia odes, *Welcome to all the pleasures*, to the society, with many other composers such as John Blow, Giovanni Battista Draghi, John Eccles, and Handel setting odes for the festival.

William Weber, in his chapter 'The Musical Festival and the Oratorio Tradition', provides detailed insight into the evolution in the eighteenth century of the political and

⁴⁹ Percy M. Young, 'Festival: §3 Choral Festivals in England, Germany and Austria, c1650-c1900', in *New Grove* (8), 735-6.

⁵⁰ See Christopher Hogwood, *Music at Court* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1980); Alan Yorke-Long, *Music at Court: Four Eighteenth-Century Studies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954); and Josephe Chartrou-Charbonnel, *Les Entrées solennelles et triomphales à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1928).

⁵¹ For a comprehensive history see Ernest Harold Pearce, *The Sons of the Clergy, 1655-1904* (London, 1904).

⁵² William Henry Husk, *An Account of the Musical Celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: To Which is Appended a Collection of Odes on St. Cecilia's Day* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857). Husk was the librarian to the Sacred Harmonic Society that was the principal choir involved in the Great Handel Triennial Festivals at the Crystal Palace. See also Tony Albert Trowles, 'The Musical Ode in Britain, c.1670-1800', D.Phil. (University of Oxford, 1992); and Rosamond McGuinness, 'English Court Odes, 1600-1800', D. Phil. (Oxford University, 1963).

social complexities of the festival of the Sons of Clergy.⁵³ It is apparent even in the early 1700s that the festivals drew together clergy that would have normally conflicted and provided a social opportunity for clergy from different dioceses to meet together for charitable causes.⁵⁴ These characteristics remained, as ‘meetings’ developed into festivals and provided a unifying function within English society. Weber explains the influence of the Sons of Clergy festival in developing a civic tradition of oratorio festivals that were to arise later in the industrial towns of the nineteenth century:

The Sons of Clergy festival was also the principal starting-point in the development of the oratorio tradition. The performance of a revered old work by large choral-orchestral forces was a powerful innovation in musical ritual. Such a formula was to prove successful in a remarkably wide variety of contexts in the modern age. It was upon this social base that the ritual performance of the oratorios of Handel was to become established.⁵⁵

The Three Choirs Festival brought together the cathedral choirs of the towns of Gloucester, Worcester, and Hereford, and each hosted in rotation an annual ‘Meeting’. The festival was devised along the lines of the Sons of Clergy and the St Cecilia Day celebrations. The first of these was believed to have taken place around 1715, and as time progressed, new works of contemporary composers were included or commissioned. Amazingly, this event, albeit now in a different format, has survived to the present day.⁵⁶ Such charity events became more widespread and were the main means of support for municipal hospitals that were emerging in the fast growing industrial towns of the late 1700s. Often these provincial festivals included secular works, concerts in other buildings, and a ball, over a two-to four-day celebration.

⁵³ William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: a Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992), 104-42.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 113.

⁵⁶ For a full history see Anthony Boden and Christian Wilson, *Three Choirs: a History of the Festival: Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992); Donald Hunt, *Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival* (Worcester: Osborne Heritage, 1999); and Young, *In Our Dreaming and Singing*.

Festivals featured Handel's oratorios in the last years of his life and around the country after his death. *Messiah*, often performed to raise money for the Foundling Hospital in Handel's lifetime, became increasingly popular, and performances attracted large audiences to raise money for local charities. The event of the 1784 Handel 'Commemoration' (it was mistakenly believed that Handel was born in 1684) in Westminster Abbey and the Pantheon, set the stage for nineteenth-century festivals that were to proliferate in many towns around England. The massive event assembled over 500 performers from all parts of England and implanted the idea that musical superiority was directly proportional to the size of the performance; in other words, 'bigger was better'. This notion was to become a central premise of nineteenth-century musical thought. The formation of choral societies that supported charitable causes increased dramatically with industrialisation. 'Grand Musical Festivals', such as that of 1824 in York Minster, promoted the reverence for Handel and proliferated regular performances of his oratorios throughout the country. The Great Handel Triennial Festivals held in the Crystal Palace from 1859 ran until 1926.

Conductors such as Sir George Smart (1776–1867) along with many soloists travelled the oratorio circuits around England and were able to make a substantial living from these performances. Others that followed in a similar vein, conducting many of these triennial events, included Sir Michael Costa (1808–1884), Sir Arthur Sullivan (1842–1900), and August Manns (1825–1907). Numbers of attendees and those participating in the performance of these festivals tended to peak in many towns in the late 1800s, after which attitudes towards large-scale oratorio performances began to change. As seen, writings such as that of George Bernard Shaw on the sanctimonious 'oratorio mongering public of the day' began to emerge. World War I also affected the oratorio festivals, with many festivals cancelled because of the disbandment of many choral societies and the appropriation of

performance and rehearsal venues (including town halls) by the War Office.⁵⁷ By the 1920s, Handel's oratorios, seen as being part of a Victorian aesthetic, were becoming increasingly out of vogue. Around this time, most large-scale oratorio festivals around England were discontinued.

As the twentieth century progressed international festivals dedicated to many different art forms began to emerge. The Festival of Britain held in the Royal Festival Hall in 1951 was designed as a multi-art festival to celebrate the centenary of the Crystal Palace. Similar festivals such as those organised by Benjamin Britten in Aldeburgh, and Peter Maxwell Davies in the Orkneys, not only stimulated the local economy but promoted these communities culturally as well. In recent times, provincial festivals have again risen to the fore with the quadrennial award of 'British Capital of Culture'. In 2009, Patrick Wintour wrote of the Liverpool event that 'culture can also change perceptions of a city, a region, a country, by bringing an association with aspiration and social mobility. That is difficult to achieve by any other means'.⁵⁸ This belief is not much different from that espoused in the nineteenth century of presenting and participating in an oratorio festival in a provincial town.

Throughout many parts of the globe, especially in industrialised 'Western' countries, rock and pop festivals have become the large-scale idolised performances of twentieth century with over 300,000 attending the festival at Woodstock, New York in 1969. The audience revered the international array of contemporary pop singers, with many participants making a social commentary on drugs, sex, and the Vietnam War. At Woodstock, past musical idols such as Handel were not revered, nor was it regarded a moral act to participate. The young enthusiastic audience displayed, however, a massed inner strength in their abandonment of traditional mores. A charitable aspect is still evident in

⁵⁷ 'The Music in the Provinces', *Musical Times*, 55 /860 (1 October 1914), 626.

⁵⁸ Patrick Wintour, 'In Liverpool's Footsteps: Now Every City can aim to be Britain's Capital of Culture', *The Guardian*, 7 January 2009, 11.

later pop festivals, such as the international British super-group Band Aid and others that have sought to raise funds for international disasters.

International classical music festivals have also continued to proliferate, though with a much smaller and select audience than the pop festivals. British festivals, to name just a few annual ones, include Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Edinburgh Festival, The Proms, Three Choirs Festival, and York Early Music Festival. The Three Choirs Festivals, previously discussed, has evolved into a weeklong annual celebration where several oratorio performances are interspersed with church services, lectures, and a whole gamut of musical and artistic events.

0.5 Parameters and description of the archival sources

In the nineteenth century, *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, first published in 1844, regularly listed hundreds of oratorio performances and festivals held in many small villages, London suburbs, and major towns throughout England in the nineteenth century. Some festivals were well-established events in cathedrals, and others lasted for a few years then disappeared. Choral societies proliferated and were associated with every nineteenth-century institution including churches, temperance missions, educational institutions, civic organisations, and workers' societies of every kind.

This dissertation examines nineteenth-century English oratorio festivals. As the topic is vast, parameters have been set in place to delimit the areas of inquiry. A principal parameter was to restrict the investigation to performances in the new monumental secular buildings erected in the nineteenth century. These buildings, as opposed to churches, were often erected for the specific purpose of catering for larger oratorio festivals.

To focus the investigation further, a selection of industrial provincial towns that erected monumental town and concert halls, including Leeds, Manchester, Liverpool, Birmingham, and Bristol has been made. Along with London's Crystal Palace, performances in these six locations will be investigated through systematic examination of

primary source documents. Some of the archives and libraries consulted include Leeds Local and Family History Library; West Yorkshire Archives; Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds; Manchester Archives and Local Studies Library; Liverpool Records Office and Archives; Liverpool Local History Library; Birmingham Archives and Heritage; Bristol City Council Records and Archives; and the Bodleian Library, Oxford. In London, the Victorian and Albert Museum Library; Victoria and Albert Archives at Olympia Kensington; Special Collections of the Royal College of Music; Centre for Performance History at the Royal College of Music; and the British Library were also consulted.

One problem of conducting the study was the limited time available in the archives concerned. Despite this drawback, the unearthing of important documents in one-day visits to cities around the country was remarkable. The discoveries were extremely exciting and indicated how much additional material could be uncovered with further research. Some towns, such as Bristol, had very little published about their festivals. The biggest boon for this study was the recent access to the new nineteenth-century newspaper databases that came online through the British Library in 2007. Many wonderful quotations included in this dissertation have come from this source. Surely, the ability to find quickly and easily, say, a quotation about Bristol festivals in the *Preston Chronicle* has totally thrown this field open to a deeper level of research for scholars from all disciplines. New information has been gleaned from the most unlikely places.

0.6 A note on structure

The dissertation consists of seven chapters, plus an introduction and conclusion, which are self-contained but inter-referential essays, each of which draws conclusions, whilst leaving space for a brief concluding chapter. A diachronic approach is taken to the topic overall, with a macro-theory focussing on an ideology of monumentalism. Chapters treat archival data in a chronological fashion.

Chapter 1 provides a review of the literature. Beginning with a survey of recent developments, it highlights the amount of progress made in nineteenth-century music studies in the last twenty years. It discusses new developments such as online databases, and analyses recent developments in urban and social history that are pertinent to the argument. Writings that apply recent thinking on monumentalism to debates in musicology are also explored.⁵⁹ In contrast to the paltry amount of secondary literature on Victorian oratorio, there is an immense body of literature to draw on for an in-depth understanding of Victorian society.

Chapter 2 develops a framework of monumentalism to examine the topic of nineteenth-century oratorio festivals. The approach to the topic involves qualitative research methods, including historical document analysis and case study methodology. These are used to explore if and how monumentalism influenced the performance of Victorian oratorio. Monumentalism is defined with a general discussion showing how the concept as applied to architecture can be equally applied to music. A framework is devised using characteristics identified by art historian Stephen Little: ‘physical scale’, ‘breadth of subject matter’, and ‘ambition to be of lasting significance’. These are the critical tools used to examine the topic, place it in a context, and draw conclusions.

Chapter 3 looks specifically at the provincial festivals, and a great deal of virgin material is unearthed and presented. It focuses on those festivals held in the Leeds Town Hall, Liverpool’s St George’s Hall, the Manchester Free Trade Hall, the Birmingham Town Hall, and Bristol’s Colston Hall. Primary source documents are included in the body of the dissertation from various town archives. Each town has its oratorio festivals systematically examined in relation to Little’s characteristics, building an argument around monumentalism. The focal dates in each town vary dramatically. For example, Bristol’s first festival was in 1873 in the Colston Hall, Leeds first festival was at the town hall opening in

⁵⁹ An important text on monumentalism and German music has been released after the main body of this dissertation was completed. See Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth Century Germany* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

1858, and Birmingham's Triennial Festivals, which ran from as early as 1784, had their town hall opened in 1834 specifically as a home for their festivals.

In contrast, Chapters 4 and 5 look at the building of the Crystal Palace in London and the rise of the great Handel Triennial Festivals that began in the 1850s. Chapter 4 looks at the spectacle of the Crystal Palace, a giant prism reflecting the society of the day. The use of music, including Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus, at the two opening ceremonies in Hyde Park and later Sydenham, is discussed, revealing how these musical performances were to set the scene for the rise of the Great Handel Triennial Festivals. With reference to primary source material, these various festivals are discussed chronologically in Chapter 5.

The music itself is presented as a monument in Chapter 6 with the examination of Sir Michael Costa's (1808-1884) arrangements of Handel's oratorios that were used in many of these large-scale performances around England. The Royal College of Music holds Costa's conducting arrangements of Handel's oratorios, and these are worthy of scholarly investigation. The instruments of the day such as ophicleides, serpents, and giant seven-foot drums are used in Costa's manuscripts. With reference to Berlioz's treatise on instrumentation, a comparison is made between Costa's arrangements (and his compositions), the Händel-Ausgabe edition (close to the original of Handel's writing), and Handel's own conducting scores. Pages from Costa's manuscripts are reproduced here for comparison. Again, Little's characteristics are used as critical tools to examine Costa's scores and develop the argument that an ideology of monumentalism helped shape even the scores for these performances.

Chapter 7 is a synthesis of evidence presented in previous chapters and elicits how and if monumentalism played an underlying part in the cult status that these festivals achieved. Various provincial festivals and the Crystal Palace festivals are compared and contrasted, and the significance and implications of the findings drawn out. The monumental ideology underpinning these festivals is made apparent through an examination

of the interaction of the gigantic buildings and the massive musical performances held within them, along with an apotheosis of the 'mighty Handel'.

The concluding remarks summarise the general findings, discuss the limitations of the study and present further questions that could warrant much more in-depth research into this fascinating, untapped if rather sprawling area of musicological research.

1 An Historiographical Survey of Nineteenth-Century Oratorio

Music historians have traditionally avoided Victorian England, that dark and weedy patch in the garden of European music. Other historians – of literature, politics, economics, religion, and society – have embraced it as one of the richest, most exciting (and self-contradictory) periods any scholar could desire.¹

Although the rich area of nineteenth-century English history has provided many fruitful areas of study for scholars of other disciplines, it is only recently that music historians have taken that topic more seriously. In the epigraph, Leanne Langley (1990) aptly described the attitude of musicologists to Victorian music in general. After drawing attention to the richness of the articles about music written in daily newspapers, periodicals and specialist music journals of the time, she suggested that a scholarly re-evaluation of the musical scene in nineteenth-century England was long overdue. Langley concluded that ‘far from avoiding this patch of the garden, we ought to get in the middle of it and dig’.²

Writing in a similar vein, Nicholas Temperley (1989) had described the music of that time as ‘a Lost Chord: the sound of it is out of our reach in a way that the sight and message of other Victorian arts is not’.³ Leon Plantinga noted the apathy towards nineteenth-century musical historicism – apart from the studies of the great composers – and explained the avoidance of the subject:

To get at historical styles in music, one needed to get past the distortions of that [nineteenth] century with its corrupt editions and solipsistic ideas about how early music ought to sound. Much of that music composed in that century of questionable

¹ Leanne Langley, ‘The Musical Press in Nineteenth-Century England’, *Notes*, 46 /3 (1990), 583. Her article refers to all aspects of Victorian music, but here is specifically applied to nineteenth-century oratorio festivals.

² *Ibid.*, 584.

³ Nicholas Temperley, *The Lost Chord: Essays in Victorian Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 14. Other relevant writings by the same author include: Nicholas Temperley, ‘Handel’s Influence on English Music’, *Monthly Musical Record*, 90 (1960), 163-74; Nicholas Temperley, ‘Mendelssohn’s Influence on English Music’, *Music and Letters*, 42 (1962), 224-33; and Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The Romantic Age* (The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, 1; London: Athlone, 1981).

taste, too, seemed hardly a fit object for serious study; it represented an aesthetic outlook one struggled to overcome.⁴

Nineteenth-century music studies have progressed considerably since the 1980s, especially with a new conference series and resultant essays published in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*.⁵ A number of comprehensive reference texts have appeared, including *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music*, published in 2001. This series of essays tends towards a philosophical and aesthetic slant but offers no specific chapter dedicated to the oratorio festival phenomenon.⁶ Yet other books have appeared with new perspectives on individual musicians from this era, including Grove, Mendelssohn, Elgar, Parry and Stainer, but there still remains a relative dearth of scholarly investigation of literature addressing the ‘Age of Oratorio’ in England.⁷ This research thesis, ‘Nineteenth-Century English Oratorio Festivals: Chronicling the Monumental in Music’, aims to develop a much better understanding of the forces that shaped oratorio performances in the festival movement of the nineteenth century.

To expand on Langley’s metaphor, nineteenth-century oratorio – a musical genre that was so central to the religious society of the day – could be likened to a bulb in this weedy garden, waiting to be unearthed and exposed.⁸ These prized bulbs of nineteenth-century oratorio festivals with their formerly adored flowerings lie still undiscovered in the early

⁴ Leon Plantinga, ‘The Nineteenth Century’, *The Journal of Musicology*, 1 /1 (January 1982), 54.

⁵ In 1997, the international biennial conference series in nineteenth-century British music commenced with a resultant publication by Bennett Zon, Jeremy Dibble, and Peter Horton (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, 3 vols. (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999-2003). For a scathing critique of Volume 2 see Leanne Langley, review of Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies* (Aldershot, 2002), in *Victorian Studies*, 46/2 (2004), 349-51. Langley suggests quality control is severely lacking and recommends ‘pulling the plug’ on the series, which nevertheless continued and spawned other studies.

⁶ Jim Samson (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge History of Music, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷ Michael Musgrave (ed.), *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003); Jeffrey S. Sposato, *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); Nicholas Kenyon (ed.), *Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2007); Jeremy Dibble, *John Stainer: A Life in Music* (Music in Britain, 1600-1900; U.K.: Boydell & Brewer, 2007); and Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).

⁸ Many garden texts refer to ‘lifting’ or digging up, drying and storing of bulbs at the end of the season to reinvigorate flowering over many years. Various bulbs were particularly prized in Victorian gardens with average prices regarded as £50 to £100 for a bulb. Indeed, some bulbs were even stolen from flower shows. See Anna Pavord, *The Tulips* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999), 225-40.

twenty-first century, in the ‘dark and weedy patch’ in which scholars now have been digging for quite a few years.

1.1 The state of research

Examination of the few existing articles and sections of texts on nineteenth-century oratorio festivals reveals a curious lack of scholarly attention to oratorio. The most comprehensive writings on oratorio to date are the four volumes of *A History of the Oratorio* by Howard E. Smither.⁹ This text provides a synthesis of the specialist literature available to 1997 and an analysis of primary sources. These volumes not only serve as an essential reference for oratorio performers and students interested in the history of the oratorio, but should also provide impetus for further research. Volume Four in the series, completed in 2000, is the most relevant to the present study of nineteenth-century oratorio festivals.¹⁰ While it provides details on individual oratorios, the text provides little information concerning the oratorio festivals that gained cult status in England at the time. Smither allocates one small paragraph to the discussion of the Great Handel Triennial Festivals held in the Crystal Palace, and about two pages of this massive work are devoted to the numerous English provincial festivals in the period 1830 to 1900. This gap in the literature deserves further investigation.

The work by Smither most relevant to the present study is his 1985 article ‘*Messiah* and Progress in Nineteenth-Century England’, in which he elaborates on the changing social context and monumental performances of *Messiah*.¹¹ While he barely scratches the surface

⁹ Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris* (1; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977); Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era, Protestant Germany and England* (2; Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1977); Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Classical Era* (3; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987); and Howard E. Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (4; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

¹⁰ In Volume 4, Smither surveys the history of nineteenth- and twentieth-century oratorio, using the approach employed in the previous volumes. He treats the oratorio in various languages and geographical areas – Germany, Britain, America, and France – by first exploring the cultural and social contexts of oratorio. He then addresses aesthetic theory and criticism, treats libretto and music in general, and offers detailed analyses of the librettos and music of specific oratorios (thirty-one in all) that are of special importance to the history of the genre.

¹¹ Howard E. Smither, ‘*Messiah* and Progress in Victorian England’, *Early Music*, 13 /3 (1985), 339-48.

in his discussion of nineteenth-century oratorio festivals, it is apparent from Smither's article how important oratorio festivals were to the progress of the society of the day. His discussion of various 'monumental performances' provides a suitable launching point from which to explore the topic further.¹²

Another groundbreaking text, Ruth Smith's *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, provides a broad investigation into the rise of English oratorio at the time of Handel.¹³ Her intellectual and cultural constructs, such as 'music, morals, and religion', and the 'biblical sublime', are applicable equally to discussions of nineteenth-century oratorio. Kurt Pahlen's book *The World of Oratorio* examines around sixty oratorios, giving basic performance information, synopses, historical information and some musical analysis;¹⁴ while Winton Dean's study (originally published in 1959) examines many of Handel's oratorios.¹⁵ John Caldwell provides in his second volume of *The Oxford History of English Music* a succinct summary of English oratorio in the nineteenth century.¹⁶ Early writings on oratorio by Charles Burney (1726-1814) and Annie Patterson (1868-1934) provide further insights from their respective eras.¹⁷

Michael Musgrave in *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* proffers more recent and comprehensive research on Victorian oratorio.¹⁸ The second section, 'The Choral Life', consists of two chapters (some 39 pages) in which he discusses in detail the Handel Triennial Festivals and other large-scale performances held in the Crystal Palace from 1857

¹² Ibid., 345.

¹³ Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*; Andrew R. Walkling, review of Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios* (Cambridge, 1995), in *Music & Letters*, 80/1 (1999), 120-22; and Ellen T. Harris, review of Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios* (Cambridge, 1995), in *The Journal of Modern History*, 69/2 (1997), 337-40.

¹⁴ Pahlen et al., *The World of Oratorio*.

¹⁵ Dean, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques*.

¹⁶ See the sections 'Oratorio and Cantata' in chapters 3 and 4 in Caldwell, *The Oxford History of English Music*, 210-9, 58-69.

¹⁷ Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, 1784*; Patterson, *The Story of Oratorio*.

¹⁸ Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Cyril Ehrlich, review of Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, in *Music & Letters*, 77/1 (1996), 130-1.

to 1926.¹⁹ However, the focus of his work is on the orchestral concerts held at the Crystal Palace, often unviable as they usually ran at a loss. While Musgrave acknowledges that the Handel oratorio festivals were the most prominent and successful form of public music making in the Victorian era, he appears to view the rise of orchestral concerts as a far worthier topic. What is clear is that primary source documents, such as the complete annual reports of the Sacred Harmonic Society, the choral society that was largely responsible for the success of the Handel Triennial Festivals at the Crystal Palace, remain open to more detailed scholarly attention.²⁰

Brian Pritchard in his unpublished three-volume dissertation, ‘The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History’, provides a wealth of information surrounding oratorio festival performances in provincial centres. He notes the constitution of the increasing and changing choral forces and gives insights into the development of oratorio festivals in the changing social context of eighteenth and nineteenth-century England.²¹ The *Royal Musical Association Research Chronicle* published a series of articles – with compiled tables of figures – from his dissertation.²² Susan Wollenberg more recently has provided a substantial contribution to cultural history in her text *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* and provides information in this text and other articles on the cultivation of oratorio in general, and Handel’s oratorios in particular, in nineteenth-century Oxford.²³

¹⁹ Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, 27-66. See also Kathleen E. McCrone, review of Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, in *The American Historical Review*, 102/3 (1997), 815-6.

²⁰ The Royal College of Music holds the full collection of annual reports with earlier reports in bound manuscript. Other relevant publications of the Society include: Robert Bowley, *The Sacred Harmonic Society: A Thirty-Five Years’ Retrospective* (London: Sacred Harmonic Society, 1867); and Daniel Hill, *A History of the Sacred Harmonic Society: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress* (London: Published at the office of the Society, 7 John Street, Adelphi, 1882).

²¹ Brian W. Pritchard, ‘The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History’, Ph.D. diss. (Birmingham, 1968).

²² Brian Pritchard, ‘Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: I: Salisbury and Winchester’, *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 5 (1967), 51-79; Brian Pritchard, ‘Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries 3. Liverpool and Manchester’, *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 7 (1970), 1-25; Brian Pritchard, ‘Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: 4. Birmingham, Derby, Newcastle upon Tyne and York’, *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 8 (1970), 1-22.

²³ See ‘Part II: The Nineteenth Century’ in Susan Wollenberg, *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), 97-202; Susan Wollenberg, ‘Handel in Oxford:

A study by Barbara Mohn, published in German in 2000, investigates the sources, traditions, and development of oratorio in nineteenth-century England.²⁴ The extensive bibliography and the appendices with their lists of oratorios composed between 1800 and 1914 are very useful. Mohn unearths for her German readership the once popular but now unknown English oratorios, evident from the cover of her published dissertation with its reproduction from the score of Mackenzie's oratorio *Rose of Sharon* – little known today but well known in its day.²⁵ Mohn remains one of the few scholars to take an in-depth look at the topic.²⁶

Katharine Ellis presents pertinent writings on French choral music in *Interpreting the Musical Past*.²⁷ While providing an overview of nationalistic and cultural trends and contexts of the time, Ellis examines various musical genres and their reception; she includes the works of Bach and Handel, which oscillated between acceptance and rejection in France.²⁸ Ellis argues that the revival of the oratorio in Catholic France did not succeed in the long term because Bach was perceived as 'too Protestant', 'too chromatic,' and 'too German', while Handel was a 'double outsider' who was dropped when his political appeal waned after the Franco-Prussian war.²⁹ Ellis's observations about oratorio performance in Catholic France might have many parallels as well as contrasts in Protestant England of the

The Tradition c. 1750-1850', *Göttinger Händel Beiträge*, 9 (2002), 161-76; and Wollenberg, 'The Oxford Commemorations', 225-49. See also Paul Langford, 'Review of *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* by Susan Wollenberg', *Music and Letters*, 85 /1 (2004), 108.

²⁴ Barbara Mohn, *Das Englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert: Quellen, Traditionen, Entwicklungen* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2000).

²⁵ The Norwich Festival Committee commissioned Mackenzie (1847-1935) to write this oratorio for the 1884 festival.

²⁶ See T. Neuhoff, review of Barbara Mohn, *The English Oratorio in the 19th Century: Sources, Traditions, Developments* (Paderborn, 2000), in *Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 240/1 (2003), 196-7.

²⁷ Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 209-40. See also John Butt, 'Choral Music', in Jim Samson (ed.), *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

²⁸ John Wagstaff, review of Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past* (Oxford, 2005), in *Notes*, 63/2 (2006), 355-58.

²⁹ Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past*, 239.

time. Reading Ellis's text promotes a clearer picture, by contrast, of the cult status that Handel's oratorios achieved in the English festivals.³⁰

In England, the work of Joseph Maizner, John Hullah, and John Curwen documents the tonic sol-fa sight singing 'mania' and the development of a network of singing classes. More than one thousand entries for John Curwen in the British Library catalogue reflect the popularity of the tonic sol-fa system.³¹ A text by Charles Edward McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: The Tonic Sol-fa Movement*, published in 2009 also provides a comprehensive documentation of the rise to international prominence of the tonic sol-fa system developed by John Curwen and his son Spencer, and how the infrastructure surrounding the movement contributed to improved morals of singers and listeners alike.³² In particular, McGuire uses case studies on temperance, missionaries, and women's suffrage to demonstrate this. Presenting much unknown primary source material, his section on the London Missionary Society and tonic sol-fa indoctrination in Madagascar especially illustrates the extent of imperialistic British influence, including the oratorio phenomenon.³³

As well as Curwen Press, publishers such as Novello produced affordable scores for the new markets.³⁴ Sterndale Bennett reported on this proliferation of choral societies in a lecture of 1858.³⁵ As discussed in the Introduction, an ideological framework of middle-class Christian ideals, moral improvement, charity, and temperance was the basis for the formation of various choral organisations. Singing had become a panacea for society's ills. Every ailment from appeasing the poor, curbing alcoholism, instilling patriotism, and

³⁰ Percy M. Young, *The Oratorios of Handel* (London: D. Dobson, 1949); Percy M. Young, review of Anthony Boden, *Three Choirs: A History of the Festival* (Stroud, 1992), in *Music & Letters*, 74/4 (1993), 591-93. There are also several articles by Percy Young describing the 'cult status' of Handel. See Percy M. Young, 'Festival: §4 Commemorative Festivals, c1750-c1790', in *New Grove* (8), 736.

³¹ John Spencer Curwen, Mrs. T. L. Banks, and John Curwen, *Memorials of John Curwen* (London: J.S. Curwen, 1882).

³² Charles Edward McGuire, *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: the Tonic Sol-fa Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), xv, xix, 42, 215.

³³ *Ibid.*, 135-64. See pages 158-9 for a description of 'oratorio-like works' sung in Malagasy and their comparison to the charity festivals of Birmingham, Leeds, and the Three Choirs.

³⁴ Fiona M. Palmer, *Vincent Novello (1781-1861): Music for the Masses* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).

³⁵ For a report from this time of the rise of choral societies in London see William Sterndale Bennett, 'Lecture 1: London and Sheffield 1858-1859', in Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *Lectures on Musical Life* (Footbridge: Boydell, 2006), 32.

increasing productivity, to prevention of blood-letting were claimed to be improved by singing.³⁶

As the influential clergyman the Reverend Haweis predicted, music's role in Victorian England was to be that of 'a vast civiliser, recreator, health-giver, work-inspirer, and purifier of man's life'.³⁷ Haweis's *Music and Morals* takes a very high-handed judgmental and often inaccurate approach to the topic, which seems quite outrageous today.³⁸ Many clergymen particularly saw singing as a means to save the souls of the working classes, who might otherwise be tempted to waste their leisure hours on undesirable pursuits such as drinking or gambling. Singing and religion have always been closely intertwined. As early as the fourth century St Augustine was reported as saying, 'He who sings prays twice'. The biblical scriptures also directly instruct Christians to sing to the Lord, or tell of the saints that sing to God.³⁹ Texts on Victorian religion such as *Muscular Christianity* and *The Sinews of the Spirit* discuss the construct of manliness that valued hard work, fair play and a healthy body.⁴⁰ Muscular Christianity was an important religious, literary, and social movement of the mid-nineteenth century, which promoted acts of moral improvement, including the healthy and religious act of singing oratorio.

In a fascinating detailed study, Susan Rutherford has investigated the attitude of female singers (as opposed to the male mentioned above) in the social, historical, and political framework of the nineteenth century.⁴¹ She paints a clear picture of operatic life of the time. While her text relates to prima donnas, much information on nineteenth-century

³⁶ Emily Auerbach, 'John Bull and His "Land Ohne Musik"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 21 (1993), 78.

³⁷ Hugh Reginald Haweis, *My Musical Life* (8th edn.; London: Longmans Green, 1912), 118.

³⁸ Hugh Reginald Haweis, *Music and Morals* (London, 1871). One example of such judgements is that 'Mr Sims Reeves is no better in the Crystal Palace than a penny trumpet in Westminster Abbey'. (Even the review of the book in *Musical Times*, 1 January 1872 criticises the bad taste and inaccuracy of many of his comments)

³⁹ A representative sample of Biblical verses includes: Psalms 9:2; 30:4, 32:11; 33:1-3; 42:8; 66:1-4; 68:4, 24-26; 71:22-23; 81:1-2; 89:1; 92:1-4; 98:1; 100:2; 105:2; 108:1; 138:1-5; 144:9; 147:1; 149:1-5. Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16; Revelation 5:9-10; 12-13; 15: 3-4.

⁴⁰ Hall, *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age*, 175-8; and Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: the Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), 40.

⁴¹ Susan Rutherford, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (Cambridge Studies in Opera; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006). See also Susan Rutherford, "'La cantante delle passioni': Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19 /2 (July 2007), 107-38.

theories concerning the voice, and social and literary discourses, is also relevant to the many female choral singers who participated in the nineteenth-century oratorio festivals.⁴²

1.2 The significance of oratorio festivals

The cult status that these oratorio festivals achieved over the length and breadth of England and the important role that these massive events played in the development of a competitive civic and international pride warrant a more detailed investigation by scholars. These festivals were major musical events and not only did they provide profits for many charities of the day, they provided an insight into the religious and moral ethos of the time. A more rigorous study of these festivals is long overdue and this study will aim to explain why these events grew to such a mammoth size at that time. At present, no books are devoted entirely to a general overview of the rise of the nineteenth-century festival movement.

A text by Richard Adams gives a detailed introductory chapter on the history of musical festivals from earliest times through the Victorian Era to the present.⁴³ Several books describe individual festivals from a historical perspective, particularly those on the *Three Choirs Festival*.⁴⁴ A festival written about more recently is the Bridlington Festival (1894-1903).⁴⁵ From this unlikely seaside town, Catherine Dale draws extensively in her book on the Bosville-Macdonald archive, family papers, newspaper reviews and other writings, making interesting reading for social historians and musicians. This text makes one realise what a wealth of information is potentially available in the most unexpected places.

American scholars have taken a proactive interest in research in the field with the *Oratorio Project*, an on-line database of nineteenth-century oratorio performances in Great

⁴² Other writings on this topic, specifically in relation to oratorio, include: Robert Toft, *Heart to Heart: Expressive Singing in England 1780-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9-14, 161-68; and Hyde, *New Found Voices*.

⁴³ Richard Adams, *A Book of British Music Festivals* (London: Royce, 1986).

⁴⁴ C. Lee Williams, H. Godwin Chance, and Theodore Hannam-Clark, *Annals of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester: Continuation of History of Progress from 1895 to 1930* (Gloucester: Minchin & Gibbs, 1931); Shaw, *The Three Choirs Festival*; Boden and Wilson, *Three Choirs*; Hunt, *Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival*; and Young, *In Our Dreaming and Singing*.

⁴⁵ Catherine Dale, *The Bridlington Musical Festival 1894-1903* (Leicester: Matador, 2004).

Britain that features concert reviews, festival programmes, and contemporary editorials.⁴⁶ In Britain, the establishment of various projects reflects the strong growth of interest in Victorian musical studies. These include the ‘Concert Life in Victorian London’ database, established at Oxford Brookes University and University of Huddersfield in 1997, as well as the ‘Concert Programmes Project’ at Cardiff University that has recently appeared online.⁴⁷ However, English oratorio – by far the most popular musical genre of this time in Britain – has generally been overlooked, although it has been considered in important recent studies of individual composers, including Jeremy Dibble’s texts on *Stainer* and *Parry*.⁴⁸

1.3 The context of the research question

Langley’s description of the existing state of knowledge in 1990 in many ways still rings true. The paltry amount of literature on nineteenth-century oratorio remains a ‘weedy patch’. In contrast, there is an immense body of literature on which to draw for an in-depth understanding of nineteenth-century society and the relevance of its values to every aspect of festival gatherings and performances of oratorio. Seminal texts include Linda Colley’s *Britons: Forging the Nation*; two books by David Cannadine, including *Patricians, Power and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*; four books by Eric Hobsbawm including *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875*; as well as Edward Said’s study of *Culture and Imperialism*.⁴⁹ These historians and social critics give detailed insights into industrialisation, urbanisation, social and educational reforms, religion, politics, the rise of imperialism and nationalism,

⁴⁶ Charles McGuire of Oberlin Conservatory, Ohio has established a unique database that at present deals mainly with Victorian oratorios from 1880 onwards. The URL is forthcoming.

⁴⁷ See <http://www.concertlifeproject.com/>. Dr Christina Bashford and Dr Rachel Cowgill direct this project. The Cardiff project team consists of Professor John Tyrrell, and Drs Paul and Rupert Ridgewell.

⁴⁸ A list of some recent ‘life and works’ studies that mention oratorio is previously provided on p. 25, f.n. 7. Dibble, *John Stainer: A Life in Music*; Dibble, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music*.

⁴⁹ Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (electronic edn.; London: Pimlico, 2003); David Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982); David Cannadine, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1980); E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London: Phoenix, 2000); E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995); E. J. Hobsbawm, *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); E. J. Hobsbawm and T. O. Ranger, *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); and Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).

culture, mass consumerism, fiscal growth, and railway expansion. One economic and social historian, Cyril Erlich, applied his techniques to the study of the music profession of the time. All of these texts help explain the world of England in which oratorio festivals became so popular. ‘Macro’ and ‘micro’ dimensions, as espoused by Georgina Born in relation to contemporary musical institutions, could be appropriated here to discuss nineteenth-century oratorio. Born defines ‘macro’ (a shortened form of macrocosmic) as including political economy, institutions, class and status, the state, politics, music and collective identity. ‘Micro’ aspects (shortened form of microcosmic) of the music could include a micro-social (and micro-political) ethnography of social networks that involve musical practice and performance, musical division of labour, and music and identity.⁵⁰

As stated previously, recent developments in urban and social history are particularly pertinent to the arguments in this dissertation about monumentalism and the spread of the festival movement.⁵¹ The last thirty years have seen a revolution in our understanding of the complexity of the social, political and other functions of towns in the past, of the social groups and classes that comprised the urban population, and of the relationships within the urban systems and between cities and the wider society, whether provincial or metropolitan. These developments will allow a fresh interpretation of the monumental oratorio festivals. An important three-volume text, *The Cambridge Urban History*, documents these recent developments in England.⁵² A section in Volume 2, ‘The Elusive Metropolitan Culture’, discusses the ‘high’ culture of London and refers to the great musical festivals.⁵³

⁵⁰ This information was given in a lecture by Georgina Born, King’s College Department of Music, University of London, July 2002. For a further discussion on ‘macro’, ‘micro’ and ‘subcultures’, see: Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 281, 315; Georgina Born, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-garde* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1995), 16, 24, 167; and Georgina Born, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* (London: Vintage, 2005).

⁵¹ Other relevant texts include: P. J. Waller, *Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983); and Colin Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).

⁵² D. M. Palliser, Peter Clark, and M. J. Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 655-9.

In addition, articles such as Maria Kaika's and Korrina Thielen's on urban shrines chart the development of the secular 'shrines', or monumental buildings, that came to dominate the landscape in the second half of the nineteenth century.⁵⁴ Simon Gunn draws on traditional urban history and modern social history in discussing provincial middle classes in his chapter 'Music and the Constitution of High Culture'. He describes architecture, urban design, dress and etiquette, social clubs, music, and civic parades and ceremonies in several industrial cities in England from the 1750s to the 1880s.⁵⁵ While Gunn draws on the writings of other scholars (such as David Cannadine's on public pageants), his work has significant relevance to nineteenth-century oratorio festivals as it provides new insights into the provincial middle classes in nineteenth-century England by drawing on urban history and modern cultural history.

Other pertinent texts on nineteenth-century social history and leisure, some specifically on music, have also appeared over the last twenty years.⁵⁶ Recent musicological writings on social history of this time are concerned with concert performance, but none specifically with oratorio.⁵⁷ Again, the monumental religious performances of oratorio and their particular context, so much a feature of society and of the time, have been overlooked.

⁵⁴ Maria Kaika and Corinna Thielen, 'Form Follows Power: a Genealogy of Urban Shrines', *City*, 10 /1 (April 2006), 59-69.

⁵⁵ Simon Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).

⁵⁶ Jane Jenkins and Eric J. Evans, *Victorian Social Life: British Social History 1815-1914* (Advanced History Sourcebooks; London: John Murray, 2002); F. M. L. Thompson, *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Dave Russell, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: a Social History* (2nd edn., Music and Society; Manchester: Manchester University, 1997); Nicholas Temperley, *Music in Victorian Society and Culture: a Special Issue* (Victorian Studies; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986); Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*; Henry Raynor, *Music and Society since 1815* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1976); Mackerness, *A Social History of English Music*; Pamela Horn, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999); Judith Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London: Harper Press, 2006); Trevor Herbert, 'Victorian Brass Bands', in Andrew Leyshon, David Matless, and George Revill (eds.), *The Place of Music* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998); and Phyllis Weliver, *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction, 1840-1910: Class, Culture and Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

⁵⁷ William Weber, *Music and the Middle Class: the Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848* (2nd edn., Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); William Weber, *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004); Susan Wollenberg and Simon McVeigh (eds.), *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004); Therese Ellsworth and Susan Wollenberg (eds.), *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Instruments, Performers and Repertoire* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007).

However, much of what is written on aspects of nineteenth-century society can be used as a starting point to examine this genre.

The desire in the nineteenth century for a vehicle of musical and religious expression on the largest of scales lends itself well to discussions of oratorio festivals and the influences of monumentalism. Better known phenomena, such as imperialism and nationalism, have already been examined in relation to music of late nineteenth-century Britain and a string of texts investigate these.⁵⁸ Monumentalism is a term that has mainly been used in reference to art and architecture, and has been applied only recently to the musical canon. Yen-Ling Liu suggested in an unpublished paper of 2008 that two principal hermeneutic models for the concept of musical monumentality developed and evolved in the nineteenth century.⁵⁹ She suggests that the first model is grounded in a German idealism and *Effekt* as espoused by Wagner; the second model is a grand architectural one as elaborated by Berlioz. Further elaboration of these models is found in Chapter 2.1, where a specific framework is developed for the purposes of this study.

Definitions and discussion of the architectural term can be found in Stephen Little's practical text *Isms: Understanding Art*, Lewis Mumford's 1949 article in *Architectural Review*, Albert Richardson's text on monumentalism in British architecture (first published in 1914 with many reprints up to 2001), and Franco Borsi's publication on European monumentalism (1987).⁶⁰ In addition, several historical and cultural texts on Marxism,

⁵⁸ Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (eds.), *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006); Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); Jeffrey Richards, *Films and British National Identity: from Dickens to Dad's Army* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997); John M. Mackenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986); Said, *Culture and Imperialism*; Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); Meirion Hughes and R. A. Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music* (2nd edn., Music and Society; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001); and Frank Stewart Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966).

⁵⁹ Yen-Ling Liu, 'Musical Effects and Musical Architecture: Two Models of Monumentality and the Case of Liszt's Symphonic Style', paper given at American Musicological Society (Allegheny Chapter), West Virginia University, 25 October 2008.

⁶⁰ Stephen Little, --- *Isms: Understanding Art* (London: Herbert Press, 2004); Lewis Mumford, 'Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style', *The Architectural Review*, 105 (April 1949), 173-80; A. E. Richardson, *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001); and

Communism, and the Third Reich including those by Peter Thompson, Brandon Taylor, and Richard Etlin discuss monumentalism in the context of totalitarian regimes.⁶¹ Friedrich Nietzsche's philosophical writings on the category of monumental history and the heroic 'Cult of the Superman' have been used, even misappropriated, as an ideology underpinning these later political contexts.⁶² Because Nietzsche wrote extensively about Wagner's music, his philosophies cannot be translated easily to the English oratorio scene of this time, as will be seen.

However, several musicologists have adapted Nietzsche's philosophy of a 'monumental history' as a framework to analyse nineteenth-century German music. In his book on absolute music, Daniel Chua has a chapter entitled 'On monuments'.⁶³ His writings, conceived in relation to German instrumental music, examine discourses, philosophers, and theorists such as Nietzsche, and refer to musical examples from Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart.⁶⁴

Alexander Rehding in his article 'Liszt's Musical Monuments' also applies Nietzsche's historical model while analysing the musical apotheosis of Beethoven in Liszt's cantata composed for the inauguration of the Bonn Beethoven statue erected in 1845.⁶⁵ The cantata depicts a musical kind of monumentality that reflects the physical Beethoven

Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era: European Architecture and Design 1929-1939* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987).

⁶¹ Peter Thompson, *Social Authoritarianism and the Left: Monumentalism, Antiquarianism and Critical History in the German Workers' Movement from Marx to the PDS*. (University of Sheffield, 2000); Brandon Taylor and Wilfried van der Will (eds.), *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich* (Winchester: Winchester School of Art Press, 1990); and Richard A. Etlin, *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).

⁶² Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983). For a discussion of the misappropriation of Nietzsche's philosophies see Abir Taha, *Nietzsche, Prophet of Nazism: The Cult of the Superman: Unveiling the Nazi Secret Doctrine* (Bloomington: Author House, 2005).

⁶³ Daniel K. L. Chua, 'On Monuments', in *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 235-44; and James Buhler, review of Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge, 1999), in *19th-Century Music*, 26/2 (2002), 184-91.

⁶⁴ While Chua's book focuses on absolute music, this brief chapter with its model for musicological and analytical studies could well be applied to nineteenth-century choral music. Reviewers include Byron Almen, Marshall Brown, Richard Eldridge, and Arnold Whittall.

⁶⁵ Alexander Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', *19th-Century Music*, 26 /1 (Summer 2002), 52-72. Liszt chooses a quotation from Beethoven's *Archduke Trio* for the apotheosis in *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo* where the theme or 'monument' (Tasso) is elevated to a fortissimo finale in a powerful climax of grandiose affirmation.

monument in a similar fashion to Schumann's and Jean Paul's theorising.⁶⁶ Rehding's article encapsulates how the events surrounding Liszt's engagement with this Beethoven statue illustrate nineteenth-century musical monumentality. He shows how this concept thrived on the interaction among the musical structure, the events surrounding the performance and the biographical background of the idolised composer. Immediate parallels can be drawn that could apply to nineteenth-century oratorio – the musical structure being that of oratorio, the events being those that led to the festival movement, and the idolised composer being Handel and others, including Mendelssohn, Haydn, Spohr, Liszt, and Beethoven.⁶⁷

An important book by Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth-Century Germany*, has been published just at the conclusion of my study of English oratorio festivals.⁶⁸ This sophisticated theoretical text is the first to develop an Austro-German hermeneutic model of monumentalism in order to examine the musical canon from the nineteenth century, including works of Beethoven, Liszt, Wagner, Brahms, Bruckner, and Mahler. Nearly a third of this scholarly text provides notes to the remainder of the book. Some chapters are developed by Rehding from previously published articles, including 'Liszt's Musical Monuments' (2002), discussed above, "'Ode to Freedom: Bernstein's Ninth at the Wall' (2005), and 'Souvenirs aus Weimar' (2008).⁶⁹ Rehding, with much reference to an analogous mountain range, espouses a two-fold view on musical monumentality. He describes a monumental style as the peaks of the 'grand', the 'uplifting', and the 'sublime' that are full of overpowering apotheoses, bold brass chorales,

⁶⁶ Ibid., 10-11. Schumann and Jean Paul regarded a monument to be a work of art on a work of art. Hence, in their theory, 'two ideals' – a 'spiritual' and a 'physical' one – paid homage to a deceased.

⁶⁷ Issues of creating contexts around any art form are well addressed by Robert D. Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).

⁶⁸ Rehding, *Music and Monumentality*. For a review and further comment on the topic see Arnold Whittall, 'Thinking Big', *The Musical Times*, 151 (Spring 2010), 99-105.

⁶⁹ Alexander Rehding, "'Ode to Freedom": Bernstein's Ninth at the Berlin Wall', *Beethoven Forum*, 12 /1 (Spring 2005), 36-48; Alexander Rehding, 'Souvenirs aus Weimar', in Lothar Ehrlich, Detlev Altenburg, and Jürgen John (eds.), *Im Herzen Europas: Nationale Identitäten und Erinnerungskulturen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 2008), 355-66.

‘sparkling string tremolos, triumphant fanfares, and glorious thematic returns’.⁷⁰ He also addresses through a theoretical lens how such impressive sound effects were used to overwhelm audiences and develop a unified German cultural memory and identity, which propelled the nation into the twentieth century and beyond. His work on cultural memory, in particular, adds an insightful dimension to the function of monumental German music. No attempt is made in my dissertation to develop such a theory or taxonomy of monumentalism; it is simply used as a framework to examine English oratorio festivals. Where, how, and why the approach in this dissertation differs from Rehding’s is addressed briefly (if somewhat retrospectively) in Chapter 2.1.

From the review of relevant literature, it is clear that no authors to date have appropriated monumentalism as a mechanism to examine nineteenth-century English society and its oratorio festivals. This dissertation argues that the aesthetic forces of monumentalism in nineteenth-century English society, coinciding with the growth of large town and concert halls, had a direct influence on massed oratorio festivals. The religious element of the music, the acts of benevolence and improvement, and the urban shrines of the new secular architecture all contributed to the cult status of these huge festivals. Scholars have far too long ignored this phenomenon, which gripped English society at the time. This chapter sets the stage for a juxtaposition of the topics of oratorio festivals, nineteenth-century society, and monumentalism.

⁷⁰ Rehding, *Music and Monumentality*, 3.

2 A Context for Nineteenth-Century Oratorio Festivals: An Ideology of English Musical Monumentalism

Good, better, best,
Never let it rest
Until the good is better
And the biggest best¹

‘Progress’ in the nineteenth century emphasised a striving towards the ‘better’, as the time-honoured ditty popular in Victorian times illustrates. As mentioned previously, the present study advances the hypothesis that nineteenth-century oratorio festivals, and the buildings in which they were held, came to represent monuments to progress and society of the day. The idea of a celebration of a town or government or some other organisation was paramount to progress in the nineteenth century, with many spectacular public pageants including the royal coronation and visits, the inauguration of public buildings, the erection of statues and monuments, and funerals of civic notaries.² All these events provided occasion for competitive ceremonial display of civic pride and identity on the ‘monumental stage-set’ of the Victorian city.³ Civic ritual and spectacle also contributed to the massed gatherings at nineteenth-century oratorio festivals.

As discussed in the introduction, by using archival research, an original interpretation of the proposed question is made.⁴ The argument is supported with much rich primary source material, little of which has been published, and which is referred to and reproduced within this dissertation.

¹ Epigraph from Leonard B. Meyer, *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989), 206. The verse was reproduced in autograph books of the nineteenth century. The jingle was further popularised by Furphy’s company who used it as an advertisement for of their gigantic water carts used around the world from the 1860s. Interestingly the poem is believed to be derived from the founder of the Latin Church, St Jerome circa 340-420, adding a religious dimension to this old adage.

² The coronation of Queen Victorian was in 1837 and Edward VII in 1902.

³ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 163; and Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*, 2-13.

⁴ For methodology in archival research see John Scott, *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990). There are dozens of texts on research methodology, including Catherine Marshall and Gretchen B. Rossman, *Designing Qualitative Research* (4th edn.; London: SAGE, 2006); and Eric F. Clarke and Nicholas Cook (eds.), *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004).

As hundreds of oratorio festivals flourished throughout England at this time, some parameters had to be set to limit the scope of the project. The research focuses on five industrial provincial towns – Birmingham, Bristol, Liverpool, Manchester, and Leeds – that built monumental halls, as well as festivals held in the Crystal Palace. The hypothesis that the ideology of monumentalism shaped the oratorio festivals which were held in the large new buildings of these towns and cities will be expounded, after systematic examination of material from these locations.

The research project will not be concerned with drawing up extensive lists and notes on the numerous oratorios commissioned at this time but no longer performed today.⁵ More specifically, scores, such as Costa's original conducting arrangements held at the Royal College of Music, will be analysed to show how the score itself became a musical monument. An original framework is developed in this chapter to facilitate the musicological research. After broadly defining what monumentalism is, key terms will be drawn up to examine the oratorio festivals. Readings of authors such as Ruth Smith, Alexander Rehding, Georgina Born, and Robert Hume influence this discussion and resultant framework.⁶ The libretti of Handel's oratorios are examined by Ruth Smith using categories such as 'music, morals and religion', 'the biblical sublime', and 'political events and political thought'.⁷ Many of these categories are appropriate also to a discussion of nineteenth-century oratorio performances. While Georgina Born applies an ethnographic and anthropological approach to examining social identities and cultural differences in art and popular music of the twentieth century, her techniques are used implicitly if not explicitly while applying the selected framework to examine nineteenth-century oratorio.⁸ Other authors such as Robert Hume discuss the complexities of how to reconstruct accurately past context in order to

⁵ See for such lists: Mohn, *Das Englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert*, 411-500.

⁶ See Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*; Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments'; Born, *Rationalizing Culture*; Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others*; and Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*.

⁷ Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 81-126.

⁸ Born, *Rationalizing Culture*, 1-39.

apply it to the interpretation of works and events of that time, which may or may not be appropriate to apply to the analysis of oratorio festivals of the nineteenth century.⁹

Further investigation encompassing these concepts is required to understand whether buildings such as the massive Crystal Palace and the new provincial town and concert halls, and the oratorio performances held within them, were a result of a complex interaction of circumstances that were underpinned by an ideology of monumentalism in nineteenth-century English society.

2.1 Monumentalism: defining the concept

As mentioned in the historiographical review, two hermeneutic models of musical monumentality have been perceived to exist in the nineteenth century.¹⁰ The first model, as described by Liu, is grounded in German idealism and regards musical *Wirkung* and *Effekt* as criteria for the monumental. Wagner's idea of the 'monumental' and his criticism of Meyerbeer's style as representing 'effects without causes', played a pivotal role in the development of this model.¹¹ Nietzsche enhanced Wagner's concept of monumentality by contrasting the 'monumental' with the 'antiquarian' and 'critical' approaches to history.¹² Wagner further developed the meaning of 'monumental' by equating it with a musical narrative model.¹³ The second hermeneutic model as depicted by Berlioz, conceived the monumental as a musical architecture with an emphasis on spaciousness and breadth of style and a symbolic representation of this at a 'sublime' level.¹⁴ While these models may appear

⁹ Hume, *Reconstructing Contexts*, 61-70.

¹⁰ Liu, 'Musical Effects and Musical Architecture: Two Models of Monumentality and the Case of Liszt's Symphonic Style'.

¹¹ Wagner regarded the opera composers Meyerbeer and Rossini as betraying art for public acclaim and sensationalism. In the first section of his *Opera and Drama*, Wagner makes the famous allegation that Meyerbeer's operas consisted of 'effects without causes'. This much quoted epithet is also humorously discussed by Tom Kaufman, 'Wagner vs. Meyerbeer', *The Opera Quarterly*, 19 /4 (2003), 644-69.

¹² Nietzsche, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', 57-125.

¹³ For an interesting tonality and narrative vs. monumentality discussion see J. P. E. Harper-Scott, 'Medieval Romance and Wagner's Musical Narrative in the Ring', *19th-Century Music*, 32 /3 (Spring 2009), 230.

¹⁴ Berlioz wrote of his style in a letter dated 25 May 1858: '... it might be appropriate to mention a style of writing which I am almost the only modern composer to have explored ... I am referring to those colossal compositions which some critics refer to as architectural or monumental music, and which caused the German poet Heinrich Heine to call me *a colossal nightingale, a lark the size of an eagle* ...' See Hector Berlioz, 'Post-Scriptum: Lettre adressée avec le manuscrit de mes mémoires à M*** qui me demandait des notes pour écrire

simplistic in themselves, they are not mutually exclusive. Writers on monumentalism and music seem to draw on aspects from both models, some with a stronger focus in one camp than the other. For instance, Alexander Rehding, Carl Dahlhaus, Arnold Schering, and Daniel Chua have all written on the monumental style of various works in the German canon.¹⁵ All apply theoretical elements of German idealism and of a sublime musical design, but in different and even contradictory ways.¹⁶

In this dissertation, which analyses nineteenth-century English oratorio festivals and the massive new buildings in which some festivals were staged, the appropriate focus to develop a framework of monumentality is on the model of grand musical architecture. The following section analyses the architectural term of ‘monumentalism’ that has been appropriated to the musical canon.

Architectural historian Franco Borsi defines monumentalism with respect to architecture as ‘spatial amplitude and grand dimensions: there is in addition an implication of refined architecture with a particular message, an impressive psychological effect, which can be exerted by the architectural language itself’.¹⁷ The term monumentalism is most commonly used today with reference to the massive architectural designs of totalitarian political systems.¹⁸

Other immediate architectonic connotations of monumentalism encompass such structures as Sienna’s Palazzo Pubblico, the Athenian Parthenon and the Egyptian pyramids. These massive constructions were monuments to, respectively, social discourse, democracy, and deceased pharaohs, and provided a strong sense of identity to the societies they

ma biographie’, in *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1878). The ‘sublime’ is discussed later in this section.

¹⁵ Rehding, *Music and Monumentality*; Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991), 76-80; Arnold Schering, ‘Über den Begriff des Monumentalen in der Musik’, in *Von Grossen Meistern der Musik* (2. Auflage edn.; Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1940), 10-14; and Chua, ‘On Monuments’, in, 235-44.

¹⁶ Compare for example, Rehding’s, Dahlhaus’s, and Schering’s attempts to define Liszt’s musical monumentality. See Rehding, ‘Liszt’s Musical Monuments’; Schering, ‘Über den Begriff des Monumentalen in der Musik’; and Carl Dahlhaus, *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980), 40-78.

¹⁷ Borsi, *The Monumental Era*, 52.

¹⁸ Dennis P. Doordan, review of Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era* (London, 1987), in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48/1 (1989) 88-9.

reflected.¹⁹ The word monumental is derived from the Latin verb *monere* which means ‘to remind’ but also ‘to warn’. These buildings could be viewed on one level not only as imposing reminders but as powerful warnings to the people of their time.

The Renaissance saw cathedrals and town halls increasingly valued as monumental landmarks to which a growing urban society gravitated. As Denis Cosgrove points out, these visible monuments hosted an array of public social activities from weddings to coronations, religious worship and festivals, and even secreted political plots within their walls.²⁰ Such buildings were located strategically for their greatest impact. Maria Kaika and Korrina Thielen explain these ‘urban shrines’:

The sheer volume and height of these constructions made them prominently visible, while their visual domination was further pronounced by the choice for their location – on a hill, in the centre of town, or in front of a public square that was often purpose-built to host functions related to the building. Scale and location choice worked in synergy towards accentuating the symbolic character of these monuments, and cast in stone, quite literally, the power of authoritative institutions.²¹

Monumentalism took on a different focus in the era of industrialisation. In the nineteenth century, while there were numerous monumental buildings that continued to pay homage to the state, civic and church authority, new ‘urban shrines’ also emerged which were built as business enterprises amongst their many other functions. Mumford discusses the ‘Urbanism and Monumentality’ of such buildings in Victorian times:

In the citadel the new mark of the city is obvious: a change of scale, deliberately meant to awe and overpower the beholder. Though the mass of the inhabitants might be poorly fed and overworked, no expense was spared to create temples and palaces whose sheer bulk and upward thrust would dominate the rest of the city ... What we now call ‘monumental architecture’ is first of all an expression of power ...²²

¹⁹ See for an example, Karen Exell, ‘Whose Monument? Ancient Egyptian votive stelae as Markers of Identity’, *Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph*, 66 (2007), 125-38.

²⁰ Denis E. Cosgrove, *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985).

²¹ Kaika and Thielen, ‘Form Follows Power’, 59.

²² Lewis Mumford, ‘Urbanism and Monumentality’, in *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961), 65.

Impressive examples of ‘monumental architecture’ included the Crystal Palace (1851) and the Eiffel Tower (1889). These massive, innovative constructions were erected for World Trade Exhibitions and dedicated to showcasing technology, trade, and cultural ‘evolution’. These ‘urban shrines’ provided new roles as secular spaces. Railway stations, banks, and factories also provided examples of commercial monumentalism.²³ In the twentieth century, monumentalism was particularly discernible in the regimes of communist and fascist countries, where ideology was supposedly reflected in massive buildings and monuments such as Stalin’s totalitarian ‘vanguard city’ and Hitler’s Nuremberg Rally grounds.²⁴ Today, flourishing city centres display a new monumentalism with skyscrapers not generally devoted to the glory of God, totalitarianism or fascism, but, rather, to the prestige of tycoons and corporations. Thus for centuries monumentalism in architecture has been a powerful tool defining public spaces for religious, cultural and political purposes.

Monumentalism, like nationalism, imperialism, modernism and capitalism, provided a psychological mechanism that energised a sense of identity and security within the expanding nations of the nineteenth century, including England.²⁵ Internationally acclaimed architects of the day such as Gottfried Semper (1803-1879) theorised that monumental architecture was connected with the mass appeal to the mind.²⁶ Semper was closely associated with Wagner, and his architectural designs influenced the construction of the Bayreuth Theatre.²⁷ Semper’s

²³ As ‘railway mania’ gripped Britain a number of grand terminal buildings were erected. St Pancras railway station, opened in 1868, was often described as the ‘cathedral of railways’ with the largest single span glass and iron structure at the time. The influence of the Crystal Palace construction is evident.

²⁴ See Etlin, *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*.

²⁵ Texts that discuss this topic include: Joshua Searle-White, *The Psychology of Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001); Shumei Shi, *The Lure of the Modern* (Berkeley Series in Interdisciplinary Studies of China 1; Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 2001), 7; and Ronald Beiner, *Theorizing Nationalism* (SUNY Series in Political Theory; Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999), 54.

²⁶ Gottfried Semper, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989); and Chup Friemert, *Die Gläserne Arche: Kristallpalast London 1851 und 1854* (München: Prestel-Verlag, 1984), 40.

²⁷ Wagner basically cannibalised Semper’s unsuccessful plans for the Munich Festival Theatre without his permission. Semper was also famous for designing a baton for Wagner. See Harry Francis Mallgrave, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996), 267.

buildings often exemplified an amalgamation of the classical with the monumental and served as visual expressions of a nationalistic mass appeal.²⁸

The growth of national identity embraced all classes, and mass consumerism became for the first time a way of life.²⁹ Religious events such as oratorio festivals appealed to the masses. Thousands participated and performed in them, raising large amounts of money from the paying audiences. These events all over England must surely have been one of the first examples of widespread and repeated mass consumerism.³⁰ Attendance at the oratorio reflected the mores of the religious society of the day. Religion was a strong feature of English society at this time with over 12,000 churches built in the Victorian era.³¹

‘Progress’, with its sense of missionary nationalism, was regarded as expansion, whether of institutions, towns or imperial land-grabbing in the far-flung empire.³² Modernism is also strongly associated with progress, capitalism and nationalism and has roots that overlap with monumentalism in its strong desire to improve and propel society forward.³³ With industrialisation in the Victorian era, the railway (1825), the telegraph (1837), the paddle steamship (1838), the postage stamp (1840), and later the telephone (1876), revolutionised mass communications. Monumental buildings sprang up in the fast growing urban centres to provide venues for these new services.³⁴

While the monumental building can be visualised in the concrete architectural sense of, say, the Crystal Palace and the commemorative public events held within it, what may be

²⁸ Sherree Owens Zalampas, *Adolf Hitler: a Psychological Interpretation of his Views on Architecture, Art, and Music* (Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1990), 73.

²⁹ Krishan Kumar, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*.

³⁰ See Ivo Supičić, ‘Early Forms of ‘Mass’ Culture’, in Allan W. Atlas (ed.), *Music in the Classic Period* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1985), 249-57.

³¹ See George Torkildsen, *Leisure and Recreation Management* (5th edn.; London: Routledge, 2005), 35; Flanders, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain*; Horn, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain*.

³² See Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (3rd edn.; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002); Felix Driver and David Gilbert, *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999); Mackenzie, *Imperialism and Popular Culture*; Horn, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain*.

³³ Anthony D. Smith, *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).

³⁴ Palliser, Clark, and Dauntton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*; Waller, *Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914*; Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*.

overlooked is that the cultural symbolism of monumentalism can also apply to nineteenth-century music. As Andreas Huyssen explains:

Indeed, architecture for obvious reasons serves as the primary medium when the reproach of monumentalism is at stake, the reproach that a cultural formation has become congealed, ossified, immobilized. Forgotten, it seems, is the classical trope according to which the geometrical harmonies of architecture echo those of music, a trope that was significantly refurbished in the romantic period by Hoffmann, Schilling and Goethe among others, and was certainly well known to Wagner.³⁵

This quotation possibly refers to the idea that ‘architecture is frozen music’.³⁶ Conversely, perhaps music could be described as liquid architecture. Goethe’s dictum is open to numerous interpretations, but many would agree that the artistic experience of a grand building or monument can equate with the wonderful sound of a piece of music. In *Architecture as a Translation of Music*, Elizabeth Martin states that ‘Architecture represents the art of design in space; music the art of design in time.’³⁷ The design of the oratorio festivals investigated in this study that were performed in the new monumental constructions of the day could be perceived in such a fluid interactive manner.

This coalescence is a crucial element in developing a more complex vision of monumentalism in nineteenth-century music.³⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 1, Alexander Rehding in his article ‘Liszt’s Musical Monuments’, and his book on monumentality in German music, discusses the notion of nineteenth-century monumentality that arises from an interaction between the musical structures, events surrounding the performance, and biographical background of the ‘superhuman’ composer. Rehding uses Nietzsche’s historical

³⁵ Andreas Huyssen, ‘Monumental Seduction’, *New German Critique*, 69 (Autumn 1996), 190.

³⁶ Quotation originally used by the philosopher A. W. Schlegel but more commonly attributed to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Others to use the metaphor include Oscar Wilde, Geoffrey Scott and Yo Yo Ma.

³⁷ Elizabeth Martin, *Architecture as a Translation of Music* (Pamphlet Architecture, 16; New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994), 8.

³⁸ Of particular interest in this interaction is Rehding’s structural analysis of Liszt’s symphonic poem *Tasso, Lamento e Trionfo*.

model of the 'monumental' to examine Liszt as a 'superhuman' in his life and his compositions.³⁹

In addition to architecture, many of the arts including music, theatre, and literature have adopted monumentalism as a structure to reflect the society and spirit of the time. Several authors, including Rehding, have discussed the idea of monumentalism in music. Other writers include Michelle Biget, Rainer Kleinertz and Kazuo Fujino.⁴⁰ In literature and drama, authors have been influenced by an ideology of monumentalism from past to present times.⁴¹ Art, like architecture, has long embraced the concept of monumentalism, with recent writers indicating psychological impact rather than physical size as the most defining characteristic of a monumental art-work.⁴²

With the concept of monumentalism seen to apply equally well to music as to architecture and other arts, it is useful, then, to draw parallels between the monumental Victorian buildings and the monumental performances of oratorio held within them. Stephen Little states, 'Monumental art is defined by its physical scale, the breadth of its subject matter and its ambition to be of lasting significance'.⁴³ A framework expanded from the three characteristics of Little's artistic definition has been constructed in order to examine their application to the monumental oratorio performances. 'Physical scale' includes the size and type of scoring, size of performance forces, size and type of performance venue, audience

³⁹ Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', 52-72. Note the parallel connotations between Wagner's 'superhuman' and Nietzsche's 'superman'.

⁴⁰ Ibid; Chua, 'On Monuments', in; Michelle Biget, 'De l'idee du monumental dans la musique française', *Les Cahiers du CIREM* /14-15 (Dec-March 1989-1990); Rainer Kleinertz, 'Subjektivität und Öffentlichkeit: Liszt's Rivalität mit Thalberg und ihre Folgen', *Europaischen Liszt-Symposions*, Wien (1991); and Kazuo Fujino, 'Burukkuna to "monyumentaru" hyosho', in *Anton Burukkuna botsugo 100 nen* (Ongakugeijutsu [Japan]: Festschrift, June 1995).

⁴¹ See Isaac Myer, *Oldest Books in the World: An Account of the ... Book of the Dead* (London: Trench & Trübner, 1900); Harry Levin, 'Two Monumental Death-Scenes', in Bernhard Fabian and Kurt von Rosador (ed.), *Shakespeare: Text, Language, Criticism: Essays in Honour of Marvin Spevack* (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1987); and John Zilcosky, 'Modern Monuments: T. S. Eliot, Nietzsche, and the Problem of History', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29 /1 (2005). Shakespeare's tragedies with their psychologically overpowering death scenes, and T. S. Eliot's philosophical poetry, surely must have an underlying sense of the monumental. Modern Chinese theatre is also embracing an ideology of monumentalism. See D. Zhao, 'The Collision, Interaction, and Integration of Heterogeneous Cultures in the Global Context: The Impact of The Monument on Huaju (Modern Chinese Drama)', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 37 /2 (2007), 161-76.

⁴² Cyril Robinson, *Lives and Times of the Modern Painters* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1993), 58.

⁴³ Little, --- *Isms: Understanding Art*, 24.

demographics, length of performance and force of the musical apotheosis (referring to the instrumental strength of the climax that elevates the work of the revered composer to a divine status).⁴⁴ 'Breadth of subject' concerns heroic, mythical or historical figures, including Biblical characters and stories. The composer was also regarded as a genius to be worshipped. Everything associated with the work is regarded as superior and superhuman, contributing to a majestic and glorious statement. 'Lasting significance' relates to the spiritual and psychological impact of the music and its ambition to be a lasting monument in the musical canon. Inherent in the lasting significance of monumentalism is the notion of a monument or a commemorative public event. A musical monument can most certainly provide lasting significance, having a similar psychological effect on its listener to that which a stone monument provides to the viewer.⁴⁵

It is appropriate to consider at this point how, where and why the approach in this dissertation differs from that in Rehding's recently released text. An important difference is that the present study is set in nineteenth-century English society with its proliferation of religious oratorio festivals. Rehding's focus is only on Austro-German composers and monumental arrangements of their music. My focus is on the wider social and urban history of England at this time, with monumentalism used in a concrete three-point framework to examine particular festivals (while still analysing some monumental arrangements of music as Rehding does). Characteristics from Little's definition have been applied in this dissertation without reference to the complex and sometimes confusing theoretical and aesthetic writings that Rehding delves into in his text.

While Rehding does develop a sophisticated theoretical lens to examine the German musical monument, it does not seem appropriate to apply Nietzschean perspectives to the

⁴⁴ See Paula Higgins, 'The Apotheosis of Josquin des Prez and Other Mythologies of Musical Genius', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 57 /3 (2004), 443-570.

⁴⁵ Several texts discuss the lasting psychological impact of works of art: Christian G. Allesch, *Geschichte der Psychologischen Aesthetik [History of Psychological Aesthetics]* (Göttingen: Verlag für Psychologie, 1987); Michelle Marder Kamhi, 'Thought and Feeling in Art: an Integrated View', *Aristos*, (November 2007), <<http://www.aristos.org/aris-07/thoughtinart.htm>>, accessed 2 February 2009; and John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1934).

English situation (or those of any other philosopher for that matter). Nevertheless, similarities abound with Rehding's stylistic approach to monumentality. The commemorative aspects, the interest in size, the historical significance, the musical apotheosis, and the adoration of the genius composer that Rehding refers to are concepts found in this dissertation. Rehding's vivid visual analogies of the 'monumental mountain range' and the 'Midas touch' (referring to the 'gilding and solidifying' of monumental characteristics by association⁴⁶) are totally applicable to the concept and ideology of monumentalism as promoted in this dissertation. No direct reference is made to the 'collective memory' per se that Rehding describes, but the concept can certainly be seen to underlie some of the characteristics of monumentalism discussed in this dissertation.

One stylistic difference in the use of the concept of monumentalism in this study appears to be in the manner that the 'sublime' is viewed. Many authors, including Rehding, seem to treat the term 'sublime' as synonymous with the 'monumental'.⁴⁷ The musical sublime that existed in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries can be described as an aesthetic feature of the music. Ruth Smith describes the biblical sublime in relation to Handel's libretti:

In England the eighteenth century is far more the age of sublime than the age of reason. Sublimity was constantly sought and admired in art, and the religious sublime was considered the highest form of it.⁴⁸

The Oxford English Dictionary describes the sublime of nature and art as

affecting the mind with a sense of overwhelming grandeur or irresistible power; calculated to inspire awe, deep reverence, or lofty emotion, by reason of its beauty, vastness or grandeur.⁴⁹

In this study the monumental is promoted as a concept that goes beyond the subset of the sublime; the monumental is something superlative to the musical sublime promoted in the

⁴⁶ Rehding, *Music and Monumentality*, 32.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, 29, 69.

⁴⁸ Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 109.

⁴⁹ *The Oxford English Dictionary*, eds. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols. (2nd edn., 17; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 39.

seventeenth and eighteenth century. The sublime has now evolved into the monumental with the addition of such traits as the historical significance of the music and composers.

Leaving differences from Rehding's text aside, the framework of monumental musical characteristics that has been developed and differentiated is now applied to nineteenth-century oratorio festivals, and, accordingly, raises questions and arguments as to whether the ideology of monumentalism helped shape their format. For example, not all of the musical characteristics listed might be present in any particular musical work or performance, but a grand and psychologically overwhelming statement might nevertheless have been made.

2.2 A context for nineteenth-century oratorio festivals

Firstly, the characteristics of 'physical scale' are examined. Size and type of scoring are an example of this characteristic of monumentalism that can be applied directly to music. During the nineteenth century, arguments were advanced to 'improve' the score of a composer, with a conductor often rescoring to include new developments in instrument construction.⁵⁰ For example, an early journal described the popularity of Mozart's additions to the score of *Messiah* in these terms:

Handel himself would in all probability have made [such improvements] had some of the instruments been in use in his day and if any had been in the state of perfection to which our modern performers have brought them. I take it for granted that [*Messiah*] will now never again be heard but in its improved condition.⁵¹

Mozart's version of *Messiah*, which dates from 1789, was to become the basis for most, if not all, later accompaniments added to the oratorio. Throughout the nineteenth century, further 'improvements' to *Messiah* included the addition of such instruments to the orchestra as ophicleides, serpents, piccolos, contrabassoons, tubas, harps, cymbals and drums (many in

⁵⁰ Christian Ahrens, 'Technological Innovations in Nineteenth-Century Instrument Making and their Consequences', *The Musical Quarterly: Orchestra Issue*, 58 /2 (Summer 1996), 332-40.

⁵¹ 'Extracts from the Diary of a Dilettante: 22nd. [September]', *Harmonicon*, 7 /1 (1829), 255. Mozart largely dispensed with Handel's keyboard continuo and replaced the tromba parts that had become practically unplayable for late eighteenth-century trumpeters. Mozart's woodwind complement included paired flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, and horns. See Chapter 6.1 for further discussion.

ever increasing size and numbers).⁵² Valves on brass instruments (discussed in Chapter 6.1) were inventions of the nineteenth century and, along with additional lengths of tubing, allowed for the production of tones of lower pitch. Not surprisingly, these newly-developed instruments were incorporated into musical compositions of the time as well as into the rescoring or arrangements of the most popular oratorios by prominent Victorian conductors such as Michael Costa,⁵³ Louis Antoine Jullien⁵⁴ and August Manns.⁵⁵ This mirrored the style of Hector Berlioz,⁵⁶ Franz Liszt and numerous other composers who were composing and orchestrating in the monumental style. Sir Michael Costa's autograph arrangements of Handel oratorios for massive forces will be examined in Chapter 6.

Another example of the physical scale of monumentalism – in both visual and aural terms – is in the size of performance forces deployed at the festivals. The Costa score arrangements as well as new compositions were not only the result of new instruments which could produce lower and louder sounds, but also of greatly increased performance forces, both orchestral and choral, which reflected the status that oratorio had attained.⁵⁷

As discussed in the introduction, previous examples of massed oratorio festivals such as the Handel Commemorations in Westminster Abbey in 1784-1791, and again in 1834 with a total of 644 performers, laid the foundation for regular 'meetings'.⁵⁸ Provincial centres generated huge enthusiasm for oratorio festivals and, early in the nineteenth century, the

⁵² Hector Berlioz and Richard Strauss, *Treatise on Instrumentation*, trans. Theodore Front (New York: Dover, 1991). This treatise not only discusses many of the new instruments that appeared at this time but also gives instructions for scoring for the massive orchestras of the time. This is further discussed in the chapter on Costa.

⁵³ Sir Michael Costa (1808-1884) was a successful conductor and composer of opera and oratorio. He was conductor of the Sacred Harmonic Society from 1848 until its dissolution in 1882 and he directed the first years of the gigantic triennial Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace from 1847 to 1880. He also conducted other provincial choral festivals of Bradford (1853), Leeds (1874) and the Birmingham Festival from 1849 to 1882.

⁵⁴ Louis Jullien (1812-1860). Keith Horner states that Jullien decorated Beethoven's Fifth Symphony with four ophicleides, saxophone, and side drums. Keith Horner, 'Louis Jullien', in *New Grove* (13), 281-2.

⁵⁵ August Manns (1825-1907) was a Director of Music at the Crystal Palace. He succeeded Costa there as conductor of the triennial Handel Festival from 1883 to 1900.

⁵⁶ Hector Berlioz's *Grande Messe des Morts* is one of his best-known works and has a huge orchestration of woodwind and brass instruments, including 16 timpani and 10 pairs of cymbals.

⁵⁷ *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* refers in a number of articles to the 'cult status' that Handel oratorio reached. For example, see entries under Chorus (i) §4, 776-780, Biography §4, 599-600, and Festival §4, 736.

⁵⁸ Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, 1784*; L. G. D. Sanders, 'A Forgotten Westminster Abbey Festival', *The Musical Times*, 95 /1339 (1954), 470-72.

Three Choirs Festival performance forces ranged from 100 to 300. In York in 1825 they numbered 600.⁵⁹ In his dissertation on the social history of provincial music festivals, Pritchard gives a very detailed account of performance forces at many of the festivals throughout this era.⁶⁰ He also gives an account of how the ‘Lancashire Witches’, a group of renowned female singers, travelled the oratorio circuit.⁶¹

The influence of the provincial festivals no doubt led to competition with the metropolitan festivals, the most notable being the Handel Triennial Festivals held in London at the Crystal Palace. As mentioned before, the mammoth size of these performances continually increased until the performance numbers peaked at the Crystal Palace in 1871 and remained stationary, with around 4,000 in the chorus and 500 in the orchestra.⁶²

The size and type of performance venues relate directly to the previous discussion of monumentalism and architecture. It can be argued that the notion of monumentalism with its desire to expand, progress, and supersede others had significant influence on the growth of new town halls and exhibition buildings such as the Crystal Palace in the Victorian era. These urban shrines, as described by Thielen, were often designed explicitly with oratorio festival performances in mind.⁶³ Examples of monumental town halls and concert halls built at this time to accommodate the growing oratorio performances include those in Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester.⁶⁴ In these towns, increasing wealth from industrialisation, along with a burgeoning population, led to public buildings such as town halls becoming ideal places for ‘meetings’ for oratorio festivals. Civic pride, combined with a moral duty to raise funds for charity, led to oratorio performances increasingly being

⁵⁹ Smither, ‘*Messiah* and Progress in Victorian England’, 340.

⁶⁰ Pritchard, ‘The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History’.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 144. A popular toast at many festival balls was the ‘Lancashire Witches’: see *The Times*, 10 October 1836.

⁶² Among the variable factors that affected estimates were the following: choral forces listed in programmes did not always all perform at once but were rotated over the three days of the festival. The inclusion of the ‘Rehearsal Day’ figures influenced the figures. Sometimes tickets sold did not reflect actual attendance (such as caused by a fierce thunderstorm in 1865). Newspaper figures varied by up to several hundred more than those given in the Sacred Harmonic Society reports.

⁶³ Kaika and Thielen, ‘Form Follows Power’, 59-69.

⁶⁴ Young, ‘Festival §3’.

held in these larger buildings that were showplaces for the prospering economy. Much rivalry existed over which place could hold the bigger audiences and the biggest performing forces, all in the name of ‘progress’ and prestige. The Crystal Palace covered a massive space of 843,656 square feet with the Central Transept used as a ‘great Music Hall, 360 feet long by 216 feet wide and containing an area 77,760 square feet exclusive of several tiers of galleries’.⁶⁵ The public interest in this competitiveness, not only nationally but internationally, is shown in lengthy newspaper reports and inserts in programmes comparing roof and floor spaces, which will be reproduced in Chapters 3 and 5.⁶⁶

Attendance at the oratorio was regarded as a ‘tribal rite’, according to Cyril Ehrlich, where God and Handel were held aloft as the idolised objects of Victorian worship.⁶⁷ Audience attendance at the Crystal Palace Handel festivals increased dramatically from 48,414 in 1857 to 87,784 in 1853. The tremendous increase in the scale of these events must surely be described as monumental. A review of the reports of the Sacred Harmonic Society (1832-1878) which organised the profitable Crystal Palace Triennial festivals, as well as the many daily newspapers, indicates that ‘progress’ for the oratorio festivals focused on making each performance outdo the previous ones, particularly in regard to attendance numbers and the size of the performance forces.

‘Progress’ was a very important concept in everyday life in nineteenth-century Britain. Howard E. Smither in his article on ‘*Messiah* and Progress in Victorian England’ illustrates just how important the notion of progress was in the sphere of music:

From a social aspect, *Messiah* participated in the progress of choral music away from being exclusive preserve of the élite to the humble classes, a progress which resulted from Victorian efforts towards mass education and the amelioration of the conditions of workers. Sacred choral music, epitomized by *Messiah*, played an immensely important role in these efforts. The vast numbers that made up both the audience and the performers at the Crystal Palace were drawn from a variety of

⁶⁵ Robert K. Bowley, *The Handel Commemoration Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1859: Programme of Arrangements* (London, 1859), 6.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

⁶⁷ Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*, 68.

social strata. Those performances symbolized metropolitan, national and imperial progress and achievement.⁶⁸

'Progress' at many levels encouraged the dramatic increase in audience numbers at the Crystal Palace from 1857 to 1883. Reasons for this could also be related to improved education and greater interest in choral singing. The promotion of the new tonic-solfa system increased participation of all classes in the oratorio festivals.⁶⁹ Cheap tickets and railway transport made attendance at oratorio festivals increasingly possible for the 'respectable' middle classes. Expansionist philosophies of imperialism and nationalism influenced and were propagated by 'every organ of British life' at that time.⁷⁰ Audience numbers swelled to extraordinary levels at these festivals, and the fact that oratorio performances were exported to audiences in America and in the colonies of Australia and India shows the strength and the extent of this movement in Victorian society.

The length of the oratorio festival performances is another feature that could have been influenced by an ideology of monumentalism. The earlier provincial oratorio festivals in the eighteenth century lasted for three days. These charitable events were increasingly combined with other civic events including balls and opening parades presided over by mayors. Some of the festivals were extended to four or five days in the nineteenth century. The better-known oratorios were performed in their unabridged forms at this time with arias and choruses often repeated, extending the performance time still further, or sometimes they were presented as complete musical pastiches with a mixture of arias and choruses assembled from different oratorios. There was no applause, either during or at the conclusion, as this was regarded as irreverent.

The forceful musical apotheosis usually took the form of a fortissimo climax. In oratorio festivals, the sheer strength of the mammoth orchestral and choral forces brought the

⁶⁸ Smither, 'Messiah and Progress in Victorian England', 347.

⁶⁹ The tonic sol-fa system was developed by the schoolteacher Sarah Glover in 1830s and later promoted by John Curwen throughout England. For a full discussion see Hyde, *New Found Voices*, 86-140.

⁷⁰ J. M. MacKenzie is quoted by Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, 17.

religious message of this music loud and clear to the thousands of listeners.⁷¹ As an example, Sir Michael Costa's altered scoring of the *Hallelujah Chorus* with massively 'enhanced' brass section of ophicleides and tubas as well as giant drums, was designed to impress on the listener that the Messiah would truly 'reign for ever and ever'. Oratorio scores of this time are full of musical climaxes that were either composed or reworked, as is the case in Costa's conducting scores.

'Breadth of subject' is the second of Little's three characteristics of monumentalism; its expansion here will provide a more comprehensive platform to discuss nineteenth-century oratorio festivals. Firstly, it could be argued that the title and subject matter of heroic, mythical, and historical figures were central to monumental oratorio stories and their performances. Biblical characters and texts featured strongly as themes of oratorios performed at festivals of this time. In her examination of Handel's libretti, Smith vividly discusses the many allegories on Biblical topics in these texts.⁷² Most importantly, Smith shows that Israel is frequently equated with Britain, and many heroic Biblical figures are compared with powerful political figures in Britain at the time Handel composed his oratorios. In Victorian times, these analogies would have been apparent also but with altered religious and political contexts.⁷³ The lauding of the oratorio by the religious public of the day at festivals in Victorian times was not only a way of praising God and the potent messages of the Bible, but also an indirect way of praising imperialism and nationalism. Some newly commissioned works later in the century, however, such as Mackenzie's popular *The Rose of Sharon*, had more romantic themes.⁷⁴

The cult status of Handel, and particularly of his *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, was a manifestation of the heroic past admired by the nineteenth-century public and has been

⁷¹ Rehding judges by present standards that 'this kind of musical apotheosis has become indicative of late nineteenth-century 'vacuous bombast'. Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', 57.

⁷² Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 171-334.

⁷³ The nineteenth century, like the eighteenth, was still a time of war, with the expansion of the Empire; and politically, analogies of Handel to Walpole in the eighteenth century (Smith, 202-3) might now have possibly been made with Prime Ministers Disraeli and Gladstone.

⁷⁴ Duncan Barker, 'Mackenzie's *Rose of Sharon*: Continental Prima Donna or Norfolk Lass?' in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2; Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).

illustrated in many newspaper and periodical reports, such as this report from *The Musical Times*:

Simplicity, directness and strength are the elements of grandeur, and of musical grandeur Handel is the colossus. He stands like a huge pyramid with its apex in the clouds and its firm base spread upon the earth. They told him he should have Salisbury Plain for a concert room and armies for executants.⁷⁵

Handel was truly a ‘monument’ of the English people with the centenaries of his birth and death celebrated on a massive scale in oratorio festival performances. Not only was Handel himself adored as the ‘genius’ composer, but the sacred themes of his oratorios appealed greatly to Victorian society. The breadth and majesty of the subject matter of his oratorios were revered by the nineteenth-century audience, who devoutly followed the text in their purchased ‘word books’. It must be remembered, of course, that many other composers of oratorio, notably, Mendelssohn, Spohr, Liszt and many unheard of today, were also advancing themes of worship for the masses and were often given commissions for these events.⁷⁶

Christian ‘armies’ of singers were enlisted as forces in increasing numbers and marshalled along with the religious themes of the oratorios to deliver performances that made conquering the world a vibrant reality for Victorian Englishmen.⁷⁷ It was assumed that music, and especially singing, could be used to elevate the minds and rescue the souls of the working classes and the destitute.

The third of Little’s characteristics of monumentalism, ‘lasting significance’, can also be used to examine the Victorian oratorio. Music that would leave a lasting spiritual and

⁷⁵ Joseph Bennett, ‘Handel: Some Remarks on the Man and His Genius’, *The Musical Times*, Supplement (14 December 1893), 12.

⁷⁶ Some authors have focused on these new commissions, viz. Mohn, *Das Englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert*.

⁷⁷ Newspapers and music periodicals in the Victorian era often reported on ‘armies’ of performers in the oratorio. This would also be a reference to the missionary imperialism of the time, which included a policy of conquering and colonising in the name of Christianity. Hymns of this time such as ‘Onward Christian Soldiers’ had military references (words written by Sabine Baring-Gould in 1865 for schoolchildren to sing while marching between two Yorkshire villages). Popular Sankey hymns promoted in England included ‘Marching to Zion’ and ‘When the Roll is Called up Yonder’ (Ira Sankey served in the American Civil War and many of his popular hymns had militaristic overtones). In 1878 a Christian group founded by Methodist minister William Booth was renamed ‘the Salvation Army’ and became a worldwide church denomination.

psychological impact on the audience was strongly desired. Just as a stone monument is used to express admiration of the work of a deceased or heroic figure, so can the musical monument be used in this way. Handel had already been cast in stone in 1738 with the erection of his statue in Vauxhall Gardens, the first living composer to be so immortalised.⁷⁸ Handel was further honoured after his death with another Roubillac sculpture erected for his memorial in Westminster Abbey in 1760.⁷⁹ Handel's oratorios evolved into a national monument to 'Everyman' in nineteenth-century England, with *Messiah* becoming an icon of choral worship at oratorio festivals.⁸⁰ Several authors have argued that the impact on society of a stone monument used to express admiration of the work of a deceased or heroic figure is paralleled by a musical monument.⁸¹

Oratorio festivals were not only the beginning of mass consumerism, but left a lasting legacy of the religious and moral ethos that formed an essential part of Victorian life. Participation in such events, along with church attendance, not only was seen to develop moral fibre on a national scale, but it provided a majestic statement about the cultural, economic, and political values of English society during Victoria's reign.⁸²

Can these massive oratorio performances in majestic buildings and cathedrals be seen within the context of a monumentalism which is more commonly associated with architecture and totalitarian regimes? This background discussion has engaged some defining characteristics of monumentalism – physical scale, breadth of subject and lasting significance. This framework will be used to make a closer examination of the massive

⁷⁸ See Suzanne Aspden, "Fam'd Handel Breathing, tho' Transformed to Stone": The Composer as Monument', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 55 /1 (Spring 2002), 39-90.

⁷⁹ Handel left instructions for the monument and a sum of 'not more than £600' in his will. There is a curious misspelling of *Messiah* and the date of birth is the incorrect one of 1684 instead of 1685. See William C. Smith, 'Handelian Research', *The Musical Times: Handel Bicentenary Number*, 100 /1394 (April 1959), 195.

⁸⁰ John Bunyan, *The Pilgrim's Progress, from this World to that which is to Come* (new edn.; Edinburgh, 1799). 'Everyman' is the central religious character in Bunyan's text. Describing *Messiah* as an 'icon' refers to the fact that it became a worshipped object by the adoring public.

⁸¹ Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', 52-72; and Aspden, "Fam'd Handel Breathing, tho' Transformed to Stone": The Composer as Monument', 39-90.

⁸² Haweis, *Music and Morals*. Rev. Haweis's publication, while not in any way factual 'evidence', simply gives his own narrative often with his own personal value judgements.

oratorio festivals held inside the grand architectural buildings erected throughout England at this time.

With historically informed performance practice greatly to the fore, much has been made of reconstructing contexts of the past – particularly the original contexts of a first performance. With these factors in mind, my dissertation will delve further into questions concerning the form and function of monumentalism in relation to nineteenth-century oratorio festivals.

3 The Provinces

Turning our thoughts to the provinces, we are reminded of those astounding musical gatherings so fitly denominated 'Festivals', which at one grasp call every kind of society and all species of performance into one bond of union.... At the meetings every class of music is provided. To the morning performances you are attracted by the 'sublime oratorio', in the evening a philharmonic concert awaits your patronage... Long may these musical gatherings flourish, alike honourable to England, and beneficial to art!¹

Some of the provincial oratorio festivals and their 'astounding musical gatherings' that were held in new monumental buildings erected in nineteenth-century Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester will be surveyed in this chapter. While Young listed the cities of Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, and Norwich in *The New Grove*, as sites for oratorio festivals in majestic new buildings, on investigation it was found that this list is not entirely correct, with Norwich actually holding their large-scale festivals in the medieval St Andrew's Hall.²

The festivals will be considered with reference to Little's three characteristics of 'physical scale', 'breadth of subject matter', and 'ambition to be of lasting significance' as discussed in the previous chapter. Throughout the nineteenth century, these new secular urban shrines were used for oratorio performances as well as many other civic activities.

The move was explained in the following way:

a feeling had been growing up against the use of the Cathedral for such a purpose [oratorio festivals], and more especially against the interruption of its usual and appropriate repose, and its stated services, by the disturbing operations of builders and workpeople putting up the necessary erections. On the other hand the raising of secular buildings in, many large cities and towns, of adequate capacity for grand musical entertainments, has afforded means the more easily to forego the use of

¹ Bennett, 'Lecture 1: London and Sheffield 1858-1859', 37-8.

² See Young, 'Festival §3'.

ecclesiastical edifices for musical festivals, which, if not with equal at least with imposing effect, can be celebrated in such buildings as the Town Halls of Birmingham and Leeds, or the St George's Halls of Liverpool and Bradford, and without offending the scruples of those who are jealous for the sacred character of our cathedral churches. The character of the scene, then, is changed, but divine harmony has its fitting temple.³

The new secular 'temples' or 'shrines', as Kaika and Thielen referred to the grand new buildings, appeared in the right place at the right time. Objections by some clergy to the performance of oratorios in churches (as listed in the Introduction) could be overcome by holding festivals in these more spacious venues that must surely have been attracting an increasingly ecumenical audience with colossal numbers in attendance.

3.1 The rise of Victorian Town Halls and culture

How did these new monumental 'temples' come to be built? The author and broadcaster J. B. Priestley described the traditional view of nineteenth-century capitalists in Britain's growing industrialised towns as one of uncultured philistinism, where the profits of industry were all that mattered.⁴ Industrial cities such as Birmingham, Manchester and Leeds were seen as 'grim fortress-like creations' with utilitarian housing for workers, dark neo-Gothic churches, and dismal mills spewing forth coal soot.⁵ Recent writings in urban and social history have corrected this stereotype and shown that despite the appalling conditions, these towns were settings where the arts grew with the support of industrialists and bankers. The work of Simon Gunn in particular looks at the rise of public culture in several Victorian industrial towns and makes a significant contribution both to the study of middle-class cultural forms and to an understanding of the relationship between culture and power. He states of music at this time:

³ 'The Leeds Musical Festival', *Leeds Intelligencer*, September 1858, 9.

⁴ J. B. Priestley, *English Journey* (London: W. Heinemann in association with V. Gollancz, 1937), 371-5. Priestley (1894-1984) described the social conditions of industrialised Victorian towns of Britain's north in a travelogue written in 1933 but containing reminiscences of his childhood. The BBC screened in 2008 a series of documentaries retracing Priestley's steps a half century later. Contemporary novels also painted a grim picture. See Charles Dickens, *Hard Times for These Times* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1854).

⁵ Janet Wolff and John Seed, *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988); and Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 10.

If religion was one axis of the culture of middle-class respectability, then art was the other ... Of all the arts, it was music that was obviously associated with religion in the nineteenth-century ... the most widely accepted musical forms, such as oratorio, grew directly out of religious tradition and maintained this association ... Music became the 'divine art' and during the second half of the nineteenth century, the concert hall was constructed as a sacred space for the performance of a cultural rite.⁶

Throughout the nineteenth century, with the rise of municipal corporations, there was a need to provide adequate public spaces both for 'performance of a cultural rite' and for unified local council services.⁷ This desire of the people for suitable venues is seen in the number of public subscriptions and architectural competitions for town and concert halls.

As Colin Cunningham states of the use of town halls:

The use of these halls provides an important direct link between citizens and the seat of their local government for they allowed the use of town halls by the citizens on their own terms.

The result of this was that the halls were used for a wide variety of functions, all strictly reputable, which brought the buildings into the daily ambience of many, indeed of most, of the townspeople.⁸

Concert and town halls not only fostered a sense of community and civic pride but also offered opportunities for public celebration with lavish festivities. As Rachel Milestone explains, the town hall of the nineteenth century was 'the ultimate representation of the new age of urban consciousness and a future age of wealth and progress'.⁹ These buildings were grand constructions infused with notions of monumentalism, spectacle and Christian

⁶ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*, 134.

⁷ Increasing urbanisation led to a number of *ad hoc* Boards which covered to varying degrees new services, such as Poor Law Unions (1834), Local Boards of Health (1848), Education Boards (1870), and Sanitary Authorities (1875). Elected county councils were set up in 1889 with functions that were historically organised at county level transferred to the new councils, including rates, licensing, asylums, highways, weights and measures and police.

⁸ Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls*, 214. See also P. J. Waller, 'Book Review: *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* by Colin Cunningham', *The English Historical Review*, 98 /389 (1983), 913-4.

⁹ Rachel Milestone, 'The Exponent of the Life and Soul of the City': The Town Hall as a Music Venue in the Nineteenth Century', in Martin Hewitt and Rachel Cowgill (eds.), *Victorian Soundscapes Revisited: Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies* (9; Leeds: Trinity and All Saints/Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2007), 178.

morality. Town and concert halls and their festivities within also provided the means for one town to measure itself against another. As Cunningham explains:

[T]here was always more to these displays than the merely showing off of visible splendor to distinguished outsiders. These occasions were really celebrations of successful trade, festivals of capitalism for which the town halls provided the only possible backdrop. It was good to be reminded of the success and variety of one's town, and useful to show this to colleagues and rivals.¹⁰

Did the ideology of monumentalism have a significant influence on the growth of these grand buildings, in an age when 'public celebration and rejoicing was a feature' of urban society?¹¹ While the local cathedral or church had provided a space for oratorio festivals, the new larger public spaces allowed for bigger audiences and greater profits for charity. These monster oratorio festivals reflected and coalesced with the monumental architectural buildings in which they were performed. To illustrate how this came about, the performances in the provincial towns named will now be examined, using the framework previously developed from Little's definition of monumental art with reference to the conjugation between the music and the architecture.

A brief note must be made here about the numerous nineteenth-century provincial and metropolitan newspapers from which much of the following information has been drawn. Provincial newspapers were well established by 1800 and on the whole were published weekly. Some longer-lasting publications included *The Hull Packet* and *Jackson's Oxford Journal* with many titles appearing and disappearing from circulation at various times. In London, the *Morning Post*, the *Morning Chronicle*, the *Morning Herald* and *The Times* were the four main daily newspapers in 1800 with *The Times* becoming an increasingly prominent newspaper as the century progressed. Relaxation of taxation laws led to the appearance of hundreds of other papers such as *Daily News* (1846) and *The Daily*

¹⁰ Cunningham, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls*, 218.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 215.

Telegraph (1855) as well as Sunday newspapers including *Lloyds Illustrated Paper* and *Illustrated London News* (both in 1842). Trained reporters were increasingly used to report on significant events, including oratorio festivals throughout the country.¹² Many newspaper titles had specific political affiliations and those known to be Liberal included *Birmingham Daily Post*, *Daily Chronicle*, *Daily News*, *Leeds Mercury*, and *Manchester Guardian*. Those papers regarded within the Conservative realm included *Globe*, *Morning Post*, *The Standard* and *The Times*, to name a few.¹³ Many of the newspaper quotes given throughout this, and following chapters reflect the ethos of a particular paper. A prolific number of Victorian journals and graphic media are also another rich source of information in the following discussion.¹⁴

¹² For a discussion on the rise of various feature articles in nineteenth-century newspapers, see Matthew Rubery, *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of News* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

¹³ Ed King, '19th Century British Library Newspapers', <http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2138bncn?BNCN_researchguide.htm>, accessed 1 September 2010.

¹⁴ For an interesting anthology and comparison of such genres, see John Plunkett and Andrew King (eds.), *Victorian Print Media: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

3.2 The Leeds Festivals

3.2.1 The Leeds Town Hall and inaugural festival

In 1850, a group of prominent citizens in Leeds expressed the wish to build a new town hall to exhibit the civic pride of the rapidly expanding population.¹⁵ A competition for the design was organised and announced in 1852; Cuthbert Brodrick, a young architect from Hull, submitted his design and won the competition.¹⁶ Queen Victoria opened the town hall (see Fig. 3.1) on 7 September 1858, with its Great Hall, known as the Victoria Hall, dedicated to her. Little's characteristic of lasting significance is evident in Cuthbert's architectural design. The combination of a mighty vertical tower with a long, colonnaded facade became a fêted model for civic architecture around Britain and abroad – a grand statement for all to see, a work of art of enduring quality built for posterity. The *Building News* in 1858 described the building as a hall 'which tells of the luxury of kings'.¹⁷

¹⁵ Information stated in a pamphlet *A Brief History of Leeds Town Hall* (Leeds: Leeds Leisure Service, 1996), 2.

¹⁶ For more details about the Leeds Town Hall see Derek Linstrum, *Towers and Colonnades: the Architecture of Cuthbert Brodrick* (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 1999).

¹⁷ *Building News*, 4 (1858), 1289.



Figure 3.1: Leeds Town Hall, 1858.

Source: The image of this water colour painting by R. P. Leitch was reproduced in colour in the *Illustrated London News*, Saturday 11 September 1858. The architect, Cuthbert Brodrick, also made watercolour paintings of the building.

Leeds was not the first industrial town to express its increasing wealth and civic pride in monumental masonry. Newspapers of the day describe in intense detail the opening ceremony, comparing the size and space of the building with other church, concert, town halls and even castles around England.¹⁸ A comparative table that appeared in several newspapers is reproduced as Table 3.1.

¹⁸ See *The Aberdeen Journal* (Aberdeen, Scotland), Wednesday, September 15, 1858 and *Manchester Times* (Manchester, England), Saturday, 11 September 1858 for descriptions of the 32,000 Sunday school children assembled. Other newspapers such as the *Daily News* (London, England), Wednesday, 8 September 1858 reported the entire speech of the Queen, listed the dignitaries present and discussed musical items at the opening ceremony, which included Henry Smart accompanying on the partially completed organ a large chorus for the National Anthem and the Hallelujah Chorus.

Building	Feet long	Feet wide	Feet high
Westminster Hall	228	66	92
Liverpool St George's Hall	169	74	75
Leeds Town Hall	161	72	75
Bradford St George's Hall	152	75	54
Birmingham Town Hall	145	65	65
Durham Castle	180	50	36
Liverpool Concert Hall	135	102	68
London Guildhall	153	50	55
London Exeter Hall	130	72	—
London Euston Sq. Station Hall	125	61	60

**Table 3.1: Comparison of length, breadth and height of concert venues in 1858
England**

Source: *The Leeds Mercury*, 7 September 1858
and the *Daily News* (London), 8 September 1858.

A good illustration of Little's category of 'physical scale' is seen in the competition for the largest sized venue, with measurements made down to the last foot, as seen in this Table; this shows how Leeds was keen to be recognized as having one of the biggest halls. Such mottos as 'God in the Highest', 'Honesty is the best policy', and 'Industry overcomes all things' inscribed around the walls reflected Victorian Christian morality. The breadth of the significant influence of this new urban shrine was reported in emotive and ecclesiastical terms:

The industrious citizen of Leeds, as he passes that noble structure may reflect with honest pride that it was his toil that helped rear it; but, in addition to this, it is certain that the beauty of this stately edifice will find its way to his heart, and stir up emotions that shall mingle with his manly feeling, as the light of heaven gilds the rugged face of the rock.¹⁹

¹⁹ 'The Musical Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 9 September 1858.

Heavenly sounds of oratorio, also imparting the Christian message, were heard at the first four-day festival that coincided with the opening ceremony. In fact, it was stated that if Queen Victoria had not officiated at the inauguration of the town hall, the oratorio festival would have served the purpose. The Leeds Intelligencer ran a series of articles reporting on the Festival, beginning:

Everything was progressing favorably for a successful musical demonstration [at the Leeds Town Hall opening], when another change was made in the proceedings of the inauguration. Majesty entered into competition and of course was successful. The Festival gave way to the Queen, but the Sovereign became patroness of the Festival.²⁰

The great object so long and so wistfully considered has at length been obtained. A magnificent Town Hall has been erected; and lo! It is scarcely opened before we have a musical festival on the grandest scale ... the magnificent strains of the *Elijah* reverberated through the superb building, and we now have to record the complete success of the Festival.²¹

The interest in these articles, which showed the growth in Yorkshire festivals, gave detailed accounts of each concert, and provided information about the composers, was such that it was reprinted in a booklet form. An example is seen in the lengthy report on the performance of *Elijah* – the first pages of which are reproduced as Fig. 3.2. A corrected programme was included because of the illness of the leading contralto. Several pages of the report were devoted to the names in the huge chorus; quotas of participants from Leeds, Bradford, Halifax, Huddersfield, Sheffield, Keighley, Dewsbury, Barnsley, Mirfield and other towns, also had their names printed over several pages in the report. A ticket for the opening oratorio *Elijah*, displaying a sketch of the town hall and stating that the performance ‘is under the immediate patronage of Her Majesty the Queen’, is reproduced as Fig. 3.3.

²⁰ Reproduced as a booklet, the newspaper series ‘The Leeds Musical Festival’, 10.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Leeds, which had never seen fit to hold oratorio festivals in its 'noble parish church', immediately seized upon the new town hall for the opening event of a massive musical festival.²² A letter by the Yorkshire musician Sterndale Bennett tells how he delightedly accepted the offer to conduct this festival without even designating a fee for the committee (the amounts that were requested were usually exorbitant), so keen was he to offer his services.²³ This festival was remarkable in that besides a ball and a banquet, on the fourth day it offered a People's Concert at greatly reduced ticket prices. Nearly 4,000 people, seated and standing, attended. The great physical scale of the inauguration concerts is evident.

²² Frederick Spark in his discussion of the inception of festivals in Leeds states 'Why...the amateurs of Leeds did not avail themselves of their noble parish church is a question which would hardly repay discussion'. Frederick R. Spark and Joseph Bennett, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889* (2nd edn.; Leeds: Novello Ewer, 1892), 1. Since it is well documented that Leeds was a Tractarian centre of the north in the early 1800s, it could be assumed that the promotion of churches as a venue for oratorio festivals would not be encouraged.

²³ *Ibid.*, 6. Frederick Spark and Joseph Bennett refer in their *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858 – 1889* to many documents of the day, including this letter, which have not survived. While Sterndale Bennett was born at Sheffield in 1816 and moved to Cambridge to live with his grandfather when he was three, he is referred to as a 'Yorkshire man' in Spark's text because of his origins.

THE PERFORMANCES.

WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 8.

The performances commenced on Wednesday morning with Mendelssohn's Grand Oratorio of

ELIJAH.

The Hall was opened at ten o'clock, but before that hour carriages were in waiting at the entrances, and as soon as admission was gained many of the seats were taken. The morning was beautifully fine and bracing, and before eleven o'clock, the time fixed for the commencement of the oratorio, the great Hall was crowded, and nearly two thousand ladies and gentlemen were in their places, the orchestra was filled to the top seat with the band and chorus, and all were eagerly awaiting the arrival of the conductor and the principals. At this moment, the appearance presented by the Hall, as one gazed around, was magnificent in the extreme. The various colours of the rich dresses worn by the ladies blended harmoniously together, and favourably contrasted with the interspersed black of the gentlemen, which in its turn admirably set off the different lights and shades throughout the Hall. In no respect was the picture inferior to that of the "Inauguration Day," save that the presence of Majesty was wanting, while there was a noticeable increase in the development of crinoline, which in some cases was found rather inconvenient to the wearers, especially to those seated in front of the pillars. But this seemed a trivial disadvantage, and generally the parties accommodated themselves to the necessities of the case with great good humour. A few minutes after eleven the principals made their appearance, and some of them received demonstrations of respect. In particular Mr. Sims Reeves, who looked remarkably well, and whose brilliant performance will be noticed below, was warmly applauded, especially by the chorus, who hailed their old favourite (not old in years, but in acquaintanceship) with a hearty greeting. Dr. Bennett, the conductor, was also cordially saluted on his entrance, and returned his acknowledgments. In the programme, the part of Jezebel had been assigned to Miss Dolby, who was also to join in the trio, "Lift thine eyes," and take the leading *contralto* portions of the second part; but before the commencement of the performance, Mr. Alderman Kitson announced from the orchestra that, although Miss Dolby had arrived she was unable from

illness to sustain her allotted share in the oratorio, which Miss Palmer had undertaken. At first there was a feeling of disappointment, but the result showed that little or no loss had been incurred by the substitution. Miss Palmer, who is a pupil of Mr. Hullah's, is new to this neighbourhood, but her sweet voice, exquisite taste, deep and finished execution in the *Elijah* on this morning won for her golden opinions from all who listened to her, and established a considerable reputation with the lovers of music in the West Riding.

The following was the programme as corrected:—

PART FIRST.

Overture.....	As God the Lord..	Mr. Weiss.
Chorus.....	Help, Lord	
Choral Recit..	The deeps afford no water..	
Duet with	Zion spreadeth her bands..	Miss Walker and
Chorus	Lord, bow thine ear	Miss Crosland.
Recit. and Air	Ye people, rend your hearts	Mr. Sims Reeves.
Chorus	If with all your hearts	
Recit.	Yet doth the Lord	
	Elijah, get thee hence	

Miss Palmer.
Madame C. Novello,
Mad. Weiss, Miss
Palmer, Miss Free-
man, Mr. Cooper,
Mr. Inkersall, Mr.
Winn, and Mr.
Hinchcliffe.
Miss Palmer.
Madame C. Novello,
and Mr. Weiss.

Double Quart. For he shall give his angels

Recitative	Now Cherith's brook	Miss Palmer.
Recit. & Duet	What have I to do with thee?	Madame C. Novello.
Chorus	Turn unto her	and Mr. Weiss.
Recits. and	Blessed are the men	
Chorus	As God the Lord	Mr. Weiss.
	Art thou Elijah	Mr. Inkersall.
Chorus	Baal! we cry to thee	
Recitative and	Call him louder	Mr. Weiss.
Chorus	Hear our cry, O Baal	
Recitative and	Call him louder	Mr. Weiss.
Chorus	Baal, hear and answer	
Recitative and	Draw near all ye people	Mr. Weiss.
Air	Lord God of Abraham	

Quartet	Cast thy burden upon the	Madame C. Novello.
	Lord	Miss Palmer, Mr.
		W. Cooper, and
		Mr. Santley.
		Mr. Weiss.
Recitative and	O thou who makest	Mr. Weiss.
Chorus	The fire descends	Miss Palmer.
Air	Is not his word like a fire?	Mr. Sims Reeves.
Air	Wee unto them	Mr. and Madame
Recitatives,	O man of God	Weiss.
Air, and	O Lord thou hast over-	
Chorus	thrown	
	Look down on us	
Chorus	Thanks be to God	

D D

Figure 3.2: Report on *Elijah* at the Leeds Town Hall inauguration. Source: 'The Leeds Musical Festival', *Leeds Intelligencer*, September 1858, 40-1.



Figure 3.3: Ticket for opening oratorio, *Elijah*, at Leeds Town Hall.

Source: Leeds Local and Family History Library scrapbooks, Ref. LQ. 780.79 SP26.²⁴

A festival was planned for 1861 but was aborted. Several reasons were reported in the newspapers: the forthcoming visit of the Royal Agricultural Society, the dullness of trade, exorbitant demands of the vocalists, the meeting of the British Association in Manchester and the conduct of the two musical parties in Leeds which ‘have been singularly bitter and unpropitious to harmonious action’.²⁵ Spark and Bennett went as far as to describe these ‘mighty opposites’ in their written history as the ‘musical Capulet’s and Montague’s’.²⁶ It was seemingly a war of ‘bad blood’ to the bitter end and this infighting amongst various

²⁴ Leeds Local & Family History Library, LQ.780.79 SP26. This scrapbook entitled ‘Collection of brochures, tickets, programmes, cuttings and other material relating to the Leeds Triennial Musical Festivals -1861, 1874, 1877 Vol. 1’ was compiled by Frederick Robert Spark. The ticket definitely appears in this volume despite the discrepancy in dates.

²⁵ ‘Abandonment of the Leeds Musical Festival’, *The Leeds and West Riding Express*, 18 May 1861; ‘The Leeds Festival’, *Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1861.

²⁶ Spark and Bennett, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889*, 39.

factions in Leeds was to have a marked effect on the possibility of regular festivals being organised in the city.

3.2.2 The Leeds Festivals from 1874

The Leeds Triennial Festival was not established until 1874; the delay was the result of the very public bickering between the town's organists and choral societies, reported and explained in detail in the press. The *Leeds West Riding Express* publicly chastised the parties involved in aborting the planned festival:

To very few persons will the fact be unknown, that for some years' past there have been in existence two musical parties—one ranging itself under the musical direction of Mr. Spark, organist of the Town Hall, and the other being ruled by Mr. Burton, organist at the Parish Church. Could that harmonious feeling that generally obtains amongst other community, a spirit of friendly competition and emulation—not of jealous rivalry—would prevail, to the manifest benefit of the art itself ... but we had hoped that in Leeds ... the various discordant elements would have united for this occasion in one harmonious whole ... to secure the benefit and prestige to the town.²⁷

Though an attempt had been made to amalgamate the choral forces around 1860 (see Fig. 3.4), discord continued and it was not until 1874 that another festival was held. In 1873, twelve years after the fiasco of 1861, Alderman Henry Marsden, later to become Mayor, declared of a proposed Musical Festival that 'no person either directly or indirectly connected with the musical profession shall take any part in the general management thereof'.²⁸ A second festival finally materialised in 1874 and was conducted by Sir Michael Costa (for a fee of 300 guineas), after which the Triennial Festivals became established.²⁹ Sir Arthur Sullivan conducted the festivals from 1880, and under his baton the Leeds Festival achieved international status, with many new works commissioned. After his retirement, the festivals continued under various conductors up to 1970. The lasting

²⁷ *Leeds West Riding Express*, 18 May 1861.

²⁸ Spark and Bennett, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889*, 59.

²⁹ Percy M. Young incorrectly reports that the next festival was in 1880. See Percy M. Young, 'Leeds: 1. Concert Life, Choirs and Church Music', in *New Grove* (14), 461-2.

significance of these gargantuan musical events for the town of Leeds is evident, and aspects of a few of the festivals will be examined here briefly as illustrations.

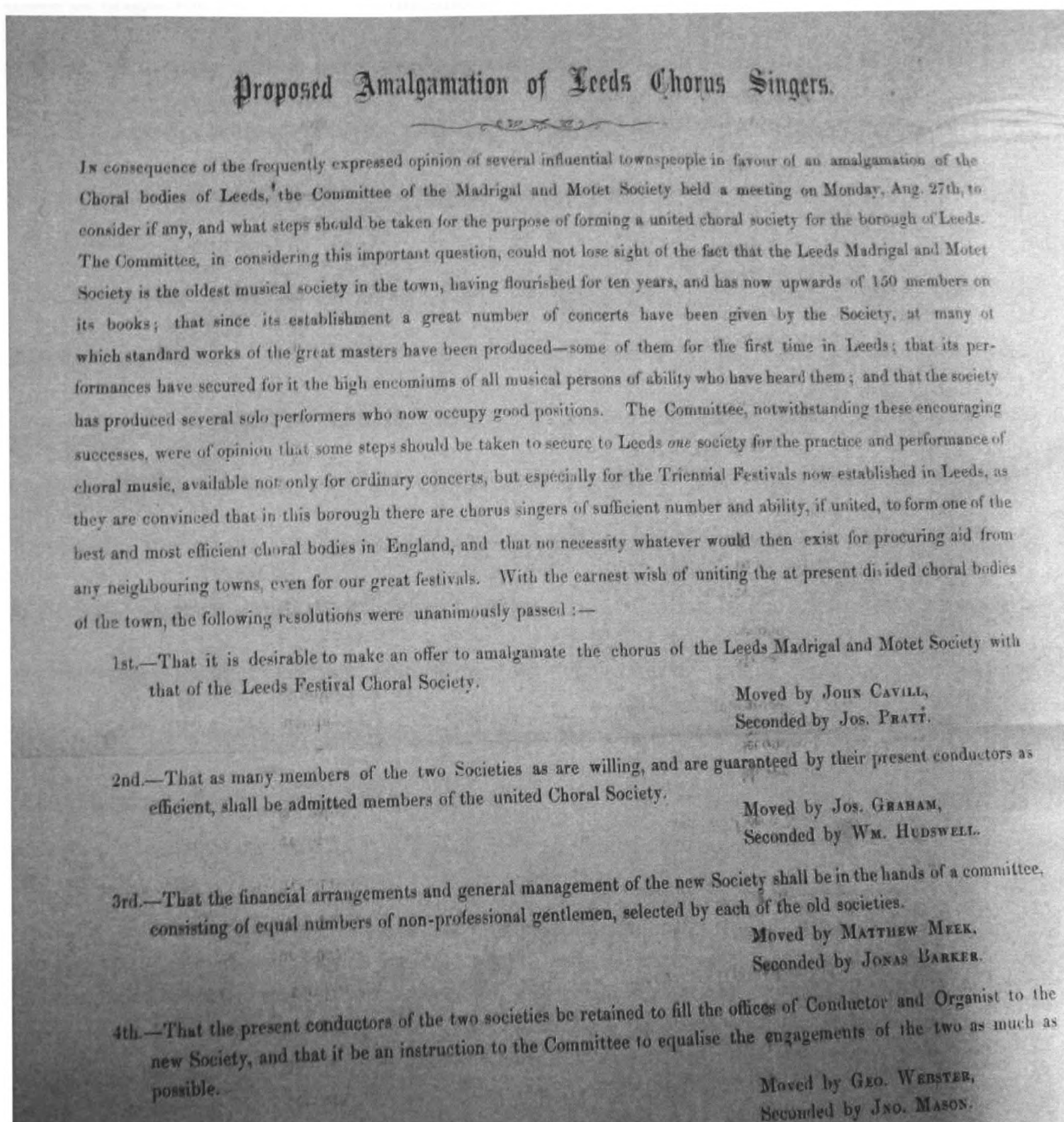


Figure 3.4: Proposal for a choral amalgamation in Leeds, 20 September 1860 by the committee of the Madrigal and Motet Society.

Source: Leeds Local and Family History Library, Ref. LQ 780.9 M681.³⁰

³⁰ 'Miscellaneous Leaflets: Leeds Music', n.d. Leeds Local & Family History Library, LQ780.9 M681.

The 1874 festival eventually took place, but with much public discord about the audition procedures and inclusion of singers from outside Leeds. The programme lists name and town of origin for the 273 chorus members with an asterisk by the names of unpaid amateur singers. Newspaper critics gave accolades of praise to the opening performance of St Paul, with the London Times reporting that ‘the Yorkshire choristers covered themselves with glory, and caused amateurs from London to envy them’.³¹

At a time when the Crystal Palace Company did not distribute festival profits to philanthropic causes, the £1000 profit from the Leeds Festival was donated to medical charities, a decision connected to the rapid urban growth and impoverished living conditions experienced by workers who had moved into the town for work. During the industrial revolution, the number of births generally approximated the number of deaths in Leeds; such was the poor standard of health.³² Malnutrition was common, along with bronchitis, consumption, cholera, typhus, diphtheria, and scarlet fever. Leeds Infirmary, founded in 1767, was run entirely by public subscription; the Dispensary was started in 1824. They provided the following services:

Liniments, emulsions, honey, sugar, treacle, and tobacco enemas were all used for treatments, the latter for strangulated hernias! Leeches were in great demand, especially the speckled ones. Patients were asked to supply their own. In the same way they had to bring their own bandages, gallipots – small earthen ware ointment jars – and phials. Unused medicines were asked to be returned.³³

Continuing successful oratorio festivals and their profits were a major source of income for many medical charities and hospitals in provincial England in Victorian times. The

³¹ ‘The Leeds Musical Festival’, *The Times*, 16 October 1874.

³² See John Ryley, *A History of the Town and Parish of Leeds* (Leeds: s.n., 1797), 46. For example, in 1793 there were 1,190 births and 1,129 deaths, and 6,691 horses.

³³ Mary Barrett and Cynthia Clarke, *Old Leeds: a Collection of Local History Stories* (Leeds Royal Park Middle School, 1979), 23.

Triennial Festival was not only a grandiose prestige statement for the town concerned but was essential in supporting health services for the local populace.

At the Leeds festival in 1877, Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was the opening oratorio under Costa's baton, with soloist Madame Albani employed at short notice for a fee of 550 guineas.³⁴ Handel's *Solomon* was performed the following night, with the chorus again being described as 'unquestionably the finest in Great Britain and, it may be added, without much fear of contradiction, in Europe'.³⁵ The People's Concert with its cheaper tickets on the final Saturday evening had become an established feature. A note in the Book of Words indicates that the *Messiah* was omitted, as the Leeds Festival would not 'be a slave to any traditional necessity'.³⁶

At the age of 38, Arthur Sullivan was invited to become conductor of the 1880 Leeds Festival and was commissioned to compose an oratorio *The Martyr of Antioch*. The chorus had now increased to 300 with over 600 applicants for the places, and the orchestra to 111. Attendance had swelled from 12,300 in 1874 to 14,854 in 1880 and profits more than doubled with the provision of more first-class seats. *The Yorkshire Gazette* reported that the increase in attendance was due to the presence of the Duke of Edinburgh, who was the President of the Festival (see also Fig. 3.5).³⁷ Criticism was leveled in the press at Mayor Statham of Leeds, who declined to become President of the Festival because he was a member of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) and had a conscientious objection to the performance of oratorio as an 'amusement of works based upon sacred subjects'.³⁸

When the autocratic Costa was replaced by Sullivan, a festive atmosphere infused the festivals. Fig. 3.6 shows a newspaper illustration of people associated with this festival in

³⁴ Spark and Bennett, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889*, 133.

³⁵ 'Leeds Musical Festival', *The Times*, 21 September 1877.

³⁶ Spark and Bennett, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889*, 133.

³⁷ *The Yorkshire Gazette*, 16 October 1880.

³⁸ *The Musical World*, 16 October 1880. As a Quaker, Tatham did not attend the festival and refused to be involved actively in any way.

1880 that captured this spirit. Sullivan is rather jovially depicted, framed with characters from his *Pirates of Penance*, which premiered not long before the festival in London. In an engraving (Fig. 3.7) of ‘The Festival Principals’, the soloists – Madame Albani, Miss Anna Williams, Meme Pâté, Meme Tribally, Mr. Joseph Maas, and Mr. Herschel – are framed with laurel wreaths, an ancient symbol of victory, indicating their popularity with the nineteenth-century public. The cult status of the oratorio festival in England attracted prima donnas who demanded exorbitant fees. It seems an ideology of monumentalism extended to the soloists who were revered by the public (and to their fees).

An interesting feature not mentioned by Spark and Bennett in their history of the Leeds Festival, was that the telephone, which had only been introduced into England the previous year, was positioned on the town hall platform and the sound of the music relayed to the Yorkshire Telephone Company offices in Leeds and Bradford.³⁹ This in effect was like a first broadcast relay on a trunk line. The new technology also expanded the audience, if only by a few persons listening on the other end of a telephone. Humorous jokes and cartoons appeared in periodicals such as *Punch*, as reproduced in Fig. 3.8, punning that Sir Arthur Sullivan was a ‘conductor’ of sound not only in the traditional sense at the helm of the orchestra, but as an electrical ‘conductor’ transmitting sound to another town.⁴⁰

³⁹ ‘The Telephone and the Leeds Musical Festival’, *The Yorkshire Post*, 15 October 1880.

⁴⁰ *Punch*, 30 October 1880.

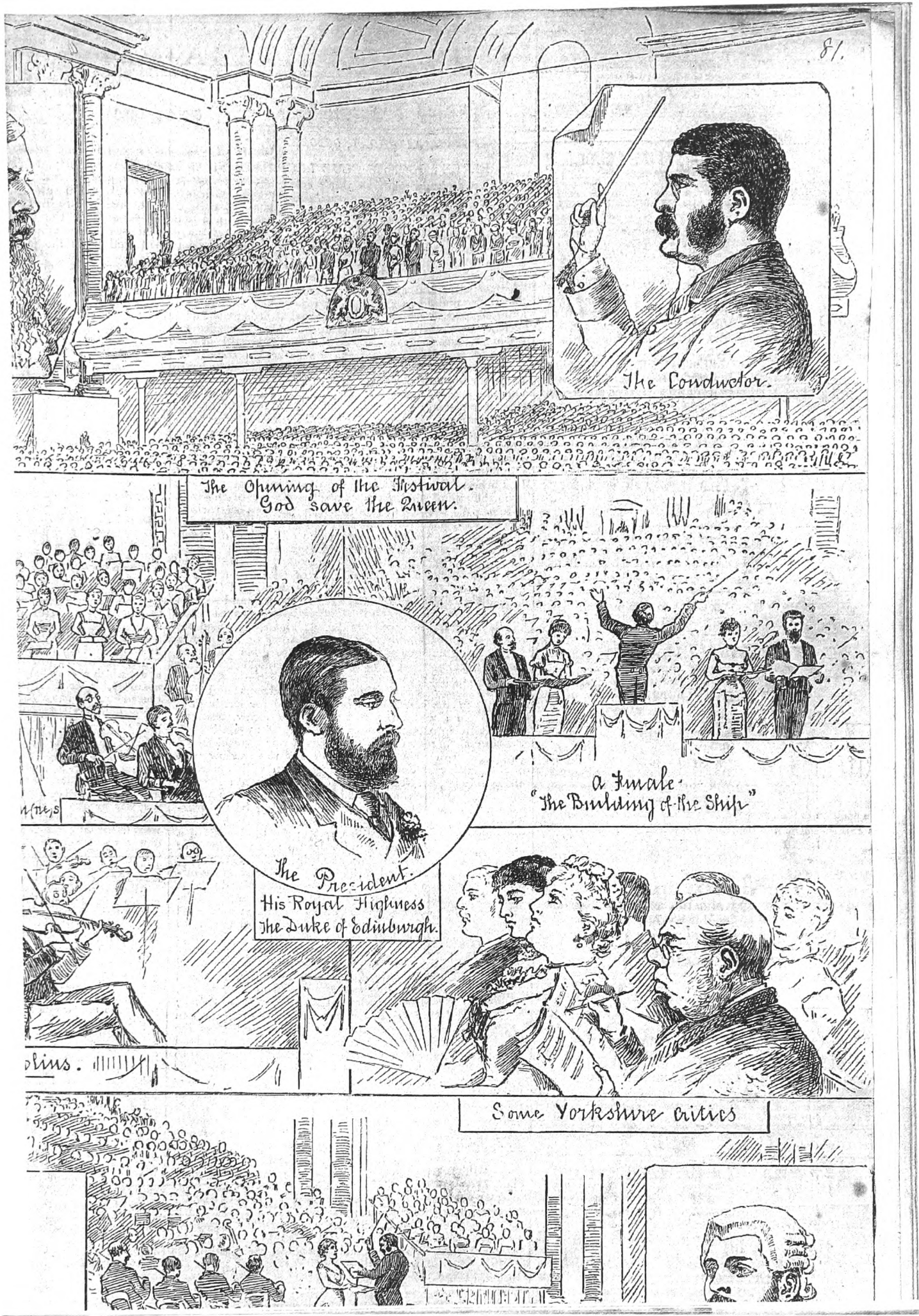


Figure 3.5: Section of an engraving of the 1880 Leeds Triennial Festival. The Duke of Edinburgh is labelled 'the President'.

Source: *The Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, October 1880.⁴¹

⁴¹ Found at p. 81 in F. R. Spark (compiler of scrapbook) 'Leeds Musical Festival 1880: Press Opinion', Leeds Local & Family History Library Ref. LQ 780.70 SP 26.



LEEDS TRIENNIAL MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

1—DR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN. 2—DR. SPARK. 3—MR. JAMES BROUGHTON. 4—MR. ALFRED BROUGHTON. 5—MR. GEORGE TETLEY.
6—ALD. ADDYMAN. 7—REV. DR. GOTT. 8—MR. F. R. SPARK. 9—MR. E. O. DYKES.

Figure 3.6: People involved in the Leeds Triennial Festival, 1880.
Source: 'The Leeds Musical Festival' in *The Yorkshireman*, 18 September 1880.⁴²

⁴² Leeds, Special Collections Yorkshire H-Lee-7.5 SPA/ LQ 780 79 SP26133. The date is written in pencil on the newspaper copy in the scrapbook.



Figure 3.7: The Festival Principals.
 Source: *The Yorkshireman*, October 1880.⁴³

⁴³ Ibid. Image found at p. 201 of the scrapbook, but with no date or page number of the newspaper provided.

OCTOBER 30, 1880.]

[OCTOBER 23, 1880.]

FRIENDS IN LEEDS.

SIR,—You told me to go to Leeds, and I told you to go to Jericho. You didn't go to Jericho, and I didn't go to Leeds.

Who needs
To go to Leeds?

when he can do as I did, and always intend to do in future. I simply—very simply—sat in my little second-floor back-room, with one end of a Telephone fitted up to my study-table, the other being attached to Dr. ARTHUR SULLIVAN, who went off with it to the Leeds Festival, and took it with him on the platform. Did you ever hear of a Telephone being attached to a person? They do, I assure you, become deeply attached—like cats, however, more to places than persons. Of course it was a brilliant idea of mine—(you, Sir, never thought of it)—to put the Telephone into ARTHUR SULLIVAN's head—in at one ear and out at the other—because, as everyone knows, he is such a perfect Conductor of sound. It succeeded marvellously. I heard everything; and was charmed with BARNETT and BENNETT, and *April Fool* and *Shipping the Builder*, and that ancient Conservative musician, the *Hoary Tory O!* Where all was so good, and so much was OSGOOD, and where one thing was as good as another, as the Telephone said—(I heard by Telephone all the jokes, made *sotto voce* on the platform, but shan't tell of one of 'em)—it is impossible to discriminate. Dr. SULLIVAN's prescriptions, for an opening symphony to a tonic, were most successful. The learned author of *Pinafore* did the words of the *Martyr of Antioch*, and the Telephone gave me a few particulars which the general public was not privileged to hear.

The great song rather reminded me of something in *Trial by Jury* and *Pinafore*; it is called "I'll tell you how I came to be a *Martyr*," with chorus. The refrain of the next most popular number is

"In spite of all temptations
From some denominations,
I remained a Christian.

(Triumphantly) I remained a Christian."

This, with the magnificent accompaniment to which it is set, created a profound sensation—

"A most profound sensation
From the grand instrumentation
Of Doctor Sullivan—
Of D-o-o-octor Sul-ul-ul-i-van."

Well, if Sir ARTHUR—(is the Telephone correct, or did it say Dr. ARTHUR? Odd! I thought it whispered "Sir,"—but perhaps it said "Sir" to me)—if Dr. ARTHUR SULLIVAN, isn't satisfied with the result of our spirited telephonic experiment, he ought to be. But if everyone can hear music at festivals by Telephone, why go to Leeds, or anywhere else?—except as an excuse for an outing—out on the Leeds. Adoo!

BOUNCER.

PUNCH'S FANCY PORTRAITS.—No. 5.



"WHEN ARTHUR FIRST AT COURT BEGAN"—

(Old Nursery Song adapted to a Pinafore Air.)

MR. ARTHUR SULLIVAN, MUS. DOG., IS A MASTER OF SCORING FOR AN ORCHESTRA. AT LEEDS HE HAS JUST SCORED A BIG SUCCESS—FOR HIMSELF.

"A HUMOROUS KNIGHT."

["It is reported that after the Leeds Festival Dr. SULLIVAN will be knighted." Having read this in a column of gossip, a be-nighted Contributor, who has "the Judge's Song" on the brain, suggests the following version, adapted to probabilities.]

As a boy I had such a musical bump,
And its size so struck Mr. HELMORE,
That he said, "Though you sing those songs like a trump,
You shall write some yourself that will sell more."
So I packed off to Leipzig, without *looking back*,
And returned in such classical fury,
That I sat down with HANDEL and HAYDN and BACH,—
And turned out "*Trial by Jury*."

But W. S. G. he jumped for joy
As he said, "Though the job dismay you,
Send Exeter Hall to the deuce, my boy;
It's the *haul* with me that'll pay you."
And we hauled so well, mid jeers and taunts,
That we've settled, spite all temptations,
To stick to our Sisters and our Cousins and our Aunts,—
And continue our pleasant relations.

Yet I know a big Duke, and I've written for Leeds,
And I think (I don't wish to be snarly),
If honour's poured out on a chap for his deeds,
I'm as good—come, as MONCKTON or CHARLEY!
So the next "first night" at the Opéra C.,
Let's hope, if you're able to find him,
You'll cry from the pit, "There's W. S. G.,
In the stalls,—with a KNIGHT behind him!"

Figure 3.8: *Punch* articles illustrating the festive spirit of the Leeds Music Festival 23 and 30 October 1880.

Many successful triennial festivals followed, with Sullivan at the helm, and with new works commissioned or premiered: these included *Joseph and King David* (George Macfarren), *Golden Legend* (Arthur Sullivan), *The Revenge*, *Voyage of Maeldune* and *Te Deum* (Charles Stanford), *St Ludmilla* (Anton Dvořák), *St Cecilia's Day* and *Invocation of Music* (Herbert Parry). Interestingly, *Messiah* was never a regular feature of the Leeds Triennial Festivals, in the way that it traditionally featured in other town festivals; it was included for the first time in 1895. Suffering from kidney disease, Sullivan conducted seated (as can be seen in Fig. 3.9) and his physical and creative energy were increasingly lacking. In 1899, Sullivan resigned from the conductorship under pressure from the Leeds Festival committee.



Figure 3.9: Leeds Festival 1886, with Dvořák and the seated conductor Sullivan.
 Source: *Illustrated London News*, October 1886.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ Dvořák is placed central to the singers labelled in the reproduced lithograph above. *St Ludmilla* was premiered at this performance. The ill conductor, Sir Arthur Sullivan, is seated in a chair. Also reproduced in Mary Evans Picture Library, Ref.10224986.

Much needed funds were regularly raised for the General Infirmary, the Public Dispensary, the Fever Hospital, and the Women and Children's Hospital with the diverse programming, which included the commissioned works mentioned above. The monumental character of the performances is seen in the great numbers of people involved in the performances and in the purchase of ticket subscriptions. The combination of the oratorio performances and the vast space of the Leeds town hall made an exhibition of lasting and recurring significance to the town's culture and society in many different ways.

Manchester Festivals

An early large-scale oratorio performance in Manchester was held at St John's Church for the opening of the organ in 1770,⁴⁵ setting the scene after the Napoleonic wars and later Peterloo, for the three-day festivals in 1828, 1836 and 1844 that were to follow.⁴⁶ Brian Pritchard states of the early festivals, both in Manchester and Liverpool:

Indeed, they [oratorio festivals] may well be placed among the cultural first-fruits of the Industrial Revolution and they almost certainly represent attempts to satisfy a growing desire for cultural standing and prestige among the rising generation of northern manufacturers.⁴⁷

The 1844 festival was held in the Free Trade Hall – probably the only venue of this type used for such events in England; a brief look at Manchester's history will show why this is so.

The Peterloo Massacre left an indelible mark not only on Manchester's history, but also that of the nation. A crowd of 60,000 to 80,000 assembled to demand fundamental parliamentary reform, including universal suffrage, the secret ballot, and annual parliaments. Cavalry charged into the crowd with sabres drawn, injuring 400 to 500, and killing around 15 people, including several women and a child. The painting reproduced as Fig. 3.10 depicts the pandemonium of the crowd and is dedicated to the radical orator Henry Hunt (central, holding his famous white hat) and the Women's Reform movement. It is speculated that this massacre played a role in bringing about the Great Reform Act of 1832.

⁴⁵ The site of St John's Church (opened in 1769) in Lower Byrom St is now a park, after the church was demolished in 1930. The stone memorial reads 'around lie the remains of more than 22,000 people'.

⁴⁶ Some authors add further dates of 1777 and 1785 as festivals but it is debatable they are oratorio festivals in the true sense. See Michael Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition: a Century of Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960), 3.

⁴⁷ Pritchard, 'Liverpool and Manchester Festival Programmes', 1.



Figure 3.10: A print of the Peterloo Massacre, 16 August 1819, Manchester.
Source: Published by Richard Carlile, 1 October 1819.⁴⁸

As Rachel Ryan describes the men of Manchester:

Their vocation brought these men, even more than money, enterprise and excitement, It brought them power – the power to dictate a national policy, and indirectly, to undermine the landed classes who surveyed them with contemptuous dislike. When the long reign of Free Trade began, the men of Manchester could – and did – boast that that they had given a lead to the rest of the country.⁴⁹

St Peter's Fields, where this massacre took place, became the site of Anti-Corn League meetings and the resultant Free Trade Halls built there. As Terry Wyke explains:

In a little more than fifteen minutes the land on which the Free Trade Hall was to be built was to be transformed from an

⁴⁸ Manchester Local Studies and Archives, Local Image Collection I.D. m01563.

⁴⁹ Rachel Montague Ryan, *A Biography of Manchester* (London: Methuen, 1937), 5. Also quoted in Wilfred Allis, 'The Gentlemen's Concerts: Manchester, 1777-1920', M. Phil. Thesis (University of Manchester, Department of Sociology 1995), 162-3.

ordinary open space into sacred ground, a place where blood had been spilt in the struggle for democratic rights.⁵⁰

This ‘sacred ground’ was to become not only the site for successive Free Trade Halls and their associated activities but also a place where oratorio festivals and workers’ choral meetings were patronised by the people of Manchester.

3.2.3 Manchester Free Trade Halls

In 1840 an enormous wooden pavilion, on a vacant plot on Peter Street, was built in haste to hold the monster meetings of the Anti-Corn League. It was a vast 150 feet in length and 105 feet in breadth, covering a space of 15,750 square feet, and its size exceeded Exeter Hall, the largest of London’s public meeting places of the time.⁵¹ A gas-lit display above the speaker’s platform formed the single word ‘Justice’. By 1842, this was replaced by another vast building, the first ‘Great Free Trade Hall’ built in brick with a slate roof. An imposing gas candelabra, dubbed ‘League Lights’, provided lighting for the hall. The crowds and the panache of the events held there made it an integral part of town life. From the beginning, this hall for the people was filled with music – an oratorio festival was held there in 1844, Mendelssohn conducted his *Elijah* there in 1847, and later Jenny Lind sang in *Elijah* in the hall in 1849. As the *Manchester Times* reported of this performance:

The tones of Jenny Lind were first heard in the double quartet, “For he shall give his angels,” but her power first made itself felt in the scene between the widow and Elijah. Here it was the listener was convinced of how little of the spell by which she rules all hearts is borrowed from dramatic costume and scenic effects,— how even her magnificent voice, pure and pealing as it is, is only one item in the complex tonality of her greatness.⁵²

⁵⁰ Terry Wyke, *The Hall of Fame: The History of the Free Trade Hall* (Manchester: Radisson Edwardian Manchester Hotel, 2004), 6.

⁵¹ Exeter Hall was the site of anti-slavery meetings and could seat 4,000. It was also where many dissenting religious groups assembled, including the Sacred Harmonic Society which was instrumental in organising the Handel Triennial Festivals (see Chapter 5).

⁵² ‘The “Elijah” at the Free Trade Hall’, *Manchester Times*, 10 February 1849.

Jules Benedict was the conductor with all the principal vocalists engaged being those who sang with Mdlle Lind at an earlier performance of *Elijah* in December in Exeter Hall.⁵³

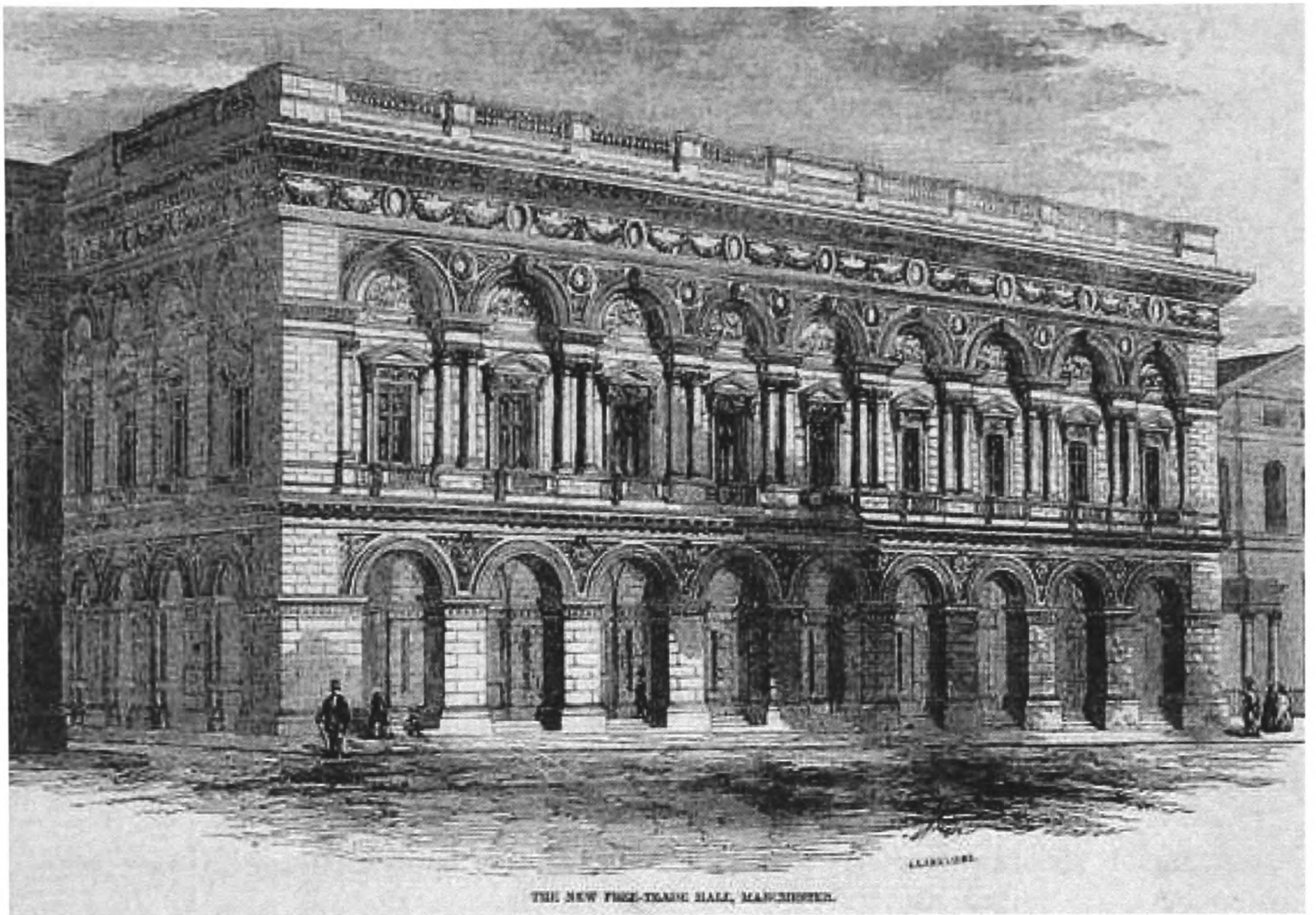


Figure 3.11: The New Free Trade Hall, Manchester opened in 1856 on the site of Peterloo.

Source: *Illustrated London News*, 11 October 1856, 374.

In 1856 an imposing and architecturally distinguished ‘New Free Trade Hall’ (see Fig. 3.11) replaced the first Trade Hall, thus forming a monument to the Anti-Corn League and independence of the people of Manchester. Unlike the many new town halls erected elsewhere that hosted oratorio festivals, this was not built with municipal funds but by local investors who had supported the League. Edward Walter’s winning design featured an ornate Italianate style building, the lower storey consisting of an arcade with arches to provide shelter from the Manchester weather. This great hall, with seating space for 3,910,

⁵³ Very little was reported in the press of the other principal vocalists but these included the Misses Williams, Mr Lockey, and Mr Machin. Lind provided her services gratis for a number of *Elijah* performances to help raise funds for a scholarship in Mendelssohn’s memory.

was the only hall in Manchester that could hold grand assemblages. Within its precincts Dickens gave public readings, Gladstone and Disraeli delivered political speeches, David Livingstone related his travels in Africa, and the Hallé orchestra performed oratorios.⁵⁴ In fact, the Hallé Orchestra was to be intimately linked with the history of this hall until as recently as 1996. It is ironic that today all that remains of the historic and majestic Free Trade Hall is the facade, which now provides a shell for a luxury Radisson hotel, hardly a suitable monument to the site of the Battle of Peterloo.

3.2.4 Oratorio festivals and performances in Manchester

Gentleman's Concerts provided the foundation for these early festivals in Manchester, and one lasting three days in 1777 was organised by Sir Thomas Egerton (1749-1814). 'Ladies and strangers' could accompany a subscriber to the early festivals, with tickets costing four guineas, according to the scanty records.⁵⁵ The festival of 1777 included an oratorio performance that was unnamed in the programme⁵⁶ Michael Kennedy states in *Manchester Sounds* that the second festival eventuated in 1785, but Pritchard correctly documents an earlier festival between 19 and 21 September 1781, which included the performance of *Judas Maccabaeus* and *Messiah*.⁵⁷ The festival between 21 and 24 September 1785 included performances of *Samson* and *Messiah*, and at the festival between 19 and 21 September 1792, a performance of *Messiah* was given. Kennedy considers the full performance of Haydn's *Creation* in 1801 a remarkable feat of 'great enterprise', with its premiere in Vienna only two years earlier.⁵⁸

⁵⁴ See Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 33-66; and Robert Beale, *Music, Money, Maestros & Management: the Hallé, a British Orchestra in the 20th Century* (Manchester: Forsyth Brothers, 2000).

⁵⁵ Michael Kennedy, 'Manchester 2', in *New Grove* (15), 722-5.

⁵⁶ For programme details see Pritchard, 'Liverpool and Manchester Festival Programmes', 15.

⁵⁷ Michael Kennedy, 'Manchester before Hallé', *Manchester Sounds*, 1 (2000), 5; Pritchard, 'Liverpool and Manchester Festival Programmes', 15.

⁵⁸ Kennedy, 'Manchester before Hallé', 6. Susan Wollenberg indicates that Oxford also held a performance of *The Creation* on 16 June 1801 conducted by Dr Crotch. See Wollenberg, *Music at Oxford*, 147.



GRAND MUSICAL FESTIVAL, MANCHESTER,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE PUBLIC CHARITIES.

1828.

PATRON, HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY THE KING.

AND ALSO UNDER THE PATRONAGE OF

<p>The HIGH SHERIFF of the County of Lancaster. The Right Honourable the EARL of DERBY, Lord Lieutenant of the County of Lancaster. His GRACE the DUKE of HAMILTON and BRANDON. The Most Noble the MARQUIS of STAFFORD, K. G. The Right Honourable the EARL of STAMFORD and WARRINGTON. The Right Honourable the EARL of ABERDEEN. The Right Honourable the EARL of WILTON. The Right Honourable EARL GOWER. The Right Honourable LORD STANLEY, M. P. The Right Honourable LORD GREY DE GROBY. The Right Reverend the LORD BISHOP of CHESTER. The Right Honourable LORD DUCIE. The Right Honourable LORD SUFFIELD. The Right Honourable LORD KENYON. The Right Honourable LORD SKELMERSDALE. The Honourable EDWARD GEOFFREY SMITH STANLEY, M. P. The Honourable GEORGE VERNON. The Right Honourable ROBERT PEEL, M. P. The Right Honourable CHARLES ARBUTHNOT, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. The Very Reverend the WARDEN, and the Reverend the FELLOWS of the COLLEGIATE CHURCH, Manchester. The BOROUGHREEVE of MANCHESTER. Sir HENRY PHILIP HOUGHTON, Baronet. Sir JOHN GERRARD, Baronet.</p>	<p>The Reverend Sir PHILIP GREY EGERTON, Baronet. Sir THOMAS STANLEY MASSEY STANLEY, Baronet. Sir RICHARD BROOKE, Baronet. Sir ROBERT GORE BOOTH, Baronet. Sir THOMAS DALRYMPLE HESKETH, Baronet. Sir OSWALD MOSLEY, Baronet. Sir ROBERT PEEL, Baronet. Sir HENRY MAINWARING MAINWARING, Baronet. Sir ROBERT HOLT LEIGH, Baronet. Sir GEORGE PHILIPS, Baronet, M. P. THOMAS ALCOCK, Esquire, M. P. JOHN BLACKBURN, Esquire, M. P. JOHN FENTON CAWTHORNE, Esquire, M. P. WILBRAHAM EGERTON, Esquire, M. P. JOHN ENTWISTLE, Esquire. THOMAS GREENE, Esquire, M. P. JAMES ALEXANDER HODSON, Esquire, M. P. THOMAS HOULDSWORTH, Esquire, M. P. ROBERT GREGGE HOPWOOD, Esquire. WILLIAM HULTON, Esquire. GEORGE JOHN LEIGH, Esquire. GEORGE LLOYD, Esquire. GEORGE RICHARD PHILIPS, Esquire, M. P. FRANK HALL STANDISH, Esquire. THOMAS JOSEPH TRAFFORD, Esquire. JOHN WOOD, Esquire, M. P.</p>
--	--

CHARLES CROSS, Esq. Boroughreeve of Manchester, Chairman of the Committee of Management.
EDWARD JEREMIAH LLOYD, Esq. Deputy Chairman.

On TUESDAY MORNING, September 30th, a SERMON will be PREACHED at the Collegiate Church. In the course of the Service, several select Pieces of Sacred Music will be introduced.

On TUESDAY EVENING, at the THEATRE,

A GRAND MISCELLANEOUS CONCERT.

On WEDNESDAY MORNING, at the Collegiate Church,
A GRAND SELECTION OF SACRED MUSIC,
From the Works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Attwood, and Marcello; in which will be introduced
**A SELECTION FROM THE ORATORIO OF
THE CREATION.**

On WEDNESDAY EVENING, at the ASSEMBLY ROOMS,
A BALL.

ON THURSDAY MORNING, HANDEL'S SACRED ORATORIO

The Messiah,

WITH THE ADDITIONAL ACCOMPANIMENTS BY MOZART.

On THURSDAY EVENING, at the THEATRE,

A GRAND MISCELLANEOUS CONCERT.

On FRIDAY MORNING,

A GRAND SELECTION OF SACRED MUSIC,

From the Works of Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Pasiello, Pergolesi, Marcello, Beethoven, Attwood, Croft, &c.
And on FRIDAY EVENING, at the THEATRE and ASSEMBLY ROOMS, which will be connected for this occasion,

A GRAND FANCY DRESS BALL,

For which the celebrated New French Quadrille Band, at Almacks, is engaged.

PRINCIPAL VOCAL PERFORMERS.

MADAME CATALANI,

Madame STOCKHAUSEN, Madame PUZZI,
And Madame CARADORI ALLAN.

Mr. BRAHAM.
Mr. VAUGHAN, Mr. W. KNYVETT,
Mr. E. TAYLOR, Mr. ISHERWOOD,
Mr. PHILLIPS.

Miss LOVE, Mrs. WM. KNYVETT, Miss GODFREY,
And Miss STEPHENS.

and
Signor CURIONI, and Signor PELLEGRINI.

INSTRUMENTAL.

Leader of the Morning Performances, Mr. F. CRAMER.
Leader of the Evening Performances, Mr. MORI.

SOLO PERFORMERS.

Violin, Mr. MORI, | Flute, Mr. NICHOLSON, | Clarinet, Mr. WILLMAN, | Violoncello, Mr. LINDLEY
and Mr. W. LINDLEY, | Horn, Signor PUZZI.

PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENTAL PERFORMERS.

(From the King's Concert, Philharmonic, and King's Theatre.)

<p>VIOLINS, Mr. Moralt, principal 2nd. Mr. Thomas, Mr. Watkins, Mr. Gedhill, Mr. Griesbach, Mr. Ella, Mr. Pigott, Mr. J. B. Taylor, Mr. Cole, Mr. Gattie, Mr. Anderson, Mr. Nadan, Mr. Licolffe, Mr. Adama, Mr. Abbott, Mr. Ducee,</p>	<p>Mr. Day, Mr. Gwynemer, VIOLAS. Mr. F. Ware, Mr. Challoner, Mr. Wilcox, Mr. Calkin, VIOLONCELLOS. Mr. Lindley, Mr. W. Lindley, Mr. Brooks, DOUBLE BASSES. Mr. Dragonetti, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Bond, Mr. Woodham, Mr. Addison.</p>	<p>Mr. Nicholson, Mr. Thomas Hughes, OBOES. Mr. Witton, Mr. Hughes, CLARINETTS. Mr. Willman, Mr. Powell, BASSOONS. Mr. Mackintosh, Mr. Tully, HORNES. Signor Puzzi, Mr. Tully, Mr. Rae, Mr. Rae.</p>	<p>TRUMPETS. Mr. Harper, Mr. Hyde, TRUMPONES. Mr. Mariotti, Mr. Smithies, Mr. Schoenger, Mr. Woodham, SERPENT. Mr. Frelke, BASS HORN. Mr. Macutechon, DOUBLE DRUMS. Mr. Chipp, Mr. Wilkinson, BASS. Mr. Challoner, M. Stockhausen.</p>
---	--	--	--

Conductor, .. Mr. GREATOREX,

Who will preside at the Organ and Grand Piano-forte.

The Band and Chorus, which will consist of nearly Four Hundred Performers, will be complete in every department, the Committee having engaged additional Performers of eminence, from some other large towns in the kingdom, to complete the strength of the Orchestra.

The Prices of Admission to each Performance, will be as follows:—

On TUESDAY MORNING, in the COLLEGIATE CHURCH, Patrons' Gallery, 5s.—Rest of the Church, 2s. 6d.

After this Service a COLLECTION will be made for the Benefit of the Charities.

FOR THE ORATORIOS ON WEDNESDAY, THURSDAY, AND FRIDAY MORNINGS,

Patrons' Gallery	21s.
Body of the Church (not under the Galleries)	15s.
Galleries and Seats under them	10s.
Choir	5s.

TO THE CONCERTS, at the THEATRE.

Patrons' Seats	21s.	Upper Boxes	10s.
Rest of the Pit and Lower Boxes	15s.	Gallery	5s.

BALL AT THE ASSEMBLY ROOMS, ON WEDNESDAY EVENING,

Gentlemen, 10s.; Ladies, 10s.; including Refreshments.

FANCY DRESS BALL, ON FRIDAY EVENING.

Admission, including refreshments, 21s.—No Money will be taken at the Doors.

The Tickets will be sold at the TOWN-HALL only, which will be open for the purpose on Saturday, the 27th, and Monday, the 29th instant, from Ten o'clock till Four; and on the following Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, from half after Eight till half after Ten in the Morning.—Books of the words may be purchased at the same time, price Sixpence, for each Performance.

The Seats in a part of the Patrons' Gallery, and in that part of the Body of the Church not under the Galleries; and also the places in a part of the Pit and Lower Boxes of the Theatre, will be ALLOTTED FOR, and reserved for the accommodation of parties. Ample notice will be given of the time and place of ballot.

The Doors of the Collegiate Church will be opened each Morning at half after Nine o'clock, and the performances will commence at Eleven precisely.

Tickets for the Patrons' Gallery will be received at the temporary entrance on the North side of the Church.—Tickets at 15s. each at the great North and South Door;—of 10s. each at the great North Door, and at the small South Door, near the Trafford Chapel;—and of 5s. at the small North Door.

The Doors of the Theatre will be opened at half after Six o'clock; and the Concerts will begin at half after Seven precisely. The Entrance to the Lower Boxes and Pit will be through the Lower Box Door; and to the Upper Boxes and Gallery, as usual.

For the Ball on Wednesday Evening, and for the Fancy Dress Ball, the Doors of the Assembly Rooms and Theatre will be opened at Nine o'clock.

The Committee earnestly request that all persons will appear at the FANCY DRESS BALL in Fancy or Full Court Dresses, Old English or Foreign Costume, or in Full Dress, Military or Naval Uniforms, as none, with the exception of Clergymen, and the Stewards for the Evening, can on any account be admitted in Plain Clothes.—Masks will not be allowed.

Proper precautions will be taken to prevent, as much as possible, the inconvenience of any rush or pressure at the Doors; and Mr. Lavender has procured assistance from the Bow-street Police, in order to render his department efficient.

The Performers are expected to attend a General Rehearsal on Monday Morning, the 20th instant, at Ten o'clock precisely.

The Committee are prepared to afford assistance to Strangers in procuring Lodgings and Accommodations; and applications for this purpose must be addressed to
G. E. AUBREY, Secretary.

Figure 3.12: A Liverpool advertisement for the Manchester Festival of 1828.

Source: Liverpool Mercury, Friday 19 September 1828.

In the peaceful 1820s, after the events of Peterloo, Manchester held a four-day festival in 1828 that included *Messiah*, Part I of *The Creation*, and a ball. The grand scale of these performances is evident from advertisements in other towns, such as the one placed in the *Liverpool Mercury* (see Fig 3.12), which also offered accommodation assistance for ‘strangers’. The ‘band and chorus’ numbered over 400 and were drawn from every part of the ‘kingdom’ for the performance held in the Collegiate Church (as the advertisement stated).

A report of the 1828 festival, given for the benefit of public charity, has fold-out pages and diagrams of the halls, detailed comments on the concerts and lists of the names of the 400 players, patrons and committee members.⁵⁹ The opening night was attended by 2,524 subscribers, and 5,000 tickets sold to the fancy dress ball.⁶⁰ Cabinet Minister Robert Peel, who donated £500, and attended the festivities including the gigantic ball in official dress, expressed himself highly satisfied and delighted

by the excellence of all the arrangements, and by the unparalleled magnificence of the scene ... Nothing indeed could surpass the splendour and brilliance of the scene ... Every part of the globe and every period of the world appeared to have contributed its costumes and its characters to complete the motley collection. Such a number of beautiful women were never before collected ... The gentlemen in general were elegantly and richly dressed; and though some of the characters partook rather of the ludicrous, they were on the whole well supported.⁶¹

Although ‘our Liverpool friends and our neighbours in Yorkshire smiled at the idea of a Musical Festival amongst those who they designated as the Cotton Fuzz Lords’,⁶² Manchester reigned supreme with cheaper tickets for their festival which produced an

⁵⁹ *An Account of the Manchester Musical Festival, 1828, ... with a description of the characters who attended the Grand Fancy Dress Ball* (Manchester Musical Festival, 1828).

⁶⁰ ‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *The Hull Packet and Humber Mercury*, 7 October 1828.

⁶¹ *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 19 April 1828. The general language in which visitors to these events tended to describe them was full of superlatives as this quote illustrates.

⁶² Kennedy, ‘Manchester before Hallé’, 10.

incredible profit of £5,000 for charity.⁶³ These truly were festivals for the people, with the promoter attracting attendance of the people of Manchester who had not had the opportunity to experience culture in this way. Manchester was making its mark in the kingdom and with superb results.

It was the ‘Grand Musical Festival’ of September 1836, again in the Collegiate Church, which left an indelible mark on future festivals in Manchester. The unfortunate demise of one of the principal singers, the mezzo-soprano Madame Maria Malibran at age 28, (see Fig. 3.13) mid-way through the festival is recorded in dramatic detail in numerous periodicals and newspapers of the day. She became a legendary figure after her death, and was celebrated with poetry, a death mask and busts, numerous biographies⁶⁴ and, more recently in 2008, films and touring displays.⁶⁵

⁶³ *The Morning Chronicle*, 28 November 1828.

⁶⁴ Vittorio Paliotti, *Maria Malibran: Casta Diva Scandalosa* (I Libri di Bron, No. 10; Rome: Pagano, 1992); Patrick Barbier, *La Malibran: Reine de l’Opéra Romantique* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2005); April Fitzlyon, *Maria Malibran: Diva of the Romantic Age* (London: Souvenir, 1987); and Howard Bushnell, *Maria Malibran: A Biography of the Singer* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1979).

⁶⁵ Several films depict the life of Maria Malibran: *Maria Malibran* (1943) directed by Italian director Guido Brignone and starring Moldovan-born Austrian soprano and actress Maria Cebotari; *La Malibran* (1944) directed by French auteur Sacha Guitry starring Géori Boué, celebrated singer of the Opéra de Paris; The German filmmaker Werner Schroeter made a film about her: *The Death of Maria Malibran* (1971) starring the trans-gendered beauty queen Candy Darling. A copy of her death mask was exhibited in a display at the Barbican in 2008. Opera star, Cecilia Bartoli had a travelling monument of Malibran’s memorabilia, which she toured around Europe, making thirty-three stops in twenty-five cities in 2008.

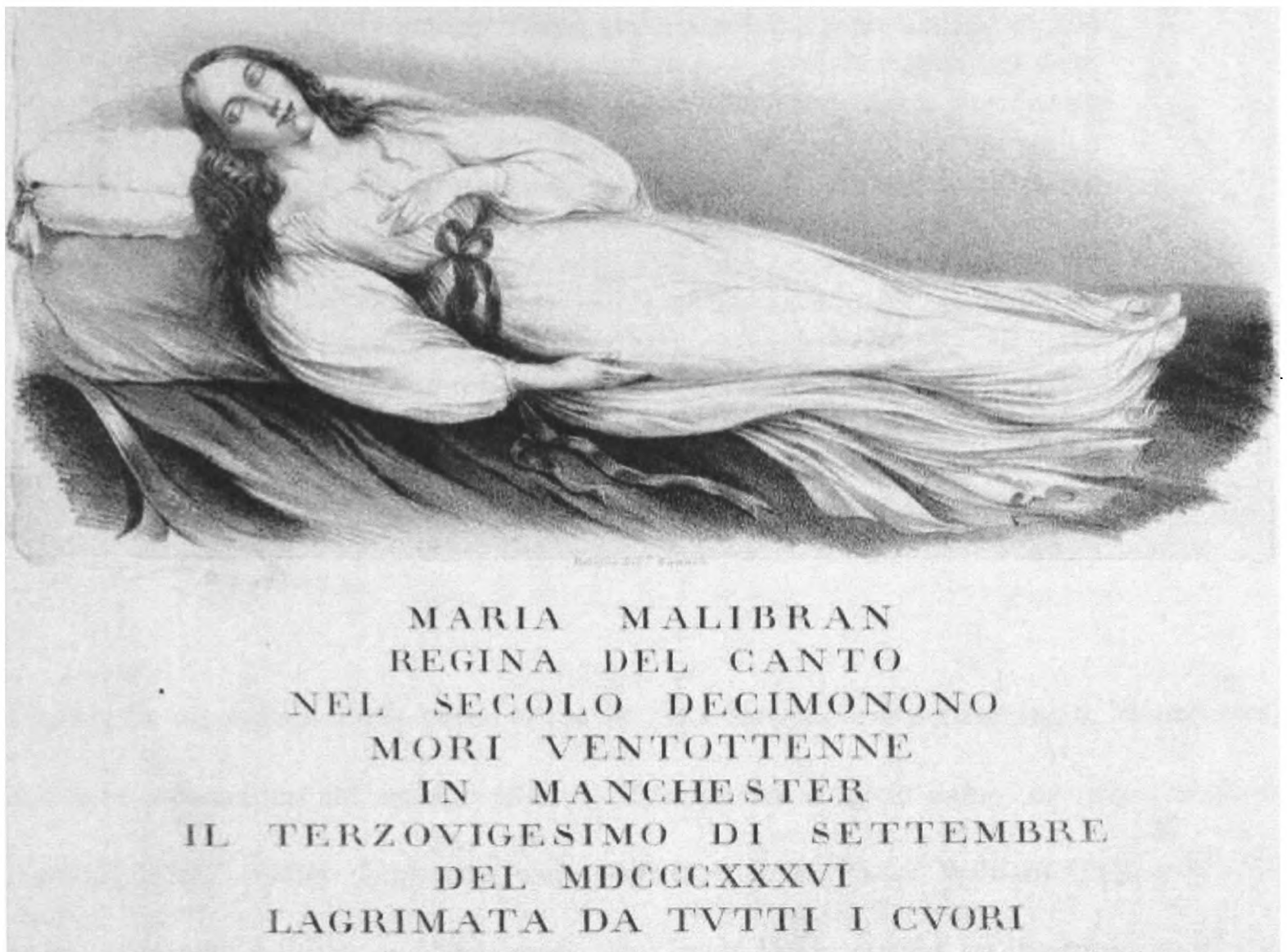


Figure 3.13: Tribute to Maria Malibran on her deathbed in Manchester, 1836.

Source: New York Public Library, Muller Collection, Image ID 1270293.⁶⁶

As usual, the press reported every detail of the ‘magnificent’ festival far and wide – from the crimson cloth and paper decorating the church to the ‘fullness of lodgings’, the ‘suffocation’ and fainting of the ladies at one concert, the receipts totalling over £10,592, the vast amount of food consumed at the ball, and the music critics’ reports of the performances conducted by George Smart.⁶⁷ Above all, this festival has been recorded as a tragic historic and musical event in Manchester.⁶⁸ One graphic report described the singer’s demise:⁶⁹

⁶⁶ An image of this unfortunate diva has travelled to archives in the United States and is held at the New York City Library, Muller Collection Image I.D. 1270293.

⁶⁷ ‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 17 September 1836; and ‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *Preston Chronicle*, 24 September 1836.

⁶⁸ Her death was generally referred to as ‘over-exertion’ in the press, but was the result of complications from a horse-riding accident some months earlier.

⁶⁹ Other published articles, that would be regarded as quite libellous nowadays, included information about the doctor’s negligence, her husband’s motives and quick departure, and also about how Malibran’s fees that were demanded upfront would have to be repaid now she was not delivering the goods. George Smart sent a partial

[Malibran] had made her appearance in the early part of the evening, but it was evident that her indisposition was momentarily getting worse, and assuming a more dangerous and decisive character. In the canon from *Fidelio*, her exertions were prodigious, taking a fearful shake at the top of her voice with her customary daring enthusiasm. The storm of cheering which followed the stupendous essay was still unabated when the unfortunate idol of an enraptured audience, who but a moment before was lighted up with fire and animation, sank in an exhausted state under the effect of her excitement. Medical aid was reported to, and she was bled in the green-room, and, after the performance was over, was removed in a chair to her hotel. On the following morning, it was announced the Madame MALIBRAN was somewhat better, but had passed a dreadful night. Her shrieks and groans resounded through the hotel. The melancholy event brought a great damp over the proceedings of the festival.⁷⁰

Malibran's subsequent death, burial in the church where she was performing in Manchester, and later exhumation and transportation to Brussels left a 'great damp' on future oratorio festivals there.⁷¹ Other dampeners were authors such as Pastor William Gadsby (1773-1884), a Baptist minister in Manchester, who made biting attacks on the morality of the twenty or so clergy who attended the festival. He sold over 1,500 of his Sunday School dialogues directed at the inappropriateness of holding such a festival in a church.⁷² With little formal education, he was a prolific author of theological pamphlets, and one of his articles was even praised in the *Gospel Magazine*, a predominantly Church of England magazine at a time when Dissenters were usually despised.⁷³ Even six years after this festival, advertisements for the sale of this text, now in its third edition, appeared in the *Manchester Times and Gazette*:

cheque for £400 for her fee to her husband who supposedly returned it with a note saying he would have 'all the £600 or none'.

⁷⁰ 'A Week at the Great Manchester Musical Festival', *The World of Fashion and Continental Feuilletons*, 1 October 1836.

⁷¹ Malibran's husband later had her body exhumed and reburied in Laken Cemetery, Brussels.

⁷² William Gadsby and Richard Parkinson, *Musical Festivals and their Patronizing Clergy dissected by the knife of God's Truth ... together with a letter to the Rev. Richard Parkinson ... and a few thoughts for the consideration of the evangelical clergy* (4th edn.; London/Manchester: R. Groombridge and Son, 1846).

⁷³ B. A. Ramsbottom, *William Gadsby* (Harpenden: Gospel Standard Trust, 2003), 80. Dissenters or Non-conformists were English Protestant Christians who separated from the Church of England in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. They did not support the involvement of the monarch in the established church and originally did not conform to the wearing of vestments. The Baptist denomination is one of several Protestant denominations that stem from this time.

The Manchester Festival and its Patronizing Clergy, and all such like, Dissected by the Knife of God's Truth, in Four Dialogues; wherein the worship of God is shown to be Spiritual and the Awful Mockery of uniting it with Fancy Balls pointed out. To which is added a letter to the Rev. R. Parkinson M.A'. Fellow of the Collegiate Church Manchester, and author of a sermon delivered the day after the Public Funeral of Madame Malibran, the Festival Singer. Third edition with a New Preface and containing a few thoughts for the "Evangelical Clergy". By W. Gadsby. Price 3d.⁷⁴

Contrary to Percy M. Young's claim that the Free Trade Hall was used for oratorio festivals, investigations have shown that it was more generally used for the Hallé concerts, which included numerous large-scale oratorio performances but only a few festivals. It can only be conjectured as to whether the dramatic events of the 1836 festival influenced future decisions to host oratorio over one or two nights and not to stage longer festivals of three or four days, or whether the writings of Gadsby were influential. The next two-day festival in 1843 in the Free Trade Hall, as reported in the press, consisted entirely of 'native talent'.⁷⁵ There was no fear of a foreign prima donna having to be exhumed and transported to Europe at this festival. Another two-day performance was held in Easter 1844, described in the poster reproduced in Fig. 3.14.

⁷⁴ *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 23 July 1842.

⁷⁵ 'The Musical Festival', *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 16 September 1843.



Figure 3.14: Poster for the Grand Musical Festival held at Easter in the Free Trade Hall, 1844.

Source: The Henry Watson Library, Manchester Library and Information Service, McRq 780.69 Me9⁷⁶

⁷⁶ This poster is held in the collection 'Manchester Miscellaneous Programmes v.1: 1825-1844', Manchester, The Henry Watson Music Library, McRQ 780.69 Me9.

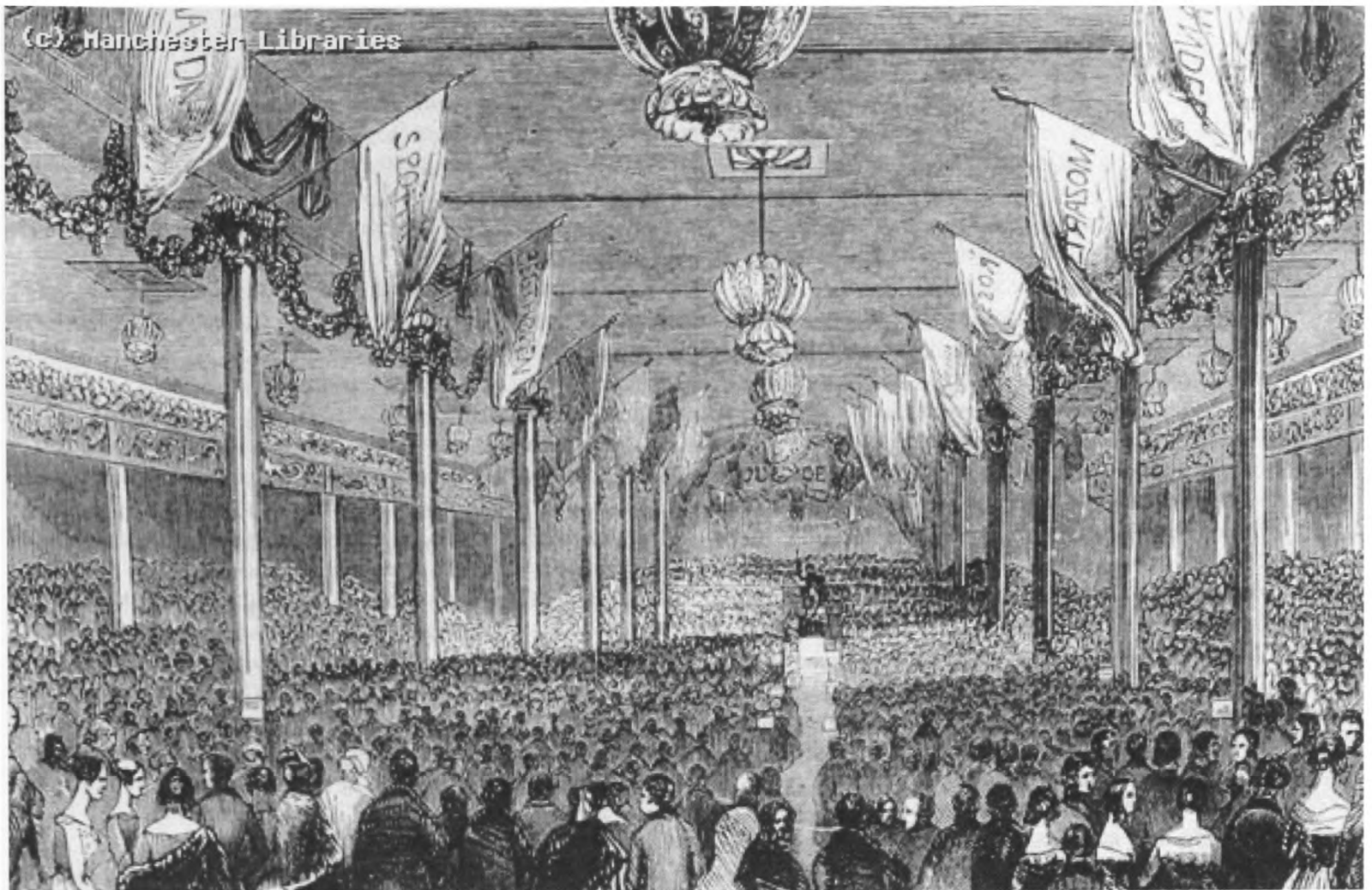
The conductor was Sir Henry Bishop, the first musician ever to be knighted.⁷⁷ Again all aspects of the festival were reported in detail in the press.⁷⁸ Over two thousand attended each night, Henry Bishop conducted in his academic dress, the violinist Herr Ernst, recently arrived from Europe, was a major attraction and the contralto Miss Hawes was stung by a wasp at rehearsal after hitting a piano key.

One of the many other uses of the Free Trade Hall was for massed singing classes for workers (see Fig. 3.15). Both John Hullah and Robert Weston held classes and concerts for workers using a fixed doh method to read music rather than singing 'by ear'.⁷⁹ The popularity of this system and the tonic sol-fa not only ensured a substantial number of proficient amateur singers in festival societies but also created larger and better-educated audiences.

⁷⁷ Henry Bishop is mainly remembered today for his songs, *Home Sweet Home* and *Lo! Hear the Gentle Lark* and has had some attention in recent scholarly literature. See Wollenberg, *Music at Oxford*, 203-6.

⁷⁸ 'Manchester Easter Grand Musical Festival', *Manchester Guardian*, Wednesday, 10 April 1844.

⁷⁹ See correspondence collection entitled 'Lancashire and Cheshire Working Men's Singing Classes' held at Manchester Local Studies and Archives, GB127.M400/1-95.



**Figure 3.15: Great Choral Meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Workmen
Free Trade Hall, 1844.**

Source: Manchester Local Image Collection I.D. m51911.

Also in G. R. Catt, *Pictorial History of Manchester* (London: n.d.).⁸⁰

Nearly a thousand voices, four out of five reported to be factory hands instructed in the Hullah method of singing, were assembled in the Free Trade Hall with Mr Weston as the conductor. One detailed report espouses the moral value of such singing activity:

Music as a recreation, is one of the most delightful and spiritual in which the mind can indulge; it is the sister-art of painting and poetry, and it is the hand-maiden of religion; and the gradual extension of it among our labouring classes is attended with an important moral effect, tending to soothe and harmonise, to implant a relish of domestic happiness, and a distaste for those haunts where the oath of the debauchee and the im[ap]preciation of anger are heard, and where the “concord of sweet sounds” never falls ... All hail! then, to those men who, by placing this charming accomplishment within the reach of the humblest, provide a sinless and exalting amusement for the

⁸⁰ Picture is entitled ‘Public Halls, Free Trade Hall. Great Choral Meeting, Peter Street, From F. R. Colt, pictorial history of Manchester of 942.7384 c4’ and held in Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Local Image I.D. m51911. Also found in George R. Catt, *The Pictorial History of Manchester* (London: Pictorial Times Office, 1845?), 11.

poor man, who, while his voice is attuned to melody, feels the chords of his heart moved by the finest of music of the universe – peace and good-will to all that breathe.⁸¹

While these words did not reflect the reality of living conditions of Manchester's working-class, Friedrich Engels' book of the same year describes Manchester as 'a Hell on Earth':

[I]nstead of being exaggerated, it is far from black enough to convey a true impression of the filth, ruin, and uninhabitableness, the defiance of all considerations of cleanliness, ventilation, and health which characterise the construction of this single district, containing at least twenty to thirty thousand inhabitants.⁸²

Despite the realities of the working-class poor, choral societies were promoted by the middle classes in many towns for the moral and social advancement of their workers. The Hargreaves Choral Society was established in Manchester in 1841 as 'an ornament to the town and a benefit to the rising generation, as a school for musical instruction'.⁸³ The choir performed various oratorios in the Free Trade Hall, including the first unabridged version of *Israel in Egypt* in 1841.⁸⁴ It had been common practice previously to omit choruses and replace them with other selections by the same or even different composers. As *The Manchester Times* reported with considerable insight:

The consequence has been that the oratorio [*Israel in Egypt*], in its entirety, has been a sealed book; and many of its best and quite difficult choruses have been quite unknown, even to the professional musicians. The attempt to grapple with the difficulties attendant upon the production of the whole oratorio, with the comparative short time for the practice of the choruses, of which many of the orchestra had not even heard before, was considered to be a most arduous one, and at least a partial failure was confidently predicted. The style of Thursday

⁸¹ 'Great Choral Meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Workmen', *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 8 June 1844.

⁸² Friedrich Engels and Florence Kelley, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1892), 45. This description of this 'single district' refers to a concealed section of the 'Old Town of Manchester' behind the 'decent' Millers Street and accessed through numerous passages.

⁸³ 'Hargreaves Choral Society: Annual Meeting of Members', *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 3 September 1842.

⁸⁴ Concert listings, programmes, word books and press cuttings are held in the Henry Watson Music Library, Manchester.

night's performance completely negated [negated] the prediction.⁸⁵

Regular profitable oratorio performances continued with reported takings of over £1,000 most years. Of particular interest is the performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in 1847, conducted by the composer (see Fig. 3.16). It had been commissioned and premiered at the Birmingham Triennial Festivals only in the previous year and was performed at Exeter Hall London with the same principal vocalists a few days before the Manchester performance. In revisions after the Birmingham premiere, the composer made 'many new movements, as connecting links ... to render the dramatic story more clear and attractive', all added for the 1847 Manchester performances.⁸⁶

⁸⁵ 'The Hargreaves Choral Society', *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 12 March 1842.

⁸⁶ 'Musical Intelligence: Rehearsal of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*', *The Morning Chronicle*, Saturday, 24 April 1847.

302, COMERT, 21A, 21B, 21C

HARGREAVES CHORAL SOCIETY.

DRESS CONCERT.

IN THE FREE TRADE HALL, PETER STREET, MANCHESTER,
ON TUESDAY EVENING, APRIL 20th, 1847;
WHEN WILL BE PERFORMED THE SACRED ORATORIO,
"ELIJAH,"
To be conducted by the Composer.....DR. FELIX MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY.

Dramatis Personæ.

ELIJAH..... <i>Bass</i>	An ANGEL.
OBADIAH..... <i>Tenor</i>	A YOUTH.
AHAB..... <i>Tenor</i>	ANGELS.
The WIDOW..... <i>Soprano</i>	PRIEST OF BAAL.
The QUEEN..... <i>Contralto</i>	The PEOPLE.

Principal Vocalists.

Miss BIRCH.	Miss KENNETH.
Miss DOLBY.	Mrs JOHN WOOD.
Mr. LOUKEY.	Miss S. KENNETH.
Mr. H. PHILLIPS.	Mr. CLOUGH.
	Mr. J. W. ISHERWOOD.
	Mr. SHELDRIKE.

Leader.....Mr. C. A. SEYMOUR. | Conductor.....Mr. JOHN WADDINGTON.

Members' Tickets.

1.—Members' tickets are transferable to ladies, to the sons of members not exceeding 21 years of age, and to strangers residing not less than six miles from Manchester; and resident non-subscribers are admissible with tickets new in each season.

2.—All parties, except members and ladies, attending the Concerts, must have their names and addresses entered in full on their respective tickets; and, to prevent obstruction, all tickets must be got ready for delivery at the doors, and they must be delivered separately.—The rule respecting the admission of non-subscribers will be strictly enforced; and with this view a complete List of the subscribers will be exhibited in the Concert Room, for reference.

The Concert Room.

3.—Admission will be REFUSED to gentlemen not attired in Evening Dress, which consists of dress coat,—black, white, or figured vest,—black trousers, and black or white cravat.

4.—There will be an interval of five minutes in the course of the Second Part, of which interval it is hoped that those parties who desire to leave before the conclusion of the Concert will avail themselves; and that no person will afterwards on any account leave until the last piece is finished.

5.—The Coachmen are to drive in line up Peter-street, and set down with their horses' heads towards Oxford-road; and on their return, to stand in Peter-street, and take up when called in the same order they set down. Coachmen will not be required to dismount.

It is requested that reference be made to the Stewards, should any inconvenience or want of accommodation be experienced.

The Doors to be opened at SIX o'clock, and the Concert to commence at SEVEN precisely.

CARE AND BEYER, Printers, 18, St. Ann's-street, Manchester.

Figure 3.16: Poster for performance of *Elijah* in April 1847 at the Free Trade Hall.
Source: Manchester Library and Information Service, The Henry Watson Library,
McRQ 780.69 Me9.⁸⁷

⁸⁷ Held in the collection 'Manchester Miscellaneous Programmes v.2:1845-1856'.

The principal vocalists on this occasion when Mendelssohn was engaged to conduct his own work in Manchester were of ‘metropolitan talent’ and included Miss Birch, Miss Dolby, Mr Lockey, and Mr Phillips.⁸⁸ These singers, well-known in their day, were a selection of those who featured at performances of *Elijah* in London’s Exeter Hall some days earlier, with Mendelssohn conducting in the presence of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert. The tenor Mr Lockey appears to be the only singer present in Manchester who had performed *Elijah* at the Birmingham premiere the previous year. Local vocalists in Manchester that were called upon to augment the performance included Miss Kenneth, and sister Miss Susan Kenneth, Mrs John Wood, and Messrs Clough, J. Isherwood and Mr Sheldrick, all listed on the right hand side of the poster. No records could be found that indicated what roles any of the singers played. The chorus master of the local Hargreaves Choral Society, Mr John Waddington often had Jnr attached to his name in advertisements in *Manchester Times* in years previous to 1847. Mr Seymour’s name is found in numerous advertisements around the country as either a leader or a rank and file violinist in festival orchestras, indicating he travelled the oratorio circuit.⁸⁹ Perhaps the best remembered musician today on this poster, apart from Mendelssohn, is the contralto, teacher and composer, Charlotte Sainton-Dolby (née Dolby) (1821-1885) who has her own entry in *New Grove*.⁹⁰

Mendelssohn was lauded by the Manchester public, held aloft and praised as a genius: ‘So then that mysterious potency which we call genius is *not* dead; does not even sleep!’⁹¹ It can be seen that the combination of the idolised composer Mendelssohn with the breadth of subject and grand orchestration of his religious music *Elijah*, performed within the spaciousness of the Free Trade Hall, created a contemporary musical monument. The

⁸⁸ ‘Mendelssohn’s “Elijah”: Hargreaves Choral Society’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 23 April 1847.

⁸⁹ Mr Seymour is mentioned as playing violin in oratorio performances in London, Gloucester, Edinburgh, Hereford, and Bradford in various newspapers.

⁹⁰ Nigel Burton and Sophie Fuller, ‘Sainton-Dolby [née Dolby], Charlotte (Helen)’, in S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 22; London: Macmillan, 2001), 114. The authors state ‘[Mendelssohn] wrote the contralto part of *Elijah* with her [Dolby] in mind.’

⁹¹ *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 24 April 1847, 50.

massive assemblage of the people of Manchester on the ‘sacred ground’ to worship Mendelssohn’s sacred oratorio, melded with the majestic Free Trade Hall erected as a moral symbol to ‘democratic rights’. The symbiotic relationship of these factors reflects a monumental ideology of the time that promoted such festival performances.

The legendary Charles Hallé was involved in the 1847 Manchester performance of *Elijah* and, later, more oratorio performances held in the ensuing New Free Trade Hall as part of the Orchestral Concerts Series. The Hallé Orchestra, established in 1858, has been well documented and generally overshadows all other musical interests of scholars writing about music in Manchester.⁹² Every year, Hallé held a number of oratorio nights within his concert series. Thousands attended, as Fig. 3.17 illustrates. Handel’s *Judas Maccabaeus* made an annual appearance – perhaps because it was the most profitable and most popular work in the repertoire at the time.⁹³

There was never to be another fully-fledged festival lasting three or four days, after the one of 1836 at which Malibran died of ‘over-exertion’. The grand New Free Trade building where large-scale oratorio performances survived in a different format was also to become a monument to Manchester’s history.

⁹² Numerous texts show how central the Hallé Orchestra was to Manchester’s musical history including: Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*; C. B. Rees and John Barbirolli, *One Hundred Years of the Hallé* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957); and Beale, *Music, Money, Maestros & Management*.

⁹³ Kennedy, *The Hallé Tradition*, 41.

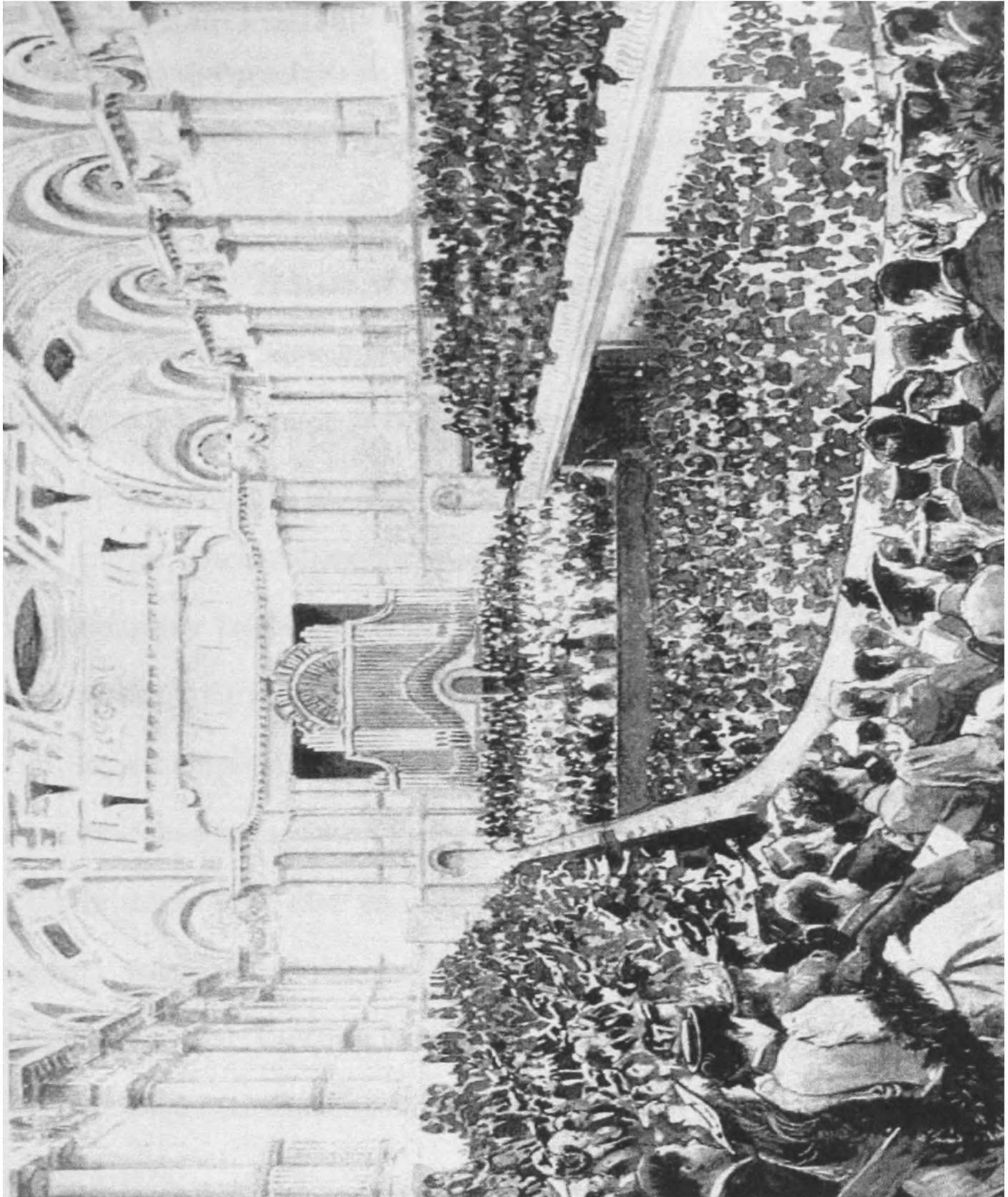


Figure 3.17: Oratorio Night, Manchester Free Trade Hall, ?1885.

Source: Manchester Local Image Collection I.D m51883.

Illustration by H. E. Tidmarsh also reproduced in *Manchester Old and New*.⁹⁴

⁹⁴ See Plate 17 in William Arthur Shaw, *Manchester Old and New* (London, 1894-6), 50. Two versions of this image entitled 'Public Halls, Free Trade Hall, Manchester, Oratorio Night from William Arthur Shaw, *Manchester Old and New*' are held at Manchester Local Studies and Archives, Local Image Collection I.D. m51883 and I.D. m51899.

3.3 Birmingham Festivals

From the beginning, these festivals were inextricably linked with Birmingham's General Hospital, which commenced in 1766 and soon ran up an enormous debt.⁹⁵ As the institution was a charitable one, doctors offered their services gratis. A festival in 1768 culminated with a performance of *Messiah* which 'met astonishingly with the most distinguished applause' in St Philip's Church at a time when acclamation, especially in a church or performance of religious music anywhere, was regarded as highly irreverent. The profits, including the proceeds from two balls, amounted to £299 and were donated to the General Hospital. Another festival followed ten years later, but it was not until the festival of 1784 that the Birmingham Triennial Festivals were established. These festivals were a source of charitable funds for the General Hospital for over a century until their demise in 1912. Of particular interest are the vast festivals held in the grand Birmingham Town Hall erected in 1834, just three years before Queen Victoria ascended the throne.

Unlike that of most other towns investigated in this dissertation, the history of the Birmingham Triennial Festivals has been recorded by a number of writers.⁹⁶ Joseph Sutcliffe Smith divided 'The Great Festivals' neatly into the following four time spans:

Part I 1708–1800. The building of the General Hospital and the beginning of Joseph Moore's activities.

Part II 1800–1850. The building of the Town Hall, Mendelssohn's visits, and the first performance of *Elijah* especially commissioned for the festival.

⁹⁵ For the very early intimate relationships between music festivals and the General Hospital see the writings of John Thackray Bunce, *The Birmingham General Hospital and Triennial Musical Festivals: a series of papers from 'Aris's Birmingham Gazette' ... with additions*. (Birmingham: Benjamin Hall, 1858).

⁹⁶ The list includes: Charles Pye, *A Brief Account of the General Hospital near Birmingham, together with the Musical Festivals Celebrated for its Benefit* (Birmingham, 1820); Lowell Mason, *Musical Letters from Abroad, including detailed accounts of the Birmingham, Norwich and Dusseldorf Music Festivals of 1852* (Boston, 1853); William Charles Stockley, *Fifty Years of Music in Birmingham: Being the Reminiscences of W. C. Stockley from 1850 to 1900* (Birmingham: Hudson & Son, 1913); Joseph Sutcliffe Smith, *The Story of Music in Birmingham* (Cornish Bros.: Birmingham, 1945); Margaret Handford, *Sounds Unlikely: Six Hundred Years of Music in Birmingham, 1392-1992* (Birmingham: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1992); Anne Elliott, *The Music Makers: a Brief History of the Birmingham Triennial Music Festivals 1784-1912* (Birmingham Library Services, 2000); and Antje Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture: A Comparative History of 19th-Century Leipzig and Birmingham* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

Part III 1850–1885. The achievements of the chorus and orchestra under Sir Michael Costa and Dr Hans Richter.

Part IV 1885–1912. The English conductor Sir Henry Wood and a central position given to the music of Sir Edward Elgar.

While it is impossible in this dissertation to examine all the festivals between 1784 and 1912 or even just those of the nineteenth century, several will be selected as focal points to show how these festivals developed into a long-standing monument in the majestic Birmingham Town Hall. The large-scale celebrations of the festivals fitted hand in glove with the spacious building that reflected a Victorian civic pride and the ideals of the local populace.

3.3.1 The First Triennial Festival of 1784

This festival is a good starting point to examine how the Birmingham festivals developed into the grand events inside the town hall in the following century. As stated previously, the specific focus of the festivals was to raise money for the General Hospital, and the 1784 festival, directed by Viscount Dudley, was no exception in that it made a profit of £703 for the hospital charity. 1784 was also the year of the epic centenary celebrations of Handel's birth in Westminster Abbey, where thousands of performers assembled, as documented by Burney.⁹⁷ By the time of the Birmingham Festival that year, the 'large double drums' used at the Abbey had been requisitioned and used in St Philip's Church.

These early festivals were not without incident: a quarrel with the proprietor of a hall used for the Miscellaneous Concerts in 1787, a cancelled festival when another hall was burnt down in 1793, the use of the vigilante group 'Birmingham Association of Infantry' to keep at bay the pick-pockets who 'infested' the town when the music meetings were on, and the starving buckle-makers, perhaps with some inciting by pick-pockets, setting upon the shoe-lace clad patrons attending the festival in 1796. John Bunce reported on the situation:

⁹⁷ Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, 1784*, xi-xxxviii.

We are sorry to record the circumstances that the town was infested with numerous pick-pockets, who came down specially for the Music Meetings, and of whose depredations the newspapers of the day made serious complaint. To effect their fraudulent designs the thieves made use of an ingenious device. Shoe-buckles were then going out of use amongst fashionable people, in favour of shoe-strings, and Birmingham being the great manufactory of buckles, the wearers of strings were decidedly unpopular. Taking advantage of the local feeling, the thieves hustled the wearers of shoe-strings, denounced them as unpatriotic despisers of fine old English customs, and in tumult which naturally ensued contrived to reap a good harvest⁹⁸

Joseph Moore (1766-1851) was a successful businessman, and the driving force behind the growth of the festivals in the early nineteenth century. He selected music, engaged principal singers and orchestral players, and when St Philip's Church became too small for the triennial festivals, was a strong proposer of a town hall with an organ. He also travelled to Berlin to visit Mendelssohn, who (as is well known) later wrote and conducted several commissions for the Birmingham Festival.⁹⁹

Messiah was a popular choice at the early festivals and was featured on the last day (a Friday), usually to sell out audiences.¹⁰⁰ Each festival aimed at outdoing the previous one, and was to be on a 'more extensive scale'.¹⁰¹ The size of the 'band', the audience and the profits grew dramatically with each successive festival. Overall, the festivals had raised a total of £5,461 by the turn of the century, which liquidated the hospital debt.¹⁰² From 1805, *Messiah* with Mozart's additional accompaniments and using a 'bigger band' was the norm and the festival expanded further to four days by 1820.

By 1816, the Birmingham Oratorio Society and the Festival Committee drew up a legal agreement that enabled rehearsals to be held in the interval from one festival to the

⁹⁸ John Thackray Bunce, *A History of the Birmingham General Hospital and the Musical Festivals* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1873), 88.

⁹⁹ See Table 3.2: Works commissioned for the Birmingham Triennial Festival (1834-1900).

¹⁰⁰ *Messiah* performances were first held in the Theatre Royal and later in St Philip's. Newspapers also reported of these early festivals 'Balls at the Hotel each night'. See *The Times*, 16 August 1787.

¹⁰¹ *The Morning Chronicle*, 9 June 1817.

¹⁰² For detailed figures see Pye, *A Brief Account of the General Hospital near Birmingham, together with the Musical Festivals Celebrated for its Benefit*.

next, thereby saving the expense of engaging chorus members from distant towns. As

William Bennett explains:

The agreement which stated the rate of pay for the choristers, contained a long list of rules ... It was signed with the autograph signature of 22 trebles—any members under age were signed for by their parents or guardians—17 Male Altos, 22 Tenors and 24 Basses, one Bass being unable to write made his mark – an X – which was witnessed by the Steward of his section of the Choir.¹⁰³

It is apparent from such an agreement that big business, music and the law had joined forces as early as 1823 in Birmingham to produce profitable oratorio festivals.

With these further savings, the profits between 1802 and 1829 reached a staggering £38,100. Provincial Birmingham was outdoing the metropolis and it was reported that the 1817 Birmingham meeting attracted musical talent from all parts of the United Kingdom, with the biggest sum of money ever collected since the ‘great meetings of Westminster Abbey’.¹⁰⁴ Even the onlookers became excessive in number and caused havoc at the 1823 festival:

Such was the anxiety to have a peek at the ‘great folks’ yesterday that several hundred feet of the posts and railings in the church-yard were broken down, and it became necessary this day, when they were replaced, to support them with strong spurs.¹⁰⁵

While the chorus members were now all local, the band was still imported with ‘all the great talent of the kingdom’ (some even from Paris) and was assembled to produce ‘the finest musical effect’, as claimed in an 1823 advertisement of the ‘scheme’ [programme] printed in *Jackson’s Oxford Journal* and included at Fig. 3.18.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ William Bennett, *Birmingham Town Hall Centenary, 1834-1934* (Birmingham, UK: City of Birmingham School of Printing Central School of Arts & Crafts, 1934), 8.

¹⁰⁴ *The Morning Chronicle*, 27 March 1820.

¹⁰⁵ *The Morning Chronicle*, 11 October 1823.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 13 September 1823.

The performance was on a grand scale in Birmingham and the crowds that reverently purchased tickets and flocked to attend *Messiah* were enormous. Thousands also purchased prints of *Messiah* copied from a painting held in Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford (see Fig. 3.19). Newspapers as far afield as Edinburgh reflected this fascination with festivals in lengthy reports, with the *Caledonian Mercury* commenting: ‘The church was crowded to excess this morning to hear *The Messiah*, which has been so frequently performed as to render it unnecessary to enter into a lengthened detail’.¹⁰⁷ A London newspaper provides a more graphic description of another performance:

Saint Philip’s church was this morning crowded at the early hour of ten o’clock; hundreds were sent back from the doors, yet the naves, the galleries, the staircase and indeed every part – however – inconvenient for sight or sound were thronged even to suffocation. The great object of attraction was the *Messiah*, which, far from a novelty to English ears, is yet the most popular Oratorio ever composed.¹⁰⁸

The prowess of the city to have organised on the ‘grandest scale’ the best chorus and orchestra possible is apparent at all these festivals, as described by Antje Pieper.¹⁰⁹ She compares and analyses the ethos and organization of Birmingham’s Triennial Festival and Leipzig’s Gewandhaus, providing insights into the architecture and interior design of the buildings, specific musical traditions, performance practice and reception and attitudes towards composers and conductors. Such aspects and attitudes of the ethos and organization of the festivals contributed greatly to an overall monumental ideology behind the festival movement.

¹⁰⁷ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 16 October 1826.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 7 October 1826.

¹⁰⁹ The ethos and organisation of the Birmingham Triennial Festivals by the town’s emerging middle-class has been well documented and contrasted with Leipzig in Antje Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture*.

BIRMINGHAM MUSICAL FESTIVAL,

FOR THE BENEFIT OF
THE GENERAL HOSPITAL,
OCTOBER 7, 8, 9, & 10, 1823.

PATRON,
HIS MOST EXCELLENT MAJESTY.

PRESIDENT, THE RIGHT HON. THE EARL TALBOT.

VICE-PRESIDENTS,
THE NOBILITY AND PRINCIPAL GENTRY OF THE COUNTIES OF WARWICK,
STAFFORD, WORCESTER, AND SALOP.

OUTLINE OF THE PERFORMANCES.

MORNING.

On TUESDAY, October 7, FULL CATHEDRAL SERVICE, as chanted at Westminster Abbey, will be performed at St. PHILIP'S CHURCH, and a SERMON preached for the Benefit of the Charity by the Honourable and Right Rev. the LORD BISHOP of OXFORD. In the course of the Service, some of the finest Anthems will be introduced, and the whole strength of the Vocal Body will assist in the Performance.

On WEDNESDAY, a GRAND SELECTION of SACRED MUSIC, in the course of which will be introduced a NEW SACRED DRAMA, the Music selected from Winter's celebrated "TRIONFO," the Poetry by the Reverend Gentleman to whom the last Meeting was indebted for the new Translation of the Oratorio of the Seasons. The performance will commence with KNYVETT'S "CORONATION ANTHEM," and will comprise part of the "REQUIEM" of MOZART; a Selection of concerted Pieces from HANDEL, HAYDN, PERGOLESI, LEO, MARCELLO, CROFT, and others, interspersed with favourite Songs by the principal Singers.

On THURSDAY, the Sacred Oratorio of the "MESSIAH," in which part of Mozart's Accompaniments for the Wind Instruments will be introduced.

On FRIDAY, a GRAND SELECTION, in which will be included "SPRING and SUMMER," from Haydn's Oratorio of the "SEASONS," the new words to which were adapted for the last Meeting, and were so favourably received. The repetition of this beautiful composition will derive increased effect from the superiority of the Band selected for the present Meeting, as well as from the absence of those imperfections inseparable from the first performance of so learned and difficult a piece of Music. The Selection will also comprise part of a "Celebrated Mass," written by MOZART expressly for Festival Occasions, and one of his grandest works; parts of a MASS of LOMELLI, of the Oratorios of "ISRAEL in EGYPT," "JUDAH," &c. and a variety of favourite Airs by the most eminent composers.

EVENING.

On TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY, and FRIDAY, GRAND MISCELLANEOUS CONCERTS will be performed at the THEATRE ROYAL, consisting of the finest Symphonies, Overtures, and Concertantes of the greatest Masters; Concertos by the principal Instrumental Performers; Songs, Duets, and Glees, by the principal Vocal Performers; and Scenes and Finales from the Operas of Rossini, Mozart, &c. and from other eminent Works.

On THURSDAY Evening, a GRAND DRESS BALL will take place at the THEATRE, which will be splendidly illuminated, and the area of the Pit, in addition to the full extent of the Stage, which has been greatly enlarged, will be elegantly and appropriately fitted up as an Assembly Room. The celebrated FRENCH BAND, employed at the balls of the Nobility, and at Almack's, in London, under the direction of Messrs. MICHAU, COLLINET, and MUSARD, is engaged for this occasion.

PRINCIPAL VOCAL PERFORMERS.

MADAME CATALANI,

MRS. SALMON, and MISS STEPHENS,

MISS TRAVIS, MISS SYMONDS, MISS FLETCHER, MISS HEATON, &c. &c.

Mr. BRAHAM and Mr. VAUGHAN,

SIGNOR PLACCI,

Messrs. EVANS, GOLDING, WHALL, T. GREATOREX, GATTIE, BLACKBOURN, AND THORNE,

Mr. KNYVETT and Mr. BELLAMY.

The INSTRUMENTAL BAND contains all the great talent of the kingdom that could be obtained, and its numerical strength is fully adequate to produce the very finest musical effects. In the list of Violin and Viola Performers, thirty-one are from the King's Concert, Philharmonic, and King's Theatre, four from the Conservatoire at Paris, and the remainder are Leaders of Concerts from various large towns. Among the other Instruments, there is scarcely one individual who is not capable of most respectably taking the lead in his own particular department of the Orchestra.

Messrs. CRAMER and MORI are appointed Leaders of the Band; and Mr. GREATOREX, the Conductor, will preside at the Organ and Piano Forte.

The Scheme contains many new and difficult pieces, some of which have never before been performed in this country, and as they cannot fail to be executed by such a band with the greatest precision and correctness, it may be justly expected, that the present Festival will prove one of the most perfect musical performances ever given in the kingdom.

The CHORUSES will be upon the same grand scale as at the last Festival; but as the Birmingham Oratorio Choral Society now enjoys all the advantages to be gained from great experience and constant practice, and as the additional voices required have been selected with the greatest care, a much higher degree of perfection may be expected in this department than has ever hitherto been attained.

The Doors to be opened at the Church at Half-past Nine precisely, and the Performances to begin at Eleven; at the Theatre, to open at Half-past Six, and the Performances to begin at Half-past Seven.

The Box Book will be opened at the Blue Coat Charity School on Saturday the 4th of October, at Ten o'clock in the morning, for taking Places in the Boxes for Tuesday and Wednesday Evenings; and on Monday morning at the same hour, to take places for Friday Evening. The persons present at the opening of the book to determine their priority of choice by ballot.

Families desirous of engaging Apartments during the Festival are requested to make application at the office of the Birmingham Gazette, where the Register of Lodgings may be inspected. A Committee has this year been appointed to superintend that part of the arrangements, and Visitors applying will find that ample accommodation has been provided upon reasonable terms.

Figure 3.18: The 'Scheme' for the 1823 Birmingham Triennial Festival.

Source: *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 13 September 1823.

The 'Scheme' is the word used for the programme at this time.



Figure 3.19: A print for sale at the 1826 performance of *Messiah* in Birmingham.

Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 224836, L55.3¹¹⁰

The original painting is located at Magdalen College Chapel, Oxford, and was booty from a Spanish galleon. This print has simplified the background with two plain crosses.

¹¹⁰ This print is held in a collection entitled 'Birmingham Musical Festival Programmes for 1826' at Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 224836, L55.3.

The 1829 festival saw the introduction of the Grand Operatic Selection presented in full costume at the evening concerts, yet another ploy by Joseph Moore to keep the profits coming in. Fig. 3.20 shows a ticket for one of these operatic concerts. It was remarkable that opera with its immoral overtones would be included in a festival with oratorio, which was widely regarded as 'the noblest of musical genres' and which was associated with religion, morality and self-improvement. This festival also saw the first appearance of the Italian Michael Costa, as a nineteen-year-old singer, who was later to become a celebrated conductor of this festival and many others around England.

William Bennett in his booklet, *Birmingham Town Hall Centenary 1834-1934*, identifies the competitiveness of other towns' festivals and the need for a town hall in Birmingham to keep the festivals profitable.

The great success of the Birmingham Festival had, however, caused the directors of the Three Choirs Festival to make strenuous efforts to secure musical supremacy and Moore was forced to the conclusion 'that if he could not raise a finer and better room (than St Philip's Church) for the morning performance, the Festivals would soon become unprofitable'.¹¹¹

Chapter 7 explores more fully the civic competition between the towns in this study.

¹¹¹ Bennett, *Birmingham Town Hall Centenary, 1834-1934*, 9.



Figure 3.20: Ticket to the Operatic Selection for the 1829 Birmingham Triennial Festival

Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, HC/GH/6/1/13.¹¹²

¹¹² This ticket is held in the 'Grand Operatic Selection' at Birmingham Archives and Heritage, HC/GH/6/1/13.

3.3.2 The Birmingham Town Hall

With pressure from Moore, the Festival Committee and the rate-paying public, the idea for a town hall took hold with the Street Commissioners (the body of unelected men that served as Birmingham's only form of local government at the time).¹¹³ An Improvement Act was passed in 1828 with the clause 'That the said Town Hall ... for the space of six weeks before the day appointed for any Musical Festival ... be under the control of the Governors of the General of the General Hospital', supposedly for the staging of oratorio festivals.¹¹⁴

With a concrete vision for a town hall, *The Times* launched a design competition that resulted in 67 entries. Joseph Hansom, probably better remembered today in connection with the famous cab of that name, and Edward Welch were the selected architects. Unlike other town halls of this era, chambers for an emerging city council were absent, and the building was to be solely a venue for public gatherings, performances of music and political speech making. Regarded by many as the first substantial example of nineteenth-century Roman Revival architecture in England (see Fig. 3.21), the building was described by the architects as 'a simple Corinthian temple closely modelled on the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Roman Forum'.¹¹⁵ Disastrously, Hansom went bankrupt and the building was still being completed a number of years after the first festival. This newspaper description from 1834 provides a clear idea of the grand exterior of the imposing building:

The building itself, the new Town Hall – the pride of Birmingham, and an ornament to England – is well worthy of the admiration bestowed upon it. Standing on the brow of one of the steep ascents from the great high thoroughfare of the town, and elevated again, considerably above the street level, by a rustic basement of massive and rock-like masonry this noble edifice rises like the Parthenon on the summit of the Athenian Acropolis; and being an oblong, peripteral building, with a fine Corinthian colonnade, running all round its exterior, with a chastely-proportioned pediment, and fine entablature and frieze,

¹¹³ Street Commissioners or Improvement Commissioners as they were called in other towns looked after street paving, drainage, lighting, cleansing, dealing with public nuisances, and providing watchmen. They were funded by ratepayers in 1828.

¹¹⁴ Bennett, *Birmingham Town Hall Centenary, 1834-1934*, 9.

¹¹⁵ Andy Foster and George Demidowicz, *Birmingham* (Pevsner Architectural Guides; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 55-7.

it strikingly resembles one of the Temples of Sun at Heliopolis or Baalbeck, though greatly inferior to that colossal edifice in size. Its sight, upon an eminence, occasions it to be seen from almost every point of view in the town; and, as it is perfectly classical in its form and elevation, and is constructed of fine grey Aglesea marble, it has all the appearance at a very little distance, of a fine old Grecian temple in that greyness of antiquity, which even the whitest marble of Paros attains after a long lapse of years; and this illusion is greatly heightened by the unfinished state of the pediment, which a slight exercise of the imagination converts into a building partially in ruins, instead of one that has not yet been completed.¹¹⁶

This grand Victorian vision and monument was to house the Birmingham Triennial Festivals.



Figure 3.21: The Birmingham Town Hall.
Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/ B11/4211.¹¹⁷

Many lithographs of the building held in the Birmingham Archive boldly state the dimensions, capacity, and use of the hall of which all should be aware:

¹¹⁶ 'Birmingham New Town Hall during the Musical Festival', *Preston Chronicle*, 18 October 1834.

¹¹⁷ Note beside this print reads 'Birmingham Town Hall soon after completion'. Scrapbook collection at Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/B11/4211, 120.

The exterior of the Building is of Anglesea White Marble

Extreme length 266 feet

Length of the Hall 140 feet

--- breadth 104 ---

Breadth --- 65 ---

--- height 83 ---

Height --- 65 ---

The Building is intended to celebrate Musical Festivals – the Hall for the purposes of
Town's Meetings will contain upwards of 8,000 persons

Upon its opening in 1834, visitors to Birmingham Town Hall were awestruck not only by the building's impressive Roman revival architecture which dominated the city centre, but also by the grandness of the interior and its specially commissioned organ:

If the exterior of the edifice was imposing, its interior was even more so; ... The noble proportion of the vast unbroken space with its ample roof and ceiling supported by beams reaching entirely across the whole building, without the aid of buttress, arch or pillar, filled the beholder with surprise; while the gigantic organ towering with its clusters of gilded pillars like the hollow masts of some large ship of war, from the orchestra to the roof, begot impressions of force and power not easily to be surpassed;¹¹⁸

Focusing on the power of the organ and other instruments, *The Times* stated that

this enormous organ is furnished with a stop, called a *posaum* [posaune], or trombone, which you meet with the organ at Haarlem, and of such calibre and force, it seemed to tear up the orchestra. The metal pipes are 40 feet high and 20 inches in diameter; but on the left side of the organ stood the ophicleide, an instrument just imported from abroad; it stood up made of shining brass, and looked very much like the chimney of a steam-vessel.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ 'Birmingham New Town Hall during the Musical Festival'.

¹¹⁹ 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Times*, 8 October 1834.

Supposedly, other competent judges described the power of the organ as ‘equal to a band of two hundred additional performers’.¹²⁰ Such hyperbole was common in journalists’ treatment of festivals, and a feature that seemed to catch the readers’ imaginations. Not only was the ‘stupendous’ organ aurally impressive, it was also immediately and visually impressive to those first audiences because of the size of the pipes that were incorporated into decorative case fronts, something not seen in England before this time (see Fig. 3.22). A precedent was set for other towns such as Liverpool and Leeds, which would later build enormous organs with decorative case fronts.

¹²⁰ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Derby Mercury*, 18 June 1834.

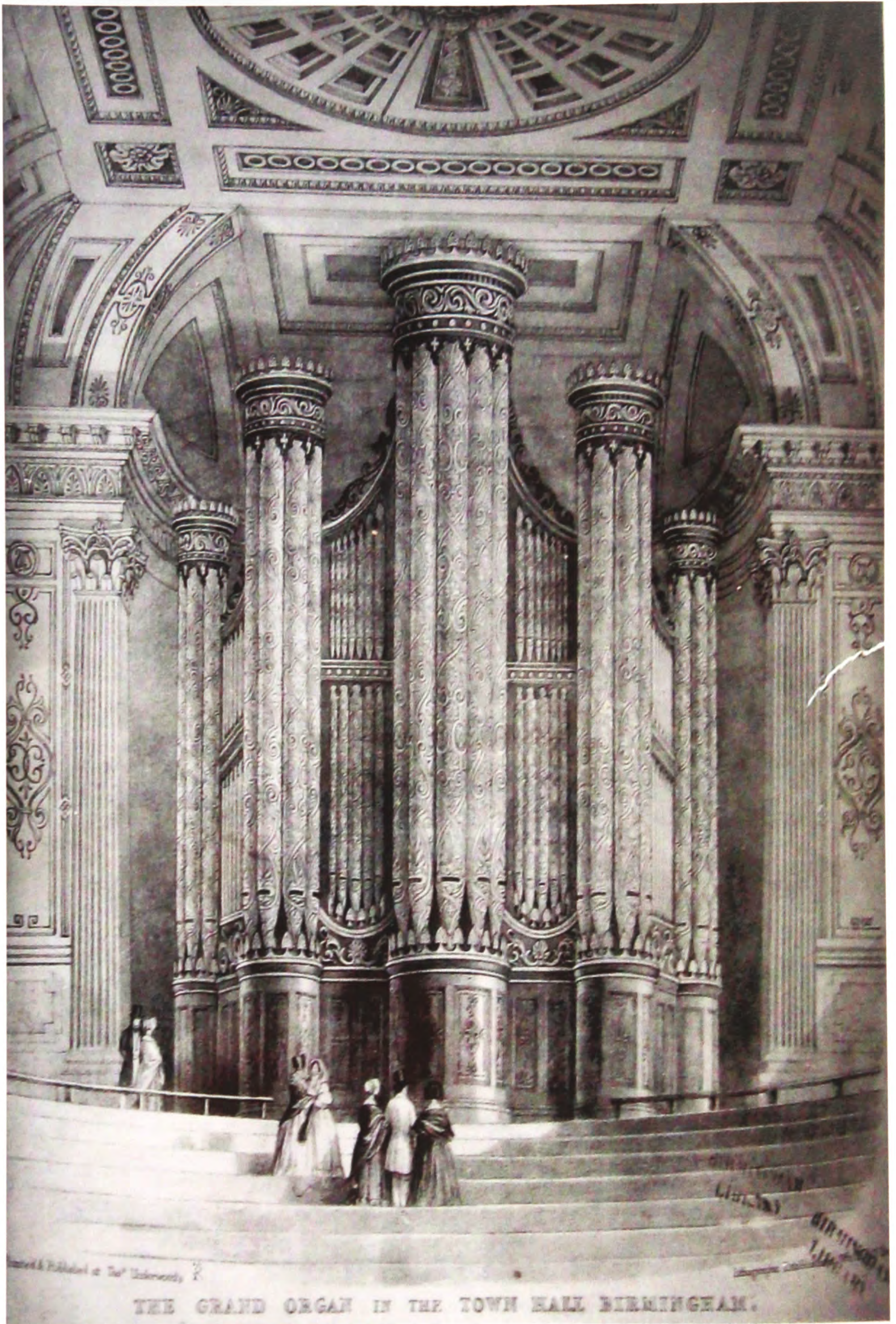


Figure 3.22: The Grand Birmingham Organ with its decorated casing.
 Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/B11/4211, 81.(Pershouse Collection)

3.3.3 The Birmingham Triennial Festival in 1834

Some doubts existed as to whether the 1834 festival would be held in the unfinished Town Hall. By June, however, newspapers all over the country were announcing that

the Birmingham Musical Festival will take place under the especial patronage of their Majesties, in the second week of October next. We are informed, on authority, that the spacious Hall, in which the performances are to be held, is rapidly finishing; and that the arrangements for the meeting, are making on a scale of magnificence far surpassing all former precedent. The Hall will undoubtedly be one of the finest and best adapted rooms in Europe for the production of grand musical effects.¹²¹

This was to be a grand occasion of ‘the most perfect displays of musical excellence that the kingdom affords’, conducted by Mr Knyvett with assistant conductor Mr Muden.¹²² An impressive orchestra of 400 players assembled from around the country and it included the spectacular contra-bass ophicleide, which was previously unknown in England.¹²³ Henry Harris depicts the interior of the hall at the opening festival in a drawing (see Fig. 3.24). There were over 200 chorus singers drawn from the Birmingham Choral Society to perform Handel’s *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, Spohr’s *Last Judgment* and a specially commissioned oratorio, *David* by Sigismund Neukomm. As was customary, *Israel in Egypt* was performed on the last day, though one London reporter (amongst others) was bluntly critical of the ‘selection’ system:

We expected, from a first glance at the [word] books, that we were to have been gratified with hearing the entire oratorio, for in such terms it was announced; and it was no small mortification to find some of its noble choruses and almost all its few songs and duets cut out, while others, unconnected with the work were inserted. It was a Brummagem *Israel in Egypt* and not the sterling and genuine work.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Originally reported in London’s *Morning Chronicle* and quoted in *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 31 May 1834; *Preston Chronicle*, 31 May 1834; and *Belfast News-Letter*, 6 June 1834.

¹²² Quoted from *Aris’s Birmingham Gazette* in the *Derby Mercury*, 27 August 1834.

¹²³ ‘A brass instrument apparently 12 or 14 feet in length and of corresponding diameter. In its compass it descends considerably lower than any instrument hitherto known’. See ‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 8 October 1834.

¹²⁴ ‘Birmingham Festival’, *The Times*, 10 October 1834.. The term Brummagem’s is a historic term that dates from the Middle Ages Brummagem ware or the colloquial ‘brummy’ was the term used for cheap shoddy

A Fancy Dress Ball and numerous evening concerts of classical music were held as well, a ticket for which is shown in Fig. 3.23. The advertisement for the ball read: ‘All parties who can conveniently appear in Fancy Dresses are earnestly invited to do so. In cases where it will not be convenient, they are requested to appear in Evening Dress’. A warning followed, ‘No parties will be admitted in Masks, Dominoes, or Low Characters’.¹²⁵



Figure 3.23: Detail of ticket to an evening performance Birmingham Festival 1834.
Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage.

imitation goods that originated from industrialised Birmingham. A major button industry in Birmingham in the nineteenth century led to the coinage of ‘Brummagem button’

¹²⁵ Smith, *The Story of Music in Birmingham*, 31.

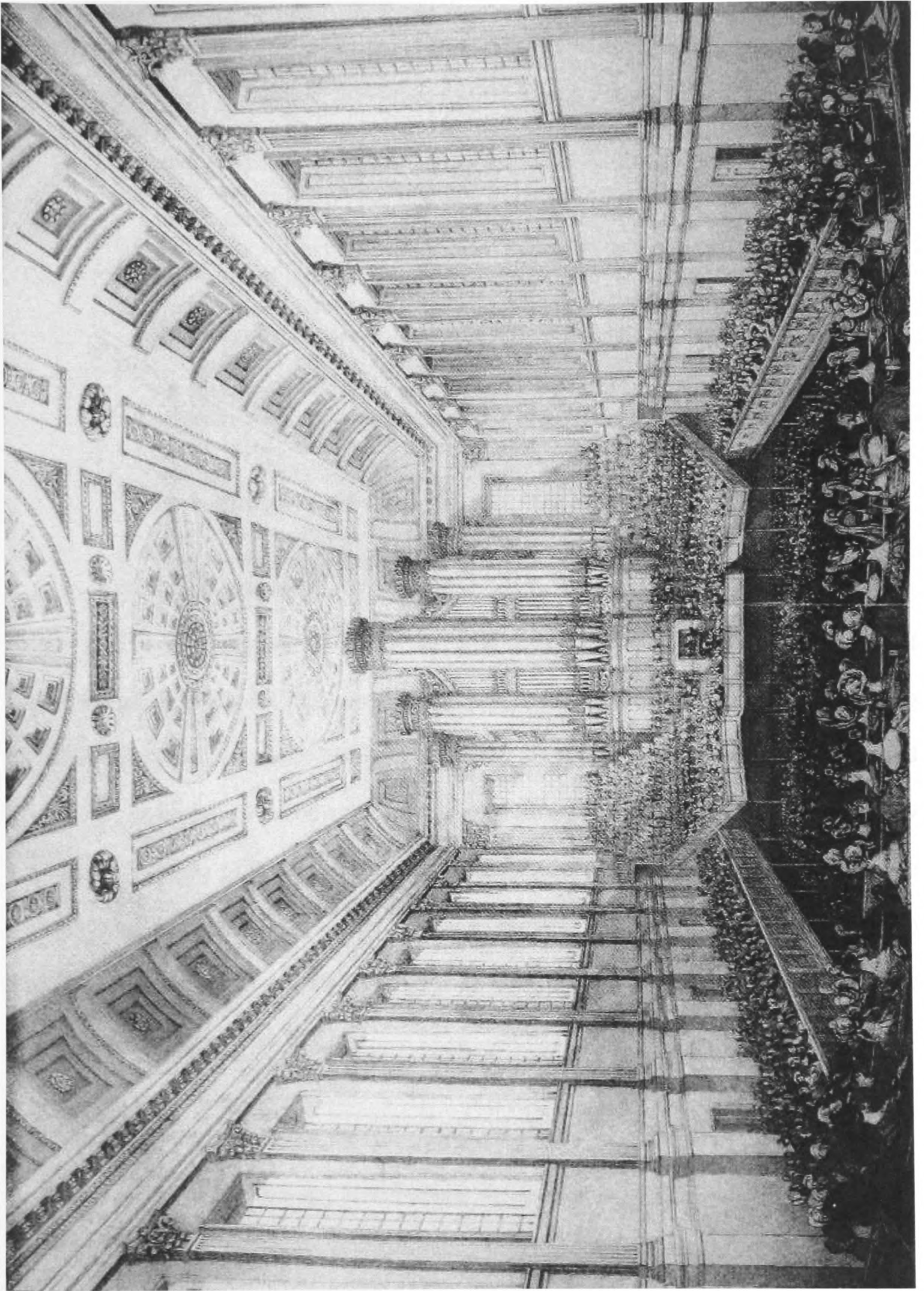


Figure 3.24: Interior of the Birmingham Town Hall during the first festival in 1834.
Source: Drawing by Henry Harris published by T. Underwood Lithographic Establishment,
Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/ B11/ 4240, 52.

Neukomm's new oratorio *David* had by far the best attendance of any event, with a crowd of around 4,000. Not all were impressed by the local zeal for the Birmingham Festival, however, as the following report attests:

It is somewhat ludicrous to hear the terms in which the inhabitants of this town express themselves when speaking of their festival and everything that belongs to it. But such is their usual custom. They believe that *they* accomplished the Reform Bill – they believe *their* member Attwood, to combine all the requisites of a statesman and an orator – and they believe in the absolute and entire perfection of all and every arrangement, plan, and execution of *their* musical entertainment. Any doubt or hesitation on this point is the unpardonable sin. And like parents who doat [dote] on the most puny of their offspring, this oratorio is the especial favourite of the Birmingham people. It was written 'to order' – to *their* order, and therefore must be, not only a good, but the best oratorio that ever was heard. We have been repeatedly told that it would supersede and eclipse the *Messiah* and the vocabulary of the compliments and commendations have been exhausted in its praise, even before it was rehearsed.¹²⁶

While this London reporter is rather sarcastic about Birmingham's apparent sense of superiority of their festival, his quotation catches the very essence of an ideology existing all around England, not just in Birmingham, that underlay the earnestness of expansion and civic competitiveness to produce something bigger and better. This was the case not only for a broader vision of society, but for a specific vision of the various aspects of oratorio festivals and their buildings, as the quotation pointedly illustrates. Today, the oratorio *David* and its composer are all but forgotten, but this was not to be the case with the festival's next commission.

3.3.4 Mendelssohn at the Birmingham Festival and the premiere of *Elijah*

At the request of Joseph Moore, Mendelssohn first appeared at the Birmingham Festival in 1837. The composer was met with immediate acclaim after conducting a performance of his oratorio *St Paul*, and performing as soloist in his second piano concerto that had been

¹²⁶ 'Birmingham Festival', *The Times*, 10 October, 1834.

commissioned by the festival committee. Mendelssohn was revered and placed on high with the ranks of Handel, as expressed in this acclamation:

Mendelssohn was greeted with reiterated plaudits, which lasted for several minutes. I repeat what has already been said in *The Chronicle*, that *St Paul*, in all probability will become the most generally and permanently popular oratorio that has been produced since the days of HANDEL.¹²⁷

Mendelssohn wrote in a letter dated 4 October 1837, ‘I had such brilliant success ... The applause and shouts at the least glimpse of me ... really made me laugh’.¹²⁸ Mendelssohn recorded his visit in a number of pen-and-ink drawings; one of the Birmingham Town Hall is included as Fig. 3.25.¹²⁹

¹²⁷ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 12 September 1837.

¹²⁸ Bunce, *A History of the Birmingham General Hospital and the Musical Festivals*, 40.

¹²⁹ For an explanation of the various cryptic details of the sketch see Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy and Felix Moscheles, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles* (London: Treubner, 1888), 210.

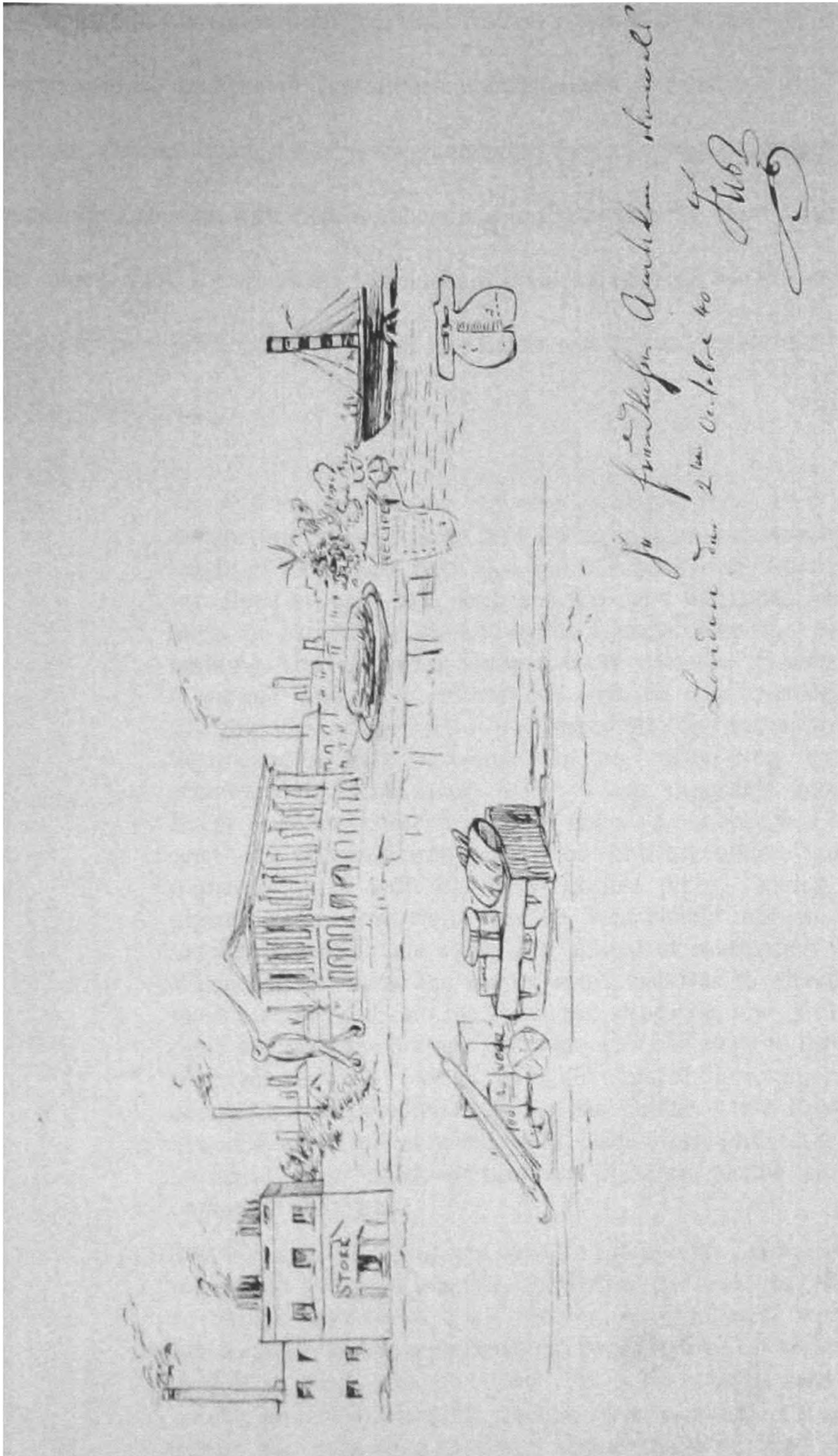


Figure 3.25: Mendelssohn's drawing of the Birmingham Town Hall in 1840.

Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/B11/4211, 17.

The German text translates as:

'In happy recollection of that time London 2 October 1840 FMB'.

Mendelssohn's absence from the 1843 festival resulted in a drop in income with fewer tickets sold, so the Festival Committee commissioned a new oratorio from him for the 1846 festival. The result was *Elijah* – 'a grand cause for excitement'. The performance was an outstanding success with eight numbers performed as encores, and it remains today one of the major events for which the Birmingham Triennial Festivals are remembered. *The Times* (and dozens of abridged versions of this article reproduced around the country) recorded every detail:

We said the streets were crowded yesterday; today they were dammed up; there was no road for foot passengers; the whole length of New-street from Hen and Chickens to the Music-hall was lined on each side, with a dense mass of human beings, eager to behold the visitors as they made their way to the building. The tops of the houses and every window, from garret to ground floor, were covered and crowded with spectators ... The first view of the hall, as we entered the great gallery to find what standing place we could – for the London press was not accommodated with secure places – was altogether dazzling. Every nook and corner was alive, not a vacant spot was to be seen. The orchestra was quite filled with executants, and the immense organ with its thirty-two-feet pipes, looking like gigantic rolls of oil-cloth, rose up from behind until its head touched the roof, like some vast animal of mysterious form. When Mendelssohn, the master spirit that was to direct this multitude, stepped into the conductor's rostrum, and gave one rapid glance at the brilliant company who had come to listen to his favourite work – for *Elijah* is the child of his adoption, the composition he prefers to all he has written – the forms of etiquette were unanimously laid aside, and one loud and universal cheer acknowledged the presence of the greatest composer of the age.

The last note of *Elijah* was drowned in a long continued and unanimous volley of plaudits, vociferous and deafening. It was as though enthusiasm, long checked, had suddenly burst its bonds, and filled the air with shouts of exultation. Mendelssohn, evidently overpowered, bowed his acknowledgements and quickly descended from his position in the conductor's rostrum; but he was compelled to appear again amidst renewed cheers and huzzas. Never was there a more thorough and speedy triumph ...¹³⁰

¹³⁰ 'The Birmingham Festival', *The Times*, 27 August 1846.

While deafening cheers greeted the adored Mendelssohn, the whole event created a vital visual and musical spectacle in the majestic Birmingham Town Hall. The oratorio's enduring success is indicated by the 1896 Novello publication of a Victorian textbook giving an extremely detailed account of *Elijah*, including a description of its premiere and reception history.¹³¹

Mendelssohn's scoring of *Elijah* for large orchestra, in itself, could be seen as a musical monument. With its huge gamut of instruments, including two ophicleides as the cornerstone of the brass section, the score vividly illustrated the intensely dramatic biblical story of the prophet Elijah. Episodes included the resurrection of a dead youth, the bringing of rain to parched Israel, the contest of the gods, and the bodily assumption of Elijah on a fiery chariot into heaven, all making an immediate impact on the sentiments of Victorian audiences. Mendelssohn's first autograph score used at this performance is now held in the Birmingham Archives.¹³² Musical Example 3.1 illustrates the grand scoring that brought to life the words of Chorus No. 38, 'Elijah the prophet break forth like a fire', in a powerful climax of the work.¹³³ This type of scoring is very similar to Costa's arrangements of Handel's oratorios, which will be discussed in Chapter 6.

¹³¹ F. G. Edwards, *The History of Mendelssohn's Oratorio 'Elijah'* ([S.l.]: Novello, 1896).

¹³² For more details about this manuscript see Elliott, *The Music Makers: a Brief History of the Birmingham Triennial Music Festivals 1784-1912*, 9-10.

¹³³ Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy, *Elia: ein Oratorium nach Worten des alten Testaments: Op. 70* (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1847), 332.

23. Major

N^o 38. Chor (♩ = 76.)

Grave.

Organo colle 4 voci * See Sir. 48, 1, 6, 7.

Musical Example 3.1: The original 1846 score of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*
 Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS1721.¹³⁴

¹³⁴ This score of *Elijah* was 'recreated' in the Birmingham Town Hall in 1998. This valuable manuscript of the first version of *Elijah* has restricted access and is held at Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS1721.

Elijah was so successful that it was performed at the opening of every subsequent triennial festival and was often referred to as the ‘immortal’ *Elijah*. More recently in 2008, ‘authentic’ performances of *Elijah* drawn from the original score have been recreated in the newly refurbished Birmingham Town Hall.¹³⁵ It was impossible to recreate the 60 male altos and orchestra of 125 as at the premiere of 1846. The town-hall organ is now tuned to concert pitch and for the performance it was replaced by one at Mendelssohn’s original pitch. However, the effect today, of the world’s only contra-bass ophicleide and use of strings, woodwind, and other brass instruments of the nineteenth century still captured the heroic grandeur of this celebrated Victorian oratorio. The marriage of the hall, the revered history of the oratorio *Elijah*, the score and the ‘genius’ composer, and the event of Mendelssohn’s bicentenary still create a grand monument today. Such recreation allows modern-day observers to see the relevance of such first performance in the development of a musical canon.¹³⁶

3.3.5 Michael Costa’s *Eli* premiered at the 1855 Birmingham Festival

As mentioned previously, Sir Michael Costa first appeared at the Birmingham Festival at the age of 19 as a solo singer. He was to become the Birmingham festival’s long-term conductor, presiding from 1849-1882.¹³⁷ He was commissioned to compose two oratorios over this time, *Eli* in 1855 and *Naaman* in 1864. Both were initially popular, especially his traditional Victorian inclusions of a ‘March’, which were released in tonic sol-fa edition for choral societies.¹³⁸ A favourite airs edition for pianoforte was also published.¹³⁹ A musical example of Costa’s grand style of arranging and composing for large orchestra as seen in

¹³⁵ Jeffrey Skidmore conducted the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment with large choir, using Derek Acock’s recreated edition of *Elijah* (based on the original of the 1846 premiere and never heard until today) on 18 October 2008.

¹³⁶ For further discussion on the musical canon see Nicholas Cook, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 29, 38, 98; and Lydia Goehr, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: an Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (rev. edn.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007), 245-53.

¹³⁷ He also conducted the Crystal Palace Great Handel Triennial Festivals as well as the Leeds Festival and others.

¹³⁸ It was common for contemporary Victorian composers to add a ‘March’ to the oratorio genre.

¹³⁹ Sir Michael Costa, *Philistines, Hark! Solo and Chorus* (Popular Choruses in Tonic Sol-fa 4; London: J. Williams, 1896); Michael Costa, *Eli: Favourite Airs for Piano* (London: Joseph Williams, 1884).

Eli is included and discussed in Chapter 6 (Musical Example 6.1).¹⁴⁰ The programme cover is shown as Fig. 3.26. Numerous periodicals and newspapers described Costa as a ‘genius composer’ after the premiere of *Eli* and refrained from making any criticism of the work as it was received with such awe, but this quotation must surely have proved to be the most insightful and accurate:

The reception given to it [*Eli*] by the audience is unparalleled even in the biographies of our most eminent composers. At the conclusion of the oratorio, the cheering was vociferous; and the waving of hats and handkerchiefs – in which the band and chorus enthusiastically joined – must have been peculiarly gratifying to the composer. The *Times*’ correspondent, after speaking of the great difficulty of criticizing the work when such praise had been bestowed on it by the public remarks, “Truth does not depend upon the mere caprice of an hour, and we shall state our impressions without hesitation. *Eli* is a work of great cleverness, displaying a large degree of musical knowledge and experience, a thorough acquaintance with the resources of orchestral instruments, a command of voices, and of the art of writing for them in parts, which some acknowledged composers might envy – a certain flow of elegant, if not very original, melody, and considerable fancy in the arrangement of detail. It is not a great work; it is not a work of genius, nor one that has the chance of enduring after the popular influence exercised by its composer shall have departed with himself”.¹⁴¹

How true this music critic’s rhetoric proved to be – *Eli*, like the hundreds of other festival-commissioned works not mentioned in this dissertation, quietly disappeared into oblivion with the death of the composer, and remains unheard of today.

¹⁴⁰ It should be noted that Costa did conduct some historically informed performances of Bach’s religious music in his later years, according to Peter Holman (RMA/SMI Conference Dublin, 2009). However, one Victorian journal states that a performance of the St Matthew Passion by Costa with some original instruments (including viol de gambas) was because there was not enough time for the conductor to write the usual ‘additional accompaniments’. See ‘Bach’s “Grosse Passion Music”’, *Athenaeum*, 2375 (3 May 1873), 574-75. It has also been noted recently that this performance of the St Matthew Passion was the first complete rendition since Bach’s death. See Katharine Pardee, ‘The Earliest Complete Performance of the St. Matthew Passion?’ *Riemenschneider Bach Journal*, 40 /1 (2009), 80-1.

¹⁴¹ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Leeds Mercury*, 1 September 1855.

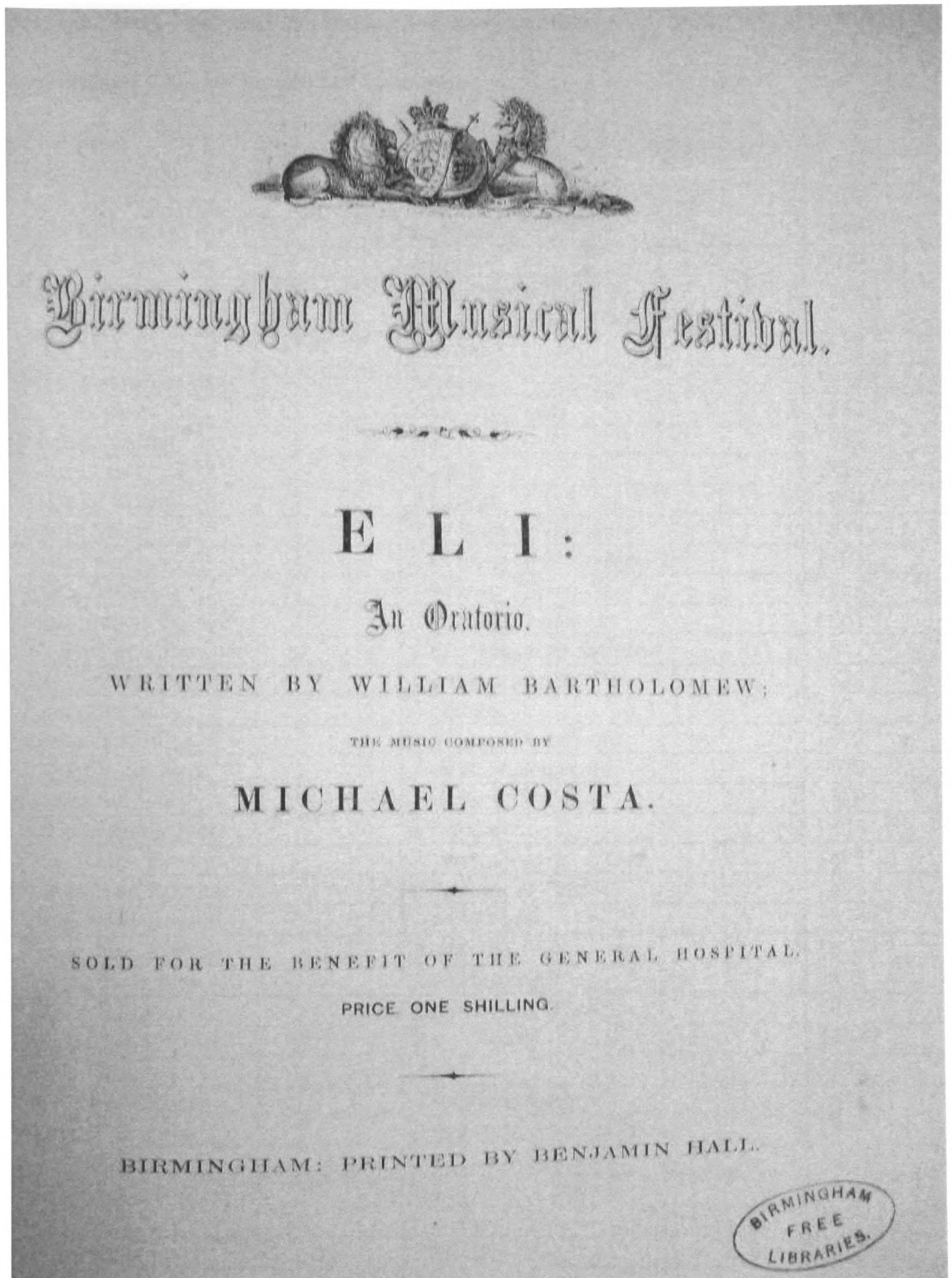


Figure 3.26: Festival Programme for *Eli*.
 Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage.

The list of commissions and British first performances for the Birmingham Triennial Festivals 1834-1900 was extensive, and the compilation in Table 3.2 shows that the commissions were not limited just to oratorio.

Composer	Composition	Year
Sigismund Neukomm	<i>David</i>	1834
Felix Mendelssohn	Piano Concerto No. 2 Op. 40	1837
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Lobgesang</i>	1840
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Elijah</i>	1846
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>A Saviour of Sinners</i> <i>Ave Maria</i> Op. 23 No. 2	1852
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Christus</i>	1852
Felix Mendelssohn	<i>Lorelei</i>	1852
S. S Wesley	<i>The Wilderness</i>	1852
Michael Costa	<i>Eli</i>	1855
Henry Leslie	<i>Judith</i>	1858
Michael Costa	<i>Naaman</i>	1864
Henry Smart	<i>The Bride of Dukerron</i>	1854
Arthur Sullivan	<i>The Masque at Kenilworth</i>	1864
Julius Benedict	<i>When my Thirsty Soul</i>	1867
John Francis Barnett	<i>The Ancient Mariner</i>	1867
W. Sterndale Bennett	<i>The Woman of Samaria</i>	1867
John Francis Barnett	<i>Paradise and the Peri</i>	1870
Julius Benedict	<i>St Peter</i>	1870
Ferdinand Hiller	<i>Nala and Demayanti</i>	1870
Robert P. Stewart	<i>Ode to Shakespeare</i>	1870
Arthur Sullivan	<i>Overture Di Ballo</i>	1870
Alberto Randegger	<i>Fridolin</i>	1873
Gioacchino Rossini	<i>Hymn of Peace</i>	1873
Gioacchino Rossini	<i>The Song of Titans</i>	1873
Gioacchino Rossini	<i>Ave Maria</i>	1873
Gioacchino Rossini	<i>Cantemus</i>	1873
Francesco Schira	<i>Lord Burleigh</i>	1873
Arthur Sullivan	<i>Light of the World</i>	1873
Frederic H. Cowen	<i>The Corsair</i>	1876
Niels Gade	<i>Zion</i>	1876
George Macfarren	<i>The Resurrection</i>	1876
Richard Wagner	<i>Libesmahl des Apostel</i>	1876
Max Bruch	<i>The Lay of the Bell</i>	1879
Camille Saint-Saens	<i>La Lyre et la Harpe</i>	1879
Niels Gade	<i>Psyche</i>	1882
Alfred Gaul	<i>The Holy City</i>	1882
Charles Gounod	<i>Redemption</i>	1882
Charles Gounod	<i>The Golden Thread</i>	1882
Charles Gounod	<i>Wedding March No. 2</i>	1882
Thomas Anderton	<i>Yule Tide</i>	1885
J. Frederick Bridge	<i>Jesu, pro me</i>	1885
Frederic H. Cowen	<i>Sleeping Beauty</i>	1885
Antonin Dvořák	<i>The Sceptre's Bride</i>	1885

Composer	Composition	Year
Charles Gounod	<i>Mors et Vita</i>	1885
Alexander Mackenzie	<i>Invocation: Love lost on earth</i>	1885
Alexander Mackenzie	<i>Violin concerto</i>	1885
Ebenezer Prout	Symphony No. 3	1885
Charles V. Stanford	<i>Three Holy Children</i>	1885
J. Frederick Bridge	<i>Callirhoe</i>	1888
Edvard Grieg	<i>In Autumn</i> (orchestral)	1888
C. Hubert Parry	<i>Judith</i>	1888
Antonin Dvořák	<i>Requiem</i>	1891
Alexander Mackenzie	<i>Veni Creator Spiritus</i>	1891
Charles V. Stanford	<i>Eden</i>	1891
Goring Thomas	<i>The Dawn</i>	1891
George Henschel	<i>Stabat Mater</i>	1894
C. Hubert Parry	<i>King Saul</i>	1894
Goring Thomas	<i>The Swan & The Skylark</i>	1894
Edward German	<i>Hamlet</i>	1897
Arthur Somervell	<i>An Ode to the Sea</i>	1897
Charles V. Stanford	<i>Requiem</i>	1897
Edward Elgar	<i>Dream of Gerontius</i>	1900
C. Hubert Parry	<i>The Soldier's Tent</i>	1900

Table 3.2: Works commissioned for the Birmingham Triennial Festival (1834-1900)

The great number of new oratorios commissioned is evident and indicated in bold print in Table 3.2, along with a variety of other works commissioned for the evening concerts. These new works were a feature of most oratorio festivals at this time. As stated in the introduction of this dissertation, it was decided not to focus on these lists of commissioned works, many of which are unheard of today.

3.3.6 Gounod's *Redemption* at the 1882 Birmingham Triennial Festival

Another work that met with instant acclaim was Charles-François Gounod's *Redemption*. An outrageous fee of £4,000 had been requested by Gounod when he first approached the Festival Committee, but after some legal wrangling with the publisher Novello, the committee endorsed the project. The oratorio was performed twice at the festival and was received with great enthusiasm by the audience and press, with one London paper commenting:

The oratorio upon which Mr Gounod has been at work for nearly ten years will, we have not the least doubt, add greatly to his fame. It is entitled *The Redemption* and is a special commission for the forthcoming Birmingham Festival. Birmingham has done noble work on behalf of good music, and the liberality displayed in the present instance is truly magnificent. Four thousand pound for the copyright of an oratorio is not bad for a nation of shopkeepers.¹⁴²

Of this big festival, the profits for charity, the fees of the soloist, and the copyright fees are all described as ‘magnificent’, here with a jibe referring to international competitiveness.¹⁴³

The Redemption was a sold-out performance in the renovated town hall, now equipped with electric lights. As *The Times* reported:

A more imposing spectacle of its kind has seldom been seen than that presented this morning by the magnificent concert room of the Town-hall crowded by a dense throng of eager listeners who filled not only every available seat, but every inch of standing room in passages and corridors. Gounod’s new oratorio *The Redemption*, whatever its permanent artistic value may turn out to be has, at its very birth, received all the marks of attention and enthusiasm generally reserved for masterpieces of the highest kind.¹⁴⁴

Reporters from other provincial towns such as Bristol, which were next to host a performance of the work, keenly observed of the Birmingham premiere that

[t]he application for seats was unprecedented, and hundreds of persons were unable to gain admission. The work, which severely taxes the power of the orchestra, was admirably rendered; and the eminent composer was enthusiastically cheered.¹⁴⁵

Others spoke of the quality of the work:

¹⁴² ‘Gounod’s Oratorio’, *The Era*, 22 July 1882.

¹⁴³ The phrase ‘nation of shopkeepers’ was used by Napoleon as a disparaging comment, and referred to the unpreparedness of the British for war. It was used previous to this by Adam Smith, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (2; Dublin: Printed for Messrs. Whitestone and 19 others, 1776), Book IV, section vii. c.

¹⁴⁴ ‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Times*, 31 August 1882.

¹⁴⁵ *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 2 September 1882. *Redemption* was due to be performed at the Bristol Festival in the coming month.

M. Gounod's work may not stand the test like the masterpiece of Mendelssohn; but it may, at least, have more success than Macfarren's *Resurrection* and *Joseph* which were almost stillborn.

Even the publicity surrounding a certain Mrs Weldon, who was evicted from the hall at Gounod's request for fear of disrupting the performance, was given extensive airing around the country, including her later attempt to sue the Birmingham Festival Committee. The animosity and ensuing legal battles were reported in the press for years to come.¹⁴⁶ Everything connected with the festival was deemed newsworthy.

As always, receipts and attendance were given great coverage in the press. The list of receipts of the 1882 Birmingham Triennial Festival was published in the *Liverpool Mercury* (see Fig. 3.27), no doubt to keep in force the competitive spirit and to outdo other towns and their contributions to charity.¹⁴⁷

PRESIDENT.	Receipts
1834—The Earl of Aylesford	£13,527
1837—Lord Willoughby de Broke	11,900
1840—Lord Leigh.....	11,613
1843—The Earl of Craven.....	8,322
1846—Lord Wrottesley	11,538
1849—Lord Guernsey, M.P.....	10,334
1852—Lord Leigh.....	11,925
1855—Lord Willoughby de Broke	12,745
1858—The Earl of Dartmouth	11,141
1861—The Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot.	11,453
1864—The Earl of Lichfield	13,777
1867—Earl Beauchamp	14,387
1870—The Earl of Bradford.....	14,535
1873—The Earl of Shrewsbury and Talbot.	15,007
1876—The Marquis of Hertford	15,160
1879—Lord Norton.....	11,729
1882—Lord Windsor	15,011

Figure 3.27: Receipts of 1882 Birmingham Festivals published in the *Liverpool Mercury*

¹⁴⁶ Mrs Weldon was a former lover and patron of Gounod's. The *Mail* printed the following poem with a pun on the word 'Redemption':

The lady has her action won,
But still she utters with a sigh,
"Ten thousand pounds of damage done,
But no Redemption draweth nigh."

Quoted in *The Dart: The Midland Figaro*, 22 May 1885.

¹⁴⁷ 'Birmingham Musical Festival: Meeting of the Festival Committee', *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 September 1882.

Gounod's oratorio was really a trilogy of *The Creation*, *The Promise* and *The Redemption*, fully explained in a detailed, sophisticated programme commentary, as was the case when it was performed in Bristol and elsewhere (see Fig 3.39 below). Perhaps such detail was provided because many musical experts regarded *Redemption* as a complete departure from the traditional sense of oratorio. A correspondent from Leeds pointed out that

[t]he *Redemption* might have been better called a symphony, with vocal accompaniment ... As to whether the orchestration in [sic] its greatest strength also constitutes its greatest weakness is a question for the musical critics to decide. The work is in its deliberate formulation a distinct departure from the time-honoured form of oratorio writing, while there is no denying the fact that the scoring is never trivial and often superb in its grip of conscious power. The choral-writing often approaches the archaic, and to any but an organisation of the most perfect kind, the work, though not impossible, would be, in a word, a failure. It requires a large chorus and a colossal orchestra for anything approaching a satisfactory rendering.¹⁴⁸

Even an Aberdeen periodical took a keen interest, adding: 'The die is now cast and it remains for the musical public to record their votes as to whether this is to be the style of the "oratorio of the future"'.¹⁴⁹ According to Dr Francis Hueffer, music critic for *The Times*, Gounod's oratorio 'marked a new departure in the history of sacred music in England'.¹⁵⁰ The Birmingham festivals moved into a new period with Sir Henry Wood and Hans Richter becoming the conductors, and the music of Elgar and other English composers taking a central position in the commissioned works.

3.3.7 Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* at the Birmingham Festival of 1900

While not a success at its first performance, the *Dream of Gerontius* is a high note on which to conclude this survey of Birmingham's nineteenth-century oratorio festivals. This work is

¹⁴⁸ 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 31 August 1882.

¹⁴⁹ 'The Birmingham Musical Festival: M. Gounod's "Redemption"', *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 31 August 1882.

¹⁵⁰ 'Birmingham Musical Festival: Meeting of the Festival Committee '.

central to the oratorio canon today, although it was generally referred to as a cantata in its earlier performances. Fig. 3.28 shows a copy of an autographed programme by those involved in the premiere in 1900. Signatories that can be deciphered include the composer Edward Elgar on the bottom of the second page (contemporary composer C. Hubert H. Parry was present in Birmingham for a performance of his *De Profundis* in the evening concert, and has signed his name slightly above Elgar's indicating that he must have present at Elgar's morning premiere). Female soloists Mme Albani, Esther Palliser, Evangeline Florence, Marie Brema, Ada Crossley, and the very florid 'Clara Kennerley Rumford née Clara Butt' were all signatories to the programme. Male vocalists Edward Lloyd (in his last festival appearance), Ben Davies, William Green, David Bispham, Harry Plunket Greene, Andrew Black, and chief conductor, Hans Richter have also autographed the programme. Only two signatures remain elusive – the very tiny signature inserted inside the 'C' of Clara Butt's name and on the other page, the signature starting with the initial 'S.' (perhaps Mr Stockley the chorus master?) under Mme Albani's autograph.



Figure 3.28: Autographed programme of *Dream of Gerontius* from its premiere 4 October 1900.

Source: Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 984957 L55.3.¹⁵¹

¹⁵¹ This autographed inside programme cover of the premiere of *Gerontius* was found amongst a collection of several programmes held at Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 984957, L55.3.

Henry Wood said of the music that ‘the choral idiom was so new, so strange, and so excessively difficult for a chorus brought up to the *Elijah* style of writing, that at least six months of choral preparation would not have been too much’.¹⁵² Critics generally praised the work but were appalled at the performance of the 500-strong ensemble, as *The Pall Mall Gazette* reported:

This morning Mr Edward Elgar’s new work *The Dream of Gerontius*, composed of course to Cardinal Newman’s words, and therefore most appropriate to Birmingham, where Newman lived so many years, and where he did so many good deeds, was produced for the first time. I am about to speak words which seem exuberant and enthusiastic; but I have thought over them carefully before setting them down for the public eye, and I will venture to say that, since the death of Wagner, ... no finer composition has been given to the world. I am proud that Mr Elgar is an Englishman, for he has justified Purcell’s early career; in a word, he has produced a genuine masterpiece.

The performance of the work, I regret to say, did not, by any means do justice to its beauties. The chorus, to be perfectly straightforward, ought to be ashamed of itself. In the most critical moments of the first part it was difficult to sit quietly and listen to the delicate harmonies, mauled and mangled by voices of singers who scarce knew what tune was. Over and over again this almost criminal offence was repeated.¹⁵³

Numerous reasons were put forward for the poor performance and reception, including: the sudden death of the chorus master, Dr Swinnerton Heap; the replacement, Mr Stockley, who was unsympathetic to Elgar’s style of writing or Roman Catholic sentiment;¹⁵⁴ lack of rehearsal time, with the score available to the conductor Hans Richter only ten days beforehand; the opinion of many that Edward Lloyd, who sang the role of *Gerontius*, did not suit the role despite his fine voice;¹⁵⁵ the Roman Catholic theology of the libretto which may have upset some listeners and performers; and the difficulty of the music, as Henry Wood observed (see above). One newspaper stated that ‘a lack of young voices’ was a

¹⁵² Sir Henry Joseph Wood, *My Life of Music* ([S.l.]: Gollancz, 1949), 249.

¹⁵³ ‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 October 1900.

¹⁵⁴ Elliott, *The Music Makers: a Brief History of the Birmingham Triennial Music Festivals 1784-1912*, 21.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, *The Story of Music in Birmingham*, 45.

factor in the poor performance.¹⁵⁶ Conductor August Manns reportedly cancelled the scheduled performances at the Crystal Palace after the Birmingham premiere.¹⁵⁷

While Elgar was given several more commissions for the festival, including *The Apostles* (1903), *The Kingdom* (1904), and *The Music Makers* (1912), times were changing, and on the eve of the Great War, the festivals were discontinued. The Birmingham Triennial Festivals were a remarkable institution in that they survived for so many years and their phenomenal financial success allowed the commissioning of dozens of new works. Several of the oratorios survive and are still performed today. Yet fiscal viability was not to be the case with the Bristol Festivals.

¹⁵⁶ 'Musical and Dramatic Notes: the Birmingham Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 12 October 1900.

¹⁵⁷ 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Graphic*, 6 October 1900. 'Its intricacies [*Dream of Gerontius*] ... induced Mr Manns to strike it out of the programme of the coming Crystal Palace concerts'.

3.4 Bristol Festivals

Like many of the towns investigated in this study, Bristol had an early history of English oratorio performance. It is reported that Bristol had performances of *Messiah* while Handel was still alive, in 1756, 1757, and 1758.¹⁵⁸ A notorious early performance of *Messiah* took place at the Theatre Royal in Bristol where actors traditionally doubled as singers for the oratorio. The fêted castrato Tenducci failed to appear and the replacement, Rauzzini, managed only one solo in the whole work.¹⁵⁹ The resultant musical shambles is humorously related in the *Bonner and Middleton Bristol Journal*:

Songs – duets – choruses were omitted – the audience disgusted – and the band thrown into confusion. – The first violin led off *one* air, while the violin-cello had begun the accompaniment of *another*.

The chorus singers were continually at a loss whether to stand up or keep their seats; and Mr Rauzzini had almost trampled Miss Storer to death, in endeavouring to sing from Mr Corfe's paper, instead of his own, which neither himself nor the conductor of the band knew anything of.¹⁶⁰

Oratorio, festivals, and selections of sacred music continued to be performed regularly in various churches, Assembly Rooms and the Theatre Royal in early nineteenth-century Bristol. In April 1811, 'Three Grand Performances of Sacred Music' were given in St Michael's Church. While not advertised as a festival, these performances, covering a wide selection of composers, were given over three consecutive evenings, with the second night being devoted to Handel's *Messiah* as well as a composition by a Dr Harlington.

In 1814 at St Paul's Church, the 'Bristol Grand Musical Festival' was presented with three morning and three evening performances between 14 and 17 June. Some concerts were held in the Theatre Royal. The performance on 16 June consisted of Handel's *Messiah*

¹⁵⁸ Cecilia, 'Handel's "Messiah": When First Performed in Bristol?' *To the Editor of the Bristol Times and Mirror*, 3 November 1890; *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal*, 3 February 1757. *The New Grove* article on 'Bristol' states that the 1758 performance is important because it was the first performance of *Messiah* in England in a church after the Foundling Hospital chapel performances.

¹⁵⁹ Kathleen Barker, *The Theatre Royal, Bristol, 1766-1966: Two Centuries of Stage History* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1974), 54.

¹⁶⁰ *Bonner and Middleton Bristol Journal*, 30 March 1782.

in St Paul's Church. The remaining performances were in two acts and combined selections from Haydn's *Creation* (14 June), Beethoven's *The Mount of Olives* (a Bristol premiere on 17 June) and a 'grand selection' from the music of Handel, Haydn, and Mozart, all for the benefit of the infirmary. A programme cover for the performance of *The Creation* is reproduced as Fig. 3.29. The prospectus and programmes provide detailed information regarding the vocal and instrumental soloists and include a list of the orchestral ensemble, led by Mr Loder and conducted by Sir George Smart. These documents also provide full listings of those involved in the organisation of the festival, including the President, Patrons, and Director.¹⁶¹ Vocalists included Madame Catalani, Miss Nash, Master G. Stansbury and Mrs Salmon, Mr Braham, Mr Magrath, Mr Garbett, Mr Hodges, Mr Lacy and Signor Naldi. To date, no record has been found of the numbers present or the size of the performing forces. In 1999, a text was published detailing the amounts of money derived from subscriptions to the Bristol infirmary, but no reference is made to any donations from oratorio festivals.¹⁶² Such festivals in other towns traditionally raised considerable sums for local charities, but Bristol was a different case.

The programme cover (Fig. 3.29) and inside of the Book of Words (Fig. 3.30) is for the 1814 Grand Bristol Festival and is held in the Andrew Ashe Collection in the Bodleian Library, Oxford. Andrew Ashe took part in this festival as a flautist, and so the annotations are probably his.¹⁶³ It is likely Ashe did a 'scissors and paste' job on this Book of Words in order to provide the printer's text of the programme for another concert. The 'new' programme featured Part 1 of Haydn's *Creation*, with at least one Handelian interpolation, clear from the first remark, evidently to the printer: 'Take all from this so far as marked and according to your bill of fare'. It was probably a concert Ashe himself organised, with Mrs

¹⁶¹ British Library, Grand Musical Festival, Bristol (1814) Case 61.g.4.

¹⁶² Martin Gorsky, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Royal Historical Society Studies in History; Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999).

¹⁶³ Bodleian Library, Andrew Ashe Collection, Vol. 5, Ref. 17405.d.10.

Ashe one of the designated singers.¹⁶⁴ The red marks on the programme appear to be from sealing wax, used to adhere any alternate wording, arias or recitatives. One attachment has fallen off, exposing the red wax. One inspirational oratorio performance in the ‘wedding cake’ church – referring to St Paul’s – led to another, such was the popularity of oratorio performances.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁴ The actual later programme may well be somewhere in the seven volumes of the Ashe collection; quite possibly it was for one of Mrs Ashe’s annual charity concerts at Bath, which turned some oratorios into incredible hodge-podges, replacing many arias with ones by different composers.

¹⁶⁵ St Paul’s has been referred to by locals as the ‘wedding cake’ church with its unusual tiered tower and Georgian architecture.

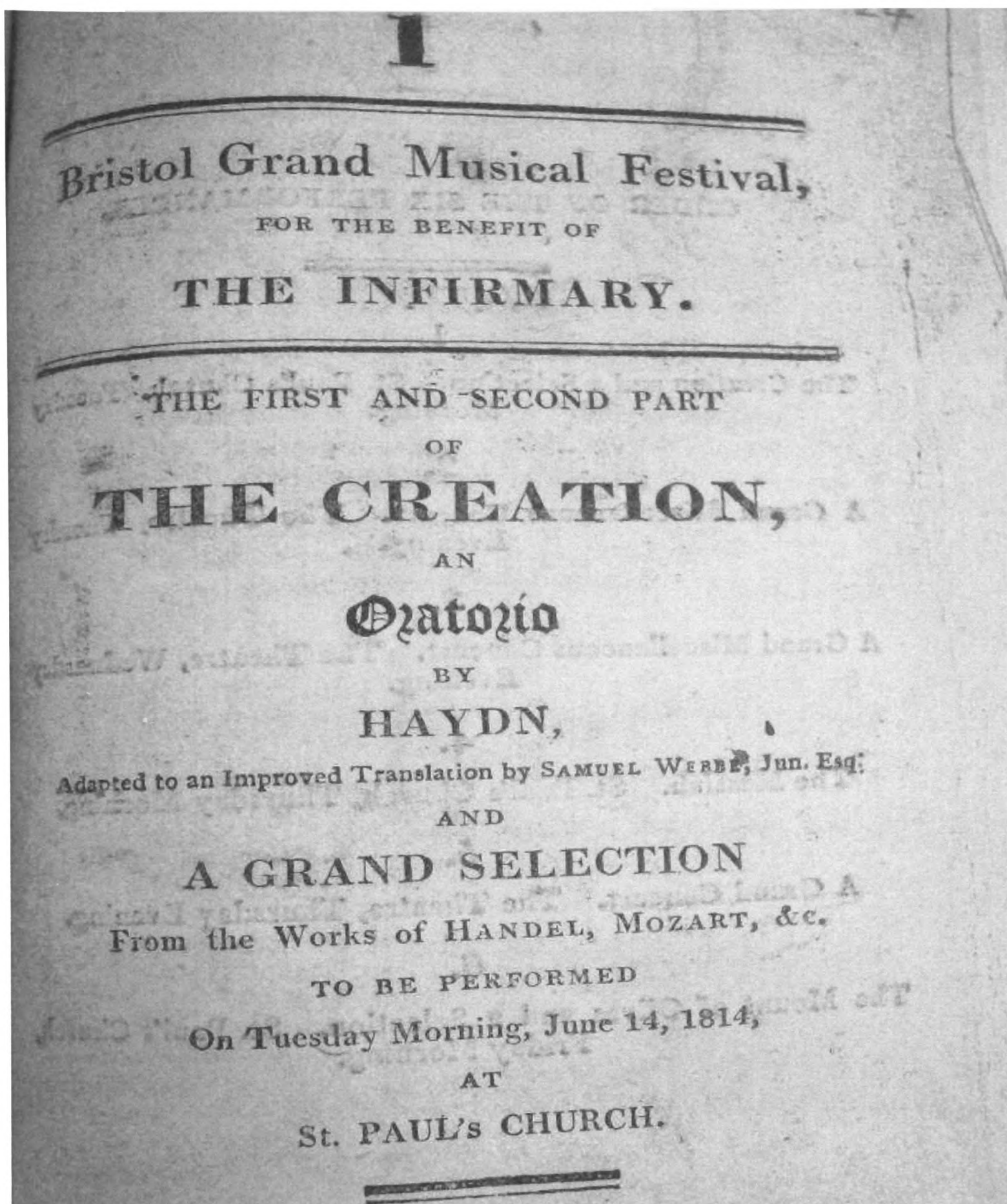


Figure 3.29: Programme for the Grand Bristol Festival in 1814.
Source: Andrew Ashe Collection Vol. 5, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Ref. 17405.d.10.

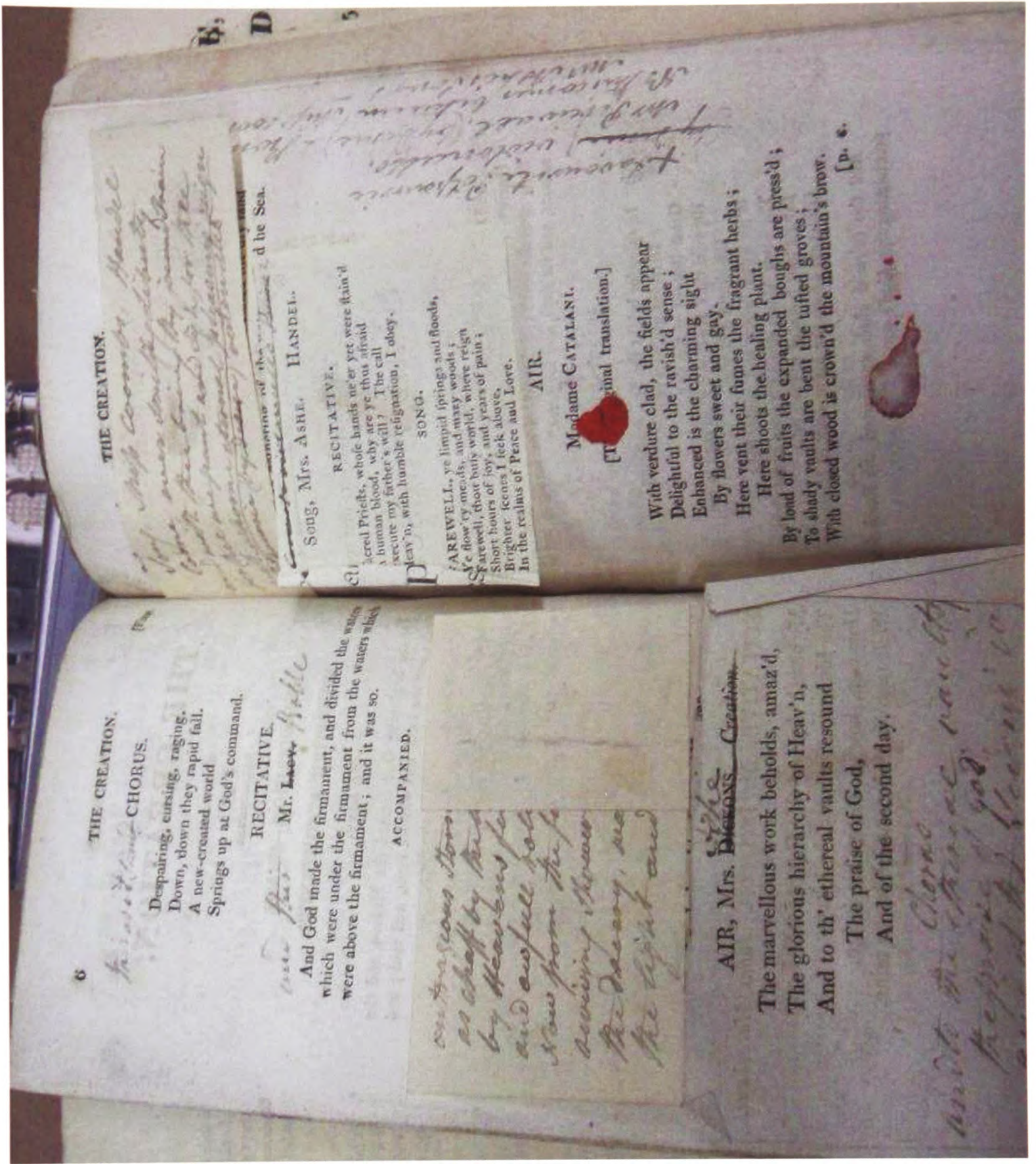


Figure 3.30: Inside of the 1814 Bristol Festival word-book of *The Creation* with annotations, possibly by Mr Ashe, for another performance.
 Source: Andrew Ashe Collection Vol. 5, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Ref. 17405.d.10.

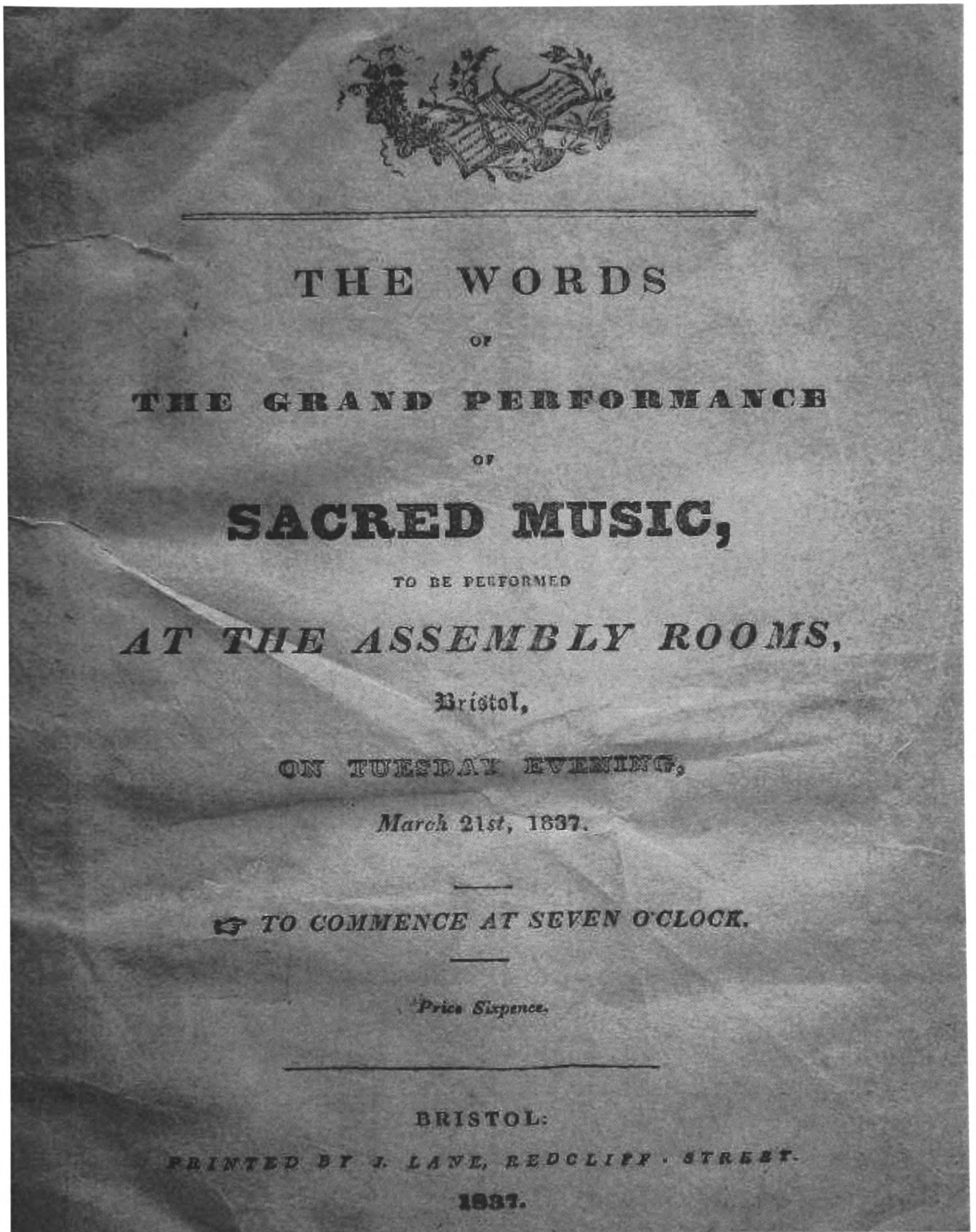


Figure 3.31: Bristol 1837 word-book for the Grand Performance of Sacred Music held in the Assembly Rooms.

Source: Bristol Central Library, Ref. Pr.2 Music B4170¹⁶⁶

¹⁶⁶ This document is held under '1837 Grand Performance Sacred Music' at Bristol Central Library, B1470, Bristol Reference Library RL press 2 pb Music I.

By 1858, the singing in the Bristol Cathedral was regarded as being of a better standard than elsewhere, with Samuel Sebastian Wesley writing in a letter requesting repairs to the organ: ‘The music too at Bristol, was much better performed than I am accustomed to hear in Cathedrals, and this would favour any effort in support of choral matters, no doubt’.¹⁶⁷ While there must have been some fine voices in Bristol, it was not until 1873 that the conductor Sir Charles Hallé established a four-day triennial festival when he travelled from Manchester with his orchestra to conduct it. However, before the Bristol festivals are investigated, it is necessary to provide some background to the Colston Hall in which they were staged, in order to show how both the grand new building and the huge triennial festivals combined to create a musical monumentalism.

3.4.1 The Colston Hall

The site on which the hall stands was originally built as a priory of the Carmelites in 1267. At the dissolution of the priory, the site was acquired by Sir John Young who built a ‘Great House’ in which he entertained many royalty of the day. It eventually fell into disrepair, and was then used as a sugar refinery before being purchased in 1707 by the Bristol philanthropist Edward Colston (1636-1721). He adapted the house to found a boys’ school ‘to educate in the principles of the Church of England, and to maintain and clothe a 100 poor boys, and to place them out to apprentice’.¹⁶⁸ As the size of the Great House proved inadequate, it was removed in 1861, and the property was purchased for the possible erection of a public hall. With the formation of the Colston Hall Company, the hall opened on 20 September 1867. Colston has been immortalised not only in the construction of this hall, but in a number of other buildings and monuments around Bristol, and a celebration of Colston’s Day occurs every 13 November.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁷ This letter is transcribed in full by Joseph Graham Hooper, ‘A Survey of Music in Bristol’, 1963), 273.

¹⁶⁸ *The Colston Hall, Bristol* (Bristol: Harvey Barton & Son, 1903), 13.

¹⁶⁹ Today Colston is perceived as a controversial figure because of his support of the slave trade. The Bristol trip-hop band, *Massive Attack* refused to play in Colston Hall and Colston’s statue has been repeatedly vandalised with red paint trickled at his feet.

A new ultra-modern foyer to the Colston Hall, clad in gold metal in a monumental architectural style representative of the 21st century, stands beside the monumental architecture of the old with its stately Victorian façade – a shocking contradiction (see Fig. 3.32) which vividly illustrates the changing concept of monumental architecture.



**Figure 3.32: The Colston Hall: Two Monumental Facades.
The 21st century beside that of the 19th century.**
Source: Photograph, field trip December 2008.

The grand Victorian hall was built in the ornate Bristol Byzantine style and accommodated 3,000 people and an orchestra of over 400 performers.¹⁷⁰ No better detailed description of the size and features of the building can be found than in *The Bristol Mercury* (see Fig. 3.33).¹⁷¹

¹⁷⁰ There are only three buildings remaining in Bristol in this ornate, multi-coloured brick style. Earlier photographs show a much more pronounced contrast in the bricks, many of which have been probably replaced during the two reconstructions of the hall. For a detailed discussion of this complex eclectic style, whatever its correct terminology, see Andor Harvey Gomme, Michael Jenner, and Bryan D. G. Little, *Bristol: An Architectural History* (London: Lund Humphries, 1979), 382-3.

¹⁷¹ 'Completion of Colston's Hall', *The Bristol Mercury*, 14 September 1867.

COMPLETION OF COLSTON'S-HALL.

The noble hall which has been erected on the site where formerly stood Colston's School, and which has been properly named after the great philanthropist, is now completed, and a few finishing strokes are alone required to render it fit for public use. As our readers are probably aware, the large hall forms only a portion of the entire scheme; but it has been so constructed that it can at once be brought into use, whilst the remaining buildings can be erected as the capital is raised, and without in any way interfering with the letting of the great hall, as the two entrances in Trenchard-street will for the present alone be used. Fashioned after the plan of the St. George's Hall, Liverpool, the interior presents an elegant and ornate appearance; whilst the vast dimensions of the hall, its noble proportions, and the elaborate character of the carving with which it is adorned, challenge the admiration of every beholder, and entitles it to rank high amongst the principal public halls of the country. Thirty-four feet longer and twenty-six feet wider than the large Victoria-room, and with the addition of a gallery at one end of the hall, it will afford sitting accommodation for upwards of a thousand more persons than our West-end saloon, it being calculated that nearly 3000 chairs, which will be the kind of seat used, may be conveniently placed on the floor of the hall. The length of the hall is 150 feet; its width 80 feet, and its height, to the centre of the ceiling, which is of semi-circular form, is 70 feet. The ceiling springs from and is supported by eight massive freestone pillars, with bases of pennant stone, and having handsomely enriched capitals in freestone. The ground work of the carving is foliage, which surrounds a small bust, carved in relief, in each quadrant of the capital. Between the arches over the columns have been inserted circular niches surrounded with wreaths, and these it is intended shall be filled with busts of Bristolians who have earned for themselves "name and fame," and two of them have already been filled with busts of Mr. George Thomas, the chairman of the company, and Mr. Conrad Finzel, both of which are striking portraits. The ceiling is ornamented with rich panelling in plaster, and the hall is lighted by ten windows of semi-circular pattern, filled with etained glass on either side, and a longer window of the same character over the gallery. The orchestra is admirably constructed, and will afford accommodation for about 400 performers, ample space being left in the centre for a large organ, which it is hoped will shortly be placed there. The acoustic properties of the room, of course an exceedingly important feature in a public hall, are expected to be most perfect; but this must to some extent remain a problem until it has been tested. Great care has been taken to provide the most approved processes of heating and ventilating, and the former will be effected by Messrs. Hayden's apparatus, whilst for the purposes of ventilation two air shafts have been constructed, which form conspicuous features on the exterior of the hall. The lighting was entrusted to Skidmore, of Coventry, who has introduced gas-fittings of novel and pretty design, the total number of burners on the premises being 550, which are supplied by two gas mains, one being brought into the building from St. Augustine's-back, and the other from Trenchard-street. The architects were Messrs. Foster and Wood, and the work has been most effectively carried out by Messrs. James and Joseph Foster, and the sub-contractors. The carving, which is most elaborate, and exceedingly well executed, is the joint work of Messrs. Divall and Sen, Mr. White, and Messrs. Palmer and Shepperd (of Orchard-street), and the iron sashes, railings, &c., was the work of Mr. R. Leaman, of Frogmore-street. The hall, we understand, has already been let for a missionary meeting, to take place in about a fortnight's time, which will, we believe, be the first occasion of its being publicly used.

Figure 3.33: 'Completion of Colston's Hall', *Bristol Mercury*, 14 September 1867.

No civic competitions were held for the architectural design of this impressive hall erected in 1867, as had been the case with all the other halls examined in this dissertation. The architectural firm Foster and Wood was commissioned to design the building somewhat after St George's Hall in Liverpool (which, as it will be recalled, was designed for the sole purpose of housing oratorio festivals). Even the complex ventilation system seems to be a copy. However, the hall in Bristol possessed some original features, with its distinctive Bristol Byzantine style, and it was one of the first large buildings constructed from the hard and very resistant catty brock bricks. These bricks were available locally and were a good economic choice, being easily transportable with the extension of the railway to New Passage.¹⁷²

There was no grand opening ceremony of the building; the newspaper extract refers to a missionary meeting as the first event. The hall was to prove ideal for massed oratorio performances, with the first performance of *Messiah* with Mozart's additional accompaniments held on Boxing Day of 1867, the inaugural performance of the Bristol Philharmonic Society and the first use of the 'new and handsome' organ. The advertisement for the performance stated the society's aspirations in one lengthy sentence:

The ample dimensions of the noble Hall, whilst admitting a larger number of Band and Chorus than usual in provincial cities, will, from its extensive Auditorium, afford the committee the much-wished-for opportunity of fixing the prices of admission in so moderate a scale that the musical public may be confidently appealed for their support in establishing this society on a permanent and successful basis.¹⁷³

Despite the ambition of the Philharmonic Society, triennial oratorio festivals did not begin until 1873, with the founding of the Bristol Musical Festival Society in that year. The Festival Society organised the training of a 'Voluntary Choir for the efficient performance of Choral Music of the highest class'.¹⁷⁴ Hallé's band travelled from Manchester for the

¹⁷² Gomme, Jenner, and Little, *Bristol: An Architectural History*, 372.

¹⁷³ *The Bristol Mercury*, Saturday 14 December 1867.

¹⁷⁴ *Bristol Triennial Festival Programme*, 1896.

performances, and he directed the triennial festivals until his death in 1895. The festival was abandoned in 1899 because the building was destroyed when a fire broke out in the adjoining clothing factory, gutting the inside of the hall and leaving only the walls and the façade standing. In all, ten triennial festivals were held between 1873 and 1902, some of which will be discussed briefly.

3.4.2 The first Triennial Festival in 1873

Twelve thousand people attended the first four-day festival in Colston Hall, which had been extended with extra galleries in order to accommodate the gigantic audience (see Fig. 3.34). Oratorio performances included a premiere of Macfarren's *St John the Baptist*, as well as the usual mainstays – *Messiah*, *The Creation*, *Elijah*, and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* – all scheduled in the mornings. The programme cover for this first festival is included as Fig. 3.35.

Hallé's orchestra, which consisted of 84 professional players, gave symphony concerts in the evenings.¹⁷⁵ The rationale of the promoters of the festival (given inside the first programme cover) included, besides the desire to raise much-needed funds for Bristol's local charities, educational concerns and the competitive influence of other towns:

They claim the sympathy and support of the people of Bristol, Clifton, and the neighbouring Counties, not only on the basis of their efforts to extend sound musical knowledge, but also for the sake of that charity which is a distinctive characteristic of our social and national life. To institute periodical performances of music of the highest class, and to raise a fund for the support of our principal Charities, is the declared aim and purpose of the Festival Committee; and they deem it incumbent on them to point to the gratifying success which has attended the efforts of those who have led the way in other Cities, as an encouragement, nay even as a command, to the citizens of Bristol to "go and do like wise."¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁵ The orchestra included an ophicleide, kettle and big drum, and a harp. *Bristol Mercury*, 4 October 1873.

¹⁷⁶ *Bristol Triennial Festival Programme*, 1873. The internal quotation is a biblical reference to Jesus showing mercy to others (Luke 10: 37).



Figure 3.34: The Colston Hall Exterior at the first Triennial Bristol Festival.

Source: 'The Bristol Music Festival: Views in Bristol', *Illustrated London News*, 26 October 1873.

Press advertisements called for singers and regularly published lists of underwriters who each pledged £50 months before the event (see Fig. 3.36). No doubt, such lists of 'peers by the score and MP's almost by the hundred', once published, became an incentive to contribute.¹⁷⁷ Impressive amounts of money were involved, with £9,000 guaranteed.

¹⁷⁷ *The Bristol Mercury*, 1 February 1873.



Figure 3.35: Programme cover for the first Bristol Triennial Festival in 1873.
 Source: Bristol Central Library, Ref. b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁸ All the triennial programmes are found in the collection ‘Bristol Musical Festival Programmes’ held at Bristol Central Library, Bristol Musical Festival Programmes b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.

BRISTOL MUSICAL FESTIVAL.

The following Names have been received as CONTRIBUTORS to the GUARANTEE FUND of £50 each. It is fully expected that no portion of this Fund will be required to be paid, but it is usual in all undertakings of this nature to commence with a List of Guarantors, for the protection of the Treasurer :—

The Mayor of Bristol—W. Hathway, Esq.
 The High-Sheriff—T. T. Walton, Esq.
 Samuel Morley, Esq., M.P.
 K. D. Hodgson, Esq., M.P.
 The Master of the Society of Merchant Venturers—T. T. Taylor, Esq.
 The President of the Infirmary—Rev. J. Heyworth.
 The President of the Bristol General Hospital—W. P. Baker, Esq.

The Precentor of the Cathedral—Rev. C. E. Hey, M.A.

Mr. Alderman Alexander	Mr. R. P. King
Mr. Samuel Alexander	Mr. J. Linton
Mr. W. Adlam	Mr. H. F. Lawes
Mr. Henry Adams	Mr. Hy. Livett
Mr. George Ashmead	Mr. W. F. Lavington
Mr. J. W. Arrowsmith	Mr. Robert Lang
Mr. Edward Arthur	Mr. Samuel Lang
Mr. William Arthur	Mr. A. Levy
Mr. W. Mills Baker	Mr. John Llewellyn, jun.
Mr. T. Baker	Mr. John Lavars
Mr. W. M. Baillie	Mr. G. Miller
Mr. W. Brittan	Mr. J. L. Matthews.
Mr. Alfred Brittan	Mr. T. G. Matthews
Mr. Arthur Baker	Mr. H. Cruger Miles
Colonel Bush	Mr. Louis Moseley
Mr. Wm. Hy. Budgett	Mr. F. Morgan
Mr. G. S. Bryant	Mr. G. K. Morgan
Mr. Samuel Budgett.	Mr. Arthur Morris
Mr. F. H. Ball	Mr. J. H. Nash
Mr. Charles Bradshaw	Mr. Charles Nash
Mr. Michael Castle	Mr. W. A. F. Powell
Rev. J. W. Caldicott	Mr. Charles Price
Mr. T. S. Cayzer	Mr. A. N. Price
Mr. Charles Castle	Mr. S. N. Price
Mr. C. D. Cave	Mr. A. Phillips
Mr. W. Gale Colso	Mr. R. J. Pierce
Dr. Colman	Mr. W. Plummer
Mr. H. N. Cooper	Mr. John Perry
Mr. Hy. Cooke	Mr. F. H. Poole
Mr. G. H. Chambers	Mr. John Pitman
Mr. R. G. Clarke	Mr. W. F. Phillips
Mr. Richard J. Crook	Mr. E. S. Robinson
Mr. John Curtis	Mr. Isaac Riddle
Mr. Hy. Daniel	Mr. T. W. Rankin
Mr. J. Derham	Mr. John Roberts
Mr. S. Derham	Mr. W. P. Sibree
Mr. A. Dimoline	Mr. T. C. Stock
Mr. M. Dunlop	Mr. T. S. Smith
Mr. G. W. Edwards	Mr. W. Smith
Mr. D. P. Evans	Mr. J. H. Smith
Mr. P. F. S. Evans	Mr. W. Spark
Mr. J. L. Evans	Mr. Geo. Somerton
Mr. C. Fisher	Mr. R. E. Strachan
Mr. John Foster	Mr. John Shute
Mr. John Fisher	Mr. H. W. Sanders
Mr. H. R. Fergus	Mr. C. J. Thomas
Mr. F. F. Fox	Mr. W. Terrell
Mr. Albert Fry	Mr. W. F. Trimmell
Mr. John Fuller	Mr. C. Townsend
Mr. H. W. Green	Mr. Colson Taylor
Mr. S. Green	Mr. Hy. Taylor
Mr. Charles Garton	Mr. Wilberforce Trike
Mr. T. W. Hardwick	Mr. T. Usher
Mr. S. V. Hare	Mr. W. K. Wait
Mr. C. B. Hare	Mr. T. Wedmore
Mr. John Hare	Mr. W. H. Wills
Mr. Henry Grace Hare	Mr. H. Overton Wills
Mr. R. M. Hatch	Mr. E. P. Wills
Mr. John Harvey	Mr. Samuel Wills
Mr. John Harvey, jun.	Mr. Fredk. Wills, jun.
Mr. E. A. Harvey	Mr. George Wills
Mr. E. Halsall	Mr. J. C. Wall
Mr. J. H. Hirst	Mr. J. D. Weston
Mr. W. Hain, jun.	Dr. Wigan
Mr. R. St. John Hall	Mr. Mark Whitwill
Mr. W. P. Hudden	Mr. R. H. Wilson
Mr. Wm. Hunt	Mr. Algernon W. Warren.
Mr. J. Strachey Haro	Mr. W. H. Williams
Mr. Fred. James	Mr. Philip J. Worsley
Mr. Stephen James	Mr. C. Tolson Wedmore
Mr. J. A. Jones	

Figure 3.36: 'Peers by the score and MP's almost by the hundred'.
 Source: Advertisements, *Bristol Mercury*, 1 February 1873.

In spite of guarantors promising huge sums, the overall profit for the first festival was a disappointing £272 that was donated to charity.¹⁷⁹ Musically, the festival was a success and a permanent festival choir was formed under Mr Stone, the chorus-master. The first Bristol Triennial Music Festival was reported widely in the press, with a Glasgow correspondent writing that ‘the Bristol festival has a band and chorus fit, like Wellington’s peninsular army “to go anywhere and do anything”’.¹⁸⁰ The variety of musical works in the ensuing festivals, especially in Hallé’s popular evening concerts, appears to substantiate this statement to some degree.

3.4.3 The second Bristol Triennial Festival 1876

Because the first festival had a problem with inappropriate applause (even London newspapers reported on it), the second festival programme printed the direction in bold type ‘It is requested that no expression of applause be attempted at the Oratorio Performances of the Bristol Musical Festival’ in every word-book.¹⁸¹ The notice must have been heeded because one Cardiff newspaper reported:

Some surprise seemed to be created, especially on the part of Mdlle Albani, at the seeming coldness and want of appreciation of the audience; but it is explained it is not the custom of Bristol people to be demonstrative in their applause in listening to representations of sacred compositions.¹⁸²

The singers employed for this festival included Mdlle Titens, Madame Tribelli-Bettini, Madame Edith Wynne, Mdlle Albani, Madame Patey, Mr Cummings, Mr Edward Lloyd, and Herr Behrens; they were described as a ‘strong cast’ in the press.¹⁸³ While the leading tenor Sims Reeves was not present that year, Madame Albani, another esteemed soloist,

¹⁷⁹ *The Bristol Mercury*, 6 December 1873.

¹⁸⁰ ‘Bristol Musical Festival’, *Glasgow Herald*, Wednesday 22 October 1873.

¹⁸¹ It can only be speculated why at the first festival there was so much inappropriate applause: perhaps the large country audience were not aware of the social conventions of no acclamation at the performance of religious music, or perhaps the new secular environs encouraged acclamation at a performance, or perhaps the audience was so enthused, they deemed it appropriate to respond to the magnificent soloists, or perhaps it was an element of all of these suggestions.

¹⁸² ‘The Bristol Musical Festival’, *Western Mail*, 18 October 1876.

¹⁸³ ‘The Bristol Triennial Musical Festival’, *Daily News*, 21 October 1876.

was.¹⁸⁴ She was a soloist at the Bristol festivals until the fire in 1898 that destroyed the hall. Many famous singers whose names recur repeatedly in various festival programmes made a living from travelling the oratorio circuit. Festivals in particular attracted soloists who demanded mammoth fees. Thus not only did the public adulate its genius oratorio composers, but it idolised the talented soloists as well.

Colston Hall admitted over 2,400 people on the last day of the festival for the *Messiah* performance. Other oratorios performed included *Elijah*, *Israel in Egypt*, *The Fall of Babylon*, and *The Mount of Olives*. None of the £300 profits was donated to charity.

Such an outcome was to recur often at the Bristol festivals, where the box office takings barely covered the expenditure. The Bristol Festival of 1876 was definitely a grand event to boast foremost civic pride with the Bristol coat of arms displayed prominently on everything connected with the festivals, as shown in Fig. 3.37.

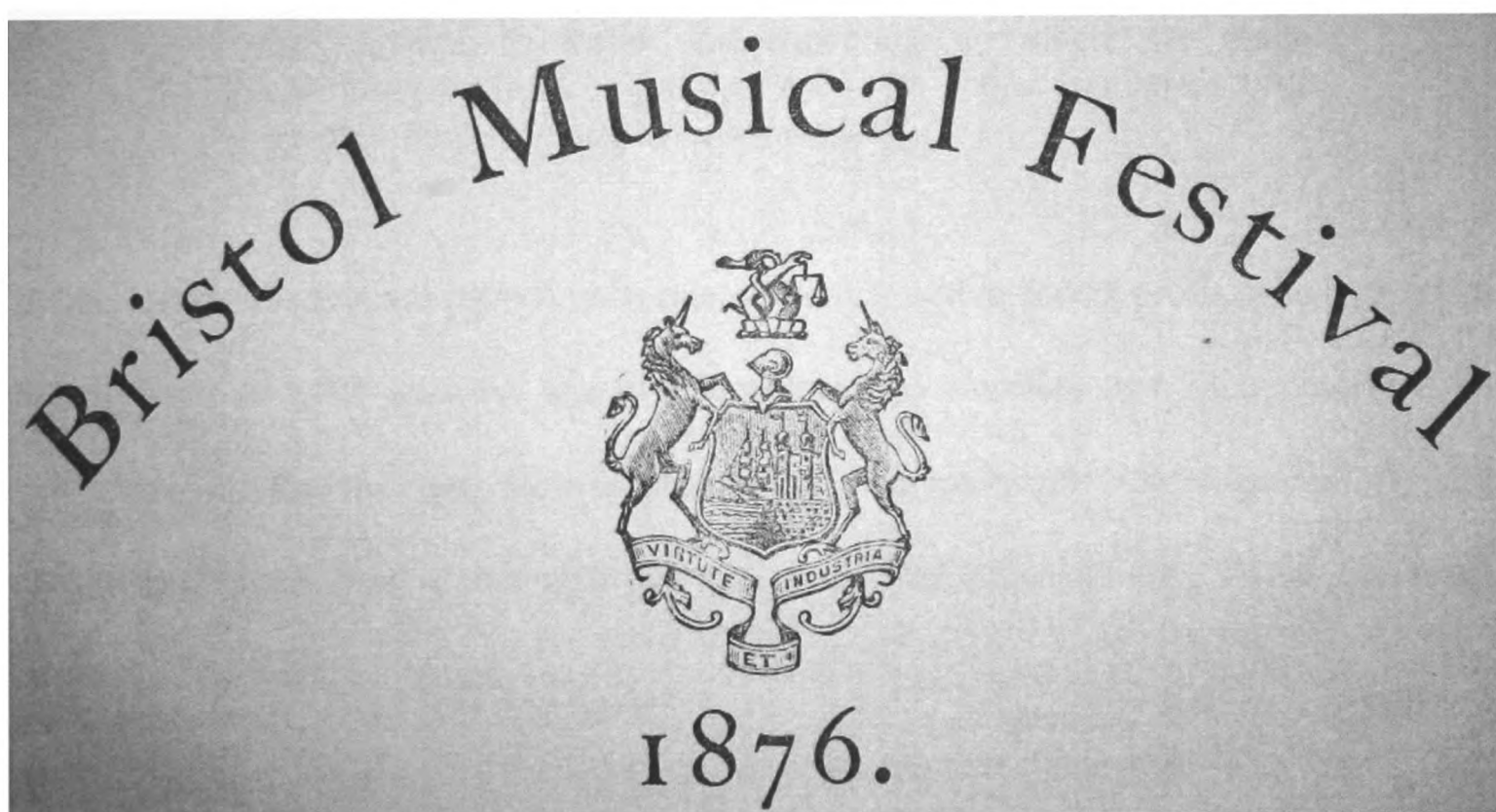


Figure 3.37: Bristol town coat of arms included on festival word-books.

Source: Bristol Central Library, Ref. b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.

¹⁸⁴ The press reported his 'regretted absence' from the festival. See 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury*, 21 October 1876. Around the same dates as the Bristol festival there are reports of 'another Sims Reeves riot' at a Manchester ballad concert where the audience became so unruly demanding encores, the concert had to be abandoned. See 'Public Amusements', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 29 October 1876.

3.4.4 The third Bristol Triennial Festival of 1879

By 1879, the choir increased in size to 350 and with the death of the founding chorus-master Mr Stone, a new choral director, Mr D. W. Rootham, was appointed. The likelihood of the postponement of the 1879 Bristol festival ‘owing to the prevalent depression’ was reported around the country.¹⁸⁵ The committee increased the number of guarantors from 300 to 400, however, and pushed ahead with the festival.¹⁸⁶ Guarantors received first selection of seats and as a result, a pull-out section giving the gallery plan now became a feature of the programmes. No doubt, the economic climate prompted the organisers of the Bristol festival to follow the example of the other provincial festivals; they presented well-known works such as *Samson*, *Elijah*, and *Messiah* to attract a bigger audience. Even Hallé’s evening concerts featured standard popular items such as Beethoven’s *Choral Symphony*. *The Examiner* commented rather unkindly on this state of affairs:

For the sake of the charities they benefit, we may heartily wish these Festivals all possible success; but for the sake of the Art they profess to foster and encourage so much, we really beginning to think – judging by 1879 – that it matters little whether they continue to exist or not.¹⁸⁷

Interestingly, this festival proved to be one of the few with a decent profit, which resulted in the division of £500 between the two local medical charities that were described with considerable hype in every festival programme. Bigger profits, more guarantors, larger choirs and bands, and more seats for sale were the rationale that drove the festival movement forward.

¹⁸⁵ *Glasgow Herald*, 7 February 1879.

¹⁸⁶ ‘Bristol Musical Festival Society’, *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 7 February 1879. Guarantors rather than subscribers were used to back the Bristol festivals, with members being ‘called on’ if a loss was made.

¹⁸⁷ ‘Music’, *The Examiner*, 18 October 1879.

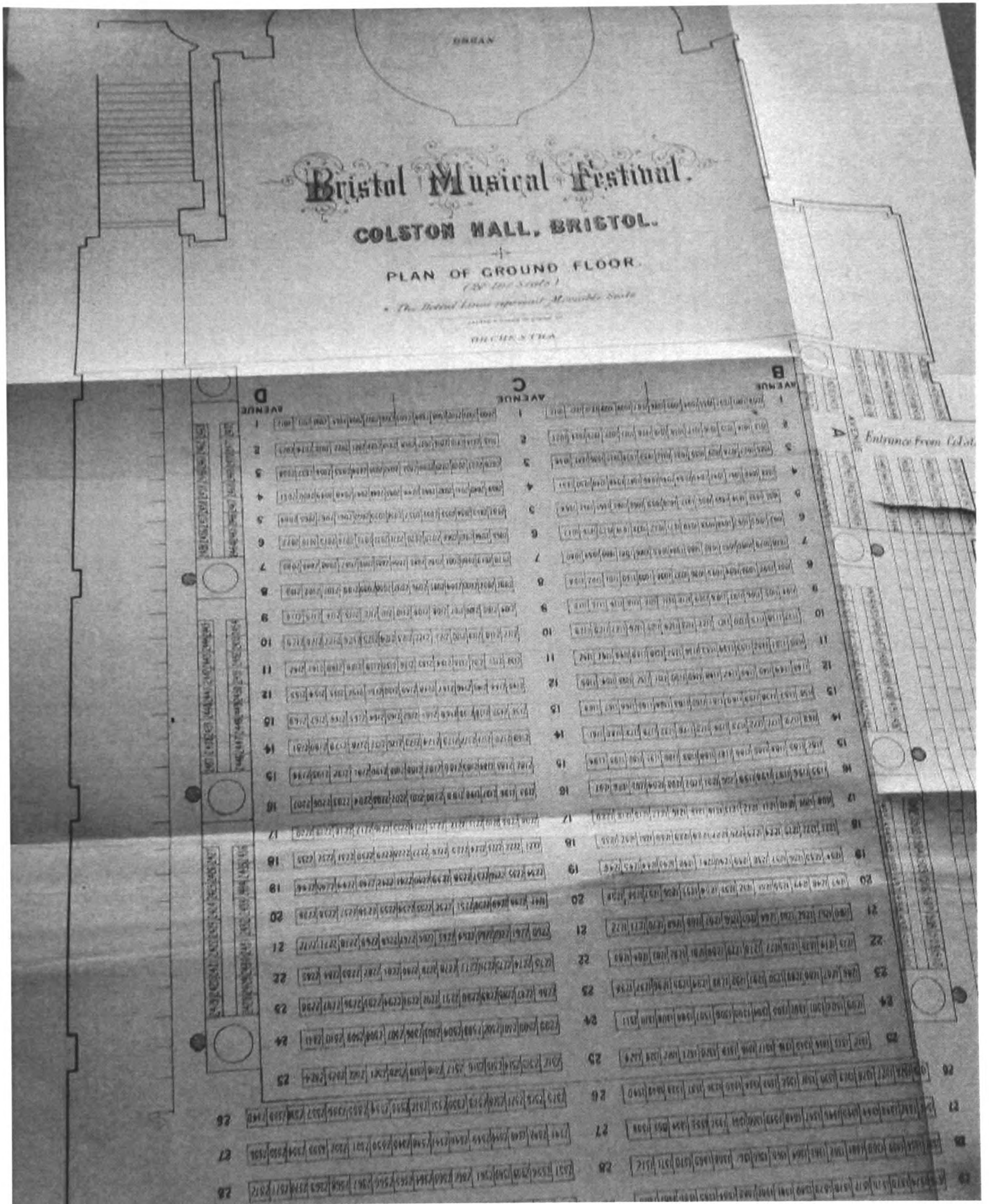


Figure 3.38: Pull-out gallery plan included in programmes from 1879.
 Source: Bristol Central Library, Ref. b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.

3.4.5 The fourth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1882

Another aim of most provincial festivals was to give a musical education to the public, the benefits of which have been discussed previously. The festival programme tells of the committee's efforts in this regard:

The diffusion of sound musical education amongst the people being also one of the objects of the Society, self-supporting singing classes, under experienced and well-qualified teachers, were established in every district of the city of Bristol, where a sufficient number of pupils offered themselves. The fee charged in order to place these classes in the reach of all was fixed at 3d. per lesson. The Committee is able to report that in every respect the experiment was highly encouraging. During the winter seasons of 1880-1, 1881-2, the classes included 794 students of whom 260 successfully passed examination and obtained certificates for proficiency in singing at sight, in time and in tune.¹⁸⁸

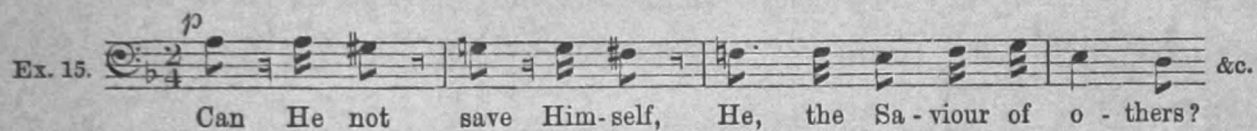
Apart from extensive lists of all the choral works performed by the Society included in the programme, detailed musical examples are reproduced and analysed in the word-books to help educate the public. Many explanations were quite sophisticated such as the one from Gounod's *Redemption* shown in Fig. 3.39.

¹⁸⁸ *The Fourth Bristol Triennial Festival Programme, 1882.*



The vocal music of the chorus is extremely simple, and calls for no explanatory remark, but in that for the orchestra a feature of interest presents itself at the point where the Redemption figure is twice inverted on the words "Save Thyself! Son of God." The inversion, looked at in association with the challenge to "come down from the Cross," has a significance impossible to mistake.

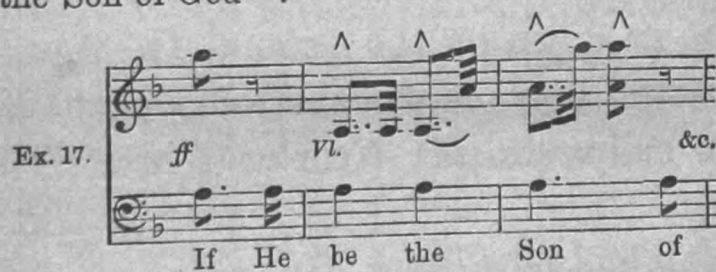
The Chorus of Priests, "Can He not save Himself?" (D minor) is very different in character, and directed to be sung "mockingly" ("*en ricanant*"), a mode of execution favoured by the nature of the opening theme:—



Other points in this chorus are, first, a series of progressions from one 6-4-2 chord to another, as under—



and, second, the emphatic delivery by the violins of the Redemption figure at the words "If He be the Son of God":—



The resumed narrative, it will be observed, is on a monotone, with the now familiar cadence, while the Prayer of Jesus, "Pardon their sin," &c., is accompanied by the Redemption theme in even augmented beauty and grace.

THE REPROACHES.

CHORUS OR QUARTET.

O My vineyard, come tell Me why thy grapes are bitter. What have I done, My people? Wherein hast thou been wronged? Did I

Figure 3.39: Detail of word-book for *Redemption*, Bristol Triennial Festival 1882.

Source: Bristol Central Library, Ref. b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ For a detailed description of how concert programmes evolved and the ideological battles that these reflected over the course of the nineteenth century see William Weber, *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

3.4.6 The fifth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1885

Before the fifth Bristol Triennial Festival, the press reported the upcoming celebration of Handel's bicentenary thus:

Associating the Bristol festival with the honour now being readily given to the illustrious Handel in the bicentenary celebration, the committee gladly welcoming the opportunity of their triennial gathering, occurring in the bicentenary year of his birth, [to] both open and close the festival with the great master's works.¹⁹⁰

The festival opened with Handel's *Belshazzar* and closed with *Messiah*. Again, no 'novelties' were attempted this year as there were no funds available to commission a composer. The 'heat and turmoil of parliamentary elections' was blamed for the poor attendance.¹⁹¹ With vastly diminished attendance figures in 1885, the five hundred guarantors were 'called up' after the event to pay £1.11.6 each, to cover the deficit that resulted. *The Times* made the following insightful suggestions:

To stimulate general interest in the festival and thus place it on a popular basis, should be the first endeavour of those interested in the musical future of Bristol. A change for the better is also needed in the internal arrangements of the concert hall. It has previously been pointed out that the tenors and basses are placed in side galleries, and in singing address each other across the platform, instead of the public. At Leeds, where the male voices are, if anything too sonorous, this would not be a very serious drawback; here, where the volume of sound is not naturally very powerful, the balance is completely upset. By way of remedy, the platform should be brought forward into the auditorium, so as to make room for the entire chorus, at the sacrifice even of one or two rows of too frequently empty chairs.¹⁹²

Bristolians, not to be deterred, organized massed performances for the ensuing celebrations in 1887 of Queen Victoria's golden jubilee and the celebrations in 1888 for the completion of the western towers of Bristol Cathedral. A band and choir of 700 performed *Elijah* and

¹⁹⁰ 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 20 June 1885.

¹⁹¹ 'Bristol Musical Festival: First Day's Performances', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 21 October 1885.

¹⁹² 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Times*, 23 October 1885, 8.

Israel in Egypt in the context of a church service. The new Bristol Choral Society emerged from these meets and later became involved in the triennial festivals. Again, the press reported attendance figures of the 1873-1885 with the utmost detail (see Fig. 3.40).

THE ATTENDANCES,			
1873.			
	Secured Seats.	Unsecured Seats.	Total.
Tuesday Morning ...	670	981	1651
" Evening ...	570	924	1494
Wednesday Morning ...	1110	813	1923
" Evening ...	414	1131	1545
Thursday Morning*	409	810	1219
" Evening ...	1222	689	1911
Friday ...	828	1094	1922
Total ...	5232	6442	11674
*New work—St. John the Baptist.			
1870.			
	Secured Seats.	Unsecured Seats.	Total.
Tuesday Morning ...	902	895	1857
" Evening ...	848	1008	1856
Wednesday Morning ...	625	1060	1685
" Evening ...	1107	738	1845
Thursday Morning ...	689	1141	1828
" Evening ...	1183	746	1929
Friday ...	944	1027	1971
Total ...	6356	6015	12371
1879.			
	Secured Seats.	Unsecured Seats.	Total.
Tuesday Morning ...	924	645	1569
" Evening ...	834	502	1336
Wednesday Morning ...	1505	559	2064
" Evening ...	1006	688	1694
Thursday Morning ...	1329	518	1847
" Evening ...	920	604	1524
Friday ...	1252	587	1839
Total ...	7360	4103	11463
1882.			
	Secured Seats.	Unsecured Seats.	Total.
Tuesday Morning ...	1453	253	1706
" Evening ...	1034	215	1249
Wednesday Morning ...	2029	50	2079
" Evening ...	1013	250	1263
Thursday Morning ...	1520	308	1828
" Evening ...	927	303	1230
Friday ...	1594	215	1770
Total ...	9570	1654	11224
1885.			
	Secured Seats.	Unsecured Seats.	Total.
Tuesday Morning ...	932	221	1203
" Evening ...	1144	141	1285
Wednesday Morning ...	1619	343	1962
" Evening ...	1036	238	1274
Thursday Morning ...	1499	310	1809
" Evening ...	1347	173	1520
Friday ...	1333	388	1721
Total ...	8800	1814	10614

Figure 3.40: Comparative attendance at Bristol Triennial Festivals 1873-1885.
Source: *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 24 October 1885.

3.4.7 Bristol Triennial Festivals of 1888, 1890 and 1893

The sixth festival presented the two revered classics of *Elijah* and *Messiah* once again, but also included works of English composers such as Mackenzie's *Rose of Sharon* and Sullivan's *Golden Legend*. The local paper commented: 'The inclusion of such works as these, leaves no room for the complaint once made against the local festival that the English music in it "amounted to no more than two or three insignificant songs, squeezed into a corner like poor relations."' ¹⁹³

In another change, local musicians were included in Hallé's visiting orchestra, which had now grown to 96 players, no doubt to quell frustrations of locals who saw the festival as 'a house divided against itself'. ¹⁹⁴ The festival 'voluntary choir', which had no paid singers as in other towns, had expanded to 400 singers. The festival ran at a loss with attendance even lower than the previous year. Once again, the guarantors were called upon to cover the loss.

Rivalry and comparison with Birmingham's festival is very apparent in press reports of the time. The immense competition between towns will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7. Not until its seventh year did Bristol move its festival forward a year so as not to compete with Birmingham and the Three Choirs. The Bristol festival which was 'last and latest of the provincial festivals' hoped to gain a financial advantage by not having to compete in the same year for patrons. No better explanation can be made of this change than that made in this evocative newspaper excerpt:

The theory of musical intervals receives a new application this week ... The explanation is that the great Midland festival, hitherto filling the dingy Birmingham Town hall during the sunny days of August, is henceforth transferred to a more bracing October week. The Midland auld body with proportions suited to the growth of nearly a century and a quarter, could hardly find room for her slim young Bristol sister – only a sweet seventeen – to walk abreast in the identical month out of 36, so the junior smartly solved the difficulty, by arrangement to walk

¹⁹³ 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 27 August 1888.

¹⁹⁴ While some supported Hallé, there were many who did not wish to import the Manchester orchestra for the festivals. 'The Bristol Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 23 October 1888.

a year in front. This harmonious arrangement of the calendar was preferable to none ...¹⁹⁵

Despite the fact that the 1890 Bristol festival had now been moved forward a year, that the unsecured tickets were halved in price from 6/- to 3/-, that some concerts were moved to the weekend, that one less concert was scheduled, and that a novelty by local Gloucestershire man Hubert Parry was included, attendance was down. Heavy rain and fog at some performances did not help attendance either. However, a loss does not seem to have been incurred.¹⁹⁶

Although the 1893 Festival was considered 'more successful musically', in part because it featured a Wagner concert, this festival suffered a disappointing overall loss of £1,923. This was a result of poor attendance with an average of 600 vacant seats at every performance.¹⁹⁷ *Messiah*, customarily featured on the closing day, had by far the best attendances.

3.4.8 The ninth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1896

George Riseley, organist of Bristol Cathedral, who had participated in the festivals for many years, became the festival conductor after Hallé's sudden death. Riseley further expanded the chorus to 500 and the orchestra to 100 players, with one instrument especially made and imported from Vienna for the Wagner pieces.¹⁹⁸ *Elijah* was well attended on the opening night, but inclement weather the remainder of the week led to decreased attendance.¹⁹⁹

While festival attendance and profits did not equal the record year of 1876, guarantors were not apparently called upon to meet the shortfall.

¹⁹⁵ 'Bristol Musical Festival: First Day', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 23 October 1890.

¹⁹⁶ A donation of £74. 6s. 1d. to the Bristol General Hospital is recorded. *Ibid.* 27 December.

¹⁹⁷ 'Musical Festival Society: Meeting of Guarantors', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 15 December 1893.

¹⁹⁸ Various selections of Wagner were performed by the distinguished prima donna Fräulein Malten (described as a 'Bayreuth apostle' in the press) in the evening concerts. Extra horns, tubas and trombones were added. One man was to play 'a special instrument made in Vienna for this Festival' to achieve the effect as scored by Wagner. See 'Music in Bristol', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 15 September 1896.

¹⁹⁹ The weather gets an unprecedented amount of press at the Bristol Festivals and seems to have quite a dramatic impact on attendance. Most transport from the surrounding countryside would have been by horse and buggy to the Colston Hall at his time. Women's weighty costumes often heavily lined with muslin and silk and with thick starched petticoats in the 1890s, crinoline that was easily crushed, and highly trimmed hats must have been a problem in wet weather too.

A contemporary explanation pre-empting recent studies in urban history, of why the Bristol festival committee, but not those in other cities, struggled financially appeared in a local newspaper:

A very modest guarantee fund is asked for in Bristol, for in Leeds the guarantee amounts to no less than £27,000, but then in the famous Yorkshire town with its splendid choir and Arthur Sullivan as its conductor, there has never been a call. But the Leeds festival is a Yorkshire festival, and the people pour in thousands from all parts of that great county upon that great triennial celebration. Birmingham is similarly fortunate in having large centres of population just outside it but, with the exception of Bath, which might be drawn more closely in than it is at present, Bristol has nothing but an agricultural district to look to. In the case of the Three Choirs Festival, which has a somewhat similar territory, 200 stewards subscribe £5 each, and so raise a guarantee fund in hard cash, or else these small cathedral cities could never hold the gatherings they do. The effect of our argument is that the terms and conditions of the Bristol festival are no fault of the committee, but are prescribed by the geographical situation.²⁰⁰

Whatever the lay of the land, the Bristol triennial festivals were shortly to be no more. On 1 September 1898, a fire that started in an adjacent clothing factory gutted Colston Hall bringing a spectacular end to a monumental building (see Fig. 3.41).²⁰¹ The planned tenth Bristol Triennial Festival of 1899 was cancelled.

The conductor Riseley, when told of the destruction of the organ, was quoted in the press as stating he felt as if he had 'lost a life-long friend'.²⁰² The 'Musical Notes' in the local paper also reported that the burning of the Colston Hall would 'knock the last nail in the coffin' for the Triennial festivals.²⁰³ How true this proved to be with only intermittent festivals held after the hall was rebuilt. It can only be admired that the triennial festivals, of

²⁰⁰ 'The Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 18 January 1896.

²⁰¹ Reece Winstone, *Bristol As It Was, 1845-1900* (Bristol: R. Winstone, 1983).

²⁰² 'After the Fire', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 3 September 1898.

²⁰³ 'The Talk of Bristol', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 8 September 1898.

high artistic merit and encouraged by an ideology of monumentalism, continued through the late nineteenth century despite the long-term fiscal difficulties that were encountered.



Figure 3.41: Roofless Colston Hall after the fire of September 1898.
Source: Plate 90 in *Bristol As It Was, 1845-1900*.

3.5 Liverpool Festivals

On 30 April 1766, only seven years after the death of Handel, Liverpool saw its first festival with a performance of *Messiah* in St Peter's Church. Dr Hayes from Oxford conducted an orchestra of London musicians for the occasion.²⁰⁴ It was not until 1805, however, that a musical festival was undertaken on a grand scale 'commensurate with the opulence and the importance of the place'.²⁰⁵ Coupled with middle-class concern about social conditions, further festivals were held in 1813, 1817, 1823 and 1827; some were very successful in raising enormous sums for charity. Newspapers far and wide reported on these successful quadrennial festivals. In 1827 it was reported in the *North Wales Chronicle*:

We hear that it is in contemplation to hold the Liverpool Musical Festivals, in future, every three instead of every four years, as heretofore. The gross receipts during the last Festival exceed, we understand, £9,000. The expenses, it is expected, will be above £4,000. The sum, therefore, which the committee will have to distribute among the Public Charities, will, it is probable, amount to £5,000.²⁰⁶

The profits donated to charity regularly appear to have been between £3,000 and £5,000. Sir George Smart, who was the conductor between 1823 and 1836, was responsible for popularising the 'grand manner of performing Handel' at Liverpool, and this was quickly emulated in other provincial centres.²⁰⁷ Some notable performances at the festivals included that of prima donna Madame Malibran in 1833 and the first performance in England on 7 October 1836 of Mendelssohn's *St Paul* (see Fig. 3.42); the latter had been premiered several months earlier, on 22 May, at the Rhenish Festival in Düsseldorf, Germany.

²⁰⁴ While newspapers of 1766 do not specify which Dr Hayes from Oxford attended., it is assumed that it is the elder Dr William Hayes (1708-1777), as the son Dr Philip Hayes (1738-1797) did not receive his doctorate from Oxford until 1777.

²⁰⁵ 'A Brief Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Musical Festivals', *The Hull Packet*, 9 October 1840.

²⁰⁶ *North Wales Chronicle*, 18 October 1827.

²⁰⁷ Smart was not a conductor in the sense understood today. *The New Grove* states: 'He directed music by presiding at the piano or organ, not by wielding a baton'. See *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 'Smart: (1) George Smart', 533.

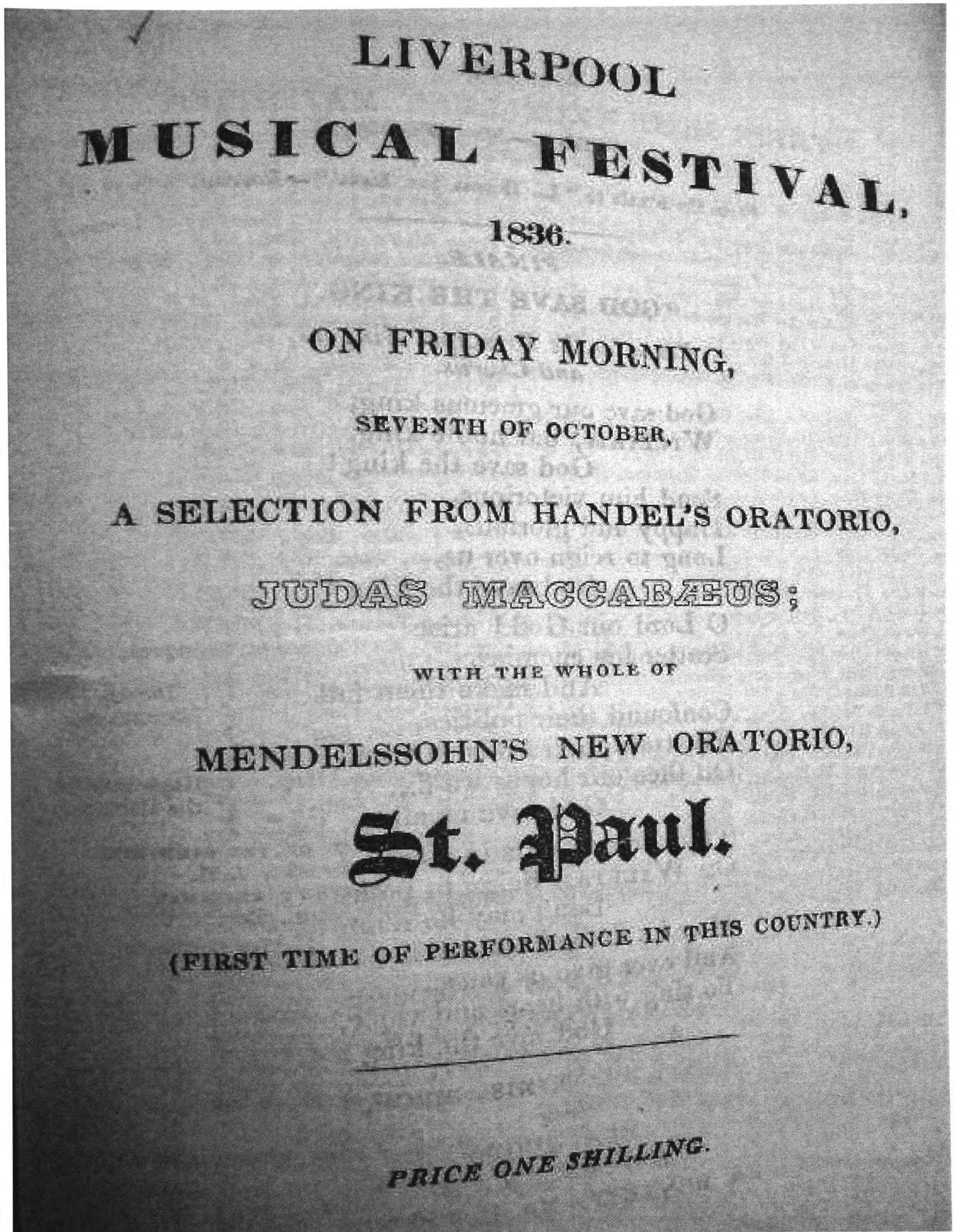


Figure 3.42: Liverpool Festival 1836: Premiere of *St Paul* in England.

Source: The Liverpool Record Office and Archive

The chorus used at the 1836 festival appears to be the nascent Liverpool Festival Choral Society that survived until 1860, when it succumbed to the dominance of the Royal

Philharmonic Chorus. The Royal Philharmonic Society formed in 1840, consisted of an orchestra and chorus, and boasted a huge number of members. Unlike the situation in Leeds, amicable relations existed between the two Liverpool choirs with some members reportedly belonging to both groups.

At the inauguration of the new Philharmonic hall in 1849 several large-scale oratorios were performed. The now hundred-strong chorus engaged in a sort of subversive warfare with one of the two conductors, Zeugheer Hermann, which came to a head with a strong disagreement over the tempo of the 'Baal' choruses in a performance of *Elijah*:

'The Philharmonic chorus-singer had his notions of what was right and proper, and meant to show Hermann that to beat one instead of three in part of the Baal scene was a thing not to be tolerated. And so, while the conductor hurried on, the singers held back and chaos seemed imminent, until the band taking their cue from their chief, showed all they could achieve in developing power, and with their weight of tone broke the choral opposition down, and brought the chorus back to a sense of their duty, or at least up to the pace intended'.

The outcome of this contretemps was the appearance of some doggerel verses signed "William Nutts" in a Liverpool paper ... :

When Hermann began to give us a taste
Of this wonderful fact and great revelation
That the Baalites always were in great haste.
For that was a concert remarkably clever,
And we, the poor vocalists, must not complain.
No malice we bear, but we say that he never
Is fit to conduct the Philharmonics again.²⁰⁸

It seems not only were the performances on a grand scale but disagreements were conducted in an equally prominent manner. The acute public interest in every aspect of the festival was reported in the press and shows the importance with which the festival was perceived.

²⁰⁸ W. I. Argent is quoted here by Stainton de B. Taylor, *Two Centuries of Music in Liverpool* (Liverpool: Rockliff Brothers Limited, 1976), 11. More humorous verse appeared about the conductor the following year as a parody to be sung to Weber's 'Laughing Song'.

By 1836, all in Liverpool were very interested in providing an even larger venue than churches or theatres had provided. The popular and profitable triennial festivals needed a bigger space in order to continue to expand successfully. A retrospective newspaper article of 1934, entitled ‘Why St George’s was built’, explained: ‘Long ago musical festivals were held in St Peter’s Church, but this did not meet with the approval of certain citizens. They considered there should be a special and proper place for holding these festivals’.²⁰⁹ In the early eighteenth century, a number of citizens believed that it was improper to hold oratorio festivals in a church, and, as a result, people would not attend oratorios, even the ubiquitous *Messiah*. For this reason as well as the lack of appeal of the performances themselves, attendances at festivals declined. One provincial newspaper in 1831 extrapolated:

[T]hey have been adopted everywhere [Mozart’s accompaniments], having now descended as low as the Ancient Concerts; and the charm of novelty being over, we are not surprised that, for the last few years the *Messiah* has ceased to be the most attractive performance of sacred music that a conductor could select. It used to be reckoned upon as certain to draw large audiences. This even when produced, at the last Norwich and Liverpool Festivals, under every possible advantage, it failed to do. Many persons stay away because they have heard it so often; and a considerable sum is probably thus abstracted from the receipts of the Festivals. There is another reason for this decline in the number of its auditors. The *Messiah* used regularly to assemble a class of hearers who attended no other performance, – those, we mean, who assume themselves the distinction of the “evangelical” part of the community. Formerly these persons, Churchmen and Dissenters, were accustomed to “go to the *Messiah*” as a sort of duty. You were sure to see a demurer, graver audience, than on the other mornings – fewer gay ribbons, smaller bonnets, unfashionable coats, cropped or sleek heads, and other outward and visible signs of their character and creed. But of late these individuals have discovered that a sacred oratorio is the most sinful of sins, – worse a thousand times than a play; and instead of going into our churches as hearers; they are to be found at the doors as bill-distributors, warning all good Christians, at the peril of their salvation not to enter the camp of Satan.²¹⁰

²⁰⁹ ‘Why St. George’s Was Built’, *Evening Express* (Liverpool), 21 March 1934.

²¹⁰ ‘The Musical Festivals - Handel’s *Messiah*’, *The Derby Mercury*, 14 September 1831.

In the face of public pressure, a committee was formed in Liverpool to raise funds for an imposing secular hall with its main purpose to stage large triennial musical festivals. The construction of the magnificent St George's Hall (see Fig. 3.43) was the result.

3.5.1 St George's Hall

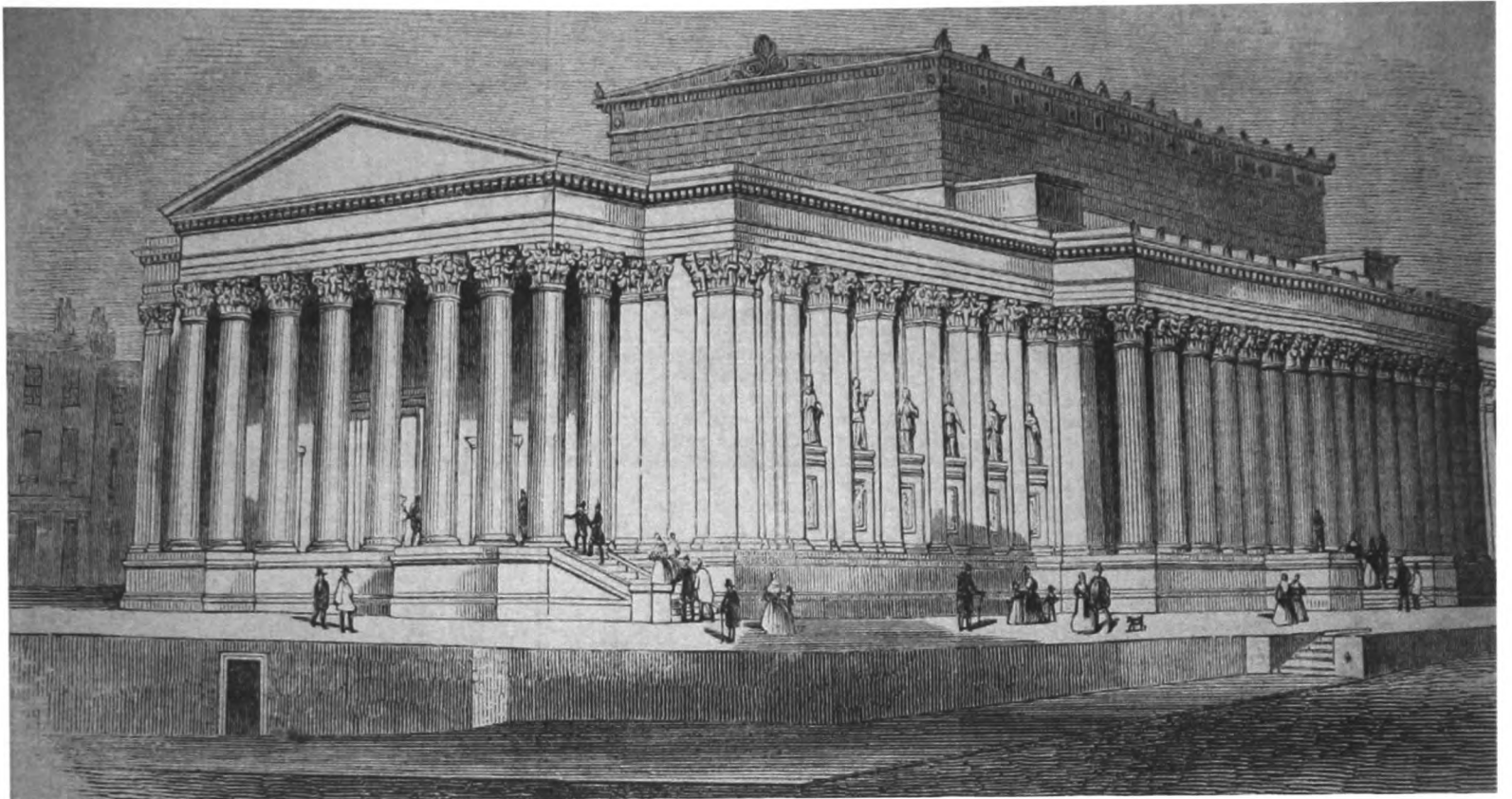


Figure 3.43: St George's Hall Liverpool.

Source: *Illustrated London News*, 11 January 1845. Print also held at Liverpool Record Office with the comment 'before completion of the hall'.

As one text explained the particular situation in Liverpool:

In many another municipality the building of magnificent town halls was a direct result of civic pride and, occasionally, of civic envy, and in this Victorian period of the Industrial Revolution enormous sums of ratepayers' money were thus spent in keeping up with the Joneses! Liverpool did not exactly come within this category, however, for it was largely the result of pressure from the PUBLIC that the great Hall was built.²¹¹

Voluntary subscriptions had raised £23,350 by January 1837 (though later returned to subscribers when the Liverpool Corporation took over the project) and a competition was announced in March 1839 for the design of the hall to hold the triennial musical festivals.

²¹¹ Douglas R. Carrington, *St. George's Hall: The Hall, Organ and Organists* (Liverpool City Council, 1981), 5.

Seventy-five proposals were received and a young unknown architect, Harvey Lonsdale Elmes won the competition. Preparation for the erection of the hall was already in progress when plans were altered. Lacking adequate funds, the Corporation asked Elton, who had also won the competition for the design of the assize courts in Liverpool, to make a design combining the two plans. The result was St George's Hall.²¹² According to the *Liverpool Daily Post*, the 'blunt' instruction given to Elmes was: 'Just make it bigger than anyone else's'.²¹³ Tragically, during the construction, Elmes contracted tuberculosis and moved in 1847 to Jamaica to recuperate. He died there that same year, at the age of thirty-three, and never saw the building completed. The replacement architect, Sir Charles Cockerell, was responsible for the completion of the interior of the building.

This grand monument to the city and its music, derived from both Greek and Roman styles, was erected between 1842 and 1854 on the previous site of an infirmary and lunatic asylum. It is often described as 'the best example of neo-classical architecture in Britain' – and even in the world – by some authorities.²¹⁴ Queen Victoria is reported to have proclaimed of the building, 'It is worthy of Athens itself'.²¹⁵ In its 2008 brochure on St George's Hall, the Liverpool Architectural Society explains the brilliant idea of combining Roman spatial engineering with exquisite Greek detailing: 'The building combines the massiveness of a Roman bath with the delicacy of a Greek temple'.²¹⁶ Interestingly, one BBC broadcaster pointed out how similar this building is to the Altes Museum in Berlin.²¹⁷ The complexities of its architectural influences aside, the hall was to become more than Victorian showmanship, with its ventilation and heating system becoming a model for many other buildings of the day.

²¹² BBC webpage states 'It is possibly the only building where you could be tried for murder, have a ball or listen to a concert all under one roof'.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/liverpool/culture/2002/08/st_georges/history.shtml accessed 2 January 2009.

²¹³ *Liverpool Daily Post*, 9 June 2005.

²¹⁴ Victorian architect Richard Norman Shaw claimed 'This is one of the great edifices of the world'. The Prince of Wales called it, 'The greatest neo-classical building in northern Europe'.

²¹⁵ The comment was made on a visit to the uncompleted hall in 1851 and recorded in her diary.

²¹⁶ *St. George's Hall* (Liverpool Architectural Society, 2008).

²¹⁷ *A Temple for the Merchant Princes* (BBC Radio 3, 1977), Stephen Bayley (dir.).

Elmes wrote on 2 March 1847, ‘The instructions to me were to provide a room for Music and other public purposes; my object has been therefore to combine these with the least possible sacrifice of any one’. The resultant Great Hall, which held the triennial festivals, was huge, measuring 165 feet long, 74 feet wide, and 84 feet tall, and with seating capacity for an audience of 1,400. The innovative use of hollow bricks in the barrel-vaulted ceiling reduced the weight, allowing it to become the biggest ceiling of this kind in Britain. Enormous cast bronze doors weighing over two tonnes each added to the grandeur of the hall. The magnificent Minton mosaic floor was produced from over 30,000 local tiles. A dozen statues, including those of Peel and Gladstone, lined the perimeter of the hall.

The north end of the great hall was dominated by the organ, built by Henry Willis of London. It was at the time the largest in the country, consisting of 7,737 pipes and 120 stops. Willis’s changes in the design of the organ made it possible to hear a greater variety of sounds, and made it much easier to operate than earlier organs. The advantages and disadvantages of this great organ were spelled out in a retrospective newspaper article of 1930:

In some respects it was far ahead of its generation, but in others it was behind. Its bellows were blown by a steam engine at a time when the majority of the large organs still relied on hand power. It also embodied four heavy pressure reeds on the solo section, then a new thing as far as English organs went. On the other hand it was turned on to what was called unequal temperament so that music in the more remote keys could not be played on it, and what is more the compass or range of its manuals was the then old-fashioned one of FF to A (63 notes).²¹⁸

The enormous organs provided in many of the grand halls discussed in this chapter were a response to a new breed of organists who regarded the pipe organ as an extension of civic pride. The organ not only enhanced the pomp and circumstance of grand civic occasions; it also proved a powerful tool in the execution of oratorio performances involving hundreds of

²¹⁸ ‘St. George’s Hall Organ Changes: It’s 75 Year History’, *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 10 March 1930.

players and singers. Another important use of the organ in Liverpool and other towns was to introduce to a wide audience orchestral music that had been arranged for the organ and that was disseminated through cheap concerts.²¹⁹

St George's concert hall was officially opened by the mayor on 18 September 1854, with a performance of *Messiah* that included noted soloists, an orchestra of nearly 100 and a choir of over 300 voices.²²⁰ Prints were produced and sold to the public for the inauguration of the building (see Fig. 3.45). The tickets cost a guinea, which was quite expensive at that time. The programme cover is included in Fig 3.46, and a list of the principal vocal performers is given in Fig. 3.47. Despite the fact that the Willis organ was not assembled fully, it was used at this first festival with some rather dire consequences as reported in the *London Illustrated News*. The paper further stated that 'This magnificent edifice will be a perennial monument to the energy and public spirit, in the nineteenth century, of the people of Liverpool'.²²¹ With the town's gentry assembled, plain-clothes police were deployed in the audience of several thousand to watch out for 'the light fingered fraternity'.²²²

²¹⁹For details of some public concerts on the organ see Peter Horton, 'A Organ should be an Organ': S. S. Wesley and the Organ in St George's Hall, Liverpool', *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, 22 (1998), 84-125.

²²⁰Queen Victoria declined an invitation to attend.

²²¹'The Inauguration of St. George's Hall Liverpool', *Illustrated London News*, 23 September 1854, 277.

²²²'The Opening of St. George's Hall, Liverpool', *The Manchester Times*, 20 September 1854.

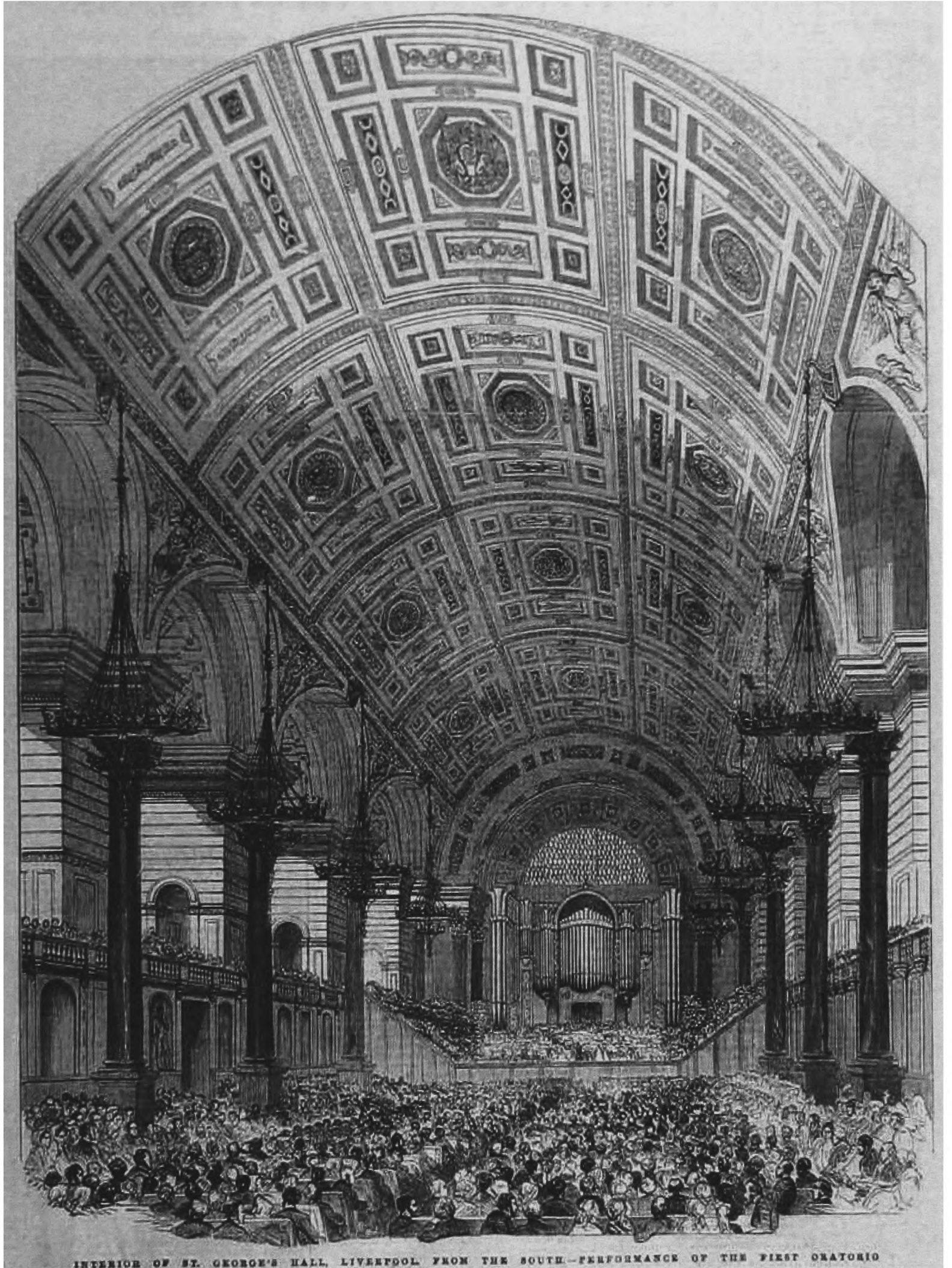


Figure 3.44: Performance of the first oratorio in St George's Hall, Liverpool.
Source: *Illustrated London News*, 23 September 1854.

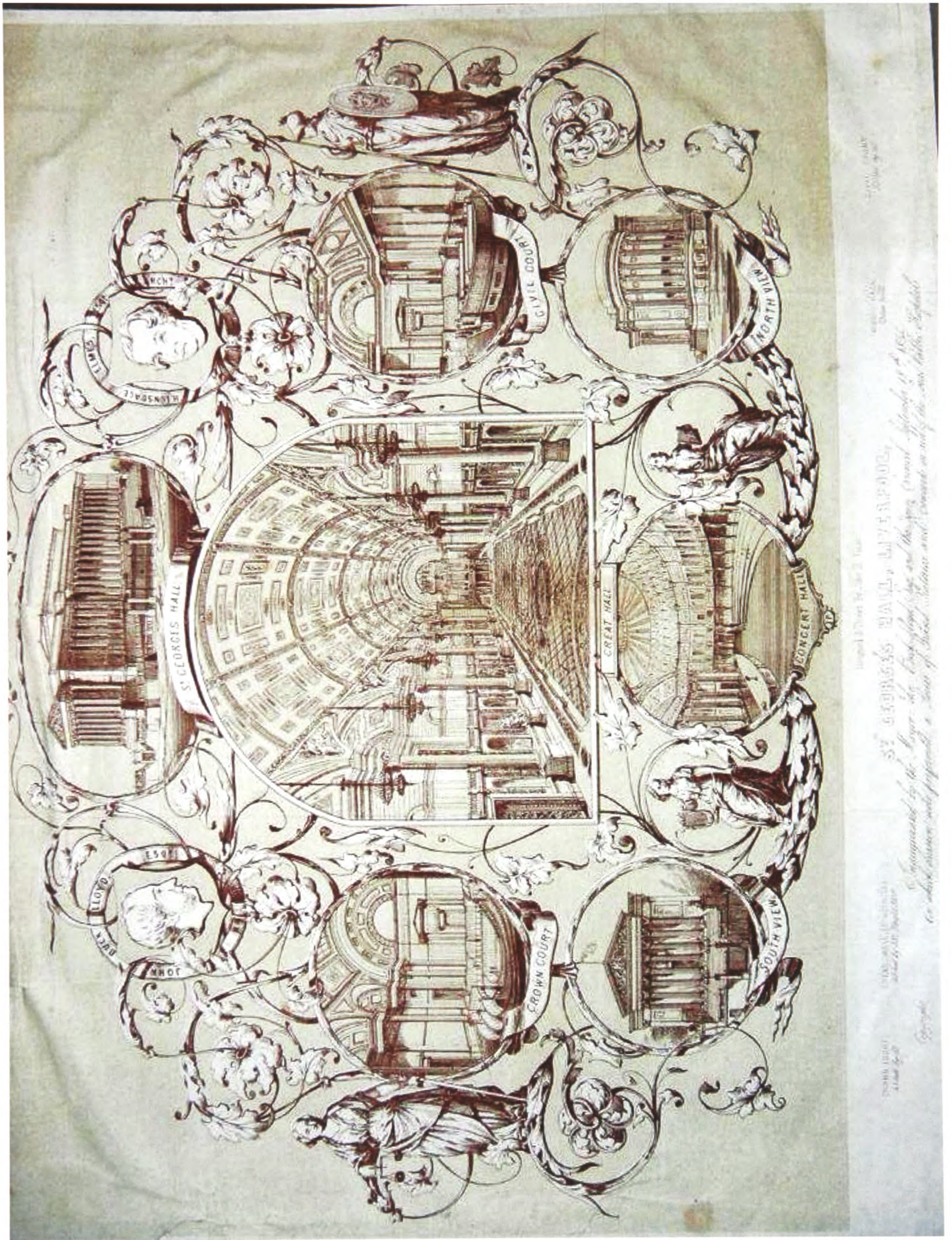


Figure 3.45: Print published for the inauguration of St George’s Hall.
 Source: Scrapbook at Liverpool Record Office and Archive, Hf 942.7213 GEO.

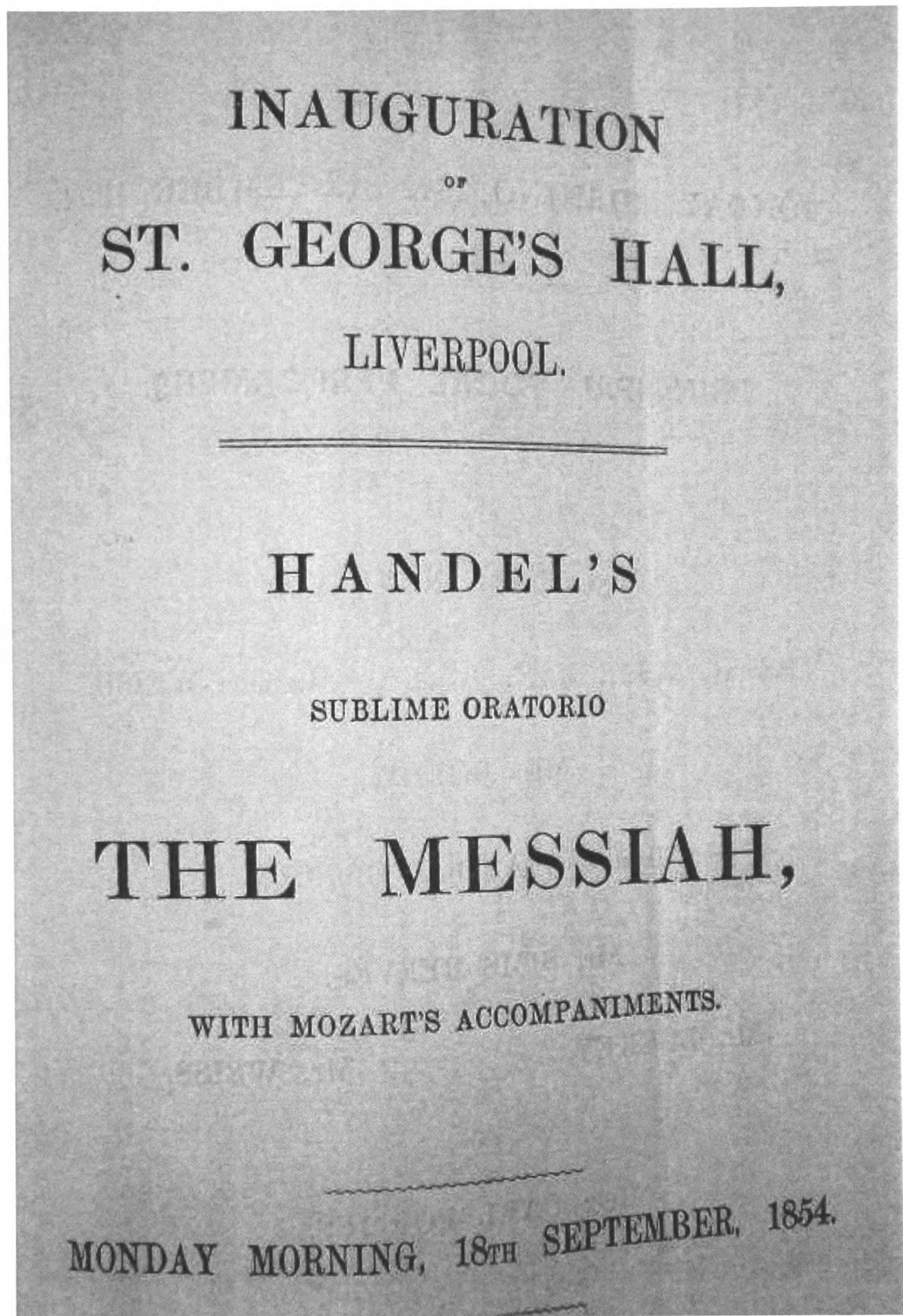


Figure 3.46: Programme of *Messiah* for the inauguration of St George's Hall, 1854.
Source: Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hf 942.7213 GEO.

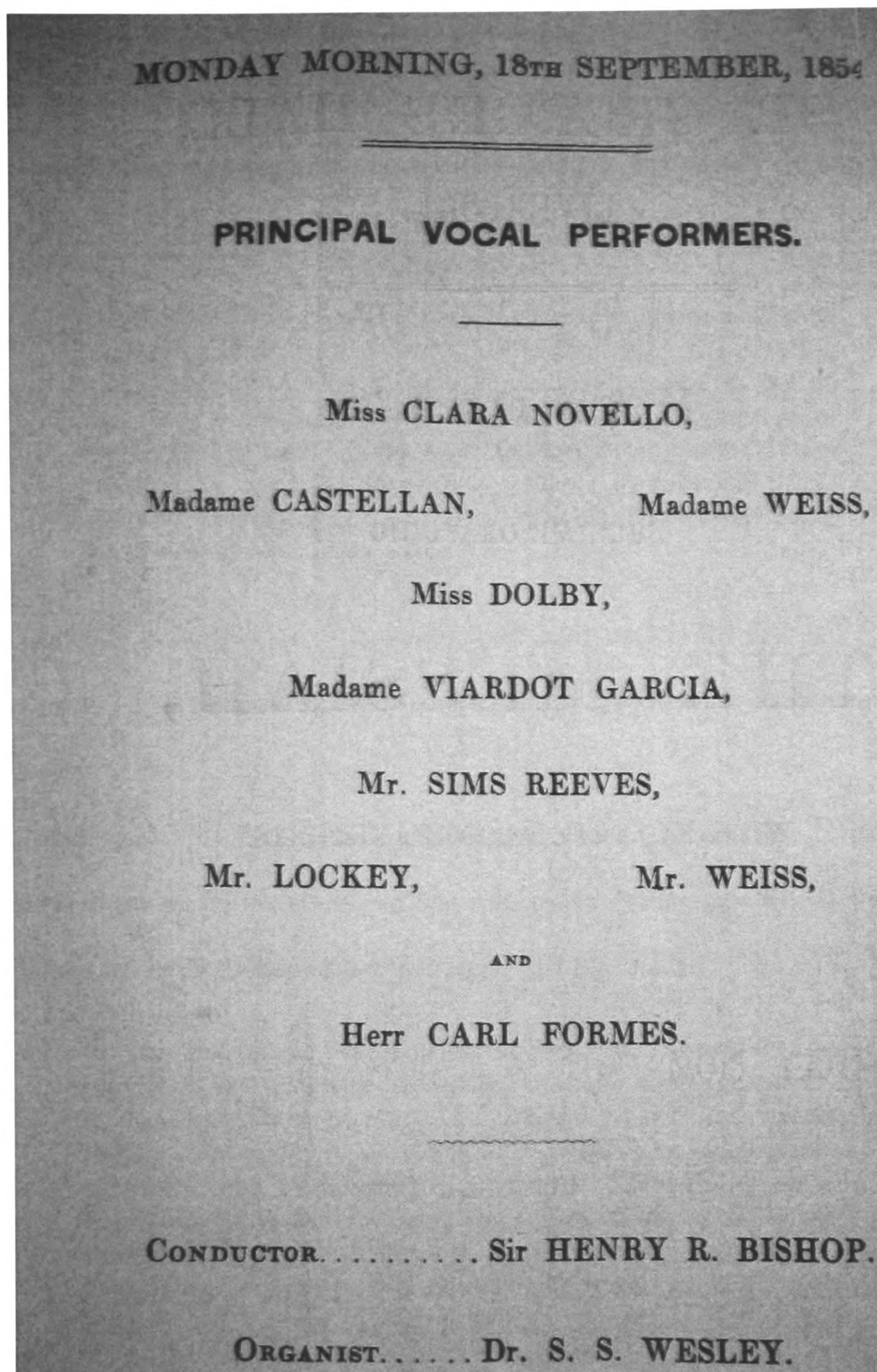


Figure 3.47: Distinguished soloists in *Messiah* at St George's Hall, 1854.
 Source: Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hf 942.7213 GEO.²²³

²²³ The principal vocalists were leading singers from London that regularly travelled the oratorio circuit. Herr Carl Formes (1815-1889) was a bass opera and oratorio singer who had a long international career in Germany, London and New York. For more details of performers including chorus and orchestra members, see the programme located in a scrapbook on the opening of St George's Hall, held at Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hf 942.7213 GEO.

Even with the distinguished soloists shown in the programme (Fig. 3.47) and with Sir Henry Bishop at the helm as conductor, the performance did not go off without event as London's *Daily News* rather condescendingly reported on the lack of audience etiquette when

a most discreditable exhibition took place at the commencement of 'Worthy is the lamb'. Instead of the entire audience standing up in reverential attention of this the most sublime of all finales, there was a general move on the part of several hundreds of people in the body of the hall, and before the close of the performance, the bad example was followed by fully half of the audience. It is questionable that any place but Liverpool could have produced such a spectacle at such a time.²²⁴

Over the next two days, the following works were performed at the festival: *Elijah*, *The Creation*, Spohr's *Last Judgement*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *The Seasons*, and Mendelssohn's *First Walpurgis Night*.

The opening of St George's Hall excited great interest all over the country, and a lengthy article extolling the virtues of the first performance in the new hall accompanied a full-page lithograph in the *London Illustrated News* (see Fig. 3.44):

In the first place, it [the performance of *Messiah*] tested satisfactorily the sonoric capabilities of the building; and showed that musical sounds of every kind, whether loud or soft, whether masses of harmony or the notes of a single voice or instrument, are heard in it to the greatest advantage. The tones came out, freely and fully, without being attended with any echo, or other source of indistinctness. In the next place, the choristers acquitted themselves admirably, and maintained the ancient fame of this district. The 'Lancashire chorus-singers' were once indispensable at every great music meeting throughout England; and now though lost much of its pristine pre-eminence; it had lost none of its pristine excellence. Performing without any rehearsal, they sang together, taking up the points of fugue and imitation with firmness and precision which showed how well every individual had been trained, and how thoroughly they had their Handel by heart. The instrumental band also went well together; and I cannot say that I detected either on their part or that of the chorus, a single positive mistake. The choral voices, however, were not perfectly balanced. The treble produced a fine rich body of sound, and the basses were vigorous and resonant; but the *inner* parts

²²⁴ 'The Opening of St. George's Hall', *Daily News*, 19 September 1854.

(the altos and tenors) were comparatively weak; and where there was an occasional wavering, it was clearly among them that it occurred. The fault – and it was unavoidable in the circumstances – was a want of the *nuances* – the gradations of sound requisite for the production of effect ... The effect of the organ was not so satisfactory as I had been given to expect. The immense instrument certainly possesses great power; it “hath a giant’s strength, “ but sometimes it “tyrannously used it like a giant;” predominating more than enough over the chorus and the orchestra, and frequently uttering shrill and screaming sounds by no means pleasing to the ear. I cannot for a moment call in question the skill and judgement of the accomplished organist [Dr. S. S. Wesley]; and I cannot help thinking he was unable sufficiently to control the power of the instrument. Perhaps, too, he was unfavourably situated for judging how its sounds blended with the general mass; for instead of being seated beside the Conductor [Sir Henry Bishop], at a keyboard brought by “long movement” to the front of the orchestra, he was placed at the very back, close to the body of the organ.²²⁵

The interest of the people in the London metropolis is shown in such critical accounts of the opening of the monumental building and the colossal oratorio performances reverberating within its space. These events and news reports drew upon a Victorian ideology which espoused grandiose monuments and spectacles as symbols of success and progress of their towns and nation.

3.5.2 Large-scale oratorio performances in St George’s Hall

While triennial festivals did not take place in Liverpool after 1836, innumerable festival-type oratorio performances were held in St George’s and other suitable halls around Liverpool. The passion for oratorio was evident in 1854, when the Philharmonic orchestra and chorus presented four performances of *Messiah*, two performances each of *Elijah* and *The Creation*, and performances of *Israel in Egypt*, *Hymn of Praise*, and many other oratorios.

The Festival Choral Society regularly performed Handel oratorios in St George’s with the choir expanding to 350 in 1857, as this advertisement in the *Liverpool Mercury* (Fig.

²²⁵ ‘The Inauguration of St. George’s Hall Liverpool’, 278. Interestingly, many later references refer to the poor acoustics of St George’s. The author did not comment on the fact that the organ was not completed and that this may have contributed to the shrill sounds.

It was perhaps inevitable that the Festival Choral Society would disband by 1860, but oratorio performances, if not triennial festivals, did continue to flourish around Liverpool. The Philharmonic Society had regular large-scale performances as part of their subscription series of 'Undress Concerts' both in St George's and other halls.

Unlike the 'Grand Full Dress Concerts', the 'Undress Concerts' featured no list of 'stars'²²⁸ (but the music was nevertheless of a high order with an occasional distinguished soloist employed), the audience dress code was not a 'grand toilet affair',²²⁹ and sometimes 'a crowd of the practicals of the day' emerged from the chorus to display their individual ability.²³⁰ A programme for the sixth Undress Concert in 1847 which included a performance of 'Dr. Mendelssohn's sublime oratorio *Elijah*' is included in Fig. 3.49. It seems that the egalitarian nature of these concerts was particularly suited to performances of oratorios and to their audiences. Perhaps the situation had become too egalitarian by 1860 when at the Philharmonic's annual meeting the following comments were made, resulting in a motion passed to limit dress concerts to twelve and banish the undress concerts for the next series:

The tickets [to the undress concerts] had been given away to a class of people whom they had not been in the habit of seeing at all at the full dress concerts. To himself [the Chairman] it had been a source of great disappointment to see the class of people who had been encouraged to attend these concerts. He had no objection to the hall being made available to those who could not afford to pay for the stalls, but then there was a part of the building where those parties might get accommodation. He did not expect to see the stalls usually occupied by their subscribers occupied by their domestics. They had therefore seen fit to institute a change, and make all the concerts dress concerts, for they believed that while music might be an attraction full dress was not less so. (Laughter and applause)²³¹

²²⁸ 'Philharmonic Society's Concert', *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 August 1845.

²²⁹ W. I. Argent, *Half-a-Century of Music in Liverpool: The Philharmonic Jubilee* (reprinted from the *Liverpool Mercury*; Liverpool: Egerton Smith & Co., 1889), 13.

²³⁰ *Ibid.* This refers to ordinary or 'practical' members of the chorus emerging to the front to perform solo.

²³¹ 'Liverpool Philharmonic Society', *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 January 1860.

29

THE SIXTH
UNDRESS CONCERT
 FOR THE YEAR 1847
 OF THE
LIVERPOOL
PHILHARMONIC SOCIETY,
 WILL BE GIVEN AT THE
 LECTURE-HALL OF THE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTION,
 On **MONDAY EVENING, the 20th DECEMBER.**

LEADER... Mr. H. F. ALDRIDGE.—ORGANIST... Mr. H. MATHEWS.
Director... Mr. J. ZEUGHEER HERRMANN.

WHEN WILL BE PERFORMED,
 (For the first time in Liverpool.)

DR. MENDELSSOHN'S SUBLIME ORATORIO
"ELIJAH."

For this occasion the Committee have secured the services of
Mr. LOCKEY.

*Books of Words may be had in the Hall, or at the Offices of the Society,
 Exchange-court, Exchange-street East—price Sixpence.*

**It is particularly requested that parties present their Tickets
 individually.**

REGULATIONS.

The Doors will be opened at Seven, and the Performance commence at a Quarter before Eight.
 Entrance to Reserved Gallery and Body.....CENTRE DOOR.
 Entrance to the Upper GallerySOUTH (WING) DOOR.
 Upon the conclusion of the Concert all the Carriages will be drawn up in rotation at the
 CENTRE DOOR, and the names for each will be announced in succession; and it is particularly
 requested that parties will remain in the Hall or on the Staircase until their Carriages are called.
 The SOUTH DOOR will be set apart for the exit of parties walking, and for those who may be
 desirous of availing themselves of disengaged Cars.
 To prevent delay the Police will have strict orders to keep a clear passage to the Centre Door
 towards Everton, and take up the contrary way.

Figure 3.49: A Liverpool 1847 'Undress' Programme with a performance of *Elijah* by the Philharmonic Society.

Source: Liverpool Record Office and Archive, Ref. 780.62.LIV.²³²

²³² Held in the collection 'Programmes 1840-1847, Liverpool Philharmonic Society', Liverpool Record Office and Archive, 780.62.LIV.

3.5.3 The last Triennial Festival of 1874

In an effort to dispel notions that Liverpool was ‘backward and lukewarm in the art of music’, an attempt was made to reinstate the long ceased triennial festivals, with the Duke of Edinburgh enlisted as President of a festival in 1874.²³³ As the local *Liverpool Mercury* explained:

Nearly 40 years ago Liverpool, in common with some of the other great centres of English industry, had its triennial music festival, at which the great vocal and instrumental celebrities of the day were wont to assemble, and the funds of the local charities were beneficially affected; but shortly after that period the Liverpool Triennial Musical Festival ceased to exist, and until the present year was not revived. It may be true that a more complete organisation for the collection of funds for the support of the charities is now in existence and that the Hospital Sunday movement has superseded some of the previous arrangements. But even should the Triennial Musical Festival result in but little pecuniary advantage to the hospitals, they ought to be encouraged as great agencies for the development of latent musical talent, especially that existing in the neighbourhood in which such festivals are held. The attempt to revive the triennial festival in Liverpool is a praiseworthy object, and an additional impulse will be given to it by the presence of the Duke of Edinburgh ...²³⁴

The septuagenarian Sir Julius Benedict was the principal conductor and the programme, performed by a chorus of 326 and an orchestra of over 100, included *St Paul*, *The Creation*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Israel in Egypt*, and selections from *Messiah*. ‘It will equal anything ever heard in the Provinces for breadth and quality of tone’, the London *Era* reported.²³⁵ Sullivan conducted his *Light of the World*, and a commissioned work, *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, conducted by the composer J. F. Barnett.²³⁶ The five-day festival included the opening of the Seamen’s Orphanage by the Duke of Edinburgh and concluded with a choral

²³³ ‘Liverpool Triennial Musical Festival’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 September 1874.

²³⁴ ‘Visit to Liverpool of the H. R. H the Duke of Edinburgh’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 September 1874.

²³⁵ ‘The Liverpool Musical Festival’, *The Era*, 27 September 1874.

²³⁶ See Taylor, *Two Centuries of Music in Liverpool*, 4. This author claims that the festival was in SGH (St George’s Hall) but many newspapers state that the oratorios were performed in the Philharmonic Hall. It seems St George’s was used only for the eisteddfod-like competition and penultimate concert of the festival.

competition with over £250 in prize money presented at the final concert (see programme cover at Fig. 3.50).²³⁷

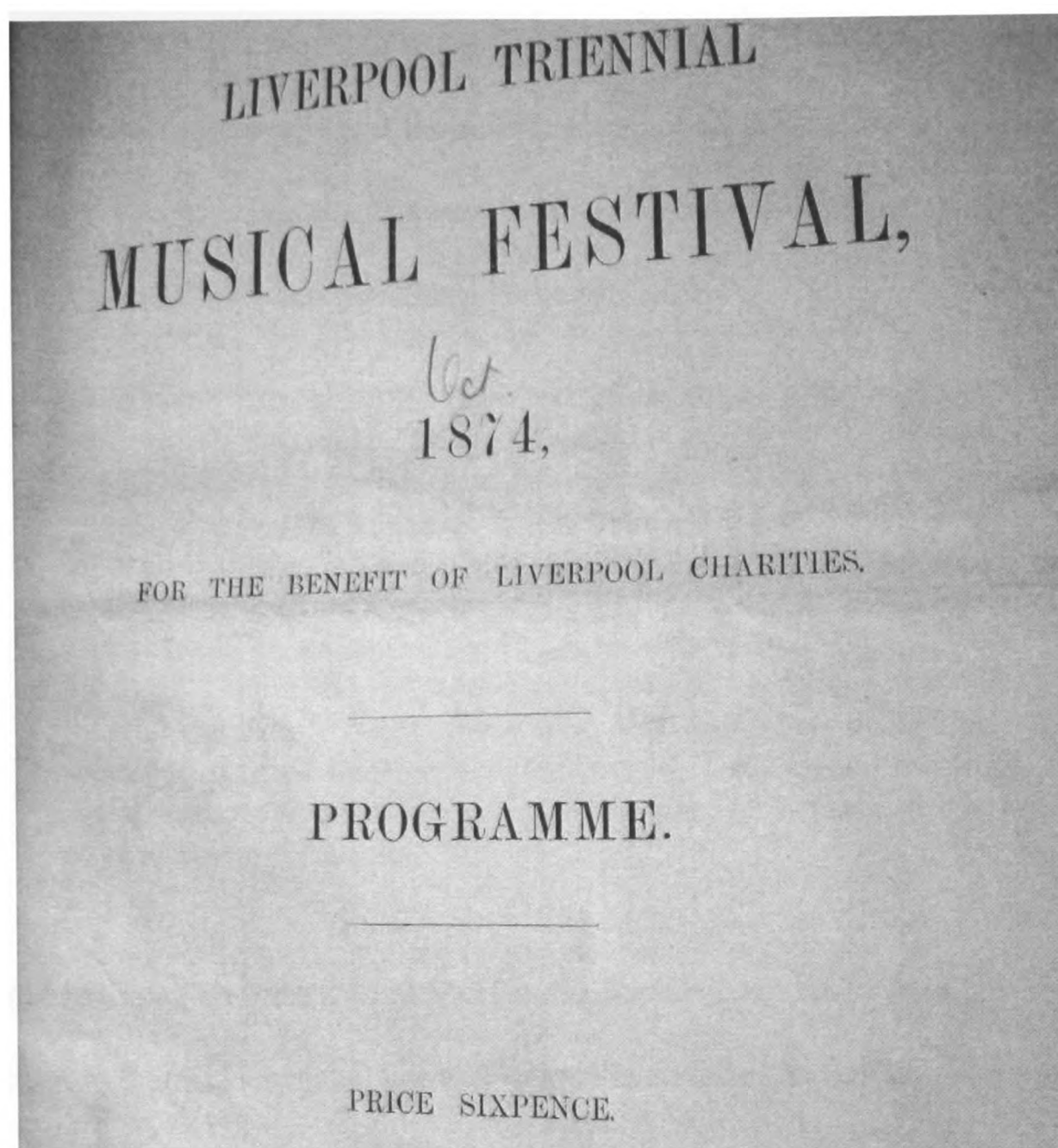


Figure 3.50: Programme cover of the last Liverpool festival in 1874.
Source: Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hq 362.73 ROY.

Madame Patti was paid £800 for singing four short songs, including ‘Within a mile of Edinboro’ and ‘Comin’ thro the Rye’, but took no part in the choral works. One newspaper quipped: ‘Perhaps some ingenious calculator will find out from the songs she is to sing how much per note this will amount to’.²³⁸ Ironically, her concerts turned out to be some of the more profitable events, with the overall profit of £970 from the festival coming mainly from her concerts.

²³⁷ The programme for this festival was located inside a book of newspaper cuttings on the opening of the Seamen’s orphanage. See Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hq 362. 73 ROY.

²³⁸ *The Leeds Mercury*, 18 August 1874.

Newspaper reports indicated that a further festival was considered after 1874, even after poor attendance figures at the oratorios and their limited fiscal success, but research to date has located no specific reason for their discontinuation. It could be speculated that the factors just mentioned, coupled with the failing eyesight of the elderly Benedict, made the holding of such lengthy massed festivals undesirable. A description of a concert that Benedict conducted in 1880 describes his vision problems:

[Benedict] was suffering from severe affection of the eyes, and the work of those he conducted was being continually jeopardized in consequence of the failure of his sight. An extraordinary pair of lamps had been rigged up for him at the rostrum, but they proved of only partial assistance, and rendered more vivid with their glaring light the final episode of the antepenultimate conductor of the Philharmonic Society. This was on January 27th, 1880, Mendelssohn's *Athalie* being the work on hand. The whole went unsteadily, and more than once utter collapse seemed imminent. Matters grew worse apace towards the close of the performance, and the suspense of one portion was almost unbearable ...²³⁹

Whatever the reasons that the triennial festival did not survive after 1874, it has been shown in this discussion that St George's Hall was unique in terms of its function and architecture. It is the only grand hall investigated in this chapter that was inspired and built solely for the purposes of the mammoth triennial musical festivals. This was not just a monument in the form of a building or a grand music musical festival that took place within, but an enduring 'monument to the energy and public spirit of the people of Liverpool', acknowledged by a sign in the hall entrance, as shown in Fig. 3.51.

²³⁹ Argent, *Half-a-Century of Music in Liverpool*, 63.

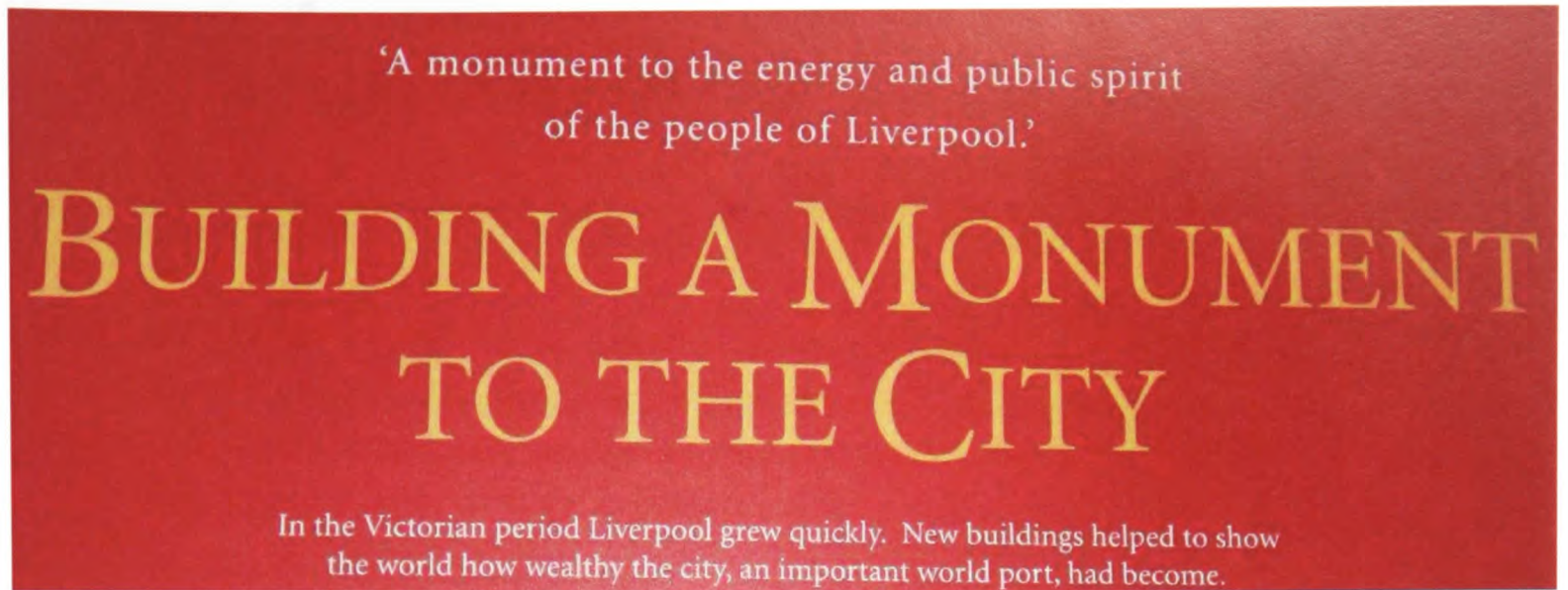


Figure 3.51: An entrance display at St George's Liverpool.

Having discussed the growth of oratorio festivals in the provinces, it is time to consider the presence of this 'monument to the energy and public spirit of the people' elsewhere in England, namely in the metropolis of London.

4 The Grand Spectacle of the Crystal Palace

No other country could certainly have offered them a building suitable for ... performance. Yet here, in their vast amphitheatre, stood this harmonious multitude, their music-books fluttering white as doves' wings, or poplar leaves in storm; and in front of them were twenty thousand eager listeners, with room enough and to spare, beyond whom, too, the far-stretching crystal naves on both sides could have accommodated ten times their number. All this great company were on their feet as we entered, following the good old fashion of George III, who always rose at the Hallelujah, as having at least an equal title to that mark of respect with the national anthem; and their sitting down, amid rustle of silk and swaying of crinoline, was of itself a musical spectacle.¹

No greater architectural monument to Victorian national greatness and enterprise can be found than in the construction of the massive 'Crystal Palace' erected in Hyde Park to accommodate the Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of all Nations in 1851. With its vast glinting exterior of 900,000 square metres of glass and 1,060 iron columns, the massive building supposedly inspired the satirical magazine *Punch* to dub it the 'Crystal Palace', a nickname that captured the hearts of the nation.² The designer Joseph Paxton was inspired by a greenhouse structure, and the prefabricated walls of glass and iron enabled the building to be dismantled and relocated to Sydenham after the Exhibition.³ Among its profitable uses was that of a performance venue for the massive Handel Triennial Festivals. This chapter's epigraph attests to the grand spectacle of the opening ceremonies when the 'Hallelujah' chorus was sung.

The building of the Crystal Palace is discussed here and the attributes of a monumental building are examined. The significance of the music both at the opening exhibition in 1851

¹ James Payn, 'Chapter IV: A Trip to Fairyland', in *Lights and Shadows of London Life* (1; London, 1867), 78.

² Douglas Jerrold, 'Crystal Palace', *Punch*, 2 November 1850.

³ John Paxton's design was inspired by a conservatory he had built after examining an Amazon water-lily leaf and its rib support. For more construction details see John McKean, *Crystal Palace: Joseph Paxton and Charles Fox* (London: Phaidon, 1994), 4-28; and Anthony Bird, *Paxton's Palace* (London: Cassell, 1976), 4-99.

in Hyde Park and the second opening at Sydenham in 1854 (after the building was dismantled and reassembled) is explored. It will be seen these two musical events set the scene for the rise of the Great Handel Triennial Festivals which are discussed in the following chapter.

4.1 The Spectacle of the Crystal Palace

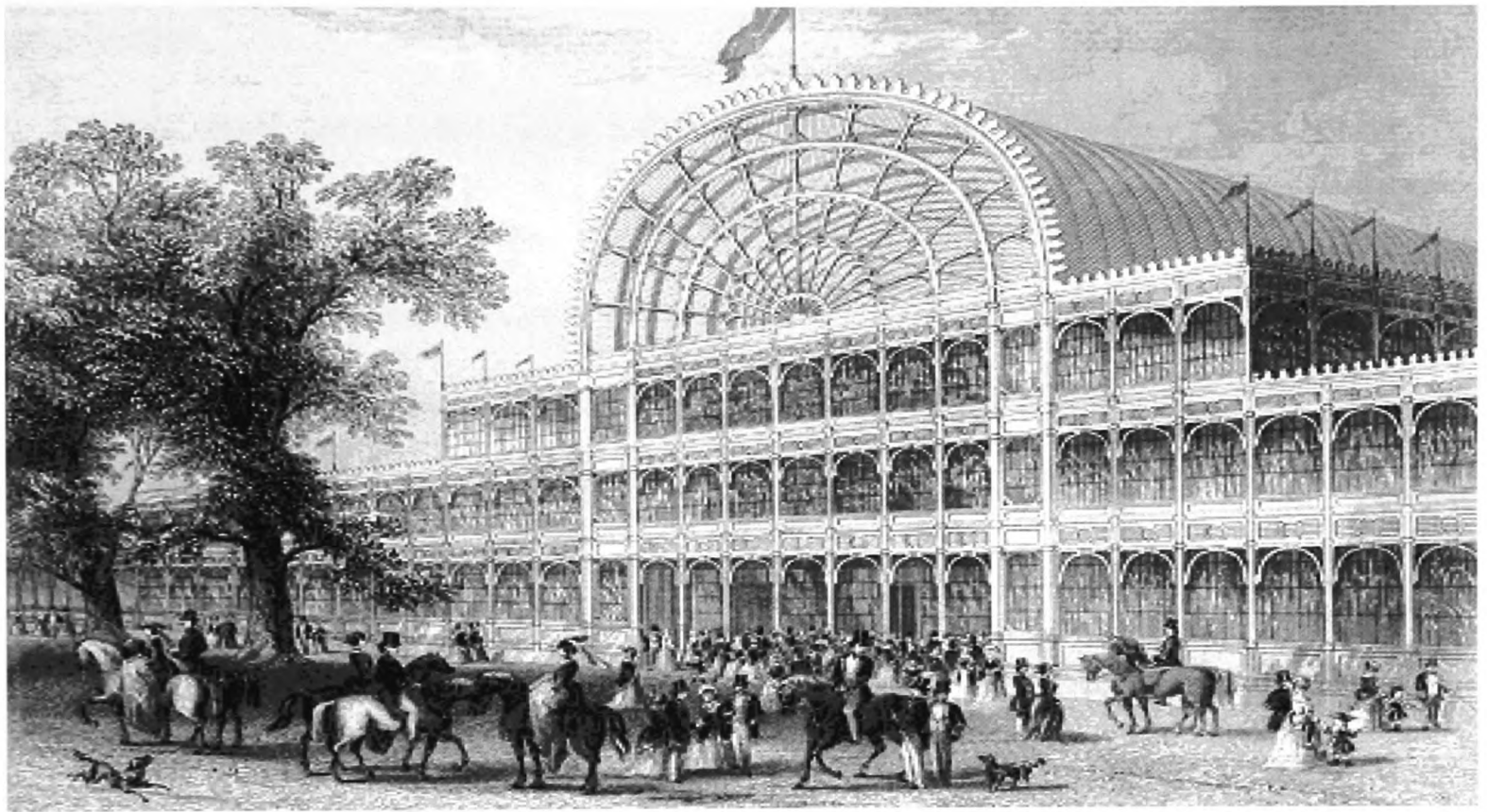


Figure 4.1: The Crystal Palace in Hyde Park, 1851.
Source: Tallis's *History and Criticism of the Crystal Palace*, 1852.

The prefabricated building, which was erected over ten days, heralded a new era of ‘commodity spectacle’ in British history.⁴ The whole building as illustrated in Fig. 4.1 was enormous, being 1,848 feet long, 408 feet wide, 108 feet high, and designed to encase several fully-grown elm trees in Hyde Park.⁵ The central transept was 72 feet wide and 108 feet high, and a grand avenue and upstairs galleries ran the whole length of the building. Altogether, 772,784 square feet (19 acres) were roofed over, not including the 217,100 square feet of galleries. The area was four times that of St Peter’s in Rome, or six times that

⁴ See Thomas Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 1-72.

⁵ For further details see John Tallis and Jacob George Strutt, *Tallis’s History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World’s Industry in 1851* (London, 1852).

of St Paul's Cathedral. The total enclosed volume was 33 million cubic feet. Materials included 550 tons of wrought iron, 3,500 tons of cast iron, 900,000 feet of glass and 600,000 feet of wooden planking on which to walk. There were 202 miles of sash bars and 30 miles of gutters. Richard Sennett explains that the featuring of glass in the gargantuan construction not only 'abolished the distinction between inside and outside' but created a more obvious 'drama of scale' that radically reduced the cost and the time needed for construction.⁶

This space housed the Great Exhibition of 1851, which consisted of over 13,000 displays of the latest technology – the largest exhibition of commodities ever gathered from around the world. Among the items on display were the Jacquard loom, a reaping machine from the United States, an envelope-making machine, steel production displays, tools, and kitchen appliances.⁷ An imperial spectacle, it included items from every corner of the colonised world.

The Crystal Palace is surrounded in myth. As cited previously, Douglas Jerrold has commonly been credited for coining the term 'Crystal Palace' in *Punch* in November 1850 to describe the glittering 900,000 square metres of glass. At least a dozen earlier citations appear in various newspapers, however, in the previous months before the *Punch* article. In fact, the *Daily News* states that the designer, Mr Paxton, 'with the author's own lips' called the building the 'Crystal Palace'.⁸ Whatever the truth behind the origins of the title of 'Crystal Palace', it must remain one of the monumental feats of architecture and imagination. In the words of C. A. Bell-Knight:

It was an apt description which fired the imagination of the masses and rapidly gained precedence over the more pretentious official title bestowed by the Royal Commission namely *The Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations 1851*.

⁶ Richard Sennett, *Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991), 107.

⁷ Tallis and Strutt, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851*; and Patrick Beaver, *The Crystal Palace, 1851-1936: a Portrait of Victorian Enterprise* (London: Hugh Evelyn Ltd, 1970), 47-55.

⁸ *Daily News*, 12 October 1850.

As the Crystal Palace it was thence acclaimed by all and sundry
– from Queen Victoria to the lowliest citizen.⁹

After the Great Exhibition and much public debate, a group of entrepreneurs undertook the dismantling and removal of the building to its new home in Sydenham.¹⁰ In its new location atop Penge Hill, it was further extended and turned into a giant Victorian theme park.¹¹ It was used for the massive Handel Triennial Festivals between 1859 and 1926. This Great Exhibition building became affectionately known as the ‘People’s Palace’ and represented a testament to free enterprise in the Victorian era. The Crystal Palace survived until 1936 when it was mysteriously destroyed by fire.¹² In numerous texts about the building, historians interpret the significance of the ‘commodity spectacle’ in diverse ways.¹³ What is clear, however, is that from the beginning to the end of the Crystal Palace, the British people projected onto this icon their values and hopes for a progressive empire. It was truly a monumental landmark and ideological touchstone of the nineteenth century.¹⁴

4.2 A Monumental Symbol

Monumentalism throughout Europe in the nineteenth century embraced size and innovative architectural constructions. As discussed in Chapter 2, the Crystal Palace and Eiffel Tower are famous examples, along with town and concert halls, railway stations and telephone exchanges that were built as cities became increasingly urbanised and industrialised.¹⁵

⁹ C. A. Bell-Knight, *The Rise and Fall of the Biggest Ever Glass Container* (Bath: Bell-Knight, 1977), 3.

¹⁰ Huge public interest in this move is evident in the collection of pamphlets and letters held at the National Art Library. One pamphlet is by the designer John Paxton, *What is to Become of the Crystal Palace?* (London: Badbury & Evans, 1851). Other letters included with this publication include one by prize-winner John Wallis on future uses of the Crystal Palace, and a medical letter quoting mortality and lung capacity rates in London.

¹¹ ‘Theme park’ is perhaps a modern connotation, but is used here to describe the collected events used to entertain and educate large groups of people

¹² The cause was never truly established and stories of arson abounded. See ‘The Crystal Palace: Mystery of the Fire’, *The Times*, 2 December 1936. No official enquiry was ever held. However, the insurance collected for the building and the organ was reported to be a paltry amount of £120,000 in *The Times*, 17 December 1936.

¹³ See, for a collection of interpretations, Louise Purbrick (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Texts in Culture, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

¹⁴ See James Trilling, *Ornament: a Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003), 128.

¹⁵ The age-old dichotomy of form versus function could also be applied to these Victorian monumental buildings and the grand events that were held within their walls. Did the buildings dictate the massive events held within? or was the demand of the masses for exhibition and spectacle what dictated the monumental size of the building?

These secular ‘urban shrines’, many of which have been discussed in Chapter 3, were monuments built to reflect civic pride and competition as well as the social and economic progress of a nation. Recent developments in urban history show the complexities of the economic, social and political systems of these early towns.¹⁶

Increasingly, new secular buildings appeared around the country that could accommodate the larger paying audience of the oratorio festivals. The reasons for this development in provincial towns have been investigated. From the original inception of the Crystal Palace, sections of the building were labelled in ecclesiastical terms such as ‘transept’ and ‘nave’. The cavernous space of the iconic Crystal Palace with its central transept would become an ideal venue for the large-scale performances of the religious genre of oratorio. Between 1 May and 15 October 1851, the Crystal Palace hosted over six million visitors, which was over a third of the population of Britain at that time. This gives a human migratory aspect to the notion of monumentalism, as the cartoon in Fig. 4.2 illustrates so humorously.

¹⁶ See Palliser, Clark, and Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*. Volume Three discusses the rise of capitalism, municipalities, civic pride and town halls in Victorian Britain.

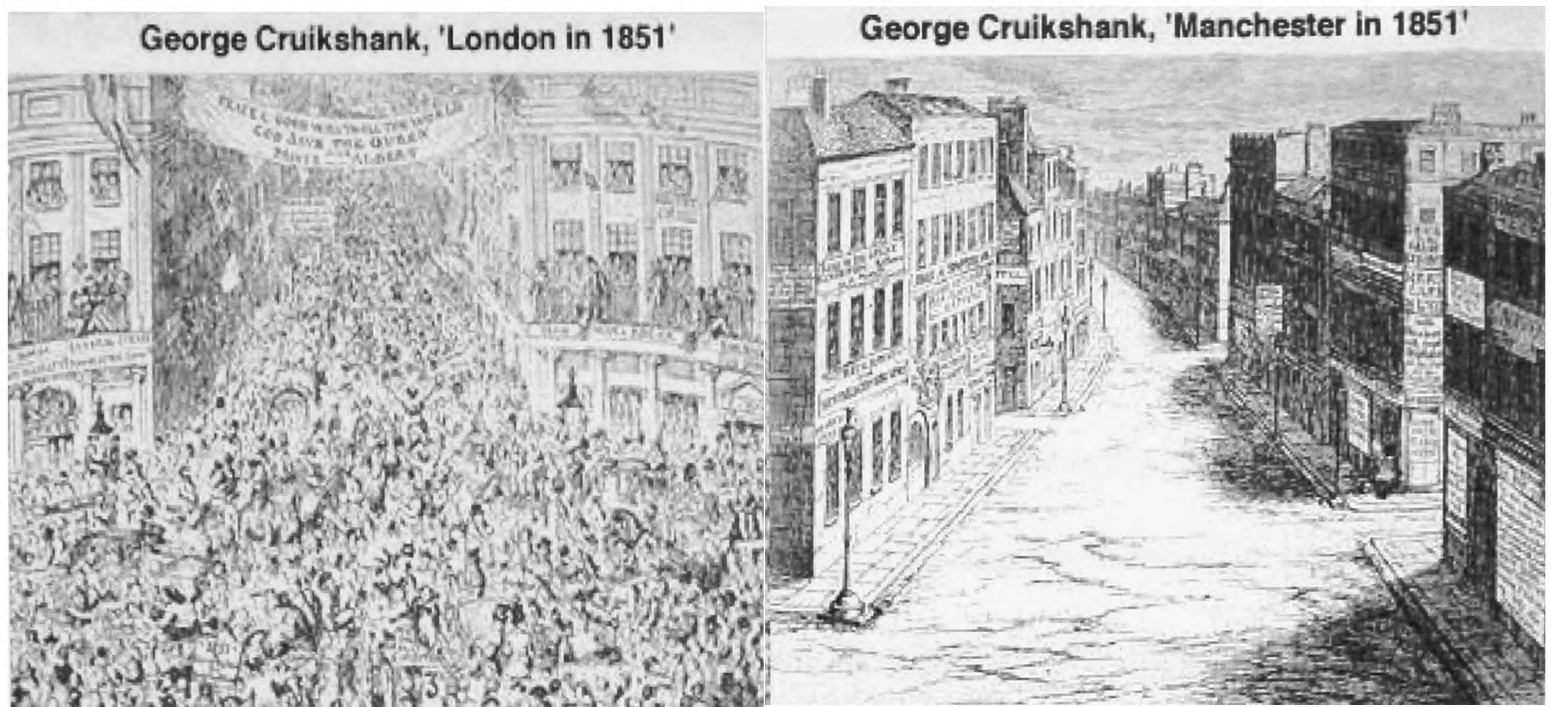


Figure 4.2: The supposed effects of the Great Exhibition.

‘The entire population of Manchester has gone to visit the Exhibition in London’.

Source: Artist George Cruikshank reproduced in Henry Mayhew's *1851: or, The Adventures of Mr. And Mrs. Sandboys*.

The public purchased tickets of up to three guineas to view the Great Trade Exhibition, with special shilling days to cater for the working classes. An intriguing ideology of monumentalism connected to power and status underpinned this desire for expansion, with the catch cry of social and economic ‘progress’. Several authors believe the financial success of the Exhibition epitomised the progress of the nation in an era in which the ideas of vastness and monumentalism were highly esteemed and everything bigger was better – whether in relation to buildings, profits, exhibitions, crowds or the empire itself.¹⁷ Music was a central force of the ‘progress’ which contributed to the shaping of British attitudes to Empire.¹⁸ Historians David Cannadine and Jeffrey Richards have proposed comprehensive models that emphasised the significant contribution of music to British imperial ideology.¹⁹

¹⁷ Jeffrey Auerbach and Peter Hoffenberg, *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London: Ashgate, 2008), ix-3; and Jeffrey A. Auerbach, *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (London: Yale University Press, 1999), 230-1.

¹⁸ Cowgill and Rushton (eds.), *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music*, 115.

¹⁹ Richards, *Imperialism and Music*; and David Cannadine, ‘The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the “Invention of Tradition”, c.1820-1977’, in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

Monumental symbols were an integral part of this expression of spectacle, and their musical aspects can be seen in the massive oratorio festivals of the day.

4.3 Music at the Opening of the Great Exhibition

Music was not a strong feature of the Exhibition, but it was still included in the 1851 opening ceremony in spite of the rushed preparations. A choir of four hundred sang the National Anthem and Handel's 'Hallelujah' chorus, while trumpets played fanfares and two organs accompanied the royal procession along with cannon blasts.²⁰ It was this musical event that set the precedent for future large-scale performances, even if it was rather lost within the cavernous acoustic of the building.

²⁰ Newspapers from around the country reported on the opening spectacle. Of the music, some commented that the two organs were inaudible in the central transept. Other gave details of the choir members and organists. For comprehensive reports see: 'Opening of the Great Exhibition', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 4 May 1851; 'Opening of the Great Exhibition', *The Manchester Times*, 3 May 1851; and 'Opening of the Great Exhibition by Her Majesty', *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 3 May 1851.



Figure 4.3: Opening of the Great Exhibition.

Source: *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851: 'Entrance of Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert'.²¹

²¹ This engraving was reproduced in the Saturday 'Great Exhibition Supplement', with the caption, 'Opening of the Great Exhibition—Entrance of Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert', *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851.

The print reproduced in Fig. 4.3 must be the only one located of this event that shows any assemblage of the musical forces.²² It appears that there are six herald trumpets announcing Queen Victoria's arrival. The conductor Sir George Smart with his baton raised high can be seen clearly standing in front of one of the two large organs built by Messrs Gray and Davison. Mr Turle, the organist from Westminster Abbey, presided at this organ. Numerous choristers, ladies bonneted and dressed in white, are seen on the balcony with music held aloft. Singers of eminence present in the choir included Miss Birch, Miss Dolby, Madame Caradori Allan, Miss Williams, and Messrs Henry Phillips, Lockey, and Bodda. A lone violinist of the orchestra appears at the end of the choristers, perhaps positioned to help co-ordinate the large group. Later in the ceremony, the 'Hallelujah' chorus was performed under the direction of Sir Henry Bishop with Dr Elvey at the organ. As far afield as Belfast it was reported that 'the anthem produced a grand effect, and not a heart present could remain unmoved at a scene so touching and so sublime'.²³

The *Manchester Times* gave a description of the entrance of the Queen:

A blazing *cortege* of heralds and trumpeters take their place – perfect marvels of red cloth and gold lace – have assumed their places ... A moment of solemn silence succeeds, when out there burst, clear and high, and loudly pealing, the resonant notes of the trumpets. We never heard a flourish executed with more effect, the volume of sound was so strong and clear, and the instruments so perfectly in tune ... when the bronze and gilded gate leading to the transept was flung open – the full crash of chorus, band and organ, burst into 'God Save the Queen,' only to be drowned in a moment by the outbreak of acclamation ... and amid the whole expectant and upstanding multitude, every hat was waved and every handkerchief flourished.²⁴

This colourful scene was also reflected in a number of prints of the event including one reproduced here in Fig. 4.4.²⁵

²² Also reproduced by Leonard de Vries and Ursula Robertshaw, *History as Hot News 1842-1865: The World of the Early Victorians as seen through the Eyes of The Illustrated London News* (London: John Murray, 1995), 84.

²³ 'Opening of the Great Exhibition', *The Belfast News-Letter*, 5 May 1851.

²⁴ *The Manchester Times*, 3 May 1851.

²⁵ 'The State Pageants of the Victorian Era', *English Illustrated Magazine*, 166 (July 1897), 381.



Figure 4.4: The opening ceremony of the Crystal Palace, 1851.
Source: Original print held at the National Art Library, Ref. 19606.²⁶

4.4 The Crystal Palace Moves to Sydenham

The building was reopened again in 1854, after it was expanded in height and length. Water towers were added to run the massive two-hundred-foot-high fountains, walkways and courtyards were designed with statues of life-size dinosaurs located in a prehistoric swamp (the existence of dinosaurs had only been discovered thirty years earlier). Several new railway lines were built to cater for the two million visitors each year.²⁷

The Crystal Palace hosted exhibitions, concerts and spectacles, and was open to all classes and interests. Mass consumerism and spectacle had become part of the English psyche.²⁸ The variety of uses for this building and its environs were diverse. It was the ideal

²⁶ Print located at Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library No.19606, Image Ref. 2006AV2167.

²⁷ Due to be opened by Queen Victoria on May 1, but with construction and financial problems, together with the Royally-decreed covering of the private parts on the nude male statues, the opening was delayed to June 10.

²⁸ Psyche refers here in a general sense to the spirit or soul of the English people. See Richards, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England*, 17-72.

place for shows and exhibitions that followed each other with ever increasing frequency. It became a venue for massed meetings of societies of every shade and description. Concerts, music festivals, massed bands, circuses and pantomimes attracted large audiences. Even the trapeze artist Mr Blondin made a visit and cooked an omelette on a high wire. As the *Daily News* explained with hyperbole, ‘The affection of the British public for their Crystal Palace is an enduring love. Time cannot state in their estimation, the infinite variety of the Queen of Penge Hill; and the first day of summer is as sure to bring together thousands of her votaries as if they were summoned by the wand of some potent enchanter’.²⁹

The much-loved Crystal Palace was by this time popularly called the People’s Palace and survived numerous physical and financial disasters until 1936 when it burnt to the ground in an incredible pyrotechnic event. Even the end of the icon was stunning and surrounded in myth. Music, in particular the Great Handel Triennial Festivals, was to become a featured event in the Crystal Palace over these years. The massed musical performances at the second opening celebration, in its new location, set the scene for these musical spectacles to happen.

²⁹ *Daily News*, 20 April 1856.

4.5 Music at the Second Opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham

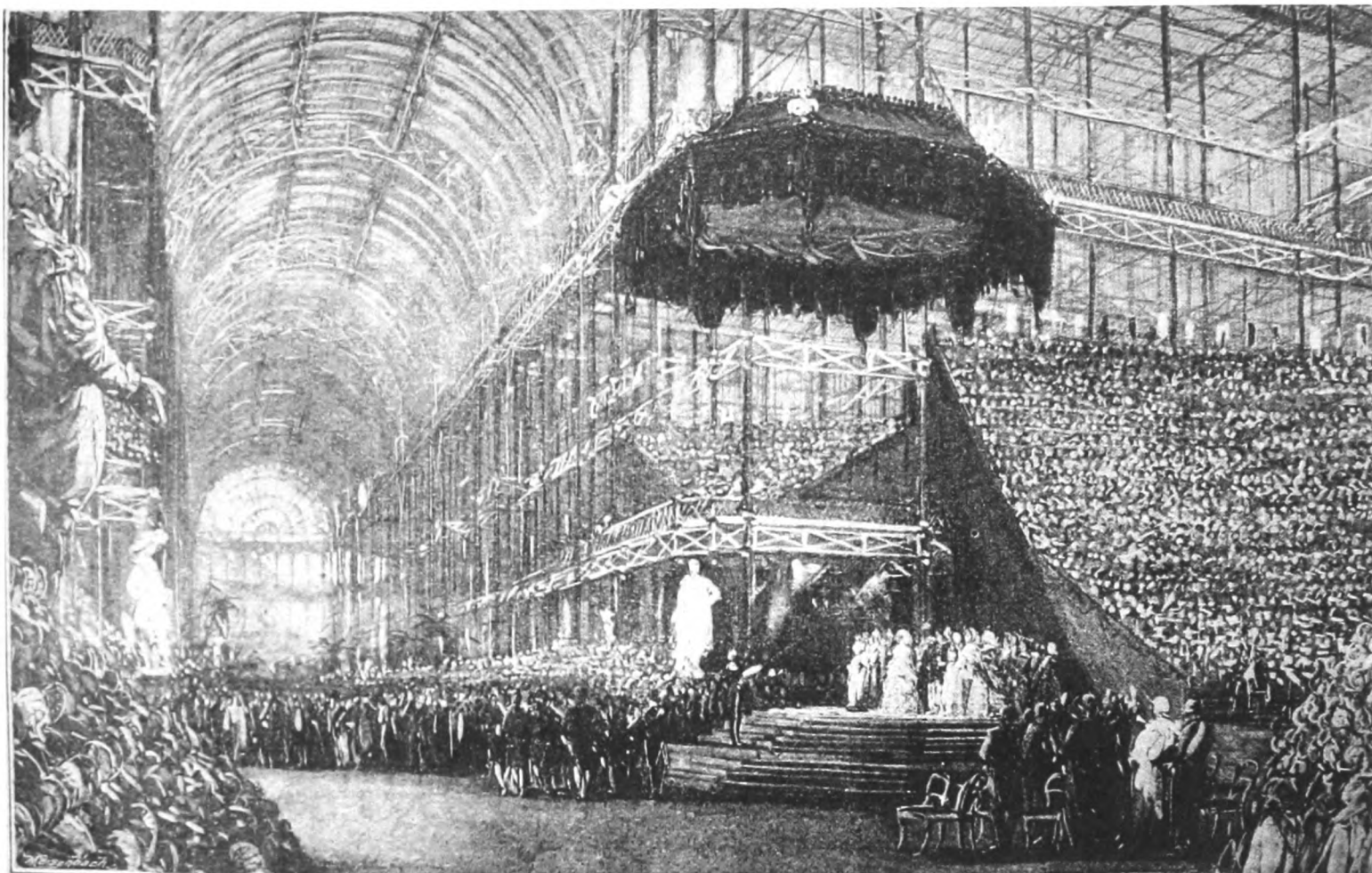


Figure 4.5: The reopening of the Crystal Palace on 10 June 1854 by Queen Victoria.
 Source: *Programme of General Arrangements* for the Grand Commemoration of the
 Diamond Jubilee, 1897.

The musical arrangements for the second opening ceremony in 1854 depicted in Fig. 4.5 were recorded not only in the newspapers of the day but also in great detail in a handwritten document by Robert Bowley, the Treasurer of Sacred Harmonic Society, which was the only Choral Society in London at that time giving large-scale performances of Handel's oratorios.³⁰ This manuscript, documented for 'private personal reference', reveals intimate details of the musical organisation of the opening ceremony, including arguments with the designer of the Crystal Palace, Mr Paxton, over the location of the choir and orchestra inside the central transept, the testing of acoustics by the singer Clara Novello, and the contract signed after deliberation by the conductor Mr Costa.³¹ The Sacred Harmonic Society was to be engaged for the opening ceremony but augmented with voices and

³⁰ The Royal College of Music holds extensive annual reports and other manuscripts of the Sacred Harmonic Society (1832-1878). Robert Bowley was the Society's Director for many years and later a Director of the Crystal Palace.

³¹Royal College of Music, London, XL11.A.7.

instrumentalists from around the country. It was decided that ‘no society or choir could be accepted but that individual names would receive their best consideration’. At the instigation of Costa, thousands of people were auditioned and provided with accommodation and train tickets to London.

To select the best participants, a ballot form was published in *The Times*, which members of the public could submit. The rationale for inviting singers from around the country to this national monument was summarised in the following way:

In conversation with the Directors of Crystal Palace, and on the suggestion of Mr Costa, it was represented to the Directors by Mr Bowley, that it would much extend the fame of the Crystal Palace if the invitations could be forwarded to some of the Provincial Musical Societies and Choirs inviting a few of the members of each Society or Choir to take part on the occasion – at the request of the Directors a list was prepared amounting to the above 200 names being submitted to the board. They came to the following Resolution:

‘Resolved that – That the Railway fare of these parties to and from London and their places of residence be paid by the Company and that the secretary do communicate with Mr Bowley as to the number of free passes which can be obtained from the various Railway Companies’.³²

The fact that Costa made this suggestion indicates that the primary purpose of promoting such an assembly of selected voices and players from around the country was to create the best possible musical effect.

Initially, the music had been regarded of secondary importance at the 1851 opening in Hyde Park. However, with the splendid expansion of the new building and its environs along with increased public demand for spectacle and entertainment, music took centre stage at Sydenham. After the opening ceremony, the relationship between the Sacred Harmonic Society and the Directors of the Crystal Palace was sealed for further events when Bowley wrote that

³²Ibid.

'Music won the cause' is beyond doubt, and the Directors of the Crystal Palace as well as the notaries of the muse may congratulate each other on the result.³³

From the musical beginnings of the two opening ceremonies, the Crystal Palace became the venue for the gigantic and financially successful Handel Triennial Festivals. The next chapter will provide an overview of how these festivals developed and changed well into the following century.

³³ Ibid. 'Music won the Cause' is a quotation from Handel's oratorio *Alexander's Feast* The chorus sings 'The many rend the skies, with loud applause; So love was crown'd but music won the cause'. This music is not reported as being sung at the opening ceremony.

5 The Rise of the Great Triennial Handel Festivals in the Crystal Palace

If further evidence be wanted, let them betake themselves to Sydenham, to hear the Handel Festival and to see the Handel Festival ... Only to see the orchestra, to say nothing of the audience is worth a journey from the Land's-End, or a jaunt from John O'Groat's House. Where else in the world can you behold an army of four hundred in the band, and a chorus of three thousand ranged tier on tier behind them? And where else in the world can you expect to find a gathering of so many thousand worshippers, assembled to do homage at the throne of mighty Handel ?¹

The widespread popularity and growth of the Great Triennial Handel Festivals is explored in this chapter through the 'Victorian prism' of London's Crystal Palace at Sydenham.² The remarkable festivals involved up to 4,000 performers and attracted audiences of up to 87,000.³ The notion of an English musical monumentalism is also developed from the coalescence between the musical structure of the festivals and the architectural structure of the Crystal Palace.⁴ Events surrounding performances and the idolisation of the 'mighty Handel' are also examined.⁵ An image begins to emerge of the symbiotic forces that promoted the rise of the festivals within the Crystal Palace.⁶

The *Daily News* explained the new use of the Crystal Palace:

[M]any ways had been tried of making it [the Crystal Palace] pay, when at last a certain Mr Bowley thought of applying it to

¹ 'Handel Festivals: a Few Words Thereanent by a Musical Ignoramus', *All the Year Round*, 12 /291 (27 June 1874), 245. Charles Dickens Jnr. was the editor of this journal and may possibly be the author. John O'Groat's House was controversially known as the last house in Britain.

² See James Buzard, Joseph W. Childers, and Eileen Gillooly, *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2007).

³ Performer numbers peaked at 4,000, 1865-1883, and audience attendance at 87,784 in 1883 according to newspaper reports and the Sacred Society Annual reports.

⁴ This refers to the interactive model used by Rehding to describe the Beethoven monument in Bonn and Liszt's music.

⁵ The concept of monumentalism in German music of this time has been discussed by Rehding, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', 52-72. 'Mighty Handel' is a reference to the opening quotation and his cult status.

⁶ There are literally dozens of texts on the Crystal Palace but only two publications devoted to the Triennial Handel Festivals held there. Smither, 'Messiah and Progress in Victorian England', 339-48; and Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, 27-58.

the performance of that sacred music which is the passion of the English people, on a scale of magnitude suited to its sublimity ... at a time when the whole country was reticulated with railroads ... and he [Mr Bowley] had, like a substantial Ariel only to wave his wand and summon trained choristers from the remotest corners of the empire.⁷

The Sacred Harmonic Society, with the combined efforts of Robert Bowley and Michael Costa (both of whom had been involved in the opening ceremonies of the Crystal Palace), would become the driving force behind the festival movement in London. Robert Bowley was the financial wizard behind the organisation of these festivals and from their inception was the Society's treasurer (and the General Manager of the Crystal Palace from 1858). Michael Costa, appointed conductor in 1848 of the Society, quickly brought the Society to the fore with an increase in members, numbers of performances, and standard of choral singing. One of the Society's documents succinctly explains of Costa: 'The flourish of his magic wand dispelled all fear of opposition, and secured the position of the Society'.⁸ Providing massive entertainments, the successful Handel Triennial Festivals embraced the religious sentiments of the day, at the same time displaying an astute sense of business acumen, on a level never before seen in England.

The oratorios of Handel were the Sacred Harmonic Society's centrepiece of Victorian repertoire and were the logical choice to present at the Crystal Palace.⁹ Handel's music was central to British public life, with his oratorio and opera traditionally patronised by royalty. With the rise of entrepreneurial publishing houses such as Novello, his music was readily and cheaply disseminated to the masses.¹⁰ The time was ripe for large-scale oratorio performances.

⁷ *Daily News*, 20 June 1859. The upkeep and cost was estimated to be £60,000 per annum.

⁸ Hill, *A History of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 17.

⁹ Technically, Handel oratorios are not actually Victorian repertoire but baroque works that were performed in a new manner during Victorian times. The Sacred Harmonic Society also performed the major new 'grand' works of Spohr and Mendelssohn, including the London premiere of *Elijah* in 1847.

¹⁰ Palmer, *Vincent Novello (1781-1861)*; and *A Century and a Half in Soho: A Short History of the Firm of Novello, Publishers and Printers of Music, 1811-1961* (London: Novello, 1961).

The religious themes of Handel's oratorios inspired listeners to improve themselves, with the many Biblical characters regarded as heroes to be emulated. As Howard Smither has argued, Handel's choral music increasingly became a vehicle for national expression of progress in Victorian England.¹¹ In previous large-scale commemoration performances in Westminster Abbey, Handel's music had been part of a number of grand civic festivals on a national scale.¹² Bowley explained the desirability of grand Handel performances:

[I]t must be done by means of Handel's works, a feeling which is undoubtedly based on the undoubted fact that his music, and his alone, rises in grandeur with every additional force employed to develop it.¹³

Handel's oratorio scores themselves became monuments of the day, performed by 'every additional force', which included hundreds of orchestral players and singers from around the country. The need to fill the vast cavern in the transept with sublime sound led to an increase in the numbers of performers with additional strings, winds and brass, and also a larger chorus and new instruments to extend the range and timbre of the orchestral sound. According to Leonard Meyer, the huge musical forces facilitated deafening apotheoses, which allowed the more diverse, less sophisticated audiences to transcend the sublimity of the musical message of the orchestral sound, discussed more fully in Chapter 6.¹⁴ The 'Victorian sublime' was a new translation of an older category of the sublime, and explained the awesome scale, infinite detail and imposing spectacle which are so much a part of an ideology of monumentalism.

¹¹ Smither, 'Messiah and Progress in Victorian England', 339.

¹² In Europe, Haydn's *Creation* was performed with over 1,000 voices in Vienna in 1843. See 'Foreign Intelligence', *The Musical Examiner*, 2 /53 (4 November 1843), 301.

¹³ Robert Bowley, *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1862: Programme of Arrangements* (London, 1862), 11.

¹⁴ Meyer, *Style and Music*, 206.

5.1 The Trial Handel Festival of 1857

The Trial Festival of 1857 was planned to test the viability of the Crystal Palace in acoustic, financial, and logistical terms.¹⁵ Fig. 5.1 shows the assemblage for this festival, reproduced on the cover of Rimbault's piano score reduction of *Messiah*, published later in 1857.¹⁶

Note the exposed glass ceiling for the festival.

The Sacred Harmonic Society oversaw the musical arrangements for this experiment. Robert Bowley, in a letter addressed to the members, subscribers and assistants of the Society, proposed the desirability of large oratorio performances of a high quality:

The extended knowledge and practice of choral music in the Metropolis has rendered it requisite that any exhibition of Handel's genius in the present day should be of 'the most *extensive* as well as of the most *efficient* character'.¹⁷

The letter further comments on the choir's participation in the opening ceremony of 1854:

It was this prepared state which enabled the Society to carry out with such perfection the then unprecedented display of 1700 performers, at the opening of the Crystal Palace in June 1854: although circumstances permitted of only ten days clear for completing the entire arrangements. ... [I]t is peculiarly the privilege of The Sacred Harmonic Society to take the lead in any grand Metropolitan commemoration of Handel.¹⁸

¹⁵ A Commemoration festival celebrating Handel's death followed two years later in 1859, after which the Handel Triennial Festivals became firmly established.

¹⁶ *Rimbault's Recollections of the Handel Festival. No.1: The Messiah* (London: Chapell & Co., 1857).

¹⁷ Bodleian Library, Sundry Musical Pamphlets Tenbury e.78.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*



Figure 5:1: The Trial Festival at the Crystal Palace, 1857.

Cover of Rimbault's piano reduction of *Messiah*.

Source: The Gerald Coke Handel Collection, HC 1066 4/A/XVII CENT.¹⁹

¹⁹ John Barnard was the artist and his painting is reproduced on the cover of the piano score entitled 'Rimbault's Recollections of the Handel Festival. No. [1], The Messiah' (London: Chappell & Co., [1857]). The score is held at the Foundling Museum London, Gerald Coke Handel Collection HC 1066 4/A/XVII CENT.

There was some concern over the suitability of the vast spaces of the giant transept for a musical performance, as Frederick Ouseley expressed in his preliminary report in 1853 to the directors recommending the installation of a grand organ:

Now an enclosed apartment of the magnitude of the Crystal Palace is very nearly in the same condition as the open air, for the walls and the roof are so far distant from the musical instrument, with the exception of the wall against which it is placed, that the dispersion of sound and consequent enfeebling effect upon the richness of quality, take place before the waves of sound have time to reach the enclosing medium.²⁰

It was to be an ongoing concern, but arrangements went ahead for the ‘trial’ Handel Festival. In November, *The Times* announced that

the Sacred Harmonic Society have seized the opportunity of calling upon England to testify on this occasion [a trial festival for the Commemoration of Handel’s death to be held in 1859] its enthusiasm for the man [Handel], and to rejoice over the good which he has accomplished; and as a preliminary experiment, it is proposed to give in May next certain performances in the transept of the Crystal Palace.²¹

Perhaps ‘calling upon England’ referred to the thirty or more towns that contributed choristers and musicians for this and subsequent festivals. The Trial Festival was set to become not only a ‘monster’ civic event but also a monumental event of national pride.²² The event of the Trial Festival, the music of Handel, the monumental architecture of the Crystal Palace with the huge performance forces and audience, melded together to create a cultural monumentalism on a national scale.

²⁰ Frederick Arthur Gore Ouseley, Robert Willis, and John Donaldson, *Crystal Palace Company: Grand Organ: Preliminary Report to the Directors* (London: Blades East & Blades, 1853), 4-5.

²¹ *The Times*, 20 November 1856.

²² ‘Monster’ is a term of the day, often used in the press, to describe these large festivals.

Importantly, the Sacred Harmonic Society Committee stated that one of the main reasons for undertaking the musical arrangements for the Grand Handel Musical Festival in 1857 was that of national power:

it is felt that England ought not to occupy a secondary position, in any commemoration, in whatever country held ... it becomes an imperative duty ... that London, the Metropolis which contains the ashes of the great musician ... should pre-eminently excel in any commemoration .²³

The grandness of the festival was a way to exhibit England's international superiority. This visual as well as aural statement in the vast transept of the Crystal Palace would exceed the respect that other nations could pay to Handel in commemoration.²⁴ International competitiveness is humorously related in a newspaper article comparing the Handel Commemoration in the Crystal Palace in London with that of the German one held in Halle:

True, we are a 'nation of shopkeepers,' which is perhaps, in some degree, a reason why a knot of *bourgeois* amateurs have been able....to celebrate the anniversary of Handel's death at their own pecuniary risk and peril, in a style which leaves all competition in the rear.²⁵

Perhaps this pecuniary competitiveness was a reaction to previous artistic philistinism seen in Britain. German oratorio festivals at this time were often run with state or locally employed orchestras. Smither relates how it was the German government that provided inexpensive rail fares for performers, and the court who lent instruments and players for the festival in Munich's *Glaspalast* in 1855.²⁶ In comparison, Britain had no such recourse to public funding. The Crystal Palace triennial festivals appear to be the first recurring

²³ 8. This document entitled 'Grand Handel Musical Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1857: A Letter addressed to the Members, Subscribers, and Assistants of the Sacred Harmonic Society' is held in a collection of pamphlets at the Bodleian Library Oxford, Tenbury e 78.

²⁴ Handel died in 1759; his centenary was to be celebrated in 1859 with a preparatory 'trial' commemoration festival held at the Crystal Palace in 1857.

²⁵ *The Times*, 18 June 1857. See quotation in Chapter 3.4.6 for an explanation of the phrase 'nation of shopkeepers' that was used by Napoleon.

²⁶ Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 52-3.

festivals in Britain run solely as a business enterprise with no donations made to charity.

There was a great desire by the British to outdo continental rivals in every way.²⁷

Civic competition between English towns can be seen also in the fold-out sections of some of the *Programmes of Arrangements* for ensuing Festivals and the Annual Reports of the Society.²⁸ These pages give a comparison of the roof sizes and shapes from all around the country and a comparison of the floor space of the various venues used for oratorio performance around England. The sketches of the Crystal Palace show that it had the ‘most *efficient* and most *extensive*’²⁹ floor and roof space, supposedly indicating its superiority as a performance venue (Figs. 5.2 and 5.3). It is interesting to note that the same descriptive words ‘efficient’ and ‘extensive’, previously used to describe the desired performance mode of Handel’s music, were later used to describe the building. The monumental building, it seems, had become synonymous with the monumental music performed within its space.

The documents also reveal the fierce competitiveness both internationally and provincially over the Festival spectacle, reflecting imperial expansion and contemporary civic mores. A new ideology of monumentalism underpinned the vision of magnitude, which equated with power and social status. Progress, in this sense, required each succeeding festival to outdo its previous incarnation, and to be an even grander event.

The trial Handel Festival of 1857 was an outstanding financial success with a reported clear profit of £9,000, standing in stark contrast to the orchestral concerts held in the Crystal Palace of that year, which had run at a staggering £12,000 loss.³⁰ The stage was

²⁷ See *Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Reports*, 9 vols. (Royal College of Music Collection, 1832-1878).

²⁸ Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1859; Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1862.

²⁹ This phrase is used throughout the annual reports of the Sacred Harmonic Society. Even well into the 1900s newspapers reported on the ‘efficient and extensive’ in musical performances.

³⁰ See the *Twenty-Fifth Annual Report of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 1858, 20 for disbursements. Only £1,000 found its way directly to the coffers of the SHS. See ‘The Crystal Palace and the Million’, *Atlas*, 25 July 1857. They suggest a loss of £12,000 for the Italian Concerts. While Crystal Palace records are lacking there is much reported in various newspapers of the day, especially the regular ‘Crystal Palace Company’ reports which give meeting discussions and detailed financial information.

now set with a 'trial' for a monumental musical event that captured the Victorian imagination for the next fifty years.

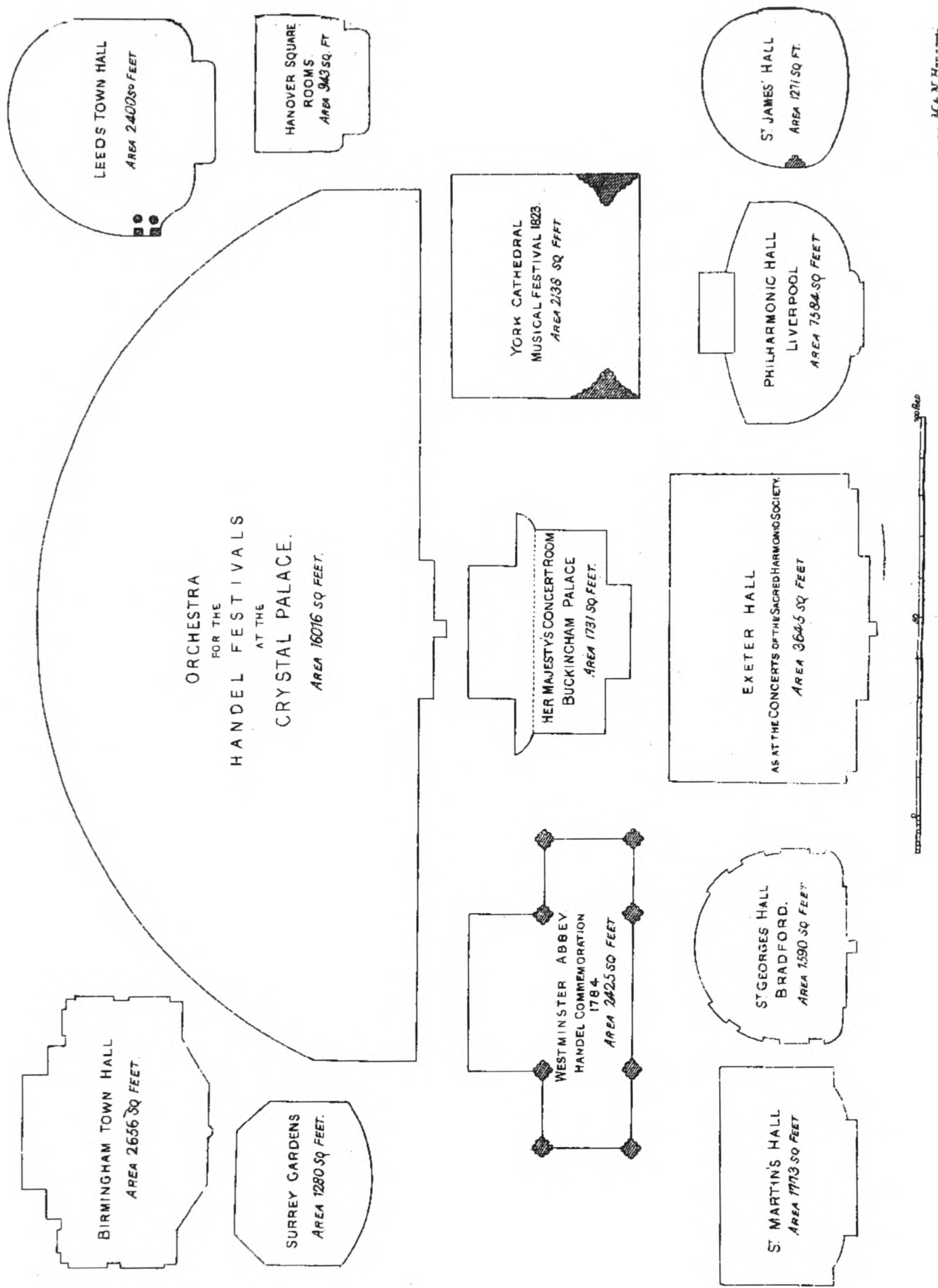


Figure 5:2: 'Comparative Dimensions of the Principal Orchestras of the Country'.
 Note the building space seems commensurate with the orchestra size.
 Source: *The Handel Commemoration Festival at the Crystal Palace: Programme of Arrangements*, 1857, Bodleian Library Oxford.

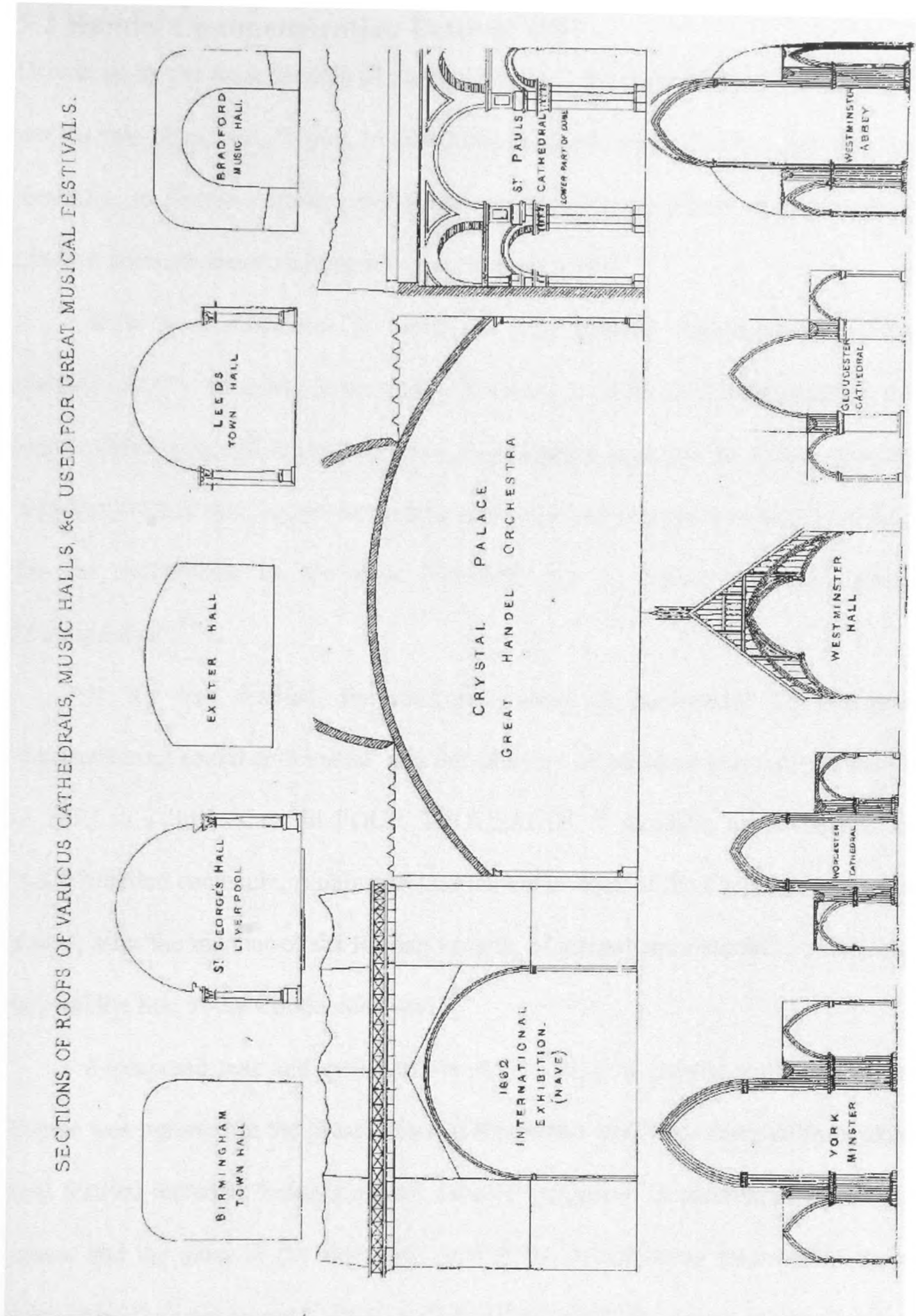


Figure 5:3: Comparison of roofs around the country used for Great Musical Festivals.
 Source: *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace: Programme of Arrangements*, 1862, Bodleian Library, Oxford.

5.2 Handel Commemoration Festival 1859

Driven on by the huge success of the trial Festival, the Sacred Harmonic Society felt it had met its two objectives, '[f]irst, to determine the mode of celebrating Handel's genius; and secondly, to furnish efficient illustration of the point to which musical knowledge and practice have advanced in England at the present period'.³¹

With these objectives in mind, an even grander Commemoration Festival was planned in 1859, using the same mode and venue, to celebrate the centennial of the death of Handel, with England leading the way. Newspapers such as *The Times* reported that the 'opportunity has been seized for calling upon England especially to testify on this occasion for the enthusiasm of the man [Handel], and to rejoice over the good he has accomplished'.³²

At the trial festival, the assembled mass of performers did not produce the 'overpowering sound anticipated' and the numbers of performers as a result were increased in 1859 to a 'little short of FOUR THOUSAND'.³³ Acoustic improvements included a 'solid boarded enclosure, running around the entire back of the Orchestra and organ, and in a roof, after the manner of the Roman *velaria*, of a repellent material ... extending forward beyond the line of the Conductor's seat'.³⁴

Widespread fear and cynicism about the safety of crowds and noise in the Crystal Palace was reported in the press. Fears of the public who were deterred from attending the trial festival included 'being stunned', lack of 'precision' in currents of sound in the large space, and the glass in the sides and roof of the Palace being fractured by sound waves created by the performers.³⁵ With such fears dispelled, the object of the Commemoration was to 'impart a fresh interest' to the familiar oratorios '*in the grandest scale*' and '*in the*

³¹ Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1859.

³² *The Times*, 20 November 1856.

³³ Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1859, 7.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁵ The cannons for a military salute were moved to Green Park at the opening ceremony in case the glass shattered and shredded the Queen. For an understanding of the fear mentality of crowds at this time see Martin Tropp, *Images of Fear: How Horror Stories Helped Shape Modern Culture, 1818-1918* (London: McFarland, 1990).

most perfect manner'. A format of *Messiah* for the opening *Israel in Egypt* on the last day was established, one that was adhered to at Triennial performances for many years. The Programme of Arrangements justifies these choices:

No English Musical Festival can be considered complete without a performance of the *Messiah*. It is peculiarly the ORATORIO of the English people. This work has therefore been selected for the opening day. *Israel in Egypt* created such a sensation at the last Festival ... no question can arise as to its repetition in 1859.³⁶

The Commemoration Festival was a resounding success with 81,260 attending, an increase of 32,846 persons from the trial Festival. Total receipts of £34,913 exceeded all expectations. The everyday members of the society with their Protestant work ethic and their 'unremitting labour cheerfully given' achieved an impressive assemblage of musicians along with a very successful financial enterprise on a grand scale.

Newspaper reports on every detail of the Commemoration provide a rich social record of the time. A description of the choir in the *Daily News* 29 June 1859 provides an example:

The ladies formed a brilliant band, a sort of girdle of Venus, across the centre, and, marshalled high up behind in solid squares in the wings were the male singers, ready and able at a signal from Mr Costa to bring down the walls of Jericho, if necessary, by the organised power of a thousand voices.

Even the enormous appetite of the thousands present was reported, illustrating vividly the carnival atmosphere of this performance:

The following refreshments consumed at the Crystal Palace during the Handel Festival may be found amusing: – 19,200 sandwiches, 14,000 pies, 240 fore-quarters of lamb, 120 balantines of lamb, 3509 chickens, 480 hams, 485 tongues, 150 galantines of chicken, 60 game pies, 3052 lobster salads, 3825 salmon mayonnaise, 300 score of lettuce, 40,000 penny buns, 25,000 two penny buns, 32,249 ices, 400 jellies, 400 creams,

³⁶ Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements, 1859*, 10-11.

350 fruit tarts, 2419 dozen beverages, 1152 malt liquor, nine tons of roast and boiled beef, 3506 quarts of tea, coffee, and chocolate.³⁷

This letter to the editor of *The Times* from a chorister gives a critical insight into the behaviour of the audience at this event and various contemporary perceptions about oratorio that do not seem to be reported elsewhere.³⁸ It comments that the members of the audience did conduct themselves with ‘great decorum’ at times, as they did not talk much during the solos considering there was not much to see. The remainder of the letter complains about the ‘inappropriate’ and even ‘profane’ cheering and applause of the Christian audience and the early departure of some of the audience during the penultimate chorus. The writer complains of the brushing past of ‘hoops innumerable’ and asks why the orchestra should not also noisily start to pack up early. This letter gives a rare insight into the audience behaviour of the day and does not seem to be reported at such length elsewhere (see Fig. 5.4):

³⁷ *The London Illustrated News*, 18 June 1859. The whole cover of this edition shows a portrait of Handel from the original painted for him by Denner, and presented to the Sacred Harmonic Society.

³⁸ ‘Handel Commemoration Festival: ONE OF THE CHOIR’, *The Times*, 22 June 1859.

HANDEL COMMEMORATION FESTIVAL.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE TIMES.

Sir,—So far as it extends, your criticism upon the Handel Festival performance is most just, and your approbation most deservedly bestowed; but you have omitted to criticize by far the most important element in this great event—viz., the behaviour of the audience.

The manager and his assistants performed their parts admirably; the conductor, the soloists, the band, and chorus exerted themselves vigorously to please; policemen and railway attendants were in every way obliging and energetic, and the audience (although this has not been remarked by you) conducted itself sometimes with great decorum. It did not talk very loudly during the solos, considering that there was not much to see; it sat down for the greater part of the time when tired; it rose up at the Hallelujah chorus, as in duty bound to do; and it encored and applauded sometimes when applause was appropriate. There were, however, two things in which the audience was seriously to blame, and for which it ought not to escape the sting of your ubiquitous lash. It cheered at times when cheering was most inappropriate; and, five times out of six, its very clever performance on the palm of its hand and its able pedal movement completely obscured the closing symphony of solo and of chorus. Upon several occasions there was something in its applause that was either unmeaning and grotesque, or else verging on the profane. It was acutely painful to hear those fearful words in the second part of the *Messiah* positively cheered, and that by a Christian audience, which professes to believe them true. Music such as that of the *Messiah* was not composed simply for the glorification of Handel, or for the glory of a favourite singer; it has a deeper meaning and a higher aim which will, I trust, in the concluding performances, be more decently secured.

The other part of the performance of the audience to which exception must be taken is the want of consideration which one half of it shows to the other half, and to the orchestra, in its execution of the last chorus. Almost all musicians would admit that the concluding choruses of several of the great oratorios are among their very finest contents, and almost all visitors to oratorio performances would admit that at least one-half of their number are present for the sake of hearing the music; it is, therefore, somewhat too bad that these last should be robbed of one great part of their pleasure by the brushing past them of hoops innumerable, and by no means highly elastic, and by the treading on their very favourite corns of unmusical, but sometimes extremely "heavy swells."

The last choruses of most oratorios take nearly five minutes to perform; and, although it is obvious that these five minutes are of the utmost value to fashionable ladies who have so much to occupy their time, yet I think that on the two or three days of a centenary commemorative of Handel's genius even they might make that costly sacrifice out of consideration for those who only regard it as a pleasure to listen to the climax of a great work of art.

I have no doubt it would be very convenient to many of the orchestra to follow the example of the audience; but the latter would regard it as a strange exhibition if violins and violoncellos, trumpets and drums, were noisily put into their cases at the moment that the last chorus commenced, and if, one by one, the performers left the orchestra, the coda thus, instead of increasing in grandeur, becoming, like the audience—anything but "beautifully—less."

It was not, I imagine, the intention of Handel in composing the choruses "Worthy is the Lamb," and "Sing ye to the Lord," that they should be performed for the purpose of accompanying an audience in putting on its opera-cloak; or that any of his grand harmonies should be applied to the "base use" of playing the said audience out of its assembly-room.

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
ONE OF THE CHOIR.

London, June 21.

Figure 5:4: A letter to the editor of *The Times* from a chorister, 22 June 1859.

The event was truly a national one as the *Herald and Standard* explained:

The Handel Commemoration at the Crystal Palace must be taken as a Grand National ovation to the great composer. It may be advanced that the idea of the centenary festival was but a commercial speculation ... A more magnificent spectacle of its kind it is impossible to conceive.³⁹

Aberdeen.	Ely.	Ossett.
Armagh.	Exeter.	Oxford.
Armley.	Frome.	Preston.
Ashton.	Froxfield.	Reigate.
Bangor.	Glasgow.	Ripon.
Barnsley.	Gloucester.	Rochester.
Belfast.	Gomersal.	Romsey.
Bingley.	Greenwich.	Royston.
Birkenhead.	Halifax.	Saltaire.
<u>Birmingham.</u>	Haworth.	Sevenoaks.
Birstal.	Heckmondwike.	Sheffield.
Blyth.	Heidelberg.	Southwell.
Bradford.	Hereford.	Stratford-on-Avon.
Bristol.	Huddersfield.	Stockport.
Bury.	Hull.	Sudbury.
Cambridge.	Hyde.	Sutton.
Chard.	Idle.	Swansea.
Canterbury.	Keighley.	Tamworth.
Carshalton.	Kilkenny.	Todmorden.
Chatham.	Kingston.	Tottenham.
Chester.	Leeds.	Tredworth.
Chorlton.	Leicester.	Trowbridge.
Cleckheaton.	Limerick.	Uxbridge.
Clifton.	Lincoln.	Wakefield.
Cork.	Liverpool.	Warrington.
Coventry.	Maidenhead.	Wells.
Derby.	Manchester.	Westbury.
Dereham.	Mottram.	Winchester.
Dewsbury.	Newcastle-on-Tyne.	Windsor.
Down.	Nice.	Woollaton.
Dublin.	Norwich.	Woolwich.
Dudley.	Norfolk.	Worcester.
Durham.	Nottingham.	York.
Eccleshill.	Ormskirk.	Yarmouth.
Edinburgh.		

Figure 5:5: A list of the origins of performers included in the 1859 *Book of Words*.

³⁹ *Herald and Standard*, 21 June 1859.

A list of all the performers from every corner of the British Isles was included in the Festival programme (see Fig. 5.5).⁴⁰ Note that the performers were from as far afield as Heidelberg, Belfast, and Aberdeen. Everyone in the audience was aware of the quota of provincial (and international) singers and instrumentalists who contributed to the magnificent assemblage. It was considered a truly national monument, exalting the musical talents of the 3,500 musicians, which encompassed every area of the country from small villages to cathedral towns to the metropolis.⁴¹ The Handel Triennial Festivals were established from this point and continued until 1926.

Over the years, the numbers performing and in attendance at the festivals dramatically increased, as Table 5.1 illustrates.⁴² The performer figures peaked in 1868 at 4,000 and attendance figures in 1883 at 87,784. The two-hundred-year commemoration of Handel's birth was changed to 1885 (making a two year gap between two of the festivals) when it became known to the Festival Committee that his birth date was incorrectly recorded.⁴³ Tremendous interest was shown in the 'progress' reports of numbers present at each Handel Triennial Festival, in the newspapers and journals of the day. Newspapers around the country gave prolonged attention to the increase of orchestral and choral forces as well as attendance and profits.

The strivings of nineteenth-century imperial England to expand territorially are also reflected at the local level in the expansion of the oratorio festivals. English society at this time, obsessed with not only unearthing and preserving the past, but with promoting an idealistic notion of a universal progress, drove the oratorio festivals forward. An ideology of monumentalism so often associated with mass movements of nationalism, imperialism

⁴⁰ Also printed in Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1859.

⁴¹ See 'Some Particulars relating to the Handel Commemoration Festival, 1859' in the *Annual Reports of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 1859.

⁴² Discrepancies exist between newspaper reports and those of the Sacred Harmonic Society. Numbers in attendance also varied depending on whether rehearsal days in the later festivals were included.

⁴³ The centenary festival held in Westminster Abbey in 1784 was calculated from Handel's incorrect date of birth.

and totalitarianism embraced the notions of grandeur, expansionism, and progress while venerating heroes and monuments of the past.⁴⁴

	Handel Occasion	Orchestra	Chorus	Total Performers	Audience Totals
1851	Opening of 1851 Exhibition	85	601	689	25,000
1854	Opening of Crystal Palace Sydenham	400	1,248	1,648	40,000
1857	Trial Handel Festival	400	2,500	2,900	38,414
1859	Commemoration Festival	460	2,765	3,500	81,260
1862	Handel Triennial Festival	505	3,120	3,635	67,567
1865	Handel Triennial Festival			4,000	59,434
1868	Handel Triennial Festival			4,000	82,465
1871	Handel Triennial Festival		3,400		84,968
	Ditto 1871-1883	1882-	Sacred	Harmonic ceased to	Society Exist
1883	Manns new conductor	440	3,560	4,000	87,784
1885	Handel Commemoration Festival				

Table 5.1: Available numbers involved in Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace.
Source: Minutes of Meeting of the Sacred Harmonic Society and newspaper reports.⁴⁵

5.3 The First Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1862

With the issue of a Commemoration Medal to all who played in the Handel Orchestra for that event, steps were taken to hold another great Musical Festival at the Crystal Palace.

⁴⁴ Andreas Huyssen, *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Cultural Memory in the Present; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003), 39.

⁴⁵ This table was drawn from the perusal of the Sacred Harmonic Society Reports and hundreds of newspapers including *The Times*, *Daily News*, *The Morning Post*, *The Morning Chronicle*, *The Standard*, *The Era*, *The Examiner*, *Pall Mall Gazette*, *The Illustrated London News*, and several provincial newspapers. The Sacred Harmonic reports tended to detail with exact rather than rounded figures, which would have been presented to the Crystal Palace Directors. There was a great deal of variance between newspapers reporting on the same event, with figures for some columns not located anywhere yet. The table is designed to give an overall impression of the dramatic increase in size of these festivals, rather than provide precise figures.

It affords the directors much pleasure here to record their sense of valuable assistance and the cordial co-operation they received in carrying out the undertaking of the Sacred Harmonic Society. As the Crystal Palace is now fitted out with the most complete and *extensive* orchestra in the world obtained at cost of nearly £7,000 (the whole of which has been paid out of revenue) and as the great transept is an equally unrivalled venue, [they]...have under their consideration the establishment of periodical musical festivals, equal in extent to at least the Handel Festival. It is proposed the first of these will take place in 1862.⁴⁶

Handel's genius was the focus of the Commemoration Festival, but for this festival, it was decided that 'MUSIC IS AN ART TO BE SPECIALLY HONOURED IN 1862'.⁴⁷ While the Great Exhibition had symbolised the spectacle of British industrial and technical achievement, the triennial festivals held in the very same building were to symbolise the way forward in musical performance and appreciation. London was to host another International Exhibition in 1862, and the organisers of the Festival thought it appropriate that

Handel, in his *Giant Majesty*, will then be displayed to the representatives of the assembled nations; his *Messiah* will receive from 'strangers and foreigners' that homage to its merits, and to its great religious truths, which Englishmen have never failed to give it.⁴⁸

The imperialist and monumentalist language used here illustrates how these majestic oratorio performances were an integral part of the English missionary conquests and expansionist policies. As discussed elsewhere, the press increasingly referred to 'armies' of singers that conquered the masses of the day with Handel's 'great religious truths'.⁴⁹

Driven on by previous financial success and public encomiastic comments, the first triennial festival of 1862 aimed to supersede the previous Commemoration Festival.

⁴⁶ *Post*, 13 December 1859.

⁴⁷ Stated in 'ADDENDA to the Copies of Extract forwarded to the Members of the Handel Commemoration Orchestra' in the *Annual Reports of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 1859, 75.

⁴⁸ Bowley, *Programme of Arrangements*, 1862, 10.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

London had now emulated the provinces in establishing its own recurring grand festival, but the metropolitan festivals were not run to make a profit for charity, as were those in the provincial cities. Not to be outdone, the *Programme of Arrangements* of 1862 carries the following table (Fig. 5.2) giving comparative numbers of orchestral players at various festivals from around the country, again highlighting the superiority and the rapid expansion of the Crystal Palace forces.

COMPARATIVE STRENGTH OF ORCHESTRAS AT VARIOUS MUSICAL FESTIVALS, ETC.

	STRINGED INSTRUMENTS.						Wind Instruments, &c.	TOTAL BAND.	CHORUS.					Conductor, Principal Vocalists, &c.	TOTAL.
	1st Violin.	2nd Violin.	Violas.	Violoncellos.	Double Basses.	TOTAL.			Trebles.	Altos.	Tenors.	Basses.	TOTAL.		
York Musical Festival, 1823	34	32	20	20	16	122	57	179	64	55	75	79	273	16	468
Westminster Abbey do., 1784	48	47	26	21	15	157	93	250	53	45	80	79	257	18	525
Do. do. do. 1834	40	40	32	18	18	148	75	223	124	68	64	100	356	53	632
Birmingham Town Hall Opening, 1834.....	26	24	24	16	10	100	45	145	57	48	52	59	216	19	380
Leeds do. do. 1858.....	20	18	12	12	12	74	22	96	65	57	59	60	241	25	362
Liverpool do. do. 1854.....	24	24	12	10	10	80	19	99	85	60	71	85	301	11	411
Bradford do. do. 1853.....	16	16	10	10	10	62	22	84	54	55	59	59	227	16	327
Gloucester Cathedral Festival, 1859	14	14	8	8	8	52	22	74	64	48	58	64	234	12	320
Worcester Cathedral Festival, 1860	14	12	9	10	9	54	22	76	56	42	52	58	208	17	301
Hereford Cathedral Festival, 1861	12	12	6	7	7	44	19	63	40	22	28	25	110	13	186
Norwich Festival, 1860.....	14	12	10	9	10	55	20	75	76	50	59	66	251	12	338
Messiah, St. Paul's, 1861	14	14	8	8	8	52	17	69	125	125	135	136	521	10	600*
Birmingham Festival, 1861	28	26	18	17	17	106	33	139	89	89	88	90	356	13	508
Sacred Harmonic Society Concerts, Exeter Hall	24	24	18	16	16	98	23	121	130	130	130	130	520	10	661
Opening of 1851 Exhibition.....	20	18	8	10	10	66	19	85	130	120	175	176	601	3	689
Opening of Crystal Palace, 1854 ...	50	50	30	30	30	190	210†	400	312	312	312	312	1,248	2	1,050
Triennial Handel Festival, 1862 ...	98	96	75	75	75	419	86	505	810	810	750	750	3,120	10	3,635†

* Numbers stated in Books of Words: chorus estimated only.

† This includes 150 Military Band Performers.

‡ Exclusive of Librarians, Stewards, and other officers: including these the number will exceed 4,000.

Table 5.2: Comparison of performers at various oratorio festivals 1784-1862.

Source: *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1862: Programme of Arrangements*, 19.

The 'superlative grandeur' produced by 'hosts of players and singers' taken up in the 'different and distant' sections of the immense orchestra created a 'new feature in Festival music'.⁵⁰ Robert Bowley describes the effect – 'the hurling and the tossing of the masses of sound in the Hailstone Chorus, as the words "FIRE!" "HAIL!" burst from side to side of the

⁵⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

immense Orchestra, cannot be forgotten ...'.⁵¹ Sublimity now referred to the overpowering force and antiphonal effect as well as to Handel's music and its narration.⁵²

The *Daily News* reported further improvements to the venue and the size of the orchestra:

The composition of the orchestra will be improved by an increase of the larger stringed instruments, and also by the use of a number of serpents and large tube brass instruments, which give the lower notes in a full round manner, so as to secure a sufficient body of full deep and middle tone ... It is intended to cover the great orchestra with an arched roof of enormous span. It was found at the last festival that too much space overhead caused the sound to travel irregularly, so that the complex passages in the choral pieces occasionally became confused ... The side of the orchestra will be about sixty feet high, or nearly the same as the Birmingham Town hall, one of the best buildings for music in the country ... Wooden girders being carried across in the form of an arch... the underside being filled with white tie bracings, lined with well seasoned match-boarding, bound closely with ingenious appliances, until the whole surface becomes as hard and as resonant as a drum-head'.⁵³

All these adjustments to the venue improved the quality of the musical sound so that the listeners in the audience could hear the double choruses and other intricate sections of the music with much more clarity. A print of the solidly roofed-in Great Transept adorned the front cover of the 1862 *Programme of Arrangements* (seen in Fig. 5.6). Apparently, no effort or expense was spared in honouring Handel's music. Comparison of the space inside the Crystal Palace transept to that of the Birmingham Town Hall highlights the focus on civic competition. The former building was gradually modified for the music over the first

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² 'Sublime' had previously been used to describe Handel's music only on a high intellectual, moral, or spiritual level. Several eighteenth and nineteenth-century authors, viz. William Crotch, Edmund Burke, and Chevalier de Jaucourt, discuss the concept of sublime and their essays are reproduced in Peter Le Huray and James Day, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (Abridged edn.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 60-6, 199-206, 429-35. Crotch states: 'The sublime is founded on the principles of vastness and incomprehensibility ... and when we hear innumerable voices and instruments sounding the praises of God in solemn and becoming strains, the most sublime image that can fill the mind seldom fails to present itself', p431.

⁵³ 'The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1862' in the *Daily News*, 30 January 1862.

few festivals, and the interaction of the monumental music with the monumental architecture was leaving its mark on the public of the day.

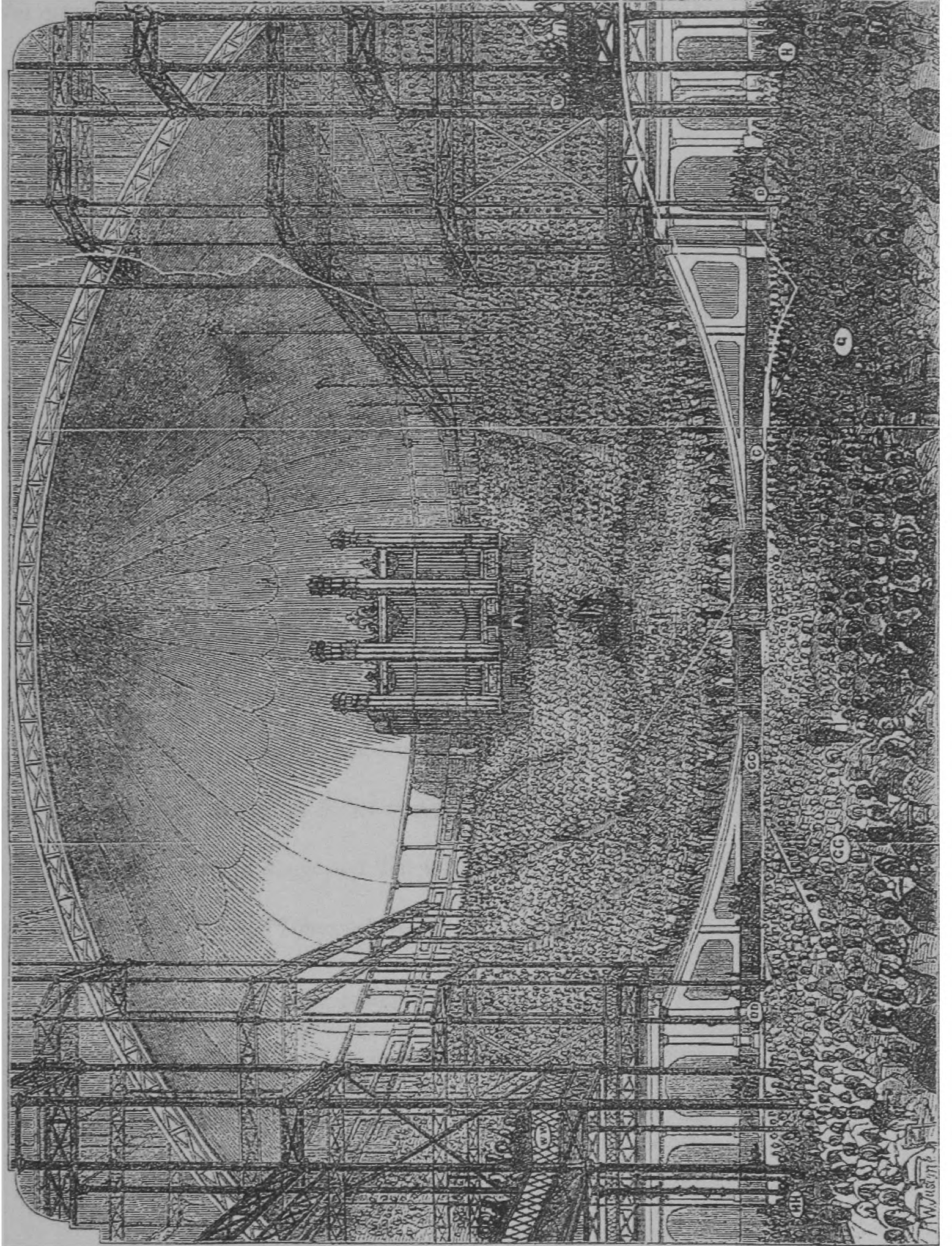


Figure 5:6: The solidly roofed in Great Transept of the Crystal Palace, 1862.
 Source: The front page of *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1862: Programme of Arrangements*.

Not only was the ‘super-genius’ Handel worshipped, but other events, including the arrival and attendance of Queen Victoria, contributed to the success of these massed performances. A royal presence added to the importance and spectacle of the occasion and heightened the interest of those attending the festival. While Her Majesty and the Prince Consort attended the 1857 and 1859 performances, royal patronage was lacking after the death of Prince Albert.

5.4 The Second Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1865

Perhaps the lack of royal patronage may have contributed to the Handel Triennial Festival of 1865 not being as well patronised by the public as previous performances. Reasons given by one newspaper for this downturn included the defective management of the railway in relation to the Crystal Palace, causing delays of up to an hour for orchestra players and concert-goers alike travelling to Sydenham; great public interest in the dissolution of the old and election of the new Parliament; and the deluge of rain which prevented thousands from attending the performance of *Israel in Egypt* on the last day.⁵⁴ Nevertheless, reports from those who were present suggested that this festival was artistically superior to any of the previous festivals. As *The Times* noted:

In 1857, the experimental trial, the aggregate number [of the audience] was only 38,114; in 1859 the first real Handel Festival, in commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the composer’s death - they were 81,319; and in 1862, the year of the International Exhibition, when it was first resolved to make the Handel Festivals triennial, 67,567 - the absorbing interest created by the International Exhibition satisfactorily accounting for the considerable difference between 1859 and 1862.⁵⁵ The second triennial meeting, that of 1865, looked at simply from the point of view of numbers, represented decadence [decline in

⁵⁴ *Israel in Egypt* is famous for its Plague Choruses and it is ironic that this performance was accompanied with a ‘plague’ of rain.

⁵⁵ The press unflatteringly labelled the factory-like character of the building where the 1862 exhibition was held as the ‘Brompton Boilers’. It is now the home of the South Kensington Science Museum.

audience numbers], although regarded in an artistic sense, it greatly surpassed any of the three festivals.⁵⁶

Recalling as well the statement in the Addenda to the 1859 Sacred Harmonic Society Report: ‘MUSIC IS AN ART TO BE SPECIALLY HONOURED IN 1862’, not only number but also artistic merit constituted an important factor in the building of a musical monument.⁵⁷

The Times also reported on the ‘rained-out’ *Israel in Egypt* performance:

[w]hoever was absent from the Crystal Palace yesterday – as whoever was present can testify – lost the very noblest performance ever heard at a ‘Handel Festival’ of Handel’s great choral work. From beginning to end, it was one uninterrupted series of successes.⁵⁸

The writer then critiques the entire performance, discussing choruses, making a comparison with the choruses of *Messiah* and the antiphonal character and effect of the double choruses in *Israel in Egypt*, the solo singers, and the rehearsals. Of the conductor Michael Costa, he writes:

the audience would fain have had this picturesque chorus [‘He spake the word’] repeated; but the despotic conductor [Costa], who knew what was coming, happily showed a deaf ear to their entreaties. What was coming was no less than ‘He gave them hailstones for rain’ ...⁵⁹

While Costa was described by many as ‘despotic’, his driving personality must surely be one factor that contributed to the continual success and expansion of the festivals.

The *Programme of Arrangement* for 1865 indicates that the Crystal Palace Handel Festivals had become by then an acknowledged ‘public requirement’, and thus a major feature of Victorian society, reiterating that the ‘sublimity’ was more fully realised in the

⁵⁶ *The Times*, 22 June 1868.

⁵⁷ ‘Art’ is taken here to be as an umbrella term which describes serious classical music performed to a high standard and which is ranked with other nineteenth-century genres such as the fine arts and poetry.

⁵⁸ ‘The Handel Festival’, *The Times*, Saturday, 1 July 1865, 12.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

‘colossal representation’ of the Handel masterpieces. These grand spectacles had become, in fact, ‘the musical household gods of the English people’.⁶⁰ The *Programme* concluded that ‘Handel’s Choral Music has acquired such additional majesty, by the employment of the vast means within reach that its practice is likely to become universal’.⁶¹

The *Telegraph* of 25 June 1867 comments on the national status of the Crystal Palace and its activities in comparison to those in France:

We decline to regard the Crystal palace as a mere show. It is speculation, no doubt, but in another sense, it has achieved a position as an almost national institution. It is not merely a London exhibition supported by and kept up for Londoners. It belongs to all England and all England is proud of it. It is the eighth wonder of the world, and we are not afraid to pit it against the gasometer in the Champ de Mars ...⁶²

The analogies seem rather outlandish, but the point is made that England was building a superior monument to musical festivals in the Crystal Palace.

Newspapers and journals report little about the acoustics by this time, with most of the difficulties apparently having been overcome. However, the Sacred Harmonic Society Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of 1867 states that ‘The progress made in improving the acoustical condition of the Centre Transept for these great Meetings has been very marked. Step by step so much was accomplished in this respect by the last Festival that little appeared to be wanting’.⁶³ The report goes on to suggest that ‘still greater effects’ may be produced by increased practice of the Handel Festival Choir and Orchestra while observing ‘strict economy’.

The Crystal Palace Company often ran events at a loss and, coupled with the huge amount of money needed to maintain the grounds and buildings, at times financial survival

⁶⁰ Robert Bowley, *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1865: Programme of Arrangements* (London: Robert K. Burt, 1865), 1.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 9.

⁶² *Telegraph*, 25 June 1867. The Paris Exhibition of 1865, like those that preceded and succeeded it, was held on the 41-acre site in the Champ de Mars. The building was described as an exaggerated ‘gasometer’. (A gasometer is a very large circular metal tank that held gas at a constant pressure).

⁶³ *Thirty-Fifth Annual Report of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 1867, 15.

was a struggle.⁶⁴ The Sacred Harmonic Society's arrangements for the Handel Festivals usually reaped a very healthy profit (or at the worst broke even) for the Crystal Palace Company. Many musically esteemed people such as George Grove and Richard Bowley were heavily involved in the administration of the Crystal Palace. Coupled with a business acumen and the work ethic of the amateur choral society, the Crystal Palace Corporation enabled these festivals to come to fruition and become an enduring feature of Victorian London.

5.5 The Third and Fourth Great Triennial Handel Festivals (1868, 1871)

Numbers in attendance at the Third Handel Festival of 1868 increased to 82,465, perhaps because of the fine weather, or the fact that two members of royalty were present for the Friday concert, or the added incentive of tickets allowing admission to all amusements at the Crystal Palace for the first time. The *Programme of Arrangements* for 1868 adopts the customary praises to Handel in its opening comments:

HANDEL! Poets sing his praises – DIVINES cite him as one of the most vivid exponents of the Holy Writ – WARRIORS march to his defiant or triumphal strains – KINGS, QUEENS and PRINCES are christened and crowned, married and buried to his ever-varying hymns, while MUSICIANS with one accord proclaim him THE MASTER OF MUSIC.⁶⁵

This *Programme* also discusses the marked acoustical improvements of each festival, stating how in 1868 the intention would be to obtain a 'still more marked display of every 'new resource' which can illustrate 'ENGLAND'S CONTINUAL MUSICAL PROGRESS'.⁶⁶ Progress equated to the vast increases in the number of performers and

⁶⁴ Bell-Knight, *The Rise and Fall of the Biggest Ever Glass Container*, 42.

⁶⁵ Robert Kanzow Bowley, *The Third Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, June, 1868: Programme of Arrangements* (London: Robert K. Burt, 1868), 3. A copy of this was difficult to locate. Worcester College at Oxford has a copy but it was unavailable to be viewed for 'ecological' reasons and the British Library copy was 'missing'. A copy was finally located in the National Art Library.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

audience members, and as Howard E. Smither has noted, performances of the *Messiah* were intrinsically involved in this concept.⁶⁷

Publications such as *The Times*, *Morning Herald*, *Daily News*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, and the *Athenaeum* prove to be a very rich source of historical information. Five hundred journalists were present at the 1868 festival.⁶⁸ The recently invented telegraph was an important aid for local and international journalists in disseminating news about the festival to cater for the huge public interest in every aspect of this impressive event.

A *Daily News* article describes the suitability of the Crystal Palaces as a venue where such vast numbers could be assembled for an *effective* performance with a 'splendid' choir supported by a 'leviathan force of nearly 500 performers', including the 'best instrumentalists of the Opera and Philharmonic Bands, reinforced by many professors and amateurs, provincial and metropolitan'.⁶⁹ *The Times* of 20 June 1868 complimented these performers in the following way: 'And if anyone present had doubted whether a host of singers and players numbering by thousands would be able to over-weight Handel in Handel's loftiest flights, all doubt must speedily have been set to rest'.

International competition was apparent when *The Times* of 29 June 1869 reported that Michael Costa was conducting 4,000 performers that night, but the Americans had outdone the Crystal Palace performances in the Boston Coliseum in their Peace Jubilee:

They introduced unheard of instruments, and they manufactured unheard of instruments in unheard of sizes. First, they built a drum so big that no drum depending on skins for its sound could ever be bigger; in fact, the manufacturer boasted that unless the skin of a hippopotamus could be turned into parchment for the purpose, his drum must needs be the largest in the world. To this, and to an enormous organ, they added heavy peals of bells, one hundred anvils, and several batteries of artillery fired by electric wires. The chorus supported by this powerful orchestra comprised 12,000 voices....

⁶⁷ Smither, '*Messiah* and Progress in Victorian England', 339.

⁶⁸ *Daily News*, 20 June 1868.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

The British had used ‘Distin’s monster drum’ (discussed in the next chapter) for their festivals, which must have been an invaluable aid for keeping the massive forces performing together as well as impressing the audience with its mighty sound.

It seems that the Americans had overtaken the English in terms of the size of their event and the musical assemblage. The expansion of these monumental performances in England and elsewhere in many ways equated to imperial expansion with their ‘armies’ of singers, drums and brass instruments bigger than anything previously known, to conquer the masses with religious music on a grand scale.⁷⁰

The Albert Hall opened on 29 March 1871, prior to the Triennial Festival of 19-23 June. Perhaps the opening of the building led to increasing demand from provincial singers and instrumentalists to participate in the metropolitan festival in the Crystal Palace. As the Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Report stated:

The Chorus consisted of about 850 Sopranos, 850 contraltos and Altos, 850 Tenors, 850 basses; total 3,400. These comprised of the Society’s ordinary Chorus, the members of the London Division of the Handel Festival Choirs, and a large number of skilled choristers from various parts of the country. Never perhaps, was so great an anxiety manifested throughout the Provinces as on this occasion, to obtain invitations to take part in the chorus. The Committee never had greater difficulty in the apportionment of such invitations to the various Country Societies included in their plans; but having regard to the necessity of making these great gatherings representative and educational, they were compelled to diminish the number they have formerly apportioned to well known centres of Choral Societies, in order to admit others who, equal in ardour and ability, have not hitherto had the opportunity of assisting in these magnificent celebrations.⁷¹

The number of participants in the Triennial Festivals seemed to remain reasonably stationary from this point on, with around 4,000 in the chorus and 500 in the orchestra, although advance advertisement often boasted more than this. Almost 85,000 people

⁷⁰ For a general discussion of the expansion of oratorio performance forces at this time see Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 282; and Smither, ‘Messiah and Progress in Victorian England’.

⁷¹ *Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Report, 1871*, 22.

attended the Festival over three days of performances and one rehearsal day. According to the Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Reports, the ‘pecuniary return was very satisfactory’ and was only exceeded on two previous occasions in 1859 and 1862.

5.6 The Fifth Great Triennial Handel Festival of 1874

Some changes started to take place in programming and in Handelian performance practice that became more apparent in the 1880s. As stated by the Sacred Harmonic Society, ‘every effort would be made to give variety to the Programmes by the introduction of Selections from Handel’s lesser known works’⁷² and it was not long before the journals of the day were reporting:

Although a certain number of amateurs and professors, tired of the constant repetition of the *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, are fond of asking for the revival of Handel’s other compositions, the general public, unfortunately, will not sympathise with the agitation, and when the less familiar oratorios are brought out, after an interval of years, the Managers of the Sacred Harmonic Society finds that a deficit takes the place of the surplus which alone can enable them to sustain the sacred school on such a grand scale.⁷³

Again the Festival organisers had to turn singers away ‘through want of necessary space, to avail them of the services thus proffered’, and again there were problems with the arrangements of the Railway Companies for the conveyance of the members of the orchestra. The Press were overall commenting much more on the artistic merits of performances:

... it may be recorded here that the immortal *Messiah* and *Israel* occupied, necessarily, the first and third days of the Festival, and that on no previous occasion were the effects produced in the Choruses and these Masterpieces of Sacred Musical Art – never so impressive as when rendered by the army of singers and players at the Handel Festival – more profoundly felt by the immense auditory gathered on each occasion. The testimony of the entire press, London and Provincial, was unanimous. Fullness and quality of tone, combined with precision and

⁷² *Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Report, 1874*, 13.

⁷³ *Athenaeum*, 18 December 1875.

attack and the varied gradations of expression ... had never before been so thoroughly realised, and these great results are only further evidence of the great progress which has been made in Choral singing since the first Handel Festival held in the year 1857.

Interestingly, analyses that were more musical in content were already sowing the seeds for 'historically informed' performance practice. With much discussion of appropriate performance of Handel's music in music journals, performers were beginning to look at the 'restoration of the true original score' by the end of the century.⁷⁴

The Sacred Harmonic Society was dissolved in 1882 after an enforced removal from its rehearsal and performance venue in Exeter Hall when the renewal of its lease was not granted. From its humble beginnings, this amateur society had risen to become a major institution, fulfilling its mission of making sacred music known to the masses. Many of its industrious members had died over the years, and the incessant labours of its long-term conductor Costa were beginning to wane. With the Society's disbandment Novello & Company stored the valuable library, and the Crystal Palace Company took over the sole management of the Triennial Festivals. Just before the Eighth Triennial Festival in 1883, Sir Michael Costa suffered an 'attack of aphasia'⁷⁵ and lost his power of speech. August Manns took over the duties of conductor at very short notice. The festival of 1883 had the highest known attendance at any Triennial Festival, numbering 87,784 people, and from this zenith attendance figures started to slip away. Perhaps while the spectacle remained an attraction, audiences were becoming increasingly more discerning listeners. The charitable aspect of festival performances earlier in the century had never been a feature of the Crystal Palace festivals. While benevolent funds of one sort or another were a driving force for festivals earlier in the century and still were in the provinces, the emphasis in London was increasingly a social and commercial one, when newspapers often reported on women's

⁷⁴ 'Handel's *Messiah* according to the original score', *Monthly Musical Record*, 16 /181 (1 January 1886), 18.

⁷⁵ Described as 'aphasia' in the *Book of Words* for the 1894 Triennial Festival but now considered a paralytic stroke.

fashions, the numbers present, and the profits. It is important to consider briefly some of the later festivals.

5.7 Some later Handel Triennial Festivals

The Bicentennial Year of 1885

Many agreed that the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of Handel, which fell in 1885, was the time to break tradition, as *The Musical Times* explained:

Only for the most serious reasons should the ordinary course of a festival be interfered with ... to break it, is to cause confusion if nothing worse. But the directors of the Crystal Palace were quite justified in anticipating this year, the solemnity which, but for the occurrence of the bi-centenary of Handel's birth, would still be twelve months ahead. It was almost an obligation upon them 'to keep the feast,' and with their wealth of resources bring to a climax a long course of celebration.⁷⁶

There was great interest in the press with newspapers such as the *Penny Illustrated Paper* running full-page historical articles with large pictorial and biographical sketches of Handel, perpetuating the reverential tradition that had formed around the image of the composer and his music. However, changes were afoot in Handelian performance practice by the 1880s. Some influential people, including Sir George Grove, were becoming increasingly critical of the bombast of the massive oratorio performances and espoused performances using the composer's original scoring.⁷⁷

⁷⁶ 'Handel Bi-Centennial Festival', *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 26 /509 (1 July 1885), 397.

⁷⁷ In the 1880s, both George and Bernard Shaw raised concerns about the gigantic size of festival performances and promoted 'authentic' performances 'as Handel had it'. See Percy M. Young, *George Grove 1820-1890: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1980), 173-4, 248. In 1883, newspapers around the country reported that Sir George Grove suggested that "Messiah" should be given as Handel wrote it, without additional accompaniments, but with extra bassoons, oboes and trumpets'. For an overview of all Shaw's critical writings on oratorio see Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 299-301.

The 1888 Handel Triennial Festival

This festival was significant for the recording made of the live performance of *Israel in Egypt* in the Crystal Palace on 29 June 1888 – the first in Britain (see Fig. 5.7).⁷⁸ Colonel George Gouraud, foreign sales representative for Thomas Edison, made the choice. Edison's phonograph had evolved from his work on his earlier inventions of the telegraph and telephone. Edison speculated that a telephone message could be recorded like a telegraph message on paper tape and he experimented with rapidly moving paraffin paper.



Figure 5:7: Recording *Israel in Egypt* on Edison's wax cylinders in 1888.

⁷⁸ In 1878, a bass, Signor Foli, recorded a solo song and Sergeant Hardy of the Scots Guard recoded his cornet into an Edison phonograph.

The sound vibrations were collected through a mouthpiece, and made indentations through a diaphragm with a recording needle marking the wax. The machine had another diaphragm –and-needle unit for playback. These pioneering paraffin cylinder recordings are extremely rare, as it was most difficult to capture any sound through the mouthpiece from a distance, especially in a large concert space. The note on the surviving cylinder reads, ‘A chorus of 4000 voices recorded by phonograph over 100 yards away’.⁷⁹ The three surviving cylinders are the oldest recordings in existence in Britain.⁸⁰ Acoustic recordings continued to be made until the full-scale introduction of electrical recording in 1925/26. It is interesting that the very last Handel Festival ever performed at Crystal Palace in 1926, conducted by Henry Wood, was one of the first recordings made by the mobile van of the recording company Her Majesty’s Voice.

Queen Victoria’s Diamond Jubilee – Handel Triennial Festival of 1897

Imperialism, nationalism, modernism and jingoism were part of the fabric of late Victorian society, and comments in the 1897 Diamond Jubilee Festival’s *Programme of Arrangements* reflect this late nineteenth-century trend. The Handel Chorus consisted of ‘those highly trained amateurs, thanks to the musical progress of the four nations, to be found everywhere in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales’. Other vocalists are described as coming from ‘quiet cathedral cities, and busy manufacturing towns – in short from east, south, west and north of the United Kingdom’.⁸¹ The national and imperial grandeur which embodied the festival movement is depicted on the front cover of the Diamond Jubilee Programme (Fig. 5.8). Queen Victoria (represented in her youth and old age) is seated on her throne with orb and sepulchre in hand, and appears to be like a deity above the thousands of assembled spectators and performers.

⁷⁹ Information presented by Annette Landgraf, ‘The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace: Cultural and Economic Achievement Combined’, paper given at The Handel Institute: Commemorating Handel, London, 24 November 2007.

⁸⁰ These recordings though of poor quality can be heard on the following website:

<http://www.webrarian.co.uk/crystalpalace/crystal16.html>

⁸¹ *Programme of Arrangements*, Handel Festival Diamond Jubilee 1897, 17.



Figure 5:8: Programme cover of the Handel Festival in the Diamond Jubilee, 1897.
 Source: Bodleian Library, Oxford.



Figure 5:9: Women in the orchestra at the Handel Festival, 1891.

Source: *Illustrated Penny Newspaper*, 27 June 1891.

By the late nineteenth century a different society existed, but still with the notions of monumentalism at its base. In the 'armies of executants', women orchestral players were included for the first time. A newspaper illustration in 1891 featuring women orchestral players at the Handel Triennial Festival (Fig 5.9) indicates that the women's suffrage movement was broadcast even into the rank and file of the orchestras.

The Handel Triennial Festivals continued for many years in the Crystal Palace until 1926, when they were quietly discontinued. Handel and monumentalism were out of vogue and, despite Henry Wood's efforts to modernise the event, the festival of 1926 proved the last.

6 Costa's Handel Arrangements: a Musical Monument

Who ever heard of a choir too large for Handel? Here the physical capacity of the ear is the only limit to the desire of the mind. Not though nations should be formed into choirs, and the genius of thunder, were to swell the harmony till it shook the very spheres, would the true votary of Handel cry 'Hold! Enough!'¹

The Victorian ideal of huge forces to perform Handel's oratorios is well illustrated in this quotation from the *Musical Examiner* of 1843. As Chapter 5 demonstrated, the performing forces at oratorio festivals at the Crystal Palace increased to massive proportions over the century to create this ideal. One journal described the impressive effect of an arrangement of *Messiah* at a Handel Triennial Festival in the Crystal Palace as

manifestly the conviction of the multitudes, assembled in the naves, transepts and galleries, contiguous to the orchestra, whence the innumerable choir of voices and instruments, like 'winged storms, chanting their thunder psalm' pealed forth their solemn harmony, until the whole edifice, from one extremity to the other, seemed to reverberate with sound.²

Sir Michael Costa, a British composer of Italian birth, was the conductor at this performance and this chapter is devoted to his monumental arrangements of Handel's oratorios, created to fill the cavernous space of the Crystal Palace and other grand buildings around England with sound. As already noted, contemporary sources describe Costa as a baton-wielding 'despot', but sources of the day also treated his discipline and determination with awe. As one report of the Sacred Harmonic Society commented: 'The flourish of his magic wand dispelled all fear of opposition, and secured the position of the Society'.³ It was at Costa's initiative that choristers and orchestral players were auditioned and transported

¹ 'Foreign Intelligence', 343.

² 'The Handel Festival', *The Lady's Newspaper*, Saturday, June 25 1859. Also reproduced in *Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, Sunday, 26 June 1859. The quotation referred to is an extract from Shelley's autobiographical poem *Epipsychidion*.

³ Hill, *A History of the Sacred Harmonic Society*, 17.

from around the country to assemble for the Handel Triennial Festivals.⁴ While he achieved fame in his day for several oratorio compositions, *Eli* (1855) (Example 6.1) and *Naaman* (1864), like many other Victorian oratorios, are virtually unheard of today.⁵

Of particular interest are Costa's conducting full score arrangements of Handel's oratorios, expanded so that orchestras of more than four hundred instrumentalists could give support to the thousands of choristers performing these works. For many years, these scores were believed lost, but the manuscripts reappeared and the Royal College of Music now houses them as part of the 'Novello Collection of Manuscripts'.⁶ At the time of writing, the scores were still not individually listed in any catalogue or database. Costa's arrangements held in this collection include Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, *Israel in Egypt* (a presentation score for the Sacred Harmonic Society as well as a working conductor's score), *Judas Maccabaeus* (inscribed with 'Judus Costa' on the front page), *Messiah*, *Occasional Oratorio*, *Samson*, and *Solomon*.⁷ These scores, mainly in Costa's autograph (the presentation score appears to be by a different scribe) include paper inserts with further additional accompaniments (often for arias), bits tied together with string to enable cuts and skips over to different sections, as well as abridgements with cuts of parts of arias and choruses. These large manuscripts are very much orchestral scores of a working conductor with all manner of directions marked in traditional blue and red pencil.

⁴ See Robert Bowley's autograph of the musical arrangements for the opening of the Crystal Palace at Sydenham.

⁵ Rossini is said to have commented negatively on *Eli*: 'The good Costa has sent me an oratorio and a Stilton cheese: The cheese was very fine': see Nigel Burton and Keith Horner, 'Costa, Sir Michael', in *New Grove* (6), 524-5 and Michael Costa, *Eli: an Oratorio* (London: Addison Hollier & Lucas, 1856).

⁶ This information is given in the CD booklet of *A Collector's Messiah-Historic Handel Recordings* (1994) (Koch Historic, B000001SKS) 2 Discs. CD I includes performances of the Crystal Palace 1926 Triennial Festival with Henry Wood conducting using a Costa/Wood arrangement of *Messiah*. The scores were possibly moved into the safekeeping of Vincent Novello's private collection during World War II.

⁷ *The Musical Times* (1844-1900).

Nº 18.

Marziale.

(MET: ♩=144.)

FLAUTI.

OBOI.

CLARINETTI.
(IN A.)

CORNI
(D.)

CORNI
(G.)

TROMBE
(IN D.)

FAGOTTI.

TROMBONI.
ALTO.
TENORE.
BASSO.

OPHICLEIDE
& SERPENT.

TIMPANI D.A.
LOOSE DRUM.

VIOLINI.

VIOLE.

SAPH.

CORO.
SOPRANI.
ALTI.
PHILISTINES.
TENORI.
BASSI.

VIOLONCELLO.

CONTRA-BASSO.

Marziale.

Musical Example 6.1: Costa's 'Philistines! Hark!', *Eli*.

The sheer musical power created by expanding the orchestra was necessary and practical for a performance in such an auditorium as the Crystal Palace.⁸ To coordinate such huge forces in a space where it would have been impossible to hear or see the performers on the far side of the orchestra or choir would have been extremely difficult. The logistics of such performances must have been overwhelming, in a time before closed-circuit television or headphones, necessitating a domineering conductor with a commanding voice to keep the performance from disintegrating. An examination of Costa's arrangements and their implementation, using the framework previously developed from Stephen Little's definition of monumental art with the characteristics of 'physical scale', 'breadth of subject' and 'lasting significance', reveals that a concrete sense of the nineteenth-century monumental can be extracted from the musical score itself.

The characteristics of 'physical scale' are evident in the type and size of the scoring by Costa. The discussion will focus on arrangements of *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*, both of which featured regularly at the Handel Triennial Festivals, and which Costa scored for large forces. Handel's oratorios were originally scored for comparatively small forces of twelve to thirty singers, and the original instrumental ensembles included for *Messiah*, two trumpets, timpani, strings, and basso continuo, and for *Israel in Egypt*, a double chorus and orchestra of trombones, trumpets, timpani, woodwinds, and string with continuo.⁹ Extracts from Handel's original versions (cited as an autograph facsimile, Urtext, or Hallische Händel-Ausgabe editions) will be compared with Costa's autographs to critique and explore aspects of the monumental expansion of the music itself.

This chapter will not discuss the chequered history of up to thirteen different conducting versions of *Messiah* that Handel used, but it is necessary to mention the later history of orchestral arrangements of the work. After Handel's death, the famous centenary

⁸ See Joan Peyser, *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986), 117.

⁹ For a list of the nine singers at the Dublin premiere, including two male altos, see 'Cast of "Messiah"' *Faulkner's Dublin Journal*, 13 April 1742. The only surviving list from the Foundling Hospital performances in London lists 38 performers plus 'boys'. See Donald Burrows, *The Cambridge Companion to Handel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 251.

performances of his birth held in 1784 in London paved the way for a radical departure in the orchestration and performance of *Messiah*, with the employment of huge forces and the addition of choirs of flutes, trombones, and French horns. These massed performances truly heralded the nineteenth-century approach of oratorio societies to Handel's works. As early as 1786, only twenty-seven years after Handel's death, J. A. Hiller commented that

[m]any improvements may be made in Handel's compositions by the employment of the wind instruments according to the fashion of the present day. In the whole of 'The Messiah' Handel never appears to have thought of the oboes, flutes or French horns, all of which are so often employed to heighten or strengthen the effect in our modern day orchestras.¹⁰

While this comment correctly applies to Handel's first Dublin orchestration, it is not technically true of Handel's later renditions of *Messiah*. Handel did score for oboes, often doubling the violins or sopranos, and bassoons that helped support the bass line. Horns and flutes probably doubled lines at some performances also.¹¹ The quotation does show, however, that in 1786 there was a strong desire to 'improve' Handel's score of *Messiah* to 'heighten or strengthen the effect' with modern instruments of the time.

6.1 Instruments of the day used to 'improve' a score

As mentioned in an earlier chapter, Mozart's 1789 'improvements' to Handel's score of *Messiah* were widely accepted and admired in Victorian England and became the basis of many other arrangements that followed. Mozart expanded the score with pairs of flutes, clarinets, bassoons, horns and three trombones while filling out the harmony with elegant contrapuntal parts for these instruments. Some choruses, such as 'For unto us a child is born', were arranged by Mozart for a quartet of soloists. An 1859 Novello edition of *Messiah* comments in its Prefatory Note:

¹⁰ John Adam Hiller, 'Account of the Performance of Handel's 'Messiah' (Berlin, 1786)', *New York Times*, 1 May 1892.

¹¹ Christopher Hogwood's famous historically informed recording of the Foundling Hospital version of *Messiah* included two horn players after receipts were discovered for the payment of their employment at the Foundling Hospital. Hogwood chose to double the trumpet line an octave lower.

A word on the history of Mozart's accompaniments to the *Messiah*. They were written at the request of Mozart's friend Baron von Swieten [van Swieten], for performance at his private concerts. Years after the death of the composer, they were first made public, and thus the censure often cast on Mozart for interfering with the works of Handel cannot apply to him ... Whatever blame there may be, must rest on the taste of the musicians, and the increasing patronage of the public, which have given to these accompaniments a general currency, and admirers so numerous that no performance of *Messiah* would now be thought complete without them.¹²

Costa would have been familiar with Mozart's 'modernisation' and such editions of his work. Costa would also have been familiar with Berlioz's treatise on orchestration, *Grand Traité d'Instrumentation et d'Orchestration Modernes*, which was first published in 1834.¹³ Berlioz spent several months in London at the Great Exhibition as a juror examining the new instruments of the day on display in the Crystal Palace. The final chapters in his *Report* from this visit were used in his updated 1856 edition. Berlioz conducted concerts with Costa while in London, strengthening the probability that Costa was familiar with both Berlioz's orchestration and his treatise.¹⁴ The treatise is a landmark historical document on instrumental playing of the time. Insightful descriptions, such as this of the ophicleide and other instruments, explained and promoted their use in the huge orchestral forces of the day:

The timbre of the ophicleide's lower notes is rough, but it can do wonders in some cases when placed below a mass of brass instruments. The highest notes have a raw quality which has perhaps not been sufficiently exploited. The middle range, particularly when the player is not very skilled, is all too reminiscent of the sound of the serpent and the cornet. I think it is best for them not to be left exposed. There is nothing more vulgar, I would even say more monstrous and less designed to blend with the rest of the orchestra than those more or less fast passages written as solos for the middle range of the ophicleide

¹² George Frideric Handel, Charles Jennens, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *Handel's Sacred Oratorio, The Messiah* (London: J. Alfred Novello, 1859).

¹³ See Hector Berlioz, *A Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration: containing an exact table of the compass, a detail of the mechanism, and a study of the quality of tone, and expressive character of various instruments; accompanied by numerous examples in score*, trans. Mary Cowden Clarke (2nd edn., Novello's Library for the Diffusion of Musical Knowledge: Theoretical Series 7; London: Novello Ewer and Co., 1858). With further revisions in 1855, the treatise was published in English in 1856 with more editions to follow.

¹⁴ Berlioz conducted his own works in the first half of a concert with the old Philharmonic Society's Orchestra on 30 May 1853. Costa conducted the second half.

in some modern operas. It is rather like a bull escaped from its stable and frolicking in a salon.¹⁵

The instruments used by Costa to ‘improve’ the effect of the *Messiah* and other Handel oratorios included not only ophicleides but serpents, piccolo, contrabassoons, tubas, harps, cymbals, and giant drums. The gigantic drum invented by Distin measured seven feet in diameter. The tympanum was made from the largest buffalo hide ever imported into England and was reduced by machinery to the appropriate thickness needed. This drum must have made a thunderous sound in the spaces of the Crystal Palace, performance inside which was often described as similar to out of doors.¹⁶ Distin’s drum was very visible and is featured in several newspaper illustrations reproduced here.

¹⁵ Hugh Macdonald, *Berlioz’s Orchestration Treatise: a Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 234. Not everyone agrees with Berlioz’s description. One article describes the ophicleide as a ‘pleasant, soft subtle sound that blends well with voices’. See John Webb, ‘19th-Century Keyed Brass’, *The Musical Times*, 127 /1716 (1986), 84.

¹⁶ ‘The magnitude of the Crystal Palace is very nearly in the same condition as the open air’. See Ouseley, Willis, and Donaldson, *Grand Organ: Preliminary Report to the Directors*, 4-5.

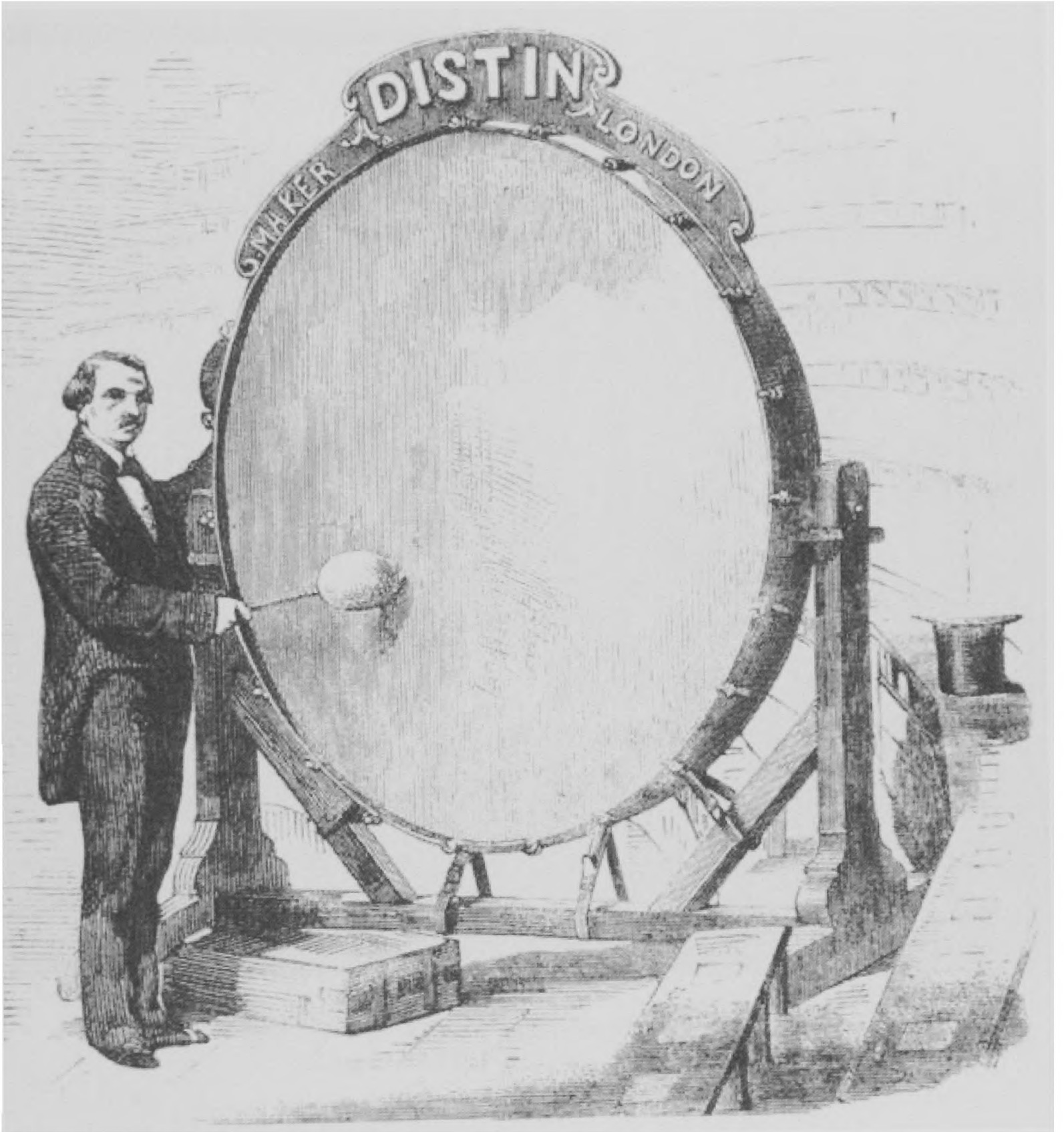


Figure 6.1: Distin's Monster Drum.
Source: *Illustrated London News*, 27 June 1857.

Notice the central position of the drum in Fig. 6.2, probably placed to enhance the coordination of the large number of players and to decrease the chance of a delay in the sound. Raised above other players, the drummer's visual cue would have been helpful as well in unifying the orchestra at crucial moments.

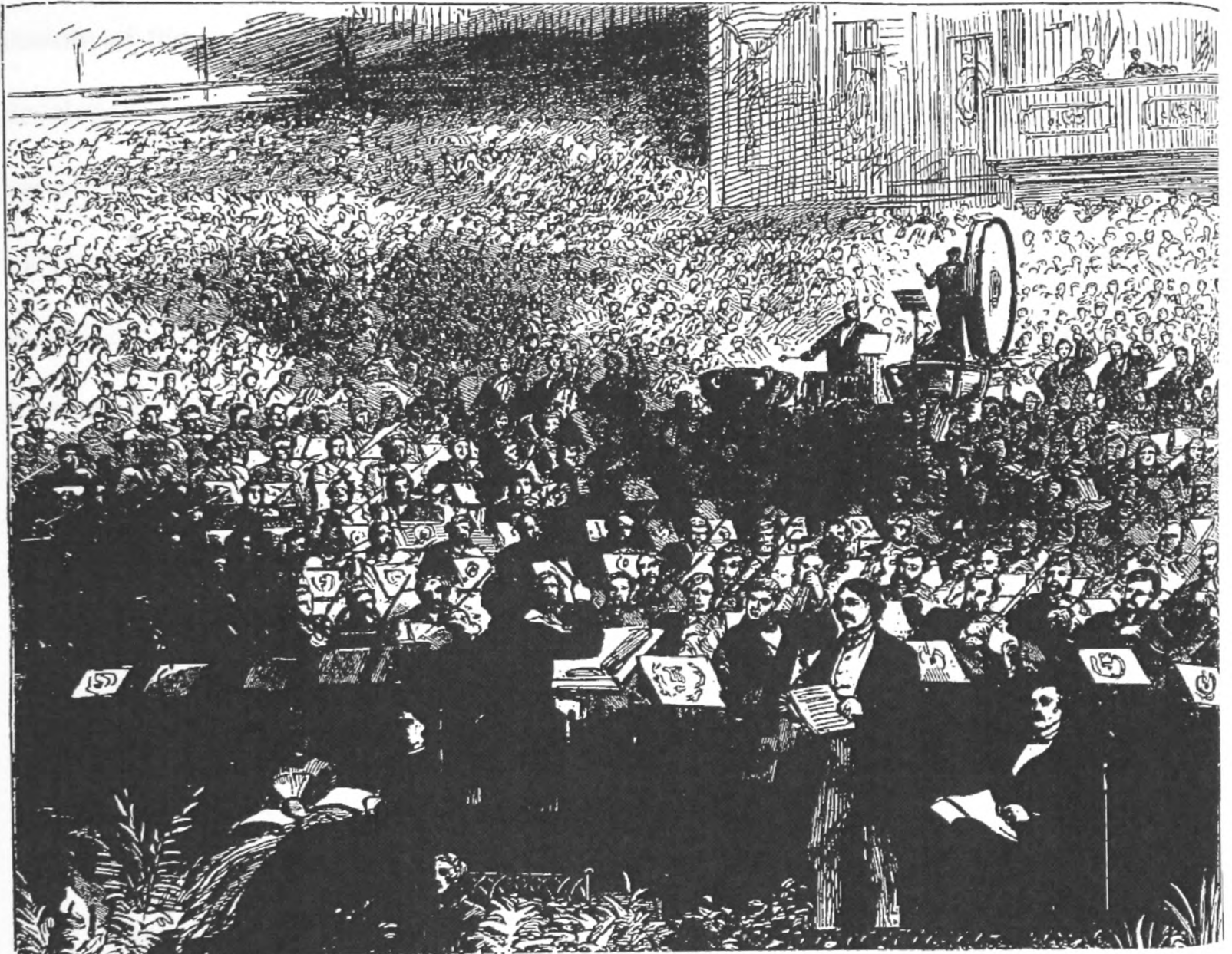


Figure 6.2: Distin's Monster Drum in Perspective.

Source: *Penny Illustrated*, 4 July 1874.

Brass instruments became very popular and widely used during the nineteenth century, as

Trevor Herbert points out:

In England in the eighteenth century very few people knew what a trombone was and trumpet and horn players of high quality were in short supply; in the mid-nineteenth century cotton-mill workers could be found whose mastery of the intricate skills of brass instruments matched that of some of the world's greatest orchestras ... The most important reasons why

brass instruments became popular among amateurs are that the application of valves made them easier to play.¹⁷

Although there is uncertainty over exactly who invented valved brass instruments, around 1826 a German valve trumpet was brought to Paris, where it was copied and began to gain wide acceptance. Hector Berlioz was the first known composer to use this instrument. The custom of the period was to score for two valved horns and two hand horns. The cornet, developed around 1828 by Jean-Louis Antoine, gained popularity for its chromatic versatility.¹⁸ In 1835 the first tuba, a five-valved instrument, was developed by Berlin instrument makers Johann Gottfried Moritz and Wilhelm Wieprecht.¹⁹ A tenor tuba was produced by Moritz in 1838, and the euphonium, originally called the ‘sommerphone’, was invented by Sommer of Weimar in 1843.²⁰ With better-designed brass instruments and improved technical ability of brass musicians, many composers, including Costa, began scoring with more brass.

6.2 Some excerpts of monumental music

Costa’s orchestral arrangements made for the Handel Triennial Festivals are examples of monumental music using the whole gamut of new instruments.

6.2.1 *Messiah*, ‘Hallelujah’ Chorus

Table 6.1 illustrates the expansion in scoring for the ‘Hallelujah’ chorus from *Messiah*. The first column shows the instruments in ‘Handel’s Conducting Score of the Messiah’ reproduced in facsimile from the library of St Michael’s College as used by Handel at the first Dublin performance (Example 6.4).²¹ The second shows the instruments in the Costa

¹⁷ Trevor Herbert and John Wallace, *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 177-8; and Herbert, ‘Victorian Brass Bands’, 104-28.

¹⁸ Anthony C. Baines and Arnold Myers, ‘Cornet’, in *New Grove* (6), 480-2.

¹⁹ Philip Bate and Edward H. Tarr, ‘Wieprecht, Wilhelm’, in *New Grove* (27), 372.

²⁰ The ‘sommerphone’ won an honourable mention at the Great Exhibition. See Clifford Bevan, ‘Sommerphone’, in *New Grove* (23), 670.

²¹ *Handel’s Conducting Score of ‘Messiah’: reproduced in facsimile from the manuscript in the library of St Michael’s College, Tenbury Wells*, ed. Watkins Shaw (London: Scholar Press for the Royal Musical Association, 1974).

manuscript inscribed ‘The Messiah: An Oratorio composed by G. F. Handel: The Additional Accompaniments composed by Sir Michael Costa’ (Example 6.3);²² and the third column is drawn from Mozart’s arrangement of Handel’s *Messias* from an 1803 German edition (Example 6.2) that was known in England at the time.²³

The table shows that Costa enlarged the sound to gigantic proportions by adding flutes, oboes, clarinets, horns, trombones, ophicleides, serpents, extra timpani, and contrabassoons. Mozart’s earlier arrangement, which was used extensively at festivals throughout England in the earlier part of the nineteenth century, was also an expansion of the scoring which included the high-pitched valveless ‘corni’, and a ‘fondamento’ with a figured bass.

Costa’s treatment of the continuo reflected his monumentalisation of Handel’s original. The organ at Costa’s disposal was massive – a 40-ton ‘colossal organ’ described in detail in the *Observer* on 1 March 1857, the largest in England at the time – and would have admirably suited the space and the performing forces. In his preliminary report in 1853 to the directors of the Crystal Palace, Frederick Ouseley, a respected church musician, scholar, and composer of the day, recommended the installation of a grand organ. He discusses the rationale for this large organ:

Now an enclosed apartment of the magnitude of the Crystal Palace is very nearly in the same condition as the open air, for the walls and the roof are so far distant from the musical instrument, with the exception of the wall against which it is placed, that the dispersion of sound and consequent enfeebling effect upon the richness of quality, take place before the waves of sound have time to reach the enclosing medium. This may tend to explain part of the disappointment that was experienced in the case of the great Organs exhibited in the original Crystal Palace, and these reasons would apply with equal force to any attempt to produce music by an orchestra of musicians and singers.²⁴

²²Royal College of Music, The Novello Collection of Manuscripts 5093 (n).

²³ George Frideric Handel, Charles Jennens, and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, *F.G. Händel’s Oratorium: Der Messias* (Leipzig: Bei Breitkopf & Härtel, 1803).

²⁴ Ouseley, Willis, and Donaldson, *Grand Organ: Preliminary Report to the Directors*, 4-5.

The colossal organ was part of Costa's scoring, providing a different 'function' from that of the original continuo. He wrote out the organ part in full indicating the use of the pedals (marked at bar 3 in this example), often imitating the bass vocal line, perhaps as a device to keep the singers in tune and in time.²⁵

In the selected extract, Costa uses huge performing forces to fill the Crystal Palace with music while reflecting the Biblical text from the Book of Revelation on which Handel's librettist originally drew: 'And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, *Alleluia: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*'.²⁶ The theological message of the words, enshrined in so much sound, must have made a huge impact on the Victorian audiences of the day.

²⁵ Pedals only appeared on large organs in England in the 1830s and while the Ped. marking may seem obvious, it was probably written in as a reminder for the organist to use them in this grand chorus.

²⁶ *The Holy Bible: King James Version* (Reference edn.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008), Revelation 19:6. Charles Jennens provided the libretto for *Messiah* that inspired Handel: See also Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 25.

Costa Arrangement	Handel Facsimile	Mozart Arrangement
Flauti		Flauti
Oboi		Oboi
Clarineti in A		Clarineti in A
		Clarini (valveless trumpet)
Trombe in D	Tromb. I	
Corni in D	Tromb. II	Corni in D
Tromboni		
Ophicleide		
Serpent		
		Fagotti
Contrafagotte		
Timpani in D:A	Tympani	Timpani in D: A
Violino I	Violin I	Violini
Violino II	Violin II	
Viola	Viola	Viola
Canto	Soprano	Soprano
Alto	Alto	Alto
Tenor	Tenor	Tenore
Basso	Bass	Basso
Bassi-Organo	Basso Continuo	Fondamento

Table 6.1: Comparison of scoring of the ‘Hallelujah’ Chorus from Handel’s *Messiah*.

Chorus - Hallelujah!

♩ = 80

Handwritten musical score for a chorus arrangement of 'Hallelujah'. The score is written on 24 staves, grouped into three sections of eight staves each. The instruments and voices are listed on the left side of each staff:

- Staves 1-8: Flauto, Oboe, Clarinetto in A, Fagotto, Trombe in D, Corni in D, Trombone, Fobacornidi, Saxofoni, Contrafagotto, Timpani S. A., Violino I e II, Viola, Canto, Alto, Tenore, Basso, Bassi, Organ.
- Staves 9-16: Continuation of the instrumental and vocal parts.
- Staves 17-24: Continuation of the instrumental and vocal parts, ending with a *Ped.* marking.

Handwritten annotations in blue ink include:

- A large 'H' above the Saxofoni staff.
- A large '4' above the Timpani S. A. staff.
- A large 'Chorus' written vertically across the middle of the score.
- A large bracket on the right side of the score, spanning from the Canto staff down to the Organ staff.
- A tempo marking 'Allegro' with a metronome marking '♩ = 80' at the bottom right.

The lyrics 'Hal - le - lu - jah!' are written below the vocal staves in a stylized, handwritten font.

88

Allegro

Tempo

con ripercussioni

Tutti

Allegro

Allegro

Allegro

Musical Example 6.4: Handel's conducting score of 'Hallelujah' Chorus.

6.2.2 *Israel in Egypt*, ‘He gave them hailstones’

Another example with a forceful apotheosis, which must have vividly impacted on the audiences of the day, is seen in Costa’s arrangement of a gigantic tone-picture, the ‘Hailstone Chorus’, one of the several Plague Choruses from *Israel in Egypt*. This work, consisting mainly of choruses (many of them double choruses) was a favourite at the Handel Triennial Festivals and lent itself well to massed performances. Table 6.2 on the next page compares the opening bars of ‘He gave them Hailstones’ as scored in the Händel-Ausgabe 1999 series (Example 6.5) and Costa’s arrangement (Example 6.6).²⁷

Costa probably did not split the brass lines as a writing device to save space on the already extended score. The harmonies for the various instrumental lines are sometimes written just as a dot a third above or below the main note with (and sometimes without) stems – see flutes, oboes, clarinets and bassoons at the top of the ‘Hallelujah’ score – all extra instruments added to Handel’s original. Costa has scored for trumpets as Handel did, but added whole choirs of the more modern instruments of the time, including families of horns, ophicleides and serpents.

²⁷ George Frideric Handel, *Israel in Egypt: Oratorio in Three Parts. HWV 54*, eds. Annette Landgraf and Edward Willes (Hallische Händel-Ausgabe: Ser. 1, Bd 14; Kassel; London: Bärenreiter, 1999); Royal College of Music, The Novello Collection of Manuscripts 5093(i).

Händel-Ausgabe Edition	Costa Arrangement
	Flauti
Oboe I Oboe II	Oboe
	Clarinet in C
Fagotto I, II	Fagotti
Trombone I, II, III	Corni :G }
	Corni:C }
Tromba I, Tromba II	Trombe:C }
	Cornetts }
	Alto [Trombone] }
	Tenor [Trombone] }
	Bass [Trombone] }
	Ophicylde [sic] and Serpent }
Timpani	Timpani:C and G
Violin I, Violin II	Violini
Viola	Viola
Soprano I	Soprano I°
Alto I	Alto I°
Tenore I	Tenor I°
Basso I	Basso I°
Soprano II	Soprano 2 ^d
Alto II	Alto 2 ^d
Tenore II	Tenore 2 ^d
Basso II	Basso 2 ^(d)
Violoncello	Violonc.(ello)
Contrabasso,	C.Basso (Double Bass)
Cembalo	
Organo I, II	organ

Table 6.2: Comparison of the opening bars of ‘He gave them Hailstones’ from *Israel in Egypt*.

18. Chorus
Allegro

Oboe I
Oboe II
Fagotto I, II
Tromba I
Tromba II
Trombone I
Trombone II
Trombone III
Timpani
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Soprano I
Alto I
Tenore I
Basso I
Soprano II
Alto II
Tenore II
Basso II
Violoncello
Contrabbasso
Cembalo
Organo I, II


**Musical Example 6.5: Händel Ausgabe edition ‘He gave them hailstones’
from *Israel in Egypt*.**

Winds. "He gave them hailstones"

Flute 1
Flute 2
Oboe 1
Oboe 2
Clarinet 1
Clarinet 2
Bassoon 1
Bassoon 2
Horn 1
Horn 2
Trumpet 1
Trumpet 2
Trombone 1
Trombone 2
Violini
Viola
Violone 1
Violone 2
Cello 1
Cello 2
Double Bass 1
Double Bass 2
Percussion 1
Percussion 2
Percussion 3
Percussion 4
Percussion 5
Percussion 6
Percussion 7
Percussion 8
Percussion 9
Percussion 10
Percussion 11
Percussion 12
Percussion 13
Percussion 14
Percussion 15
Percussion 16
Percussion 17
Percussion 18
Percussion 19
Percussion 20

Allegro. ♩ = 112

Musical Example 6.6: Costa's arrangement 'He gave them hailstones'.

Costa not only expanded these arrangements with dozens of instruments; he also expanded the harmony of the original.²⁸ The opening bars of 'He gave them hailstones' is a good example for showing the arrangements of Costa compared with the near original of Handel's writing in the *Händel-Ausgabe* edition. This section is entirely based on the tonic chord of C using C instruments. In the first bar, Costa has the upbeat on C sounding in the contra basso (double bass) line (rather than the original organ) and matched by a choir of woodwinds (rather than single instruments). The drooping C octaves continue on the double basses with the violones (cellos on this occasion) entering later.²⁹ The *Händel-Ausgabe* edition starts with the organ on the first note and includes, from the following bar, other basso continuo instruments such as double bass and harpsichord in the following six bars. It could be speculated that Costa thought that the colossal organ at the Crystal Palace was not ideal to articulate softly the recurring knocking rhythm  and so he used only the double basses to speak this rhythm. Costa's added upbeat in the double bass perhaps also to permit greater cohesion and clarity of the rhythmic entry for his large ensemble. The string harmonies are identical in the Costa score and the *Händel-Ausgabe* score. Clarinets are an extra addition by Costa in bar 3, with an extra fifth of the chord added in the original bassoon part, once again as a way of filling the harmony. Costa adds horns in G and C in two parts, doubling the octave or adding a third. The alto, tenor, and bass trombones (labelled as I, II and III in the *Händel-Ausgabe* score) have been expanded by Costa to include the lower tones of the 'ophicyde' (as he has spelt it in his autograph) and serpent. He has bracketed these in the score as another family of instruments.

The performance effect of all these instruments playing in two parts, although the playing is a soft rhythmic ostinato, must have achieved a totally different timbre from that

²⁸ Interestingly, these bars are commonly regarded as 'borrowed' ones by Handel from a *Serenata* by Alessandro Stradelli. The first ten bars all in the tonic chord are identical and represented, according to Stradelli, someone knocking at a door.

²⁹ Costa's marking *contra basso* probably refers to the six-stringed *violone del contra-basso*, which is equivalent to a double bass in pitch, and the *violone* could be interpreted as a cello in this instance. While the term *violone* generally referred to a bass viol or double bass size instrument, in Italy where Costa was educated, many composers such as Corelli regarded the *violone* as a large viol and hence the term was used interchangeably for bass violin or *violoncello*.

obtained from a reading of the Händel-Ausgabe score, which is orchestrated for two oboes and basso continuo with only an occasional fifth added. When the repeated notes in ascending thirds commence in bar 8 (perhaps descriptive of hailstones falling), the oboes enter in unison in the Händel-Ausgabe, but Costa harmonises with thirds. Costa's entry with the bassoons in canon is identical to Händel-Ausgabe. The choirs of flutes and other instruments added to the score in a canonic manner must have heightened the contrived dramatic effect in the large auditorium. Again, in bars 9 to 11, the string parts are identical in the Costa score to Händel-Ausgabe, with no changes to harmony, apart from Violin II not entering in unison with violin I in bars 9 and 10. With hundreds of string players to coordinate, perhaps this was a performance ploy by Costa to help execute cohesive entries. The time delay in the acoustics of the building along with the rapid note changes in the string writing must have made it difficult for Costa to co-ordinate such a large body of several hundred-string players.³⁰

The scoring in Example 6.6 of Costa's arrangement of Handel's 'Hailstone Chorus' is almost identical with that of 'Philistines! Hark!' from his published oratorio *Eli*, Example 6.1.³¹ 'Philistines! Hark!' was the orchestral march of this oratorio. This type of movement was a 'trademark' of all Victorian oratorios.³² While Costa specifies an extra 'Loose Drum' in *Eli*, it is quite likely that the great Distin drum (described previously) was the loose drum, even though this is not specified in Costa's Handel arrangement. The only other difference appears to be the lack of an organ part in *Eli*. On a general perusal of the two scores, it is apparent that the vocal lines have more independence from the accompanying forces in *Eli*

³⁰ For an explanation of why some instruments lagged a bar behind in performance with a large orchestra by Berlioz see Daniel J. Koury, *Orchestral Performance Practices in the Nineteenth Century: Size, Proportions, and Seating* (Studies in Musicology; No. 85; Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1986), 280.

³¹ *Eli* was premiered at the Birmingham Festival in 1855. The whole text of this chorus was reproduced in a newspaper article 'Birmingham Festival', *Morning Chronicle*, 30 August 1855. It was reported that this chorus was 'encored by acclamation, in spite of official warnings that such demonstrations were illegal'. This refers to the strong antipathy that was held toward clapping at performances of religious music as showing irreverence. This was often very emphatically stated in bold notices in programmes.

³² Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 325. The *a cappella* number is another hallmark, according to Smither.

than in Costa's Handel arrangements. There is repetition in *Eli* for unifying effect;³³ additionally, Costa's composition did not borrow material from elsewhere as Handel did.³⁴ These appear to be the main differences between the scoring in Costa's own compositions and his arrangements of Handel's oratorios.

6.2.3 *Messiah*, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'

One more example that illustrates how Costa altered orchestration from the Handel original score is found in the aria 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.³⁵

In Handel's original conducting score (Example 6.7) and the Hallische Händel-Ausgabe (Example 6.8), both editions are clearly marked 'senza ripieno', meaning that the bare sound of two violin parts and basso continuo provided both the introduction and accompaniment to the solo soprano singer throughout. The Costa arrangement (Example 6.9) has no such marking, and while the full complement of players available may not have been used, a considerable number of players would have been needed to support the singer and to be audible in the vast transept of the Crystal Palace (while at the same time not drowning the singer's sound). Again, Costa did not employ a continuo function, and hence there was no need for the figured bass evident in the other two scores. The double basses played Costa's bass line, but the two other scores indicate a violone (a bass viol). The Handel and the Ausgabe scores had a bass viol line, but the sound would have been much thinner with smaller orchestras in comparison to the huge numbers of double basses (often over 50) in Costa's orchestras. Costa transcribed the string parts exactly from Handel but again added flutes, clarinets in A and a new bassoon line, which imitated the violins at a higher or lower octave or at pitch. With only a solo voice to accompany, there was no

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ George Grove, 'Mendelssohn's Oratorio "St. Paul"', *The Musical Times*, 50 /792 (1909), 94. 'Sir Michael Costa looked on the hymn tunes in *St Paul* as mere plagiarism. "When I wrote a hymn tune in *Eli*, I composed it myself!" he said'.

³⁵ Roubiliac's statue of Handel in Westminster Abbey quite literally monumentalises this aria. The composer is cast with this piece of music and a pen held in his hands, for all to read the words.

attempt as in the larger choruses to fill out the chords with added thirds and fifths, just with overtones at the octave to fill the cavity of the building with a simple melody.

Costa added Handel's original simple ornamentation in the violin part into all the extra instrumental lines, and it may have been possible to synchronise the ornamentation despite the large forces because of the slow tempo of the aria. At the entrance of the solo soprano voice, Costa dropped any extra instruments and used only the strings as accompaniment, exactly as in the Handel conducting score and the Händel-Ausgabe. Costa does, however, change the dynamic mark from *p* to *pp*. This exaggeration of the dynamic from the original would have had the effect of subduing further the larger number of violins accompanying the voice in Costa's arrangement.

Part 4th Time.

Largo - sostenuto

I know that my Redeemer liveth

piano

and Maest

piano

Musical Example 6.7: Handel's conducting score 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' *Messiah*.

PART THE THIRD

DRITTER TEIL

40. Air

Larghetto

Violino I, II *senza rip.* *f* *tr*

Soprano

Fagotto *f*

Violoncello, Violone, Cembalo *f* 6 7

11 *tr* *tr* *tr*

I know that
Ich weiß, daß

p

20 *tr* *tr* *tr*

my Re - deem-er liv-eth,
mein Er - lö - ser le - bet

and that He shall stand _____ at the lat -
und daß er er - scheint _____ am - Jüng -

p

31 *tr* *f*

- ter - day _____ up-on the earth,
- sten - Tag _____ auf die - ser Erd,

I know that my Re -
ich weiß, daß mein Er -

f *p*₂

Musical Example 6.8: Händel Ausgabe edition 'I know that my Redeemer liveth'.

I know that my Redeemer liveth.

No. 40. air $\text{♩} = 72$

Flauto
Clarinete in a
Fagotto
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Vocce
Basso

A X mp

Flauto
Clarinete in a
Fagotto
Violino I
Violino II
Viola
Vocce
Basso

These three short excerpts from Costa's arrangements of Handel's oratorios illustrate the notion that the enlarged scores themselves were monuments. In fact, they are the only enduring remnant of an ideology of monumentalism that helped create the Handel Triennial Festivals. The Crystal Palace has long since vanished, the sounds of the nineteenth-century performances have been lost to the past with many of the instruments used then now obsolete, the massed festivals have been superseded more often than not by small-scale 'historically informed' performances, and although some larger-scale renditions do survive, the choristers number only in the hundreds, never in the thousands.

Little's second category of a monumental artwork, 'breadth of subject', can be applied in a number of ways to Costa's manuscripts. The oratorios listed previously as part of the 'Novello Collection of Manuscripts' (including arrangements of Handel's *Acis and Galatea*, *Israel in Egypt*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Messiah*, *Occasional Oratorio*, *Samson* and *Solomon*) show an impressive range of works that Costa adapted for the gigantic festivals he conducted from 1857 until 1880.³⁶ 'Breadth of subject' could also refer to Costa's filling out of Handel's score, not only with the numbers of instruments, but the addition of harmony parts, adding 'flesh and blood' to Handel's 'skeleton' as the *Athenaeum's* critic so vividly explains:

To adhere to Handel's intentions in this age would be folly. The experiment has been tried and was a signal failure ... Sir Michael Costa has composed orchestral parts for *Israel in Egypt*, for *Samson* and for *Solomon*, that is, he has enhanced the effects proposed by Handel. Such combinations vivify the mere outline – the simple sketch; they add, in fact, flesh and blood to the skeleton. Without such additions, the Handelian oratorios would soon be extinct.³⁷

³⁶ *Grove* incorrectly gives the latter date as 1847. See Burton and Horner's article on Costa referred to in f. n. 5, 239.

³⁷ *Athenaeum*, 19 December 1874.

101

Flauti

Oboe

Clarin.

Fagotti

Corni G

Corni C

Trombe C

Cornetti

Trombones

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Oph/ Serp

Tympani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

V.Cello

C.Basso

Organ

And the ser- vant of the Lord

And his ser- vant

And his ser- vant

And his ser- vant

Musical Example 6.10: Costa's arrangement 'And Israel saw that great work' from *Israel in Egypt*.

Instrumentation is added for clarity on the left hand side of the extract.

122

101

Flauti

Oboe

Clarin.

Fagotti

Corni G

Corni C

Trombe C

Cornetti

Trombones

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Oph/ Serp

Tympani

Violin I

Violin II

Viola

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

V.Cello

And Israel saw that great work
 And Israel saw that great work
 And Israel saw that great work
 And Israel saw that great work

Musical Example 6.10: Costa's arrangement 'And Israel saw that great work' from *Israel in Egypt*.

Instrumentation is added for clarity on the left hand side of the extract.

Note the massive dominant G-major chord contrasting with the tonic minor on the V-I cadence point on the word 'servant'. Such a cadence is traditionally a subtle baroque device to provide an instance of word painting in the music. In Costa's arrangement, the major chord could not be missed, with all its added major thirds in at least six instruments of differing pitches and timbres. The G-major chord falling to C minor is heard again, but after a suspension, creating another major V/minor i contrast, all on the word 'Moses'. Costa again adds six woodwind and brass instruments blasting out only the major third of the dominant chord. From comparison, it can be seen that Costa's use of so many timbres and notes added at the octave in various registers enhanced the sheer strength and breadth of the music produced at oratorio festivals.

The musical score is arranged in a system with ten staves. On the left, the instruments are listed: Oboe, Fag. (Bassoon), VI (Violin I), V II (Violin II), Va (Viola), Sop. (Soprano), Alto, Tenor, Bass, Vcc Cbb (Violoncello/Contrabasso), and Cemb. Organ I, II. The score begins at measure 66. The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) have lyrics: "liev - ed the Lord and his ser - vant Mo - ses." The instrumental parts feature a prominent G-major chord (G-B-D-F#) in various registers, with some instruments playing the major third (B) specifically. The score concludes with the text "End of Part II" at the bottom right.

Musical Example 6.11: Händel-Ausgabe edition of 'And Israel saw that great work'.
Instrumentation is indicated on the left hand side of the extract.

‘Breadth of subject’ could also refer to the religious topics of Handel’s oratorios and their impact. The identification of the British public with the Israelites in Handel’s oratorios has been discussed previously, and the massed performances were a way not only of praising God, but also of indirectly promoting nationalism and imperialism. Grand civic festivals were essential for promoting and sustaining ideologies of monumentalism, modernism, imperialism, and nationalism.³⁸ Costa’s scores, like these ideologies, provided a psychological mechanism that energised a sense of identity and security in the God-fearing public of the day.

Little’s third characteristic of ‘lasting significance’ applies in a concrete way to Costa’s scores, as they are the only direct remnant of the large musical performances that has been preserved for posterity. Through their performance, these impressive scores made a lasting spiritual and psychological impact on the religious and moral ethos of Victorian society.³⁹ They give us a direct insight not only into the most widely patronised musical performances of the day, but also into an ideology of monumentalism that promoted them.

Significantly, Costa’s adapted scores made a bold statement just as did the thousands in the massed choirs showing reverence to Handel. Today this sort of ‘improvement’ of a composer’s score is regarded as sacrilegious, but in the nineteenth century, it was regarded as ‘progress’. Through Costa’s alteration and expansion of Handel’s scores, Handel could be eternally revered by the public. No better concluding point about Costa’s Victorian arrangements of Handel’s oratorios can be found than in a quotation from the *Athenaeum* of December 1875:

³⁸ Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*. See Chapter 7, ‘The Rites of Civic Culture’.

³⁹ While musicologists have not stated this about Costa’s arrangements in particular, some have discussed Costa and Jullien’s rescoring for larger forces. See José Antonio Bowen (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 180. However, Smither discusses the powerful psychological impact of large oratorio scores, such as those of Mendelssohn’s, and the moral and religious impact of Bach and Handel’s works, which lasted well into the early twentieth century. Henry Wood ‘modernized’ Costa’s arrangements in 1926. See Smither, *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, 10, 151, 320, 714.

We have outlived the cuckoo cry, – ‘The score, the whole score, and nothing but the score,’ the worn out ‘platform’ of the purists. The orchestration of the ancient masters, confined to so few executants in their day has necessarily been expanded, when the choralists are counted by thousands, as in the Handel Festival.

It can only be wondered if the expansion of Handel’s scores on such an enormous scale will ever be fashionable again at some future time. For now, Costa’s scores are indeed a musical monument that speaks of past glories.

7 Towards an English Musical Monumentalism

It appears a singular anomaly that, in a country which has made so little comparative progress towards perfection in music, the most gigantic, if not the most successful, attempts should be made to reach those great soul-stirring effects, found only in the very loftiest inspirations of the art. No orchestras ever formed in Italy, Germany or France, can all be compared in number and strength with those of our periodical music-meetings in different parts of Great Britain ...¹

This chapter will discuss and synthesise information presented in the previous chapters. Little's characteristics will be further expounded to clarify how a monumental aesthetic was promoted in nineteenth-century musical thought in England. Furthermore, it will be argued that an ideology of monumentalism underpinned the circumstances promoting the gigantic oratorio festivals that were such an idiosyncratic part of the British musical landscape, as the epigraph points out.

Although the various festivals previously examined could be compared and contrasted synchronically, this does not work from a practical standpoint, because these festivals were not all founded at the same time. The simplistic focusing on just one point or decade would not cast the evolving festivals in the various cities and towns in proper perspective. On the other hand, it is far too difficult to compare comprehensively the festivals over the century: the trees would be lost for the wood, so to speak. As a compromise, to obtain a clear but complex vision of the festival movement in the towns covered in this dissertation, a selection of three points in time across the century facilitates the discussion.

Firstly, the time span of the 1830s – the beginning of the railways and Queen Victoria's accession to the throne – will be considered in the towns that had festivals at that

¹ 'The Festival at Westminster Abbey', *The Court Magazine and Belle Assemblée*, 1 August 1834, 75.

time.² Next, the decade of the 1850s with the construction of the Crystal Palace and the Great Exhibition of Works of Industry of All Nations will be examined. Finally, the decade of the 1870s, when the Bristol Festival was founded, will be focused upon. The three selected snapshots in time have deliberately stopped short of the 1890s, so often, if controversially, referred to as the ‘English musical renaissance’.³

7.1 Comparison of the festivals examined

In the introduction, it was noted that there had been recent developments in urban history that were pertinent to the arguments about monumentalism and the spread of the festival movement in the towns, cities and villages of England. Developments in the scholarly literature over the last thirty years have seen a revolution in the understanding of the complexities of social, political, economic, cultural, and other functions of towns and cities of this time. Of necessity, these areas overlap and are interconnected in complex ways. Many historical facets are discussed concurrently, rather than separately, to some limited extent throughout this chapter, to provide a holistic background to the festivals and to develop the argument further.

The second volume of the three-volume reference work, *The Cambridge Urban History* discusses ‘The Elusive Metropolitan Culture’ and the ‘high’ culture of London with reference to the Great Handel Festivals held in the Crystal Palace.⁴ Other series such as *Themes in Urban History* have done much to dispel the simplistic view of the provincial industrial town solely as a dismal, disease-ridden environment of the exploited poor.⁵ Other

² A ‘city’ was distinguished from a ‘town’ in England at this time by whether it was granted permission to establish a cathedral. Population was not always an indication that a settlement is a city. Bristol, for instance, had held city status from medieval times.

³ Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance*; Hughes and Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940*; and Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850-1914*.

⁴ ‘The Elusive Metropolitan Culture’, in Peter Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 655-9.

⁵ Some relevant texts in the series include: Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*; Michael E. Rose, *The Poor and the City: the English Poor Law in its Urban Context, 1834-1914* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985); Martin Doughty, *Building the Industrial City* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986); Peter Clark, *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981); R. J. Morris, *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth-Century Towns* (Themes in Urban History;

texts discuss the explosion of urban history in the 1960s and its subsequent involvement in relation to provincial towns in England.⁶

While living conditions in many of the towns discussed may have been appalling, philanthropic industrialists and bankers were also supporting the Arts.⁷ These authors and many others recount how new grand secular buildings appeared in a climate when spectacle and civic pride and competition were foremost considerations in the emerging towns and their middle classes. The 'cultural rite' that Gunn exhorts (or 'tribal rite' as Cyril Erlich pithily describes it) is an integral part of attendance at the oratorio throughout the nineteenth century.⁸

The emerging middle class participated passionately in these events, as described in the introduction to this dissertation, in a manner similar to the ritual of church attendance. Landed gentry as well as industrialists and bankers were all involved in the promotion of and attendance at the oratorio festivals in provincial towns. Cannadine succinctly discusses the general historical situation and the manner in which great patrician families responded to local industrial involvement and the growth of towns contiguous to their estates:

[I]t has become increasingly fashionable to stress how slowly this transition [from rural to urban] occurred, and to emphasise the degree to which the *landed* élite also survived as the *governing* élite, well into the last quarter of the nineteenth century ... Particularly important in such explanations is the landed élite's continued wealth, largely the result of widespread participation in non-agricultural ventures such as mining, markets, docks, harbours and urban estate developments ... For

Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986); F. M. L. Thompson, *The Rise of Suburbia* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982); Anthony Sutcliffe, *British Town Planning: the Formative Years* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981); and Derek Fraser, *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).

⁶ See Chapter 2 of Richard Dennis, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography, 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984); H. J. Dyos, (eds.), *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, eds. David Cannadine and David Reeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982); R. J. Morris and Richard Rodger (eds.), *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London: Longman, 1993); and James H. Johnson and Colin G. Pooley (eds.), *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities* (London: Croom Helm, 1982).

⁷ See Chapter 6 of Gunn, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class*.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 134; and Ehrlich, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History*, 68. Both these terms are referred to elsewhere in the dissertation.

it was often this sustained and augmented wealth which made possible continued political involvement and social dominance.⁹

While Cannadine's collection of essays relates to three industrial towns and two seaside towns, none of which are applicable to this study, his ideas are transferable to some extent to other contemporaneous towns around England.¹⁰ However, Cannadine warns about over-generalising about the manner in which these patricians were involved in the social, public, and political life of any particular town: 'For generalising about Victorian landowners is almost as hazardous as generalising about Victorian towns'.¹¹

Asa Briggs' comprehensive text *Victorian Cities* paints a diverse and detailed picture of many of the towns in which festivals are investigated in the dissertation. The book provides direct information on urban history across a wide time span from the 'coming of the railway to the coming of the automobile'.¹² Briggs has chapters on *Manchester: Symbol of a New Age*; *Leeds: a Study in Civic Pride*; *Birmingham: the Making of a Civic Gospel*; and *London: the World City* – all of which are towns and cities in which a new monumental building, at some point, was the venue for mammoth oratorio festivals.¹³

As has been seen, many new secular urban shrines were designed with oratorio festivals in mind. The sheer size of these events, the spectacle, the civic pride, and competition between towns were essential ingredients of this expanding art form. One provincial newspaper sums up the appearance of monumental halls and their musical and civic importance:

Among the many signs of progress which distinguishes the century in which we live, stands not the least the erection of magnificent and extensive buildings adapted for grand musical performances and other useful public purposes. These buildings

⁹ Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*, 2.

¹⁰ Contributors include John Davies who discusses the marquesses of Bute and Cardiff, Richard Trainor, the earls of Dartmouth and Dudley in the Black Country, John Liddle, families at the resort of Southport, and Richard Roberts the landowners at Bournemouth.

¹¹ Cannadine, *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns*, 7.

¹² Asa Briggs, *Victorian Cities* (London: Odhams Press, 1963), 13.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 83-136; 85-244; 321-72.

are becoming so numerous that no town of any importance seems complete without one.¹⁴

Pritchard gives an insightful explanation of the rivalry between provincial towns over oratorio festivals held in the new grand ‘temple-like’ buildings:

Contemporary reports leave little doubt that competition between meetings was fierce. Civic prestige awakened ... and it was the individual towns, where population growth, the greed for wealth, and the disfigurement of the countryside had for so long overwhelmed any cultural instinct, that the most extravagant praises were lavished on local efforts. The desire for cultural recognition was stronger in these towns than in the centres less ravaged by industrialisation.¹⁵

In London, the Crystal Palace, another of the new spectacular buildings, was a venture that was simultaneously metropolitan, national, and international. The Handel Triennial Festivals held there stand in stark contrast in many aspects to the provincial festivals. This leads us directly to the next step, a comparison and a discussion of the grand musical performances and the buildings, at the three points of time nominated.

7.1.1 Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1830s

The festivals discussed in this study that existed in the 1830s were Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool. Birmingham Festivals were held in the grand Birmingham Town Hall from 1834, while Liverpool and Manchester were holding their successful large-scale festivals in churches in the 1830s – St Luke’s, St Peter’s and the amphitheatre in Liverpool, and the Collegiate Church in Manchester. Leeds did not hold festivals at this time in any venue. The Crystal Palace was not in existence and Bristol, which had an occasional performance of an oratorio in the 1830s, did not inaugurate a Triennial Festival until 1874. These last three festival locations and their buildings are of necessity excluded from this discussion. However, Westminster Abbey held a Royal Musical Festival in 1834,

¹⁴ ‘Inauguration of St. George’s Hall, Liverpool’, *The Leeds Mercury*, 23 September 1854.

¹⁵ Pritchard, ‘The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History’, 366.

which will be included here briefly to give a contrast between the metropolitan and the provincial events.¹⁶

Characteristics of size

Little's monumental characteristic of 'size' will be taken to include physical dimensions of buildings (Table. 7.1), and size of audience and orchestra (Table 7.2). The length of the festival is another variable of size, as well as the takings and profits. Tables display the information drawn from detailed scanning of newspaper and other reports, which may or may not be reliable. Often there were considerable discrepancies between papers. However, these figures do give an indication of the general trends, which is sufficient to assist the argument.

Monumental Building	Width	Length	Height	Seating
Birmingham Town Hall opened 1834	145'	65'	65'	8,000

Table 7.1: Interior dimensions of new monumental buildings in the 1830s.

The Birmingham Town Hall was the only large building opened expressly for regular festivals of oratorio. The press compared its size to Exeter Hall, ('not longer than Exeter Hall but 20 foot higher'), and Westminster Abbey, as seen in this quotation:

The late extension [in 1837] of the Birmingham Town Hall has made it very nearly of the same dimension as the portion of the Abbey devoted to that purpose, viz. from the organ screen to the west door. The hall is a few feet longer, but its width is within four feet of the whole extent of the nave and aisles, and that without any obstruction calculated to impede sound. It further possesses sufficient vibration without the inconvenience of echoes, which large gothic structures are almost necessarily subject to, and by which harmony is often greatly confused.¹⁷

¹⁶ This festival was not billed as a Commemorative Handel Festival, although the year of 1834 was regarded as the 150th commemoration of Handel's birth.

¹⁷ 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Derby Mercury*, 6 September 1837.

Many new secular buildings were to appear over the century and were used as a venue for oratorio festivals. Large cathedrals such as Westminster Abbey and York Cathedral, and smaller provincial cathedrals and halls used for events such as the Three Choirs Festival, and Norwich's medieval St Andrew's Hall, continued to provide spaces for festivals, but many festivals moved to larger secular halls as the century progressed.

Table 7.2 shows a comparison between the provincial industrial towns of Birmingham, Manchester, and Liverpool. While some details remain elusive, further research might yield fresh data.

Town/City	Year	Oratorio Audience nos.	Choir nos.	Orchestra nos.	Receipts
Birmingham Triennial Festivals (4 Days) Opening of Town Hall	1834	<i>David</i> c. 3,500 (best attended) <i>Last Judgement</i> <i>Messiah</i> (Mozart arr.) c.3,000 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> (selections)	200	200 Strings 50 24 16 10	£2,200 £4,200 Total £13, 627 Profit to General Hospital £7,000
	1837	<i>St Paul</i> (cut) <i>Messiah</i> <i>Triumph of Faith</i> <i>The Ascension</i>	250 40 semi- chorus 55 cantus 45 counter- tenors 50 tenors 55 basses	240? 56 violins (30 from London)	£1,524 £2,086 £1,179 £ 683 Total £ 10,311
Liverpool (4-5 days) St Luke's (Sermon in St Peter's) St Luke's (Sermon in St Peter's) 2,000 St Peter's (Sermon in St Luke's)	1830	<i>Last Judgement</i> <i>Messiah</i> Final ball 2,300			Total £7,800 Charity £2000
	1833	<i>Messiah</i> 1,200 <i>Selections</i> 1,300 <i>Selections</i> 1,600			Total c.£ 8,000 Ball £2,300 Charity c.£ 3,000
	1836	<i>St Paul</i> <i>Messiah</i>			Total £ 8,000 Charity c.£2,500
Manchester Collegiate Church	1836	First ball 7-800 <i>The Creation</i> c.3,000 (best attended) <i>Messiah</i> <i>Mount of Olives</i> <i>Redemption</i> Final ball 3,966	224 Nearly 400 total	102 Incl. harp, 1 drum and ophicleide	Total £ 17,005 Charity £ 5,000
London Westminster Abbey 4-5 days	1834	<i>The Creation</i> 3,000 <i>Selections</i> <i>Selections</i> <i>Messiah</i> c.3,000	316 Chorus + 40 Semi- chorus 12 sop 8 alti 8 tenors 12 basses 52 Principals	231 incl. 2 ophic. 2 serpents ? sackbuts 2 tower drums 2 kettle drums	Total £22,013 Expenses £12,736 Charities: £9000 Decayed Musicians £6,000? RAM Westminster Hospital £1000?

Table 7.2: Size of oratorio festivals in selected locations in the 1830s.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the General Hospital requisitioned the Birmingham town hall for six weeks for the duration of each Triennial Festival. In contrast, Manchester held the last of its triennial festivals (one only, in 1836) in the Collegiate Church, where the fêted singer Malibran died and was buried while the festival was in progress. Liverpool had regular triennial festivals across this decade in the local churches of St Peter and St Luke's, which alternated in holding the opening musical sermon in one church and the oratorio performances in the other.

As Table 7.2 shows, Birmingham had 3,550 present at *David*, commissioned in 1834 for the first festival of the decade in their new town hall. Manchester reported 3,000 present for a performance of *The Creation* in 1836, although one report suggested that there were only 1,000 in attendance. Perhaps the latter document was referring to the normal capacity of the church. The only reports located for any of the Liverpool festivals of this decade indicated around 1,200 present for *Messiah* with sacred *Selections* attracting bigger audiences of up to 1,600. The balls at each of these towns received considerable press, particularly in Manchester where nearly 4,000 people attended the 1836 post-festival ball in the Assembly hall. This ball resulted in the largest takings, totalling £17,000, of any of the provincial festivals investigated. While no figures could be located for the Liverpool performing forces, Birmingham had the largest choir and orchestra, which increased with each festival. All towns seemed to draw choristers and orchestra from 'around the Kingdom', which was made possible now with the railways reaching these towns. The numbers cogently support Little's monumental characteristic of 'size' in comparison to the size of performing forces of previous festivals.

The data presented here raise interesting questions and point to differences in the nature of these towns, as Asa Briggs so astutely observed:

The first effect of early industrialization was to differentiate rather than to standardize them [the towns]. However much the historian talks of common urban problems, he will find that that his most interesting task is to show in what respects the cities

differed from each other ... The classic example of such differences is between Manchester and Birmingham. For [Lewis] Mumford they were both 'insensate industrial towns' created by the development of cotton, iron and steel. In fact, they diverged very strongly in their economic life, their social structure and their politics.¹⁸

It is these points of divergence and the questions that result which are of interest in the comparison of oratorio festivals in the various towns and cities. Why for instance, in the 1830s, was a sermon held with the festivals in Liverpool and not in the other towns? What attracted nearly 5,000 people to attend pre-and post-festival balls in Manchester in 1836 and why was the Assembly hall a venue for the balls and not the oratorio festival? Why in 1834 did a newly commissioned work (not performed or known of today) in Birmingham attract the largest festival audience of 3,500, a larger audience than any at the Westminster Abbey Royal Musical Festival in London in the same year?

While no simplistic answer is available to these questions, studies in urban and social history can certainly throw some light onto possible explanations. For instance, it has been generally assumed that Manchester was the leading provincial society in the 1830s, but that Birmingham was the leading provincial society in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

As G. M. Young wrote:

In many ways, the change from Early to Late-Victorian England is symbolized in the names of two great cities: Manchester, solid, uniform, pacific, the native home of the great economic creed on which aristocratic England has always looked, and educated England was beginning to look with some aversion and some contempt; Birmingham, experimental, adventurous, diverse, where old Radicalism might in one decade flower into lavish Socialism, in another into a pugnacious Imperialism.¹⁹

¹⁸ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 32. See the section 'The Insensate Industrial Towns' (where the new type of Victorian city is described as akin to Dickens' Coketown in *Hard Times*) in Lewis Mumford, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Hancort, Brace and Company, 1938), 144.

¹⁹ George Malcolm Young, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936), 124.

On reading Asa Briggs' chapter on Birmingham, in which he expresses similar concerns, a greater insight is gained into the economic and social structure of the town. He discusses the four conditions of work that set the terms of its social history – the great diversity of occupation as compared to other towns, that work was carried out in small workshops rather than in large factories, that a large proportion of the Birmingham labour force was skilled and (unlike in Manchester) well off economically, and lastly that there was considerable social mobility in Birmingham. Briggs elaborates on the 'rising in society' with successful business ventures at this time:

Of course, if trade turned bad, as it often did in a city of marked industrial fluctuations, small masters might find themselves 'men' again. The mobility worked both ways. Distress, however, did not divide masters and men in Birmingham: it brought them together by common statements of grievances.²⁰

Perhaps this characteristic of compassionately embracing all in a common integrated Birmingham society, so different from other towns such as Manchester, coupled with the charitable concern of the Birmingham Triennial Festivals, explains why these festivals lasted so much longer than those in other towns did – they involved the participation of all classes. Chapter 3 referred to the man who signed his contract with an X with the employment of local singers at the festival, thus indicating some form of illiteracy.²¹ Even social mobility among the singers was observed, with the uneducated able to participate in the 'noblest' of events.

The characteristics of Birmingham society described in the quotation above, combined with the sense of adventure and the experimental, might explain why audiences turned out en masse for *David*, a newly composed 'novelty' for the opening festival in the Birmingham Town Hall. It is remarkable that this new oratorio in a town, whose population was much smaller than London, had a greater attendance than that of individual festival performances in Westminster Abbey. The overwhelming presence of Brummagem for the

²⁰ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 189.

²¹ See p. 108.

performance of *David* in their new town hall showed their shared enthusiasm, civic pride, and curiosity.²² Recall the London reporter who sneered at the esteem with which the local Birmingham citizens held ‘their’ musical festival (see Chapter 3).²³ The massive competition and sense of municipal superiority was a cornerstone of the monumental ideology that drove oratorio festivals forward.

Interestingly, an audience of 3,000 was present for *Messiah*, 500 fewer than for *David*. This trend in many festivals of the 1830s will be discussed below. At the 1837 festival, the year Queen Victoria ascended the throne and Mendelssohn first appeared at the festival, Birmingham Town Hall had been further extended, again with comparisons to Westminster Abbey – ‘no pillar to block the view’, ‘longer’, ‘four feet less than aisles of Westminster’, and the ‘decorated stupendous organ’.²⁴ A quartet of the soloists sang a new national anthem, with the words published in the paper.²⁵ Even towns such as Manchester reported on the new anthem used to open the festival.²⁶ National and imperial sentiments, evident in this act, overlap with the monumental aesthetic at the festivals, particularly, as will be seen, at the Crystal Palace, with the building itself so much a symbol of the nation and the empire.

Manchester was regarded as a symbol of the industrial age in the 1830s, standing in total antithesis to Birmingham. The travel writer and French aristocrat Alexis de Tocqueville, who visited Manchester in 1835, compared the town unfavourably with Birmingham. He described the former town:

A sort of black smoke covers the city. Under this half-daylight, 300,000 human beings are ceaselessly at work. The homes of the poor are scattered haphazardly around the factories. From this filthy sewer, pure gold flows. In Manchester, civilized man is turned back almost into a savage.²⁷

²² See p.119.

²³ See p. 122.

²⁴ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’.

²⁵ Words were by Barry Cornwall and music was reportedly a German air.

²⁶ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 23 September 1837.

²⁷ Alexis de Tocqueville, quoted and translated from *Voyage en Angleterre et en Irlande de 1835* on <http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/ITmanchester.htm>. Accessed 7 May 2009.

Chapter 3 discussed how the ‘cotton fuzzi lords’ made Manchester. Progress was represented not only in new buildings but also in the squalor of a town with a class of rich industrialists and a suffering poor and, that in contrast to Birmingham was ‘notorious for the intensity of class division’.²⁸ The propensity for social unrest continued well after Peterloo and was still apparent in the 1830s. As Briggs described it, ‘The capital of an industry became the capital of discontent’.²⁹ Because of the excessive anger directed at the church, Manchester, like Birmingham, did not hold a festival in 1830.³⁰ Most cathedral cities and towns such as Birmingham and Manchester that were in the forefront of the Reform struggle were silent in musical affairs. Pritchard explains the lack of festivals at this time:

The wrath of the country against the lay Peers, bitter though it was, seemed nothing to that against the twenty-one Bishops whose votes had enabled the Lords initially to reject the Reform Bill ... A festival attempted in the mood prevailing in most cathedral towns would have been disastrous.³¹

A newer image of Manchester emerged later in the 1830s, according to Briggs. Rather than one of social disorder, an image of Manchester as a city that was a ‘cradle both of wealth and of new and formative social values’ was evident.³² In 1832, the *Manchester Guardian* publicly called upon the middle and upper classes to show their ‘poor brethren’ that ‘the bond between them was not yet broken’.³³ With this background in mind, it is curious that the one oratorio festival of 1836, a year of financial crisis and imminent economic depression, attracted 3,900 at the ball and 3,000 at the performance of *The Creation*. Was it

²⁸ Fraser, *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City*, 16.

²⁹ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 86.

³⁰ The resentment present in Manchester is shown by this Reformer’s Prayer that circulated: ‘From all those damnable bishops, lords and peers, from all those bloody murdering Peterloo butchers, from all those idle drones, that live on the earnings of people, good Lord deliver us’.

³¹ Pritchard, ‘The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History’, 392.

³² Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 86.

³³ *Manchester Guardian*, June 1832.

the publicly expressed opinions, not only by local newspapers but also by international commentators as well, that money should be raised for the 'poor brethren' of the town that prompted many to attend? The 1836 festival (in a town with a population much smaller than the city of London, in a church in no way comparable in size to Westminster Abbey or Birmingham Town Hall, and with an orchestra numbering a hundred less than at all the other venues) had takings not far behind those at the Westminster Commemoration Festival. An incredible £17,000 (also double the takings of any Liverpool festivals) was collected, with £5,000 reported as being donated to charity. Surely such a tremendous response must indicate an overwhelming interest in religious entertainments coupled with a desire to assist the poor, contrary to the grim uncaring image generally presented of the wealthy in Manchester. The death of Malibran at the festival must have been a tragedy on more levels than one. It received unprecedented coverage in the press and periodicals. As pointed out previously, after the 1836 event, large festivals lasting many days never reappeared in Manchester.

As for the venue, the Collegiate Church was generally known to support the growth of the manufacturing industry, and no doubt attracted to its sanctity the middle and upper classes of Manchester.³⁴ It seems there was no opening sermon given at the 1836 festival, in contrast to the Liverpool festivals of this time. Dissenter Pastor Gadsby, in his virulent attacks on the morality of the festival, was quick to point out that twenty clergy in Manchester attended. Church of England ministers were obviously supportive of the festival but Dissenters, whose membership was mainly from the working classes, were making loud public criticisms. With obvious pressure from some sections of the community not to hold oratorio festivals, it was curious that some large secular venue such as the Assembly rooms was not selected in 1836. Further investigation of the Assembly rooms where balls were also held, and which included a theatre with an orchestra pit, has revealed extensive temporary construction. The building was extended with wood and sailcloth over railways

³⁴ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 93.

so that carriages could still pass underneath, and the ball, where refreshments were served, was held in several rooms.³⁵ Although catering for a ball for 4,000 people, the building probably would have been unsuitable as an oratorio performance venue. Interestingly, at the next nominated point of time, large-scale oratorio performances moved into the Free Trade Hall associated with the workers of the town.

Liverpool held three festivals over the 1830s, more than any other town investigated. As shown in Table 6.2, in 1830 the opening sermon with a musical programme was held in the older St Peter's, with the morning oratorio and sacred selections held in the newly constructed St Luke's. Liverpool seems to be one of the few towns around England that held a festival in 1830, despite the negative sentiments towards the church that the defeat of the Reform Bill provoked.³⁶ The 1833 festival in Liverpool reversed the order with the musical sermon in St Luke's, and the morning oratorio in St Peter's Church. The British Library holds several folios of programmes with annotations by the conductor George Smart, indicating that he played the organ at the opening sermons.³⁷ While it is interesting that of the festivals investigated in this dissertation, only the Liverpool festivals incorporated a sermon, there were other music meetings or festivals of this time, such as the Three Choirs Festival, which featured a sermon.³⁸ What was so particular to Liverpool that a sermon was included, unlike the Manchester festival, also held in a church?

Historians typically have referred to the elite males of these societies as the 'Men of Manchester' and the 'Gentlemen of Liverpool'.³⁹ The network of gentlemen in the trade-rich port of Liverpool intertwined religion with the politics of the town in an idiosyncratic way.⁴⁰ Perhaps more openly evangelical terms framed Liverpool's benevolence toward their

³⁵ 'The Fancy Dress Ball', *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 17 September 1836.

³⁶ See previous quotation at f.n. 30, 283. Liverpool had a long history of being a 'rotten borough' and the conservative elite supported the defeat of the Bill in 1830.

³⁷ British Library, Liverpool Grand Musical Festival (1832-1836), Case 61.g.12.

³⁸ The Three Choirs Festival has survived to the present day in a different format but still maintains an opening sermon.

³⁹ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 107.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 391. There was a large body of Irish Catholics present in Liverpool and religious affiliations shaped political and social structures of the town.

poor, possibly explaining why a sermon opened each festival.⁴¹ Another reason also could have been that amongst the organising committee members there was a particularly interested minister determined to include a sermon. That the festival was shared between two Church of England churches within walking distance of each other, one brand new and the other older, shows on one small level, a co-operative community in existence in Liverpool.⁴² Community spirit evident within the organisation of the festivals in the 1830s would later be seen in the choirs that developed in Liverpool, where, as reported in Chapter 3, singers belonged to several choirs simultaneously and harmoniously participated in various events. (The warring choral factions in Leeds discussed below, constituted a total antithesis to this situation.) Industrialisation played an important part in the Liverpool festivals. With the opening of the railway from Manchester to Liverpool just months before the 1830 festival, the local newspapers expressed some reservations that people would not travel back by rail so soon for the festival. The fears were unfounded, though, and attendance at the festival was good. Subsequent festivals also drew attendance from many smaller towns in the district and elsewhere because of the railway connections.

No numbers have been located for the size of the orchestra and choir in Liverpool to determine whether the size of performing forces increased at successive festivals. Some indication of numbers in attendance at the 1836 festival is recoverable, however, with *Messiah* having an audience of 1,200 and one sacred *Selections* concert having 1,600 present. Like Manchester, attendance was better at the *Selections*. Some indication of why this was the case might be seen in the newspaper quotation of 1831 given at 3.6, on Liverpool Festivals. Articulating his reasons why *Messiah* was not as well attended at this time, the journalist refers to the Churchmen and Dissenters who were accustomed to 'go to

⁴¹ Briggs draws attention to a large poor population of Irish Catholics in Liverpool; he does not mention the large population of non-conformist Welsh, giving Liverpool the nickname 'Cardiff of the North'. This group with their tonic sol-fa church choirs were very influential in the Liverpool musical scene as the century progressed.

⁴² Briggs quotes Augustine Birrell's work on the religious divisions of the town, 'The inhabitants of Liverpool appeared to be divided between Church and Dissent by a wall harder than the wall of Balbus to leap over'. However, the blatant public criticism of festivals heard in Manchester did not seem to exist in Liverpool. Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 65.

the *Messiah*' as a sort of duty but over the 'last few years' found it sinful that such entertainments should be held in a church and wished 'not to enter the camp of Satan' by attendance at the oratorio.⁴³ The novelty of the Mozart accompaniments had 'ceased to be the most attractive' and people did not attend *Messiah* because they had heard it so often. It seemed that it was not only Liverpool and Manchester but also all around the country that *Messiah* was drawing smaller audiences in the 1830s than it had previously, as the author pointed out.

A full-page article in the *Liverpool Mercury* showed a remarkable amount of public interest in everything connected to the 1830 festival.⁴⁴ Newspapers published large passages of the opening sermon as well as providing much coverage of the prima donnas – it is remarkable that a provincial newspaper reproduced note-by-note for their readership the 'tiresome' ornaments that Madame Malibran and Madame Catalani performed (see Fig. 7.1). It must be wondered to what extent the readers of the newspaper could read music. Was the typesetting of the notes to impress the public (it is likely that the notes were engraved rather than typeset as there are no breaks on the print in Fig. 7.1), or was this a genuine attempt to educate the local populace? More insidiously, perhaps this published notation was to let the singers know that the public was complaining about their 'eternal reiteration' of ornaments. Perhaps this was really an attempt by the public, through the newspaper, to dictate performance practice to their taste in Liverpool.⁴⁵

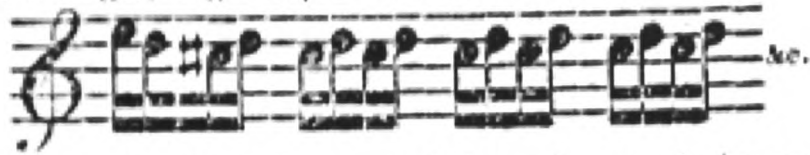
⁴³ 'The Musical Festivals - Handel's *Messiah*'.

⁴⁴ 'Liverpool Musical Festival', *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 October 1830.

⁴⁵ In *Recreating Contexts*, Hume defines archeo-historicism as a method that scholars could use to reconstruct a past context. Even with such concrete literary evidence as presented in Figure 7.1 of Malibran's 'tiresome' ornaments, it seems impossible to infer what a 'legitimate' reconstruction or interpretation of the context might be. For that matter, even from a contemporary viewpoint of the 1830s it is likely that there would be numerous complex constructions of what could be regarded a 'legitimate' interpretation.

named!

It is to be regretted that when some leading singer or singers have fallen upon some new and pretty form of ornament or cadence, they soon render it tiresome by an eternal reiteration, and also by an excessive repetition of the thing in itself, like the eternal *piroettes* at the Opera-house, &c. Madame Malibran's prevailing form of ornament at this time, in common, we believe, with many others, (which circumstance alone, with such a singer, ought to prove a deterrent,) is as thus:



Madame Stockhausen now and then adventured the same, but did not succeed to the same extent. This may have superseded another which we believe Catalani had the honour to originate, and which has been followed up by the Stephens, the Patens, &c., not excepting, we think, Mr. Braham.

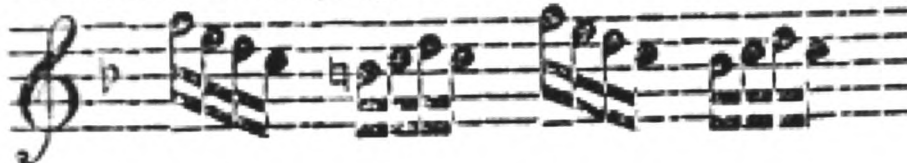


Figure 7.1: Malibran and Catalani's 'tiresome' ornaments in 1830.
Source: 'Liverpool Musical Festival', *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 October 1830.

Musical examples shown in the local newspaper must surely indicate that the educated and moneyed attended the Liverpool festival. Historians identify a gulf between rich and poor in both Liverpool and Manchester in the 1830s. The cellar populations of the poor in Liverpool were described as a 'crying evil', with 'two communities whose members dwell within the same bells, and under the same chief magistrate, in many respects to be practically as wide apart as if they resided in two quarters of the globe'.⁴⁶

Briggs further described class division in London as a parallel of the exploration of distant, primitive societies: 'A hovel in one of the suburbs which they [the wealthy] know least would be as strange to most Londoners as a village in the African forests'.⁴⁷ London's population had also increased dramatically by 1830 to 1,595,000.⁴⁸ Yet it lagged behind with industrialisation in some economic areas such as textiles, shipbuilding, and

⁴⁶ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 62. 'Dwell within the same bells' refers to people living within earshot of the same church bells; in other words within close proximity.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Palliser, Clark, and Daunt (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 650.

chemicals.⁴⁹ Competition between the metropolis and the expanding provincial cities was fierce, and not only for reasons such as trade.⁵⁰

Rivalry among provincial towns and between London and the provinces over size of venues and performance forces for oratorio festivals is apparent from detailed newspaper descriptions and comparisons found in this dissertation. Even in the 1830s, newspapers reported the measurements of a building to its last foot, such as the 1837 comparison of Birmingham Town Hall to Westminster Abbey. Size and numbers equated to progress, and figures reported in newspapers were of great interest to the public, judging by the repeated publication of such facts.

In the 1830s, London lagged behind the provinces in the organisation of regular musical meetings or oratorio festivals, as an 1834 London newspaper explains of the Royal Festival:

It is, indeed, a strange thing that the inhabitants of London for so many years have been obliged to take long journeys into the country whenever they wanted to hear an oratorio of HANDEL or HAYDN, and that when they have travelled, perhaps, a couple of hundred miles for this purpose, they see an orchestra almost entirely filled with 'familiar faces' they are in the habit of meeting in the orchestra of every London theatre and concert-room. What earthly reason is there for either – for a set of London musicians, or of London amateurs – travelling to Birmingham or York, the one to perform, and the other to hear music, that each party might perform and listen to without stirring from home? The expence [sic] of such performances in London ought to be much smaller than in the country. In the provinces, the only *native talent* consists of chorus-singers and *ripieno* players, while all the expensive materials are imported from London. In London, all the expensive materials are on the spot, and if anything is wanted, it is a few chorus singers from Lancashire or Yorkshire. We do not mean that the great provincial Festivals ought not to take place. We trust that our wealthy and spirited country gentlemen, and inhabitants of our commercial towns, will always continue to support meetings from which good arises in so many ways. But we say that it is a

⁴⁹ Victorian London had historically concentrated on the provision of luxuries rather than of necessities that the provincial towns provided. See Donald J. Olsen, *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1976), 351.

⁵⁰ For a pre-industrialisation history of the complex relationship between London and the provincial towns see Theo Barker, 'London: A Unique Megalopolis', in Theo Barker and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds.), *Megalopolis: The Giant City in History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993), 43-60.

disgrace to the metropolis to be behind the provinces in a matter in which every facility is on their side.⁵¹

Perhaps this was the rationale behind the organisation in London of the Royal Musical Festival in a Handel commemoration year. The festival was described as ‘frequently ignored’, compared to the earlier Handel Festivals of 1784, 1785, 1786, 1787, and 1791.⁵² Burney documented extensively the well-known landmark, the Handel Commemoration Festival of 1784.⁵³ The conductor George Smart also reported on the 1834 festival in a detailed publication.⁵⁴ Every aspect of this festival aimed to ‘exceed in grandeur and importance, all preceding Music Meetings’, and the details can be gleaned from this publication. The Westminster forces included a chorus of 316 and a semi-chorus of 40 – by far the biggest choral force assembled anywhere around the country in the 1830s for a festival. The massive orchestra of 231 performers included sackbuts, two serpents, two ophicleides, tower and side drums. Twelve each of bassoons, horns, and oboes were augmented by an equivalent balance of other wind and brass instruments. An army of string players rounded out the ensemble with 80 violins, 30 tenors [violas], 18 cellos, and 18 double basses. One newspaper reported that

a stupendous effect of *fortissimo* was produced by the union of this immense number of voices and instruments, not one of which was forced beyond the bounds of smooth tone and intonation.⁵⁵

Not only had the numbers of choristers, orchestral players, and soloists increased since previous festivals by at least a hundred, but reports stated that the standard of playing was also higher. Another newspaper commented on the ability of the orchestra assembled from

⁵¹ ‘Royal Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 23 June 1834.

⁵² Sanders, ‘A Forgotten Westminster Abbey Festival’, 470. While there are numerous copies of reports of the earlier festivals available, there are few copies of the published account of the 1834 festival available.

⁵³ Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, 1784*.

⁵⁴ John Parry, *An Account of the Royal Musical Festival, Held in Westminster Abbey, 1834, Drawn up from Official Documents* (London: Cramer, Addison and Beale, 1834).

⁵⁵ ‘Royal Musical Festival’. Other newspapers including *The Times* expressed disappointment in the predicted volume of sound.

around the kingdom to perform with greater technical ease: 'The musicians in his [Burney's] day would have been utterly confounded in any attempt to play such a piece as Haydn's *Creation*'.⁵⁶

Oratorio attendance of around 3,000 was similar to that in Birmingham. There was great demand to gain entry, with tickets also sold to rehearsals which, if counted as performances would give London the highest attendance rate. Some patrons took seats where pillars restricted the view of the performance in the Abbey. Others were content to attend rehearsals, and yet others squashed into the space under the orchestral stage where it was 'so dark it was impossible to follow the performance by perusal of the printed book, and so placed besides, that even the orchestra was but imperfectly heard'.⁵⁷ Little's monumental characteristic of 'size' is well illustrated in numbers, space, sound and ability at this event.

While provincial towns such as Manchester had protestors like Pastor Gadsby complaining about the inappropriateness of using the church for oratorio festivals, the capital also experienced strong public debate. The House of Lords debated twice in 1834 on the inappropriateness of holding an oratorio festival in Westminster Abbey. The Earl of Malmesbury had the last word:

[N]o one was more fully impressed with sentiments of proper reverence and respect for places of worship than he was. Many things were permitted to go on in Churches in London, in parochial Churches, of which he highly disapproved, and which he thought it would be well to check; but when he knew, that King George the 3rd, of glorious memory, and Bishop Porteous, one of the greatest ornaments of the Episcopal Bench, had sanctioned such a Festival [referring to the Handel Commemoration] as that now proposed, he could not think that it was a desecration of the Church. If the ceremony of the Coronation was permitted in the Abbey, why not a Commemorative Musical Festival? Subject dropped.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ 'Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey', *The Times*, 21 June 1834.

⁵⁷ 'Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey: Fourth Rehearsal', *The Times*, 1 July 1834.

⁵⁸ The first debate in the House of Lords was on 18 April, then the second on 2 May, 1834. 'Festival at Westminster Abbey', in *The Hansard Catalogue and Breviate of Parliamentary Papers* (House of Lords, 22; London, 1834), HL Deb c930-1.

This extract may explain why the festival was billed as a ‘Royal Musical Festival’ (the King attended every night) and not presented as a Handel Commemorative Festival, which would have been quite appropriate in the supposed 150th anniversary of the composer’s birth.

Breadth of subject

Little’s characteristic of breadth of subject is evident in the topics of the oratorios, as well as in the all-encompassing nature of the festivals that embraced so many towns from one end of England to the other. As mentioned, the ubiquitous *Messiah* had lost some favour in the 1830s, but the heroic religious themes of Handel’s oratorios appealed immensely to nineteenth-century British aesthetic thought. Many other ‘oratorio’ performances were of selections only at this time and included a hodgepodge of favourite choruses and solo arias from various oratorios. Generally, many oratorios were not known in their entirety.⁵⁹

The English knew their religious topics verbatim and with fervour. John Bunyan’s *Pilgrim’s Progress* and the Bible were important elements of an integral and ingrained Protestant culture that bound many differing groups of people to a common identity – even those who did not attend church regularly. As Linda Colley explains:

... the Protestant world view was so ingrained in this [British] culture that it influenced people’s thought irrespective of whether they went to church or not, whether they read the Bible or not, or whether, indeed, they were capable of reading anything at all.⁶⁰

Colley draws analogies of Britain standing for Israel, and its opponents as Satan’s accomplices, giving several examples from eighteenth-century sermons. She notes the importance of these analogies in Handel’s oratorios:

⁵⁹ Recall the 1841 newspaper quotation in Chapter 3, 99-100. on the first unabridged performance of *Israel in Egypt* at Manchester.

⁶⁰ Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837*, 31.

One of the most powerful transmitters of the idea of Britain as Israel, for instance, took the form of the sung rather than printed word. From the moment he settled in London, George Frederick Handel flattered his surroundings, and especially his patrons at court, by inserting into his music regular comparisons between events in British history and the endeavours of the prophets and heroes of the Old Testament ... it was in the oratorios that he exploited the parallel between Britain and Israel to the full. *Esther*, *Deborah* and *Athalia*, *Judas Maccabaeus* (which was composed in honour of the Duke of Cumberland's victory over the Jacobites at Culloden), *Joshua*, *Susanna*, *Jeptha* and self-evidently *Israel in Egypt* all have as their theme the deliverance of Israel from danger by leaders inspired by God... It was because he celebrated Britain in this glowing fashion that Handel became such a national institution.⁶¹

Handel continued to serve the nation throughout the nineteenth century. The political allegories of Handel's libretti at their original conception in the eighteenth century, as discussed by Ruth Smith, would probably have been just as apparent to the public of the nineteenth century in a different social and political context – such was the breadth and influence of these works into the next century. By the 1800s, the cult status of oratorio festivals meant that every detail of the works performed was revered. A brief discussion of a few oratorios that were performed in the 1830s illustrates the breadth of the subject matter that so appealed to the large audiences that patronised the mammoth events.

Every festival in the 1830s, in the four places mentioned previously, performed *Messiah* (see Table 7.2). With a history of performance for philanthropy from Handel's involvement with the Foundling Hospital, *Messiah* was regarded as the cornerstone of most Victorian oratorio festivals. (Leeds would prove an exception in its later festivals). The libretto, by Charles Jennens, testifies to the mysteries of Christianity and to the doctrine of redemption by grace and is taken directly from the Bible, including Isaiah, Job, and Psalms (in the Old Testament) and Matthew, Luke, John, Romans, 1 Corinthians, Hebrews, and Revelations in the New Testament. Newspapers of the day abound with detailed reports of performances of the arias and choruses, often sung again, especially the famous 'Hallelujah'

⁶¹ Ibid., 31-2.

chorus. The reverence with which the work was viewed is seen in this passage about the Westminster performance of 1834:

We cannot allow however the performance of the Hallelujah chorus to be passed over in silence. Often as we have heard it sung, we are sure that its magnificence never was more fully developed, or its gigantic proportions more nobly delineated. When we hear other chorusses [sic] by the same composer, such as one or two in Israel in Egypt, we are disposed for the time to rank them higher than this; but a subsequent performance at once removes the momentary hesitation, and we yield again to the conviction that it is the most magnificent acclaim to the Deity that ever was, or could be, conceived by man.⁶²

Messiah performances, using the enlarged Mozart rendition, were celebrated as a true symbol of a nation and empire – a monument to the heroic past of Handel and of the Christian religion and to industrial progress and the underlying expansionist philosophy of the 1830s.

By the 1830s, Haydn's *The Creation* was beginning to appear regularly in its entirety at oratorio festivals in England.⁶³ Both Manchester and Westminster Abbey held performances that attracted 3,000 people. The dramatic depiction of texts taken from the Book of Genesis, Book of Psalms, and Milton's Genesis epic *Paradise Lost* made a huge impact on audiences of the day. With a large orchestra, the depiction of 'chaos' and 'light' were depicted respectively with such devices as withholding cadences at ends of phrases and changing from C minor to a sudden C major chord in Part One of the oratorio. The effect on audiences was sensational in many countries well into the nineteenth century, as seen in these letters to the editor of an 1815 newspaper:⁶⁴ 'With all our reverence for Handel, we never heard a more perfectly sublime passage than that which describes the instantaneous

⁶² 'The Royal Musical Festival', *The Morning Chronicle*, 3 July 1834.

⁶³ Haydn composed *Die Schöpfung* or *The Creation* after a visit to London in 1798 where he heard Handel's *Israel in Egypt*.

⁶⁴ At the premiere of the *Creation*, the orchestra could not continue for several minutes after the C major chord on 'Licht' because the audience was reportedly so stunned. For an understanding of the impact of this work on the audiences of day in Europe, see the text by A. Peter Brown, *Performing Haydn's The Creation: Reconstructing the Earliest Renditions* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1986), 31-46.

production of light in the *Creation*' (1814).⁶⁵ 'The burst of sound upon the word "light" was stupendous, the observance of the previous piano adding to the grandeur of the sublime idea' (1846).⁶⁶ This newer manifestation of the 'grandeur of the sublime idea' in the nineteenth century included awesome scale, infinite detail, and imposing spectacle. The 'sublime' of Handel's oratorios of the eighteenth century, so eloquently discussed by Ruth Smith, was increasingly becoming the 'monumental' of the nineteenth.⁶⁷ The awesome scale, infinite detail, and imposing spectacle of the oratorio festivals and the buildings in which they were housed reflected an ideology of monumentalism. Newly commissioned works as well the old masters' oratorios embraced this concept with a vengeance.

In Birmingham, Neukomm's *David*, commissioned specially for the first festival in the new town hall, drew the largest crowd of 3,500. The topic of the oratorio, again a heroic one taken from the two Books of Samuel, was told in full in several newspapers, so eager were the public to know every detail. The libretto written by a local, Mr Webb, gave musical scope for the biblical characters of David, Saul, Jonathan, Michal, Goliah [sic], and the High Priest. The dramatic work had a theatrical and operatic approach:

It would be difficult to assign this oratorio to any particular school, since it partakes several, but its general character is that of the theatre. The songs are usually florid and too frequently take us to the Italian opera.⁶⁸

The author of the passage tells how the serenity of the 'beautifully plaintive' chorus of the Israelites (no doubt symbolic of the British) after the death of Saul, was interrupted by a gong. The powerful tenor John Braham played the hero David with 'impressive delivery'.⁶⁹ Even this newly composed oratorio of the 1830s can be seen to have political allegories, like Handel's oratorios. The Israelites singing a lament chorus at the death of King Saul,

⁶⁵ 'To the Editor', *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 October 1815.

⁶⁶ 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Era*, 30 August 1846.

⁶⁷ Smith, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought*, 108-26. Smith states that in the eighteenth century 'sublimity was constantly sought and admired in art and the religious sublime was considered the highest form of it', 109.

⁶⁸ 'The Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Hull Packet*, 17 October 1834.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

surely, for the contemporary audience, must have been representative of Britain lamenting the recent loss of King George IV in 1830. Oratorios, new and old, seemed to embrace the whole nation with the breadth and depth of their heroic subjects.

Lasting significance

The ‘lasting significance’ of the oratorio festivals from this decade is considerable. The building and opening of the Birmingham Town Hall for the express use of Triennial Musical Festivals is historically significant both as a monument for the town and in the increasing financial support to the local hospital that the festivals could continue to provide. London made a conscious decision to keep up with the provinces with their Royal Festival in 1834. A complex reciprocal interaction between the metropolis and the provincial centre is evident and shows the scale on which oratorio festivals embraced the nation. The late eighteenth-century Handel Commemoration Festivals in Westminster Abbey radiated into the provinces where they took root in the 1800s. These large-scale provincial performances in their turn were now in the nineteenth century influencing the metropolis to emulate them. Despite the political upheaval of the Reform Bill and Depression, provincial large-scale oratorio performances continued in a competitive manner in one format or another and were often held in new grand secular halls. The ground had been laid for a new type of festival to emerge that relied on the development of local choral societies.

7.1.2 Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1850s

By the 1850s, the next nominated point in time, many of the towns investigated in this study had erected a monumental building in which oratorio festivals were held. A comparison of the interior hall dimensions of the 1850s is seen in Table 7.3. It is a little difficult to assume total accuracy from reports, as sometimes niches in the halls may or may not have been included in measurements. Seating also could vary dramatically, especially for festivals

when many platforms were temporarily erected to accommodate larger numbers in the audience. Seating numbers in parentheses are the greatest recorded assemblages.

Monumental Building	Width	Length	Height	Square feet for orchestra	Seating
Birmingham Town Hall opened 1834	145'	65'	65'	2,656	2,200 (4,500)
Liverpool St George's Hall opened 1854	169'	74'	75'		3,000 (5,000)
Manchester New Free Trade Hall opened 1856	135'	78'	52'		3,910 (7,000-8,000)
Crystal Palace Sydenham Central Transept Handel Festivals from 1857	128'	380'	208'	16,016	20,000 (27,000)
Leeds Town Hall opened 1858	161'	72'	75'	2,400	2,000 (3,000)

Table 7.3: Comparison of size of halls investigated in the 1850s.

Characteristics of size

Again, Little's characteristic of 'size' is evident in a number of new monumental buildings that had appeared by the end of the 1850s and were discussed in detail in Chapter 3. It is obvious from a glance at the table that the Crystal Palace far exceeded all other buildings in its size. Everything down to the last foot of a building gave it a competitive civic ranking (as was seen in the programme inserts in Chapter 5 that compared dimensions, roof shapes, and space of the Crystal Palace with other buildings around the country). This was intended to show the public that the building concerned was superior by far to others. In Chapter 3, a few tables reproduced from the dozens in the newspapers of the day illustrate the huge civic rivalry between towns and cities. Such blunt comparisons, showing which town had the

biggest hall to accommodate the biggest audience and provide the biggest orchestra space, were very important to the nineteenth-century public.

Table 7.4 shows that the Birmingham festivals continued to expand; the magnificent Leeds town hall was opened in 1858 with a festival; Manchester had large-scale oratorio performances in the New Free Trade Hall as part of the Hallé concert series but no oratorio festivals per se; Liverpool opened its St George's Hall in 1854 with a festival; and Bristol had not as yet begun its triennial festivals. The crowning festival achievement in 1859 was the beginning of the Great Handel Triennial Festivals in the Crystal Palace, now moved to Sydenham on what was then the edge of the London metropolis. All these large secular buildings have been discussed in detail in previous chapters. From comparison, it is obvious that all these new secular provincial buildings took on a sort of religious sensibility in their architectural expression that was reflected in the musical performances inside them, by decking the facades of these civic monuments with Roman and Greek temple-like columns.⁷⁰ Clearly it was as though these buildings were in many ways like a place of worship with their religious, majestic designs, and as if the audiences attending the oratorio inside were a congregation praising God.

⁷⁰ Carl Dahlhaus, *Das Problem Mendelssohn* (Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19 Jahrhunderts 41; Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1974), 55-60.

Town/City	Year	Oratorio Audience nos.	Choir nos.	Orchestra nos.	Receipts
Birmingham Town Hall	1852	<i>Elijah</i> <i>Messiah</i> <i>Samson</i> (arr. Costa) Ball 200	Chorus 310 76 sops. 23 contraltos 58 altos 80 tenors 80 basses	Total perf. c.500 70 violins and tenors 18 cellos 17 double basses 4 each of w/wind , 3 trombones Equal serpents and ophicleides Double drum etc.	£2,304 £2,762 £1,725 Receipts £10,751 Charity c. £5,000
	1855	<i>Elijah</i> 1,574 <i>Eli</i> 1,608 <i>Messiah</i> 2,597 Ball 600 Total	Chorus 32 4 80 sops. 80 alti 82 tenori 82 bassi (mainly provincial)	Total perf. c.500 145 (108 strings) Almost all metropolitan	£1,890 £1,497 £2,808 Total Receipts £12,000 Charity ?
	1858	<i>Elijah</i> 2,004 <i>Eli</i> 1,093 <i>Messiah</i> (split soloists) 2,270 Ball 300	Chorus 350	Orchestra, conductor, soloists- the same as 1855	£2,485 £1,223 £2,789 Total receipts c. £11,000.
Leeds Town Hall	1858 Opening festival	<i>Elijah</i> 1,800 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 1,800 <i>Selections</i> 2,000 <i>Messiah</i>	Chorus 244 Trebles 65 Contraltos (female) 16 Altos (male)43 Tenors 60 Basses 60	96 London Phil. + some players from local towns	Receipts: £7.500 Charity: c.£1,500
Liverpool St George's Hall	1854 Opening festival People's Concert 2,800	<i>Messiah</i> 1,900 <i>Elijah</i> 800 <i>Creation &</i> <i>Last Judgement</i> 800	300.	Total perf. c400 90 orchestra (Liverpool Phil.)	£1,995 £560 £560 Receipts £ 4,165 Charity-loss
Manchester New Free Trade Hall	1856	<i>Musical</i> <i>Inauguration</i> <i>Messiah</i> 4,000	> 1836 nos over 400	>1836 nos.	No details
	1858 Hallé Concerts			Hallé Orchestra 60	No details
London Crystal Palace	1857 Trial Festival	Rehearsal 8,344 <i>Messiah</i> 11,129 <i>Judas</i> <i>Maccabaeus</i> 11,649 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 17,292 Total c.48, 414	2,000 (1,000 metro. amateurs, 200 professional, 850 provinces)	Total perf. c2, 500 400 including 300 strings, 90 w/wind, 8 serpents 3 ophicleides, 1 long drum, 6 side drums, new organ	Receipts £23,360 £ ? £ ? £11,000 Profits £9,000 Crystal Palace
	1859 Handel Comme- moration Festival	Rehearsal 19,680 <i>Messiah</i> 17,109 <i>Selections (Te</i> <i>Deum)</i> 17,644 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 26,827 Total 81, 260	c.2,765 617 sops. 718 altos (296 ladies) 657 tenors 565 basses	Total perf. 3, 500 462 Additions: 2 bombardons, 1 contra bass ophicleide, 3 steel double drums	£34,913 Profits

Table 7.4: Comparison of festivals during the 1850s.

The shift in venue for the oratorio festivals had been dramatic over the last twenty years from the 1830s and it is evident in Table 7.4 that all the oratorio festivals investigated in this project were now located in a monumental hall of one type or another. No figures for performing numbers at the Manchester Free Trade Hall opening have been located, although newspaper reports were found indicating that they were greater than at the 1836 festival (that is over 400). Details have been located for later individual oratorio performances in Manchester that were part of the annual Hallé Concert Series rather than oratorio festivals. Generally the provincial centres had performing forces of approximately 500, a steady increase for those towns where festivals were held in the 1830s, and the Crystal Palace in London had a gigantic 3,500 musicians performing in the 1859 Handel Commemoration Festival. In assessing this table, the following questions could be posited: Why did London burst onto the scene with absolutely mammoth oratorio festivals that outdid all others in this decade? Why was no money donated to charity at the Crystal Palace festivals in London? How were social and urban changes in the towns reflected in the oratorio festivals? What was different about Manchester in that no festivals were held, only large-scale performances in their New Free Trade Hall? Why did Liverpool not continue festivals in St George's Hall (since it was built expressly for this purpose) and why was attendance so poor at their opening festival? Why did regular Leeds Festivals not eventuate for many years after the opening festival in their new town hall?

The well-established Birmingham Triennial Festivals had continued without a break since the 1830s. The performers at the festivals had increased from 400 to 500. Audiences had remained of a similar size with the best attendance at *Messiah* in 1855 of 2,597. After the premiere of Mendelssohn's 'immortal *Elijah*' in 1846, this oratorio became a mainstay of all future festivals in Birmingham. Numbers present for *Elijah* in 1852 have not been ascertained, but the press did report that 'the calls of charity bade defiance to bad

weather'.⁷¹ The attendance at *Elijah* in 1855 and 1858 increased from 1,574 to 2,004 respectively. The *Messiah* still attracted a larger audience generally, but the figures indicate how Mendelssohn's new commission had taken Birmingham by storm. In contrast, *Eli*, the commissioned work by the long-term conductor of the festival, Michael Costa, did not have the same fate. Its premiere in 1855 had an audience of 1,608 but its final performance in 1858 attracted a smaller audience of 1,093. (A page of the score included in Chapter 6 illustrates the gigantic size of the orchestra used, and its reception was discussed in Chapter 3.) The Birmingham festival had changed, incorporating the popular new work *Elijah* into every festival programme. Other 'improvements' included increasing the number of commissioned works, employing a bigger orchestra and choir, and drawing greater attendance and profits.

Birmingham had grown too as a town, and the festivals of necessity reflected this. The population had burgeoned from 17,000 in 1801, to 146,986 in 1831 and to 232,638 in 1851.⁷² The population almost doubled between 1830 (our previous point of festival reference) and 1850. Proletarianisation of the rural population into Birmingham is regarded as the main cause for this change in demographics.⁷³ This rapidly increasing population would have allowed greater numbers to attend the oratorio festivals and created a larger pool from which to increase the number of local choristers participating in the festivals.

Antje Pieper in her 2008 text *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture* examines music making in Birmingham at this time, with a comparison of festivals in Birmingham and Leipzig over the nineteenth century.⁷⁴ A text from 1853 by Lowell Mason makes similar observations and comparisons.⁷⁵ When he visited Birmingham for the 1852

⁷¹ The amount of coverage in newspapers right across the nineteenth century about inclement weather and attendance at festivals is apt. 'The Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Derby Mercury*, 15 September 1852.

⁷² Palliser, Clark, and Daunton (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, 679.

⁷³ Michael Hanagan, 'Population Change, Labor Markets, and Working-Class Militancy: the Regions around Birmingham and Saint-Etienne, 1840-1880', in John R. Gillis, Louise A. Tilly, and David Levine (eds.), *The Quiet Revolution*. (Studies in Social Discontinuity; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992), 127-45.

⁷⁴ Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture*.

⁷⁵ Mason, *Musical Letters from Abroad, including detailed accounts of the Birmingham, Norwich and Dusseldorf Music Festivals of 1852*.

festival, he drew a grim picture of the poor of Birmingham as compared to those of Düsseldorf, and their lack of involvement in musical activities:

It was otherwise here [in Birmingham], for little children and old men and women were seen clothed in filthy rags, and it was enough to put to the test the olfactory nerves of the stoutest man to crowd his way through the motley groups. The people, too, in Dusseldorf, were interested in the festival, – indeed it was the *people's festival*, and if there were some who could not hear, all took delight in seeing. But *here*, the common people are entirely cut off from the music; it is intended only for the rich, and only they can go to the expense of purchasing admittance. *There*, the people make their own music; *here*, the greatest performers, vocal and instrumental, the world affords are brought together at enormous expense, to give an exhibition of the triumph of art.⁷⁶

This vivid description stands in contrast to Briggs' assertions that Birmingham was a much more socially mobile and collaborative place than other industrial towns of Victorian Britain. Mason also describes the ticket ballots for the festival, and gives an exhaustively detailed account of the performance of *Elijah*, probably unfamiliar to most of his readers in the United States.

According to Briggs, the impressive non-conformist Rev. Dawson did much to promote the 'civic gospel' in Birmingham. In Dawson's view, the public library movement that emerged around this time was 'the largest and widest Church ever established'.⁷⁷ Briggs explains:

Dawson's view of duty was grounded in a conception of common purpose – a city transcended the social classes into which it was divided. In this sense the 'civic gospel' was a true gospel. The ideals which lay behind it were greater than the men who brought it into being.⁷⁸

Businessmen and aspiring politicians such as Joseph Chamberlain were influenced by such aspirations. This common sense of purpose for the town would have also influenced the

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 196.

⁷⁷ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 199.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 200.

festival committee and their philanthropic support of the General Hospital. Unlike London's Crystal Palace Handel Festivals that began in this decade, Birmingham was not interested in making a large profit for private enterprise.

Manchester was a different proposition. Their New Free Trade Hall, like the previous Trade Halls, was used extensively from the start as a musical and a political venue for the people. A banquet opened the hall and several days of secular musical concerts followed, culminating in a large-scale performance of *Messiah* on the final day. In no way were the concerts billed as an oratorio festival, as in other openings of majestic buildings in this decade. The musical inauguration was described as, 'Each performance ... has a marked individuality of character'.⁷⁹ Manchester was a city of individuality in every way.⁸⁰

Not only was Manchester set apart politically with its Peterloo, the Anti-Corn League, and Chartists, but the town displayed artistic individuality as well. It has already been seen that despite its grim industrial reputation Manchester manifested a great level of public interest in art, literature, and music. Manchester officially became a city in 1853, but it was not a metropolis in the modern sense; there was still no clean water or a sewerage system. The population of Manchester had increased at an astonishing rate, from 70,409 in 1801, to 142,026 in 1831, and to 303,382 in 1851. The imposing New Free Trade Hall (rebuilt on the same site as the earlier hall) opened in 1856. A large-scale performance of *Messiah* was given as a finale to the civic celebrations. Reportedly around 4,000 well-dressed people rushed into the vestibule of the hall, 'like the charge on the Malakoff', and hundreds more were refused admission.⁸¹ This massive attendance was considered 'a suitable recognition on the part of the musical people of Manchester of the attempt in this series of performances to advance the character of music in this good city'.⁸²

⁷⁹ 'The New Free Trade Hall', *The Manchester Times*, 27 September 1856.

⁸⁰ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 113.

⁸¹ 'New Free-Trade Hall', *The Manchester Times*, 18 October 1856. The reference refers to thousands of British and French soldiers who stormed Malakoff, as part of the Crimean War in the previous month.

⁸² *Ibid.*

In 1857, Manchester held a great exhibition of art treasures, the first in the provinces, which was to 'elevate taste' and provide 'educational direction'.⁸³ It attracted over 1.3 million visitors.⁸⁴ The conductor of the music at the 1857 art festival was Charles Hallé, who also established a Concert Series around this time. His acclaimed orchestral series that has survived to the present day included performances of single oratorios, with Handel's *Judas Maccabaeus* an annual favourite.

While there had been some notable events in the 1840s in the older Free Trade Hall, such as Mendelssohn conducting *Elijah*, a two-day Easter festival, and huge choral meetings of Lancashire workers (documented in Chapter 3), regular oratorio festivals did not become a feature again after 1836. It could be suggested that this irregularity was due to 'dampeners' of the likes of Pastor Gadsby, or to the tragic death of the principal singer Malibran during a festival. But perhaps the most pressing cause was formed by the fluctuating economic circumstances of Manchester over the difficult years of Depression and unemployment in the 1830s and 40s. According to Briggs, Manchester was particularly hard hit in a trade downturn, and the propensity for unrest was high. By 1855, there were 1,724 cotton warehouses as opposed to 95 cotton mills. Manchester had become increasingly dependent on trade rather than on the manufacture of cotton.⁸⁵ In this sort of fiscal climate it would have been hard to attract the regular backing of large amounts of money needed for these huge festivals. As seen in Table 7.4, Hallé's Concert Series began in 1858, and often three individual oratorios were spaced throughout the annual programme. His orchestra consisted of 60 players, and in Manchester these profitable concerts, which included regular large-scale oratorio performances, were now part of a wider orchestral and choral landscape that was emerging. Interestingly, the most popular oratorio was not *Messiah* but *Judas Maccabaeus*, reportedly an annual performance. Perhaps it could be

⁸³ Words of Prince Albert, who believed the Great Exhibition of 1851, should be followed with a stimulus to art. Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 133.

⁸⁴ Manchester Art Gallery website <http://www.manchestergalleries.org/whats-on/art-trasures-in-detail/a-city-of-art-and-industry> accessed 22 May 2009.

⁸⁵ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 133.

speculated that for Manchester, with its large assembly for the oratorio performances in a grand hall, erected as a monument to the Corn Leaguers and the Peterloo rebels, stirring tunes such as 'See, the conquering hero comes' from *Judas Maccabaeus* held an immense appeal to the psyche of its Victorian people. *Judas Maccabaeus* was even performed some years on Christmas Day in preference to the traditional *Messiah* performances in Manchester.⁸⁶

Similar arguments could be made about the lack of festivals in Liverpool as in the case of Manchester. Between the 1836 festival, when Mendelssohn's *St Paul* was premiered in England, and the opening of St George's Hall in 1854, the festivals had come to an end. While the clergy preached sermons at the beginning of the festivals in the 1830s, a certain Rev. Mr Brooks, Rector of Liverpool, appeared on the scene in 1839 and objected strongly (not unlike Pastor Gadsby in Manchester) to morning oratorio festivals being held in St Peter's.⁸⁷ Chapter 3 details the resultant public meetings and the history of the building of the gigantic St George's Hall. Yet in spite of this building being the one monumental building that came into existence entirely because of a desire for the local populace to have a secular place to hold their oratorio festivals, when the grand building was finally opened and a festival organised, the attendance was very poor and the festival made a substantial loss. As Table 7.4 shows, *Messiah* had an attendance of 1,900 at the opening festival in St George's Hall Liverpool compared to 4,000 at the *Messiah* at Manchester's Free Trade Hall inaugural celebrations two years later. Other oratorios at the opening festival had an abysmal attendance of only 800 people. The lack of interest could perhaps be due to Queen Victoria not making an appearance. Many thousands turned out to greet her at the Leeds Town Hall inauguration. London reporters were scathing, not only about the inappropriate behaviour of the audience (as discussed in Chapter 3), but also the lack of interest among

⁸⁶ 'Advertisements & Notices', *The Manchester Times*, 19 December 1849.

⁸⁷ 'Opening of St. George's Hall, Liverpool', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 24 September 1854.

the townsfolk, and explained it in the following way in an article entitled *Unmusical Liverpool*, which was reproduced in several music journals and newspapers:

Had the people of Liverpool come forward and supported what, but for their backwardness, might have elevated itself into a festival, instead of a failure, we should have had to record a success. Of each performance, morning and evening, strangers more than half filled the hall. Out of a population of about 500,000, not one in a thousand could be found to subscribe to the glory of his native town. Is it that ship-broking, dealing in cotton, and speculating on the stock exchange, must necessarily be incompatible with a love of the fine arts? Does business, as an inevitable consequence absorb refinement: or the *amor nummi* preclude a feeling of nationality? Why else should the wealthy merchants and traders have held themselves aloof on such an occasion and secreted themselves in their dingy offices, or—instead of lifting up their voices in St George’s Hall, when applause should have followed some glorification of song—joined at the stock exchange of frantic yells of losers and gainers, which arose on the declaration of some rise or fall in ‘those martyred saints the Three per Cents’? The boasted ‘Liver’ is no bird of song, and like the dog in the manger, it neither performs nor permits. It sings not itself, and suffers not others to sing.⁸⁸

While this article points to apathy toward the opening festival, another factor besides the absence of royalty could have been the high cost of tickets. Many regarded the price of one guinea to the morning oratorios as being excessive.⁸⁹ Triennial festivals did not reappear in Liverpool (detailed in Chapter 3). Of interest in Liverpool in the 1850s were the two large choral groups, the Festival Choral Society and the Philharmonic Choral Society, which co-existed harmoniously, with some members belonging to both choirs.⁹⁰

Leeds in many ways was to prove a total antithesis to Liverpool, both in the discord seen amongst its choral groups, and in the opening festival in the new Leeds Town Hall in 1858. Chapter 3 discussed the construction of Leeds Town Hall as a monument to business

⁸⁸ ‘Progress of the People: Unmusical Liverpool’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 1 October 1854. *Amor nummi* refers to a Latin phrase translated as ‘The love of money grows as our wealth increases’. The ‘Liver’ refers to the mythical seabird (often represented as a cormorant) that was Liverpool’s ancient seal of the town. ‘Three per Cents’ refers to certain foreign exchange rates. The ‘martyred saints’ could possibly refer to a Mr Edward Oliver, a merchant ship owner and investor in Liverpool, who lost everything, including his house, which was extensively reported on in *The Times* in 1854.

⁸⁹ ‘Opening of St. George’s-Hall, Liverpool’, *The Times*, 20 September 1854.

⁹⁰ Taylor, *Two Centuries of Music in Liverpool*, 14.

energy and civic pride. The opening ceremony attended by Queen Victoria and Prince Albert was a mammoth event. Over 37,000 singing Sunday School children assembled to welcome the Queen en route to the hall. Tickets for the opening were in such demand that ballots had to be drawn. Reports stated that attendees at *Elijah* totalled to 1,800, similar to the 1,900 at the Liverpool opening festival: the Leeds Town Hall was described as full. The difference was that the seating capacity of 2,000 at Leeds Town Hall was much smaller than at the other halls. Despite similar attendance at the opening oratorio, the festival in Leeds, recognized in the press for its fine singing and civic pride, stands in contrast to the purportedly mediocre singing, squawky organ, and general apathy of Liverpool folk towards their opening festival.

Reports abounded in papers around the country, often with tables comparing figures, all seriously perused by readers for superiority and progress. Compliments and rivalry appeared in the same bold statements, as seen in this homage by a Manchester paper to the new Leeds Town Hall: 'Let us trust that the Leeds Town Hall will be an object of as much curiosity in this ripe period as the Pyramids of Egypt'.⁹¹

Asa Briggs discusses the Leeds Town Hall and the open rivalry with Bradford, making comparisons with Manchester:

The building of Leeds Town Hall provides a magnificent case study of Victorian civic pride and its place in the life of provincial communities. It is most illuminating when it is studied in detail ... The story of Manchester is fascinating in its bold outline: it is the intricate pattern of problem, personality and performance which fascinates the historian of Leeds, the pavement view rather than the vista from the balloon.⁹²

Indeed, it was the personalities and resultant problems in Leeds' musical scene that were the undoing of any future festivals for many years. Disagreements between the musical 'Capulets and Montagues' of Leeds have been discussed previously. There was also animosity towards Bradford residents, and involving the fine singers from that town was

⁹¹ 'The Queen at Leeds', *The Manchester Times*, 11 September 1858.

⁹² Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 158.

not likely to overcome the 'bad blood'. Briggs, speaking generally about Bradford, begins with Leeds: 'Civic pride in Leeds expressed itself in fits and starts: it inspired great events in the life of the city, but more usually it exhausted itself in local rivalry'.⁹³ This proved to be an accurate description not only of the overall 'macro' aspects of the town, but also the particular 'micro' aspects examined here in the musical scene surrounding oratorio festivals that failed to eventuate for many years.⁹⁴

By the 1850s, London was running 'in the rear' as far as regular great musical meetings or festivals were concerned.⁹⁵ A new sort of triennial festival arose in 1859 in the Crystal Palace on a scale hitherto unseen. The Transept in the Crystal Palace was five times longer than any other new monumental hall in the country and accommodated at this festival: 27,000 in the audience, 3,500 choristers, 500 orchestral players, new 'munster' [sic] instruments, and a massive organ. A despotic conductor and a committee with superior business acumen drove the festivals forward. The receipts of the Handel Commemoration Festival totalled a startling £38,000. The profits were not donated to charity but were distributed back to the shareholders of the Crystal Palace Company that had underwritten the event.

⁹³ Ibid., 187.

⁹⁴ Recall Chapter 3, 72.

⁹⁵ See Chapter 5, 207.

Size

Again, with such powerful imagery presented above, it can be seen that Little's characteristic of 'size' had taken on nationalistic and imperialistic connotations. These sentiments could never be mutually exclusive and are an integral part of the complex picture. The nationalistic, the imperialistic, and the sublime were well considered aspects of Handel's oratorios in the eighteenth century that were carried forward in a different format as the nineteenth century unfolded. However, an ideology of the monumental propelled the festivals into something new, with an underlying shift in design. The *Daily News* espoused the rationale that 'magnitude is the favourite test' of the ever-expanding festivals:

The Londoners may therefore boast, they live in the largest city, have the largest ship floating in their river, the most wonderful Crystal Palace in their neighbourhood, and within it, the greatest orchestra in the world – no mean boast when magnitude is the favourite test and standard by which all excellence is measured and admired.⁹⁶

The metropolis had 'joined the bandwagon' and embraced an English ideology of monumentalism that drove the festival movement forward.

Breadth of subject

Little's 'breadth of subject' also contributed to this ideology. The devoutness of the audience showed the respect of 'a great nation paid to a great man [Handel]'.⁹⁷ Mass consumerism, a new feature of English society, had taken hold of the oratorio festivals, with nearly 20,000 attending one performance of *Israel in Egypt* in the Crystal Palace in 1859.

One newspaper explains the new appreciation by the masses of Handel's music:

The veneration for Handel's name and works, which, within our own generation, was confined almost exclusively to the educated classes, is now largely, if not to say universally, shared

⁹⁶ 'The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace', *Daily News*, 23 June 1859.

⁹⁷ 'Handel Festival, Crystal Palace', *The Times*, 15 June 1857.

in by the masses of this nation, and the name of George Frederick Handel is scarcely less a 'household word' in art than is that of Shakespeare in literature. It has been said, and we believe truly said, that 'Handel made England musical'. It is fitting that England should do homage to the memory of one to whom she owes a debt so great as that, and the heartiness, the goodwill, the spirit of emulation in which at the mention of a Handel commemoration all classes of musicians from all parts of the country came forward to proffer their aid, do as much honour to the conscience and feeling of the nation as to the memory of him whose glorification the festival was designed.⁹⁸

The increasing breadth of reverence for Handel and the subject of his religious oratorios are evident on a national scale and amongst all classes of society. Gigantic crowds listened to inflated musical forces perform Handel oratorios inside the new majestic buildings. The reverence shown to Handel and to the Biblical figures of his oratorio had become an integral and subconscious part of the Protestant psyche of the nation, as Linda Colley has pointed out.⁹⁹

Lasting significance

The Trial Festival and the Handel Commemoration Festival had icons of Handel on display. A great oil painting of the composer was suspended in front of the organ ('smiling as if conscious of the delight he gave to all, and by the glory he gained by his art'). Other well-known memorials and paintings were placed around the side of the orchestra, reductions of the Roubillac statues were on display, and the spinet on which Handel composed was shown to the public.¹⁰⁰

Mendelssohn's *Elijah* (1846) had taken the oratorio festivals by storm and had become almost as popular in the provinces as Handel's *Messiah*, as can be seen from the attendance figures given in Table 7.4. The dramatic themes of this oratorio, with its moral message, had immense appeal to the Victorian mind. In 1938, Gerald Abraham, writing

⁹⁸ 'The Great Handel Festival', *The Bristol Mercury*, 20 June 1857.

⁹⁹ See the discussion above.

¹⁰⁰ 'Handel Commemoration Festival at the Crystal Palace', *The Bristol Mercury*, 25 June 1859; 'The Handel Festival', *The Morning Chronicle*, 16 June 1857.

from the perspective of a different era and mind-set, highlighted some of these Victorian views:

Elijah makes hardly the slightest pretence at being a religious work till nearly at the end – the last five or six numbers – and at that point whatever vitality the music has hitherto possessed flickers peacefully out. None but a Bible-worshipping people like the Victorian English, that assumed everything Biblical, from the list of the dukes of Edom in *Genesis* to the highly erotic *Song of Solomon*, was connected with the religion of Christ, could possibly have accepted the music of *Elijah* as religious. A modern critic can hear it only as a dramatic story told in a rather unsatisfactory way in music that is occasionally genuinely dramatic.¹⁰¹

While views and appeals of religious works may have changed in general, and of Mendelssohn in particular, many scholars regard *Elijah* as a work of lasting significance. Nigel Burton describes *Elijah* as the one work ‘that did more than anything to drag British choral music belatedly into the romantic era’.¹⁰² This large-scale work, so popular in Victorian times, has left a strong testament. Little’s characteristic of a lasting significance can also be seen in a visual sense in the grand provincial buildings of Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool that appeared in the 1850s. These were lasting concrete monuments to the society of the day. The Crystal Palace was an international monument that propelled the oratorio festival movement into a bigger arena.

7.1.3 Comparison of oratorio festivals in the 1870s

Of the cities considered in this study, Bristol was the last, in 1874, to commence triennial festivals in its Colston Hall. It is illuminating to compare the dimensions of this new hall to the dimensions and audience capacity of others previously built, as shown in Table 7.5.

¹⁰¹ Gerald Abraham, *A Hundred Years of Music* (London: Duckworth, 1938), 73.

¹⁰² Nigel Burton, ‘Oratorio and Cantatas’, in Nicholas Temperley (ed.), *The Romantic Age 1800-1914* (1; London: Athlone, 1981), 218.

Characteristics of size

Monumental Building	Width	Length	Height	Square feet for orchestra	Seating
Birmingham Town Hall opened 1834 lengthened 1855	145'	65'	65'	2,656	2,200 (4,500)
Liverpool St George's Hall opened 1854	169'	74'	75'		3,000 (5,000)
Manchester New Free Trade Hall opened 1856	135'	78'	52'		3,910 (7-8,000)
Crystal Palace Sydenham Central Transept Handel Festivals from 1857	128'	380'	208'	16,016	20,000 (27,000)
Leeds Town Hall opened 1858	161'	72'	75'	2,400	2,000 (3,000)
Colston Hall opened 1867	80'	150'	70'		2,000 (3,000)

Table 7.5: Comparison of the size of halls investigated in the 1870s.
Seating numbers in brackets are the greatest recorded assemblages.

It can be seen that the floor space of the newly erected Colston Hall is quite comparable to many of the older provincial halls built in the previous decades (many of which had extensions and refurbishments by this time) and that the hall could seat an equivalent number of people (2,000 to 3,000) comfortably. With a capacity for over 20,000, the Crystal Palace still outshone any other festival venue for space and seating.

Details of festivals given in the various towns and cities are given in Table 7.6.¹⁰³

¹⁰³ There may be possible errors in this table due to poor quality newspaper print.

Town/City	Year	Oratorio Audience nos.	Receipts	Choir nos.	Orchestra nos.
Birmingham Town Hall	1873	<i>Elijah</i> 2,243 <i>Light of World</i> <i>Messiah</i> 2,213 <i>Judas</i> <i>Maccabaeus</i> 2,306	£ 2,535 £1,854 £2,893 £1,458 Total £16,097 Charity £6,577	Chorus 365 Total per. c. 500	Orchestra 139 London Opera bands: 28 VI, 26 VII, 17 cellos, 16db; 4-Fl, ob, cl, bass; 1c.bass, 2 tr, 4 horns, 3 tromb. & ophicleides 4 harps, Drums etc.
	1876	<i>Elijah</i> 2,334 <i>Resurrection</i> 1,255 <i>Messiah</i> 2,385 <i>St Paul</i> 2,289	£3,271 £1,402 £3,061 £1,393 Total £15,363 Charity £6,077	Chorus 360 Total perf. c. 500	Band 142 Strings 108 players as above
	1879	<i>Elijah</i> 1,952 <i>Moses in Egypt</i> 993 <i>Messiah</i> 1,945 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 1,325	£2,444 £1,332 £2,543 £709 Total £11,729	Chorus entirely Birmingham	As above + 2 cornets only on tenth Birmingham players
Leeds Town Hall	1 st festival 1874	<i>St Paul</i> 1,151 <i>John the</i> <i>Baptist/ Stabat</i> <i>Mater</i> 1,561 <i>Messiah</i> 1,252 People's Concert 3,800	£886 £1,186 £917 £332 Total £7,592 Charity £1,000	Chorus 273 Drawn from other towns	Orchestra 100? 70 strings
	1877	<i>Elijah</i> 1,950 <i>Joseph</i> 1,623 <i>Selections</i> 2,140 with No Messiah	Total £7,847	Chorus 300 S 79, Contra- Altos 41, Altos 41, T 65, B 67	100+ Orchestra 79 strings 9 w/winds 9 Brass (incl. 1 ophic + 2 cornets) Drums and cymbals
Liverpool St George's Hall	1874 Last festival 5 days	<i>St Paul</i> 1,240 'disappointing' <i>Creation</i> 1,148 'sparse' attend. <i>Light of the</i> <i>World</i> 1,358 'nearly full'	£963 £936 £1,055 Total £ 2,220 Charity £70	Chorus 326 92 Sopranos 76 Altos (50 F. & 20 Men) 74 Tenors 84 Basses Competition St George's Hall	Orchestra 103 78 strings 11 'woods' 10 'brasses' 4 percussion Profit from concerts not oratorios
Manchester New Free Trade Hall	Hallé Concert Series	<i>Judas</i> <i>Maccabaeus</i> c. 3 oratorios per annum			Hallé's band 72+
Bristol Colston Hall	1873 1 st festival 4 days	<i>Creation</i> 1,800 <i>Elijah</i> 2,700 <i>John the Baptist</i> <i>Messiah</i> 2,000	Total £5,783 Profits £272	Choir 300 S 80, A 60, T 80, B 80	Total perf. c. 400 Strings 16, 14,10,10, 10 W/wind 2 each 4 horns, 2 tr, tromb., 1 ophic., 1 harp, 2 drums

Town/City	Year	Oratorio Audience nos.	Receipts	Choir nos.	Orchestra nos.
	1876	<i>Elijah</i> 2,000 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> ('immense') <i>Fall of Babylon</i> <i>Messiah</i> 2,400	Total £6,473 Profits £272	Choir 310 S 90, A 70, T 60, B 80 (day 2 extra nos. from Bath)	Hallé's Band 80
	1879	<i>Samson</i> 1,562 <i>Elijah</i> 2,069 <i>Messiah</i> 1,831	Total £6,135 Profits £150	Choir 350	Hallé's Band 72+
London Crystal Palace	1871	Rehearsal 18,676 <i>Messiah</i> 21,946 <i>Selections</i> 21,330 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 23,016		Chorus 3,400 850 each of SAT & B.	Orchestra 386 Total perf. 3, 786
	1874	Rehearsal 16,731 <i>Messiah</i> 20,027 <i>Selections</i> 20,180 <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 21,901		Chorus 3,000 S 785, C/altos 581, Male altos 217, T 690, B 721	Orchestra 450 Strings- 95, 92, 63, 62, 59. W/wd in proportion 6 cornets, tr. 12 horns, euphon., ophic., perc. Total 3,450 perf.
	1877	Rehearsal <i>Messiah</i> <i>Selections</i> <i>Israel in Egypt</i> 20,343	Profits in 1880 were £16,000+	Chorus 3,500	Total c. 4,000 perf. Strings-89, 90, 66, 61, 59. 2 ophic. 1 double bassoon, 8 piccolos. 9 tromb. etc

Table 7.6 Comparison of festivals during the 1870s.

The Birmingham festivals continued steadily and receipts increased, even if the takings at oratorios (as opposed to the concerts at the festival) remained similar to those in the 1850s. Many factors influenced the total profits of the festivals. While this dissertation has considered just the oratorio performances at the festivals, it should be remembered there were balls at the earlier festivals and always many other concerts of secular music held, often in the evenings, which also raised large sums of money that are added into all the total amounts in the tables. While receipts had increased, profits and resultant donations to charity had often not kept pace proportionally, because festivals were becoming increasingly expensive to stage. It was not until the 1890s that Birmingham, Leeds, and

Liverpool were granted 'city' status. Manchester, designated a city in 1853, no longer held festivals that lasted for days, but gave large-scale oratorio performances within the well-established Hallé Concert series of the 1870s. Liverpool had one last fling, trying to reinstate the old festivals in 1874, but they failed to continue. The citizens of Leeds finally overcame all of their internal bickering, to stage their first triennial in 1874. This festival became known for its high quality of singing, and many new works were commissioned, as the Birmingham festival promoters had been doing for many years.

Bristol's triennial festivals did not begin until the 1870s, when the grand Colston Hall was erected. The festivals in Bristol demonstrated a desire to support local charities, but this rarely happened, as explained in Chapter 3. Contemporary comparisons were made between Bristol and towns of the Three Choirs Festival and its environs. Yet Bristol did not have the same large industrial environs that Birmingham had to draw on to make its festivals fiscally viable.

As health and living conditions gradually improved in the provinces, and sources of council and state funding became available to maintain hospitals and charitable causes, there seemed to be less pressure to hold oratorio festivals solely for charity; however, most festivals continued to use charitable causes as their Christian rationale. From the start, the Handel Festivals of the Crystal Palace had been private events held for private profit. This festival series seemed to show little concern for charitable causes, but much concern for dividends of the Crystal Palace Company.¹⁰⁴ While the numbers in attendance and the size of the 'band and chorus' were reported in detail, minimal publicity was given to outlay, receipts, and profits. One newspaper quipped of the Crystal Palace Company's indebtedness to Handel:

The Handel Festival of 1880 will take high rank in the series, and the shareholders of the Crystal Palace may possibly have

¹⁰⁴ Some monies paid to the Sacred Harmonic society did indirectly end up in their Benevolent Fund.

reason to be grateful to the old master for being the means of earning them a dividend.¹⁰⁵

The social and cultural comparisons between metropolitan London and the provinces are complex. Briggs states that this ‘tangled history’ remains to be written.¹⁰⁶ Regarding oratorio festivals, the differences were not static or predictable across the nineteenth century, as illustrated, for example, by the intellectual interest in Malibran’s ‘tiresome trills’ seen in a 1830s Liverpool newspaper, and the assembly of 20,000 listeners in London’s Crystal Palace in the 1870s.

Size

Little’s characteristic of ‘size’ can again be seen in the numbers of both the audiences and the performers participating at all the festivals. The dramatic increase in numbers has been well illustrated in the tables drawn up for comparison in this chapter. The Crystal Palace generally drew a staggering crowd of around 20,000 at each oratorio performance and profits around £16,000. The performers numbered 3,000 to 4,000. These figures peaked in the late 1880s then gradually fell off (see Table 5.1).

Breadth of subject

Little’s ‘breadth of subject’ can be seen in the great public interest in the importance and scope of everything connected to the festivals, as reported in the press in detail for all of these festivals. If profits or attendance decreased in any way, newspapers immediately drew public attention to the fact. With the advent of the electric telegraph, detailed reports were disseminated further, as far as Belfast, Cardiff, and Edinburgh. The topics of the oratorios, relating to Biblical texts, were revered by all. The eternal favourite remained Handel’s

¹⁰⁵ ‘The Handel Festival’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 27 June 1880.

¹⁰⁶ Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 371.

Messiah whose subject was familiar to the many people who attended the ‘morning oratorio’. A regular morning time-slot was devoted to its performance at most festivals.

Lasting significance

The lasting significance and meaning of *Messiah* is shown in an 1876 Birmingham newspaper report:

From the first note of the overture to the final ‘Amen’ the grand old oratorio [*Messiah*] breathes, and defies Time to abate one jot of its benignant [sic] power. The ‘Messiah morning’ of the festival has always been a special distinction of its own; it is not that our noble hall is filled to the remotest corner by a splendid and elegant audience, but that every word of the book, and almost every note of the music is so familiar to all. Thus listeners and performers are more nearly *en rapport* than usual; a perceptible unity and sympathy pervade the assembly, while the reverent silence in which the well-known gems are awaited, and the visible electrical thrill which follows each grand effect, are at once an expressive tribute to the genius of the man who is speaking to us out of the bygone, and an involuntary testimony to the vitality of his masterpiece.¹⁰⁷

7.2 Towards an ideology of English musical monumentalism

Little’s characteristics of a monumental artwork – size, breadth of subject and lasting significance – have been raised continually throughout this dissertation both in relation to the oratorio festivals and to the buildings in which they were performed, and need not be reiterated further. Suffice to say that from the application of the research framework to the primary source material, it is apparent that a complex ideology of monumentalism underpinned thought in a manner difficult to comprehend today. The obsession with increasing size was fundamental to the notions of progress and the sublime. Nationalism, imperialism, modernism and monumentalism overlapped to promote a thought process that valued an aesthetic of the monumental. As discussed above, a newer manifestation of the sublime had appeared. In fact, the ‘sublime’ of previous centuries increasingly became the

¹⁰⁷ ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 1 September 1876.

‘monumental’ of the nineteenth century. Newspapers continually reported facts about the size of halls, size of orchestra spaces, and even size of roofs. Attendance numbers and profits were compared between festivals and towns in newspapers throughout the country and in choral and orchestral society reports to an extent that would seem tedious today. Size equated to the sublime, power, success, and – most importantly – progress. From the size of the empire to the size of a hall, monumentalism was a fundamental ideology that drove aspects of society forward.

The oratorio festivals of English nineteenth-century society reflected an ideology of monumentalism of the time. The majestic buildings that were erected at this time paid homage to past Roman and Greek civilisations and became symbols of lasting significance to the fiscal progress and the ‘civilised’ status of society. Similarly, the oratorio performances themselves paid homage to the ‘immortal Handel’ and his heroic Biblical themes, and yet symbolised musical and cultural progress of the populace. The specific dimensions of the vast buildings, attendance numbers, size of the orchestra and choir, and profits were paramount concerns of the oratorio festivals. The surviving oratorio scores themselves remain a lasting legacy to an ideology of monumentalism that underpinned the ever expanding festivals (see Chapter 3) and mirroring the nation’s continued desire to expand its empire.

The monumental building and the hordes assembled within, glorifying the oratorio, became synonymous with expansionist ideologies and the massive vibrant festivals held inside. The Crystal Palace was viewed as a living being, an ‘organ’ itself that embraced a ‘nation at prayers’ within its walls:

[D]uring the choruses, the peal of voices seemed to swell from the building and fill the air as though the Palace itself was a vast organ. The Hallelujah chorus could be distinctly heard nearly half a mile from Norwood, and its effect, as the sound floated

on the wind, now high now low, was impressive beyond description, and sounded as if a nation was at prayers.¹⁰⁸

This unity of the building with the oratorio performance is vividly depicted when the writer states ‘the peal of voices seemed to swell from the building and fill the air as though the Crystal Palace itself was a vast organ’.¹⁰⁹ The large building and equivalent musical assemblage within, ‘like a nation at prayers’, seem on an abstract level to mutate into a unified symbiotic monument to the society of the day.

Much has been said in previous chapters about the changing society that lauded these ‘monster’ festivals. None of the festivals that have been investigated, in London or in the provinces, drew entirely on local talent. The network of railways that had evolved for trade and manufacture was necessary for festival growth. In fact, if the monumental buildings had not been in existence to accommodate the huge numbers of people, if there had been no railroads or steam trains traversing England and transporting performers and audience, and if there had been no penny post, electric telegraph, or newspapers to facilitate communication, these monumental oratorio festivals might not have been able to flourish.¹¹⁰ An ideology of an interactive musical monumentalism in turn interacted with a complex wider society that permitted and eagerly encouraged these events to take place.

It seems that the concerns with industrial profits and progress of the nation paralleled interest in profits raised for charity at most of the festivals. While the religious and charitable elements in nineteenth-century society must have contributed to the aesthetic appeal of large musical gatherings, they were not in themselves what drove the festivals forward. Great numbers of churches were built, but in reality, church attendance was

¹⁰⁸ ‘The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace’, *The Derby Mercury*, 17 June 1857. This article was reproduced in provincial newspapers around the country.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁰ The words ‘immortal Handel’ first appeared to describe his tombstone monument. See the series of monthly articles on various tombstones entitled ‘A Tour through the Cities of London and Westminster, and Parts adjacent to these Populous Cities’, *The Royal Magazine*, 1763. The June issue features Handel’s tombstone monument.

declining from the beginning of the nineteenth century.¹¹¹ A gloomy 1851 census showing declining church numbers can, however, offer insights into the complex religious demographics of various towns and lead to further questions about who was in the rapidly expanding audiences of oratorio festivals:

Nonconformist attendances made up more than 50 per cent of total attendances [on religious census day] in Bradford, Leeds, Oldham, Wolverhampton, and Sheffield, and between 40 and 50 per cent in Birmingham, Manchester, Salford, and New Castle. When the Roman Catholic group was taken into reckoning – it accounted for over 30 percent of attendances in Liverpool and over 20 per cent in Manchester – Anglicans were in a minority in all the large cities which lay within the ‘chief manufacturing districts’.¹¹²

Reading this analysis of religious denominational patronage of 1851, it seems relevant that most of the festivals in provincial towns were held in large Anglican churches in the 1830s but that by the 1850s they had moved increasingly into large secular halls. Anglicans were in the minority in the towns investigated, but they were responsible for organising and allowing the massive festivals in the 1830s, which, because of large numbers attending must have attracted an ecumenical audience. In the Birmingham festivals, for example, works were billed and even commissioned (long before Elgar’s works) that would have had an appeal to a Catholic audience. These included Mozart’s *Requiem* performed in St Philip’s Anglican Church in 1823 and, later, Gounod’s *Redemption* and requiem mass *Mors et Vita* and Dvořák’s *Requiem* and *Stabat Mater* in the Birmingham Town Hall in the 1880s. All were billed despite the risk of reduced attendance for works with a Latin text or Roman Catholic sentiments.¹¹³ In many ways, the festivals were massive events of competitive civic display, but in other ways, people of different religious denominations

¹¹¹ The national religious census day of 1851 showed that less than one in ten persons attended church in Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, and Newcastle. Briggs, *Victorian Cities*, 61.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 66.

¹¹³ One London newspaper commented that ‘the English concert-going public has not always taken kindly to compositions written to a Latin text’. ‘The Birmingham Festival’, *Daily News*, 10 October 1891.

and class background were increasingly coming together in great numbers for the festivals throughout the nineteenth century.

The grand festivals were a significant lasting statement of the progress and civic competitiveness of the urbanised nineteenth-century society. They also brought together the religious sentiments of the day and Biblical themes of the oratorio, the promotion of tonic sol-fa singing and the muscular Christianity movement, and charitable support for others from the profits. The festivals were truly a musical monument to the society of the day, seen as a means of educating the public musically, engaging large groups of people in a productive manner, and providing Christian charity to others. The provincial *Hull Packet*, keen to educate the public on the national merits of oratorio festivals, highlights the international pride and competitiveness in such an achievement:

A taste for sacred music has been greatly increased in England by the Musical Festivals, which have now, for many years, been so generally popular in the provinces; and at which the charms of music have been called in as allies to the cause of charity. The frequent union of this charming science with beneficence has been made the subject of eulogy, by Dr Burney, who says – ‘that the most honourable eulogium that can be bestowed on the power of music is, that whenever the human heart is wished to expand in charity and beneficence, its aid is frequently more called in, than that of any other art or advocate;’ and ‘from the epoch of the great assemblage of talent in their behalf ... could the details be collected together the aggregate amount of the sums collected from musical performances in this kingdom, devoted to public charities, not to speak of those for the benefit of distressed individuals, would be so great as to almost exceed belief. No other nation than this can produce such a page out of her records.’¹¹⁴

Unlike oratorio festivals in Germany, which were largely supported by the state, the English events were profit-making ventures organised by local committees with backing and subscriptions from the local populace. They were organised by the people, involved the participation of the people, and the profits were for the people. They were a truly national

¹¹⁴ ‘A Brief Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Musical Festivals’. Quotations are from Burney, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, 1784*. John Crosse, *An Account of the Grand Musical Festival held in September 1823 in the Cathedral Church of York. To which is prefixed, A sketch of the rise and progress of musical festivals in Great Britain* (York, 1825).

institution, which sprang from the uniquely English society of the day and driven forward by an idiosyncratic ideology of monumentalism.

Upon reflection, the majestic buildings investigated, with their spectrum of civic events in their locations around England, acted as a cultural prism for the society of the day and provided the catalyst that allowed the massed oratorio performances to take root and become established. Factors contributing to the ever-expanding festival movement included the cult status of large-scale oratorio festivals in a religious society, international and local competitiveness, the business acumen of various festival committees, the growing public psyche of consumerism, and the driving personality of conductors such as George Smart, Sir Michael Costa, and Sir Arthur Sullivan.

It becomes apparent how the coalescence between the grand musical structure of these performances, the thousands of performers and listeners, and the monumental architectural structure of the new urban shrines of the nineteenth century, produced the notion of an English musical monumentalism. Gigantic buildings became synonymous with the gigantic oratorio performances contained within their spaces. Like the two-faced Janus, these festivals were monuments to progress of the contemporary industrial society and to free enterprise of the day. Yet at the same time they looked to the past, idolising former societies and the heroic music of earlier composers in the new secular large-scale 'temples'.

8 Concluding Remarks

'Monumentality' turns out to be something like the elephant in the room of nineteenth-century musical culture, a topic so obvious but at the same time so huge and potentially disconcerting that musicologists have all but ignored it.¹

8.1 General findings

Using critical tools developed from the work of Stephen Little, Alexander Rehding and Georgina Born, the creation of an English musical monumentalism at various venues, both provincial and metropolitan, has been demonstrated. The hypothesis, expressed in levels of increasing complexity has been argued. A multidisciplinary approach has allowed similarities and contrasts to be drawn out, nuanced, and at times subjected to speculation, to provide a deeper understanding of the society of the day in which oratorio festivals grew to enormous proportions. The musical public of the day idolised aspects of both the past and the present. The genius of Handel and others such as Haydn, as well as that of the contemporary Mendelssohn, were praised. The majestic new buildings that were erected, often with the purpose of large-scale festivals in mind, honoured past societies, yet were symbols of the cultural and civic 'progress' of the present day. It has been acknowledged throughout the dissertation that the ideology of monumentalism overlapped and underlay nineteenth-century concepts such as those of imperial power, political strength, corporate national identity, and religious fervour in certain strata of English society.

Like a 'nation at prayers', the vast crowds in attendance at the oratorio festivals, the huge orchestras drawn from around 'the kingdom', the volunteer local choruses, the prima donnas and soloists, the conductor, and the arrangements of the music itself have all been investigated in this study. It was found that the society of the day promoted an aesthetic of continual expansion and growth as extremely desirable, which was reflected in the specific

¹ Thomas Grey, review of Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth Century Germany*, in *The Oxford University Press Catalogue* (2009).

event of the oratorio festivals. Little's characteristics of 'size', 'breadth of subject', and 'lasting significance' have been reiterated throughout the dissertation suggesting many new insights, both generally and through a comparative analysis of the towns investigated. Furthermore, from these insights, it is evident that a complex ideology of monumentalism underlay nineteenth-century cultural practice, propelling the oratorio festivals throughout the century. Monumentalism, a term more commonly associated with architecture, has been appropriated in this dissertation and made synonymous with the symbiosis between the spectacular new secular buildings and the grand English oratorio festivals held within them; hence the coining of a new concept and term here, 'English musical monumentalism'.

Another significant finding of this study has been the quantity and quality of primary source material held in archives; the identification of some sources for the first time appears to make a significant contribution to nineteenth-century musicological studies. These include examples of pull-out sections of programmes, and numerous newspaper quotations that illustrate the Victorian obsession with size. Costa's orchestral arrangements and conducting scores, the Sacred Harmonic Society Reports, scrapbooks held in the Victoria and Albert Museum and several provincial local history libraries, some of which have hitherto been only scantily perused by music scholars? The material uncovered is rich and vast, and much of it deserves to be in the public domain.

This study also employs an approach to information gleaned from several disciplines. Apart from traditional historical musicology, these include urban, social, and political history, theology, and architectural history. This breadth has assisted greatly in the comparative analysis of towns, and in particular has helped to identify and highlight different factors that influenced the waves of festival growth in England during the nineteenth century. The significance of an ideology of monumentalism is lost without painting a picture of the complex evolving society that was the backdrop for the oratorio festivals. While the topic is mainly a historical one, care was taken to include some

engagement with musical sources through comparison of Costa's 'lost' manuscripts, thus placing the specialism of this dissertation more centrally within the scope of musicology.

8.2 Limits of the study

The time span covered in this study is a sprawling one, from well before the turn of the nineteenth century, when the Birmingham Triennial Festivals commenced, to the last festival held in the Crystal Palace in 1926. While the focus is on the long nineteenth century, the choice to cover such an expansive time frame was deliberate, to develop a general knowledge of the whole span first from which further, more specific investigations could evolve. It was not difficult to think of parameters to narrow the study to a dissertation size. From Percy M. Young's list in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* of monumental buildings in which nineteenth-century oratorio festivals were held, the idea was born. With further research, the list of monumental buildings was verified but with some omissions from Young's erroneous list.² In the process of conducting the study, it has been discovered that other festivals in large nineteenth-century venues could have also been included for consideration. For example, St George's Hall erected in Bradford in 1851 also held large regular festivals at one time and could have been included in this project (and the list in *Grove*). This dissertation does not claim to cover all monumental halls and their festivals in the nineteenth century – narrowing the festivals to be investigated helped set manageable and realistic parameters.

Another limit of the study is that the scope embraces only oratorio performances. The festivals generally included many other concerts in smaller venues that were not devoted to oratorio, and sometimes attendances were higher than at the oratorios themselves. There were also whole days of *Selections* of sacred music done on a large scale that, again, were in some cases more popular and better attended than the mainstay oratorios. The balls connected to some festivals raised enormous sums of money for local charities. To expand

² Recall from Chapter 3, p. 61 that Young's list incorrectly included the town of Norwich that held festivals in St Andrews medieval hall and not in a new monumental building.

the investigation to consider this broader range of musical genres might have given a more accurate picture of the overall festival atmosphere and achievements, but this would have detracted from the focus of the argument.

8.3 Implications for further research

The topic of this dissertation is a virgin area with considerable potential for research. The most pressing areas begging for further investigation must include the virtually untouched collection of Costa scores (dozens of these massive manuscripts are held in the Royal College of Music archives and are not even individually listed in their catalogue), a biographical study of the conductors of the festivals (how did these idiosyncratic personalities keep these mammoth groups together?), solo singers (their massive fees and the difficulties of dealing with them, and the demands of their singing roles), demographics of the audiences and choirs (exactly who were their constituents in the various locations?), the evolution of oratorio/singing performing practice, and the little-examined Sacred Harmonic Society Reports (while it is evident some musicologists have consulted them, no one has undertaken a detailed study of this London choir that virtually ran the Handel Triennial Festivals, and their detailed annual reports which have survived intact).

Another area in which this study could lead to further scholarly work, is the recreation of the sound itself. What did Mendelssohn's oratorios sound like at their first performances in England? What of the massive arrangements that Costa made with the ophicleides, serpents, and seven-foot drums? While it was mentioned in the introduction that Christopher Hogwood has spoken of a need to recreate 'authentic' music performances from the nineteenth century, is it feasible or financially viable to do this? Is it likely that more live performances, such as the recreation in 2008 of the original *Elijah* in the Birmingham Town Hall, will be done? According to sound engineers, it is quite possible to recreate a digitised sound of some of Costa's defunct scores including the obsolete instruments and multiplying individual voices to represent a choir of 3,000. What would the sound have been like inside

a vast venue like the Crystal Palace with its glass walls? How would the sound outside the Crystal Palace be heard? (Recall the press reported that the music could be heard floating miles from the top of Penge Hill). Would it have been heard in waves or a continual blast of *forte*? In no way is the monumentality of such recreated performances suggested here regarded as more virtuous than that of smaller period ensembles – it is simply another aspect of historically informed performance from another era to be investigated.

Further research could also be undertaken in the area of comparative studies with festivals not only in other towns in England but in other countries. While Antje Pieper's historical study compares nineteenth-century festivals held in Birmingham and Leipzig, this research could be developed on a broader scale as developments in social and urban history allow for a much more in-depth examination of many locales.³ Comparisons could also be made between the notion of a Victorian English musical monumentalism developed here and that of a nineteenth-century German one. Using Nietzschean and nationalistic undertones, Alexander Rehding promotes the greatness of indigenous German music as a symbol for the greatness of Germany in his book *Music and Monumentality*.⁴ The German promulgation of their monumental canonic composers (whose extensive collected editions on miles of German library shelving were a top project of nineteenth-century German musicologists) could be countered with the English promulgation of genuine monumental musical practice and performance. A wide popular musical dissemination in England through participation in oratorio festivals, and a broad public understanding of music provided a different perspective of nineteenth-century monumental music. This was achieved by programme notes, music dictionaries, a great deal of sheet music and scores made available in the home by a burgeoning music publishing industry, numerous dedicated music journals for every taste, and pianos in almost every home. Eventually, in the twentieth century, a music broadcasting organization, the BBC, became the envy of the

³ Pieper, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture*.

⁴ Rehding, *Music and Monumentality*.

world – all of which created an educated public for music that no other country in Europe could claim – not even Germany, whose collected editions were not generally used or consulted outside of scholarly research. Comparative investigation of a monumental musical ideology in the nineteenth century is an area of great importance that could develop from this study.

8.4 Significance of the study

Monumentalism is a recent focus in music studies and it is apt to develop the concept with its new perspectives and insights and apply it to the little-investigated topic of nineteenth-century English oratorio festivals. As stated in Chapter 1, the main pertinent published writings in the area have been in 2000 by Howard E. Smither in Volume 4 of his *History of Oratorio*, which covers the developments in nineteenth-century English oratorio in broad brushstrokes, literally over a matter of a few pages. The present study expands on Smither's outline as well as on his article 'Messiah and Progress in Victorian England', and provides extensive details drawn from much primary source material while offering a current musicological interpretation of the events.

Other scholars including Michael Musgrave have carried out some detailed research on the Handel Triennial Festivals, noting their existence and importance, but they have indirectly criticised the value of the festivals in the course of their own work that has focused on the rise of orchestral and other concerts. This is seen when Musgrave describes the rise of orchestral concerts at this time as 'more historically significant' and the Handel festival as a 'limited vehicle for the expansion of the repertory' (orchestral presumably);⁵ he regards the 'standards of performance' of orchestral music as 'the major impetus to the development of British musical life'.⁶

⁵ Michael Musgrave, *An Audience for Classical Music: the Achievement of August Manns at the Crystal Palace* (Goldsmiths' College, 1996), 1.

⁶ Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, 67.

Today, it is regarded as sacrilegious to alter scores as Costa did, but this was commonly accepted practice until quite recently with conductors such as Malcolm Sargent rescoring others' works. Sargent explained his own philosophy when writing on the release of his second recording of *Messiah* in 1955:

The 'purists' seem to be satisfied if they listen to a performance which they believe to approximate the 'first performance'. This extraordinary thought has always filled me with amazement. Even today, the first performance is seldom the best one. After the first performance the composer often makes amendments. But in Handel's day the conditions of first performance and many subsequent ones were brought about more by circumstance than the desire of the composer. Must we today produce a Shakespeare play with a boy as a heroine, or with placards saying 'A Wood near Athens' because it was done in Shakespeare's day? No dramatic critic suggests this, but our 'musicologists' are not so intelligent.⁷

While purists still advocate 'authentic' performance to a greater or lesser extent, Sargent's comments seem full of common sense.

Contrary to Musgrave's comments, from my perusal of endless nineteenth century newspaper reviews, many of which do show a real sensitivity and insight as well as a desire to educate the public, it does not seem that any one form of musical genre at this time necessarily enjoyed a better 'standard' of musical performance than any other. The 'munster' [sic] events must have had logistical and tuning problems that were probably exacerbated by lack of rehearsal time. Despite this, the enthusiasm with which the oratorio festivals were patronised and flourished in their day was phenomenal. A change of the negative attitude towards this quasi-religious genre that was so publicly ridiculed by George Bernard Shaw is long overdue. These monumental events were dynamic, financially viable entertainments, which was not often the case with orchestral and other concerts of this time. The oratorio festivals were a strong popularist and nationalistic feature of their day, laying the foundations, and acting as a catalyst for much music making into the following century.

⁷ Sir Malcolm Sargent, 'Messiah', *The Gramophone Classical Music Guide* (April 1955), 19.

They are vitally important, not only to gaining a full understanding of nineteenth-century musical practice, but also to understanding the society of the day.

In fact, another divergent area to which this research might be applicable is current educational policies in Britain. The *Manifesto* on singing in schools across the country encourages singing on a massive scale for perhaps similar reasons to those promoted in the nineteenth century.⁸ Recently Howard Goodall, the National Singing Ambassador, has hosted large-scale choral concerts by children and young people at the Proms in 2009. These young choristers had been participating in projects across London as part of *Sing Up*, the Government funded Music Manifesto National Singing Programme. This event culminated in an equally imposing rendition of *Messiah* for the launch of a national *Sing Hallelujah* choral-singing campaign to raise money for charity. This study of a past era could give insight into the development and promotion of such large-scale singing events in today's society.

This research project has opened the doors to a vast and important area of neglected study that could be approached from many disciplines. Nineteenth-century oratorio festivals in general have been ignored by musicologists. The desire to investigate the monumental in music may seem an obvious one, as Thomas Grey points out in the epigraph, yet until now 'the elephant in the room of nineteenth-century musical culture' has generally been ignored.

This study has proved to be unique in a number of ways. From a bulb in the Victorian garden, the English oratorio festivals flourished in a prepared plot that had all the ingredients necessary to propel its growth to become a massive tree that took root and expanded to gigantic proportions in the society of its day. An ideology of monumentalism was one of the fertilisers in the plot that encouraged its growth. The nourishment that the sprawling tree provided to the identity of a past society still has many branches to be explored and fruits to be plucked and investigated by scholars. English oratorio festivals and their underlying ideology of monumentalism should no longer remain forgotten.

⁸ Howard Goodall, *Music Manifesto Report No.2* (Dfes Publications, 2006).

Bibliography

Manuscripts

- Birmingham Archives and Heritage, WK/B11/4211.
- Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 224836, L55.3.
- Birmingham Archives and Heritage, HC/GH/6/1/13.
- Birmingham Archives and Heritage, MS1721.
- Birmingham Archives and Heritage, Ref. 984957, L55.3.
- Bodleian Library, Andrew Ashe Collection, Vol. 5, Ref. 17405.d.10.
- Bodleian Library, Sundry Musical Pamphlets Tenbury e.78.
- Bristol Central Library, B1470, Bristol Reference Library RL press 2 pb Music I.
- Bristol Central Library, Bristol Musical Festival Programmes b780.65 Local Music – Bookstack F.
- British Library, Grand Musical Festival, Bristol (1814) Case 61.g.4.
- British Library, Liverpool Grand Musical Festival (1832-1836), Case 61.g.12.
- Foundling Museum London, Gerald Coke Handel Collection HC 1066 4/A/XVII CENT.
- Leeds Local & Family History Library, LQ.780.79 SP26.
- Leeds Local & Family History Library, LQ780.9 M681.
- Liverpool Record Office and Archive, 780.62.LIV.
- Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hf 942.7213 GEO.
- Liverpool Record Office and Archives, Hq 362. 73 ROY.
- Manchester Local Studies and Archives, Local Image Collection I.D. m01563.
- Manchester Archives and Local Studies, Manchester Local Image I.D. m51911.
- Manchester Local Studies and Archives, GB127.M400/1-95.
- Manchester Local Studies and Archives, Local Image Collection I.D. m51883 and I.D. m51899.
- New York City Library, Muller Collection Image I.D. 1270293.

Royal College of Music, The Novello Collection of Manuscripts 5093(i).

Royal College of Music, The Novello Collection of Manuscripts 5093 (n).

Royal College of Music, London, XL11.A.7.

Victoria and Albert Museum, National Art Library No.19606, Image Ref. 2006AV2167.

Newspapers and nineteenth-century journals

‘Cast of “Messiah”’, *Faulkner’s Dublin Journal*, 13 April 1742.

Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal, 3 February 1757.

‘A Tour through the Cities of London and Westminster, and Parts adjacent to these Populous Cities’, *The Royal Magazine*, 1763.

Bonner and Middleton Bristol Journal, 30 March 1782.

The Times, 16 August 1787.

‘To the Editor’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 19 October 1815.

The Morning Chronicle, 9 June 1817.

The Morning Chronicle, 27 March 1820.

The Morning Chronicle, 11 October 1823.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 13 September 1823.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 7 October 1826.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 16 October 1826.

North Wales Chronicle, 18 October 1827.

‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *The Hull Packet and Humber Mercury*, 7 October 1828.

Jackson’s Oxford Journal, 19 April 1828.

The Morning Chronicle, 28 November 1828.

‘Extracts from the Diary of a Dilettante: 22nd. [September]’, *Harmonicon*, 7 /1 (1829), 253-56.

‘Liverpool Musical Festival’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 8 October 1830.

‘The Musical Festivals - Handel’s Messiah’, *The Derby Mercury*, 14 September 1831.

Manchester Guardian, June 1832.

‘The Festival at Westminster Abbey’, *The Court Magazine and Belle Assemblée*, 1 August 1834.

‘Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey: Fourth Rehearsal’, *The Times*, 1 July 1834.

‘The Royal Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 3 July 1834.

Belfast News-Letter, 6 June 1834.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Times*, 8 October 1834.

‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 8 October 1834.

‘Birmingham Festival’, *The Times*, 10 October 1834.

‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Hull Packet*, 17 October 1834.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Derby Mercury*, 18 June 1834.

‘Birmingham New Town Hall during the Musical Festival’, *Preston Chronicle*, 18 October 1834.

‘Royal Musical Festival in Westminster Abbey’, *The Times*, 21 June 1834.

‘Royal Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 23 June 1834.

Derby Mercury, 27 August 1834.

Preston Chronicle, 31 May 1834.

Jackson’s Oxford Journal, 31 May 1834.

‘A Week at the Great Manchester Musical Festival’, *The World of Fashion and Continental Feuilletons*, 1 October 1836.

The Times, 10 October 1836.

‘The Fancy Dress Ball’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 17 September 1836.

‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *Caledonian Mercury*, 17 September 1836.

‘Manchester Musical Festival’, *Preston Chronicle*, 24 September 1836.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Derby Mercury*, 6 September 1837.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Morning Chronicle*, 12 September 1837.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 23 September 1837.

‘A Brief Sketch of the Rise and Progress of Musical Festivals’, *The Hull Packet*, 9 October 1840.

‘Hargreaves Choral Society: Annual Meeting of Members’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 3 September 1842.

‘The Hargreaves Choral Society’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 12 March 1842.

The Manchester Times and Gazette, 23 July 1842.

- ‘Foreign Intelligence’, *The Musical Examiner*, 2 /53 (4 November 1843), 301.
- ‘The Musical Festival’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 16 September 1843.
- ‘Great Choral Meeting of the Lancashire and Cheshire Workmen’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 8 June 1844.
- ‘Manchester Easter Grand Musical Festival’, *Manchester Guardian*, Wednesday, 10 April 1844.
- ‘Philharmonic Society’s Concert’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 August 1845.
- ‘The Birmingham Festival’, *The Times*, 27 August 1846, sec. Reviews.
- ‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Era*, 30 August 1846.
- ‘Mendelssohn’s “Elijah”: Hargreaves Choral Society’, *The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 23 April 1847.
- The Manchester Times and Gazette*, 24 April 1847.
- ‘Musical Intelligence: Rehearsal of Mendelssohn’s *Elijah*’, *The Morning Chronicle*, Saturday, 24 April 1847.
- ‘The “Elijah” at the Free Trade Hall’, *Manchester Times*, 10 February 1849.
- ‘Advertisements & Notices’, *The Manchester Times*, 19 December 1849.
- Daily News*, 12 October 1850.
- The Manchester Times*, 3 May 1851.
- ‘Opening of the Great Exhibition’, *The Manchester Times*, 3 May 1851.
- ‘Opening of the Great Exhibition’, *The Belfast News-Letter*, 5 May 1851.
- ‘Opening of the Great Exhibition—Entrance of Her Majesty and His Royal Highness Prince Albert’, *Illustrated London News*, 10 May 1851.
- ‘Opening of the Great Exhibition by Her Majesty’, *Jackson’s Oxford Journal*, 3 May 1851.
- ‘Opening of the Great Exhibition’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 4 May 1851.
- ‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Derby Mercury*, 15 September 1852.
- ‘Progress of the People: Unmusical Liverpool’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 1 October 1854.
- ‘The Opening of St. George’s Hall’, *Daily News*, 19 September 1854.
- ‘Opening of St. George’s-Hall, Liverpool’, *The Times*, 20 September 1854.

'The Opening of St. George's Hall, Liverpool', *The Manchester Times*, 20 September 1854.

'The Inauguration of St. George's Hall Liverpool', *Illustrated London News*, 23 September 1854.

'Inauguration of St. George's Hall, Liverpool', *The Leeds Mercury*, 23 September 1854.

'Opening of St. George's Hall, Liverpool', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 24 September 1854.

'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 1 September 1855.

'Birmingham Festival', *Morning Chronicle*, 30 August 1855.

'Letter to the Editor', *Liverpool Mercury*, 1 December 1856.

'New Free-Trade Hall', *The Manchester Times*, 18 October 1856.

Daily News, 20 April 1856.

The Times, 20 November 1856.

'The New Free Trade Hall', *The Manchester Times*, 27 September 1856.

'Handel Festival, Crystal Palace', *The Times*, 15 June 1857.

'The Handel Festival', *The Morning Chronicle*, 16 June 1857.

'The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace', *The Derby Mercury*, 17 June 1857.

The Times, 18 June 1857.

'The Great Handel Festival', *The Bristol Mercury*, 20 June 1857.

Building News, 4 (1858)

'The Musical Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 9 September 1858.

'The Queen at Leeds', *The Manchester Times*, 11 September 1858.

Liverpool Mercury, 13 September 1858, sec. Advertisements and Notices.

'The Leeds Musical Festival', *Leeds Intelligencer*, September 1858.

'The Great Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace', *Musical Times and Singing-Class Circular*, 9 /197 (1 July 1859), 75-83.

Daily News, 20 June 1859.

Herald and Standard, 21 June 1859.

'The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace', *Daily News*, 23 June 1859.

- 'Handel Commemoration Festival at the Crystal Palace', *The Bristol Mercury*, 25 June 1859.
- 'Handel Commemoration Festival: ONE OF THE CHOIR', *The Times*, 22 June 1859, sec. Letters to the Editor.
- 'The Handel Festival', *The Lady's Newspaper*, Saturday, June 25 1859.
- Bell's Life in London and Sporting Chronicle*, Sunday, 26 June 1859.
- 'Liverpool Philharmonic Society', *Liverpool Mercury*, 17 January 1860.
- Leeds West Riding Express*, 18 May 1861.
- 'Abandonment of the Leeds Musical Festival', *The Leeds and West Riding Express*, 18 May 1861.
- 'The Leeds Festival', *Daily Telegraph*, 20 July 1861.
- 'The Handel Festival', *The Times*, Saturday, 1 July 1865.
- 'Completion of Colston's Hall', *The Bristol Mercury*, 14 September 1867.
- Telegraph*, 25 June 1867.
- The Bristol Mercury*, Saturday 14 December 1867, sec. Advertisements and Notices.
- Daily News*, 20 June 1868.
- The Times*, 22 June 1868.
- The Bristol Mercury*, 1 February 1873, sec. Advertisements.
- 'Bach's "Grosse Passion Music"', *Athenaeum*, 2375 (3 May 1873), 574-75.
- Bristol Mercury*, 4 October 1873.
- The Bristol Mercury*, 6 December 1873.
- 'Bristol Musical Festival', *Glasgow Herald*, Wednesday 22 October 1873.
- 'The Leeds Musical Festival', *The Times*, 16 October 1874.
- The Leeds Mercury*, 18 August 1874.
- 'Handel Festivals: a Few Words Thereanent by a Musical Ignoramus', *All the Year Round*, 12 /291 (27 June 1874), 244-47.
- 'The Liverpool Musical Festival', *The Era*, 27 September 1874.
- 'Visit to Liverpool of the H. R. H the Duke of Edinburgh', *Liverpool Mercury*, 29 September 1874.

‘Liverpool Triennial Musical Festival’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 September 1874.

Athenaeum, 19 December 1874.

Athenaeum, 18 December 1875.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 1 September 1876.

‘The Bristol Musical Festival’, *Western Mail*, 18 October 1876.

‘Bristol Musical Festival’, *The Bristol Mercury*, 21 October 1876.

‘The Bristol Triennial Musical Festival’, *Daily News*, 21 October 1876.

‘Public Amusements’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 29 October 1876.

‘Leeds Musical Festival’, *The Times*, 21 September 1877.

Glasgow Herald, 7 February 1879.

‘Bristol Musical Festival Society’, *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 7 February 1879.

‘Music’, *The Examiner*, 18 October 1879.

‘The Telephone and the Leeds Musical Festival’, *The Yorkshire Post*, 15 October 1880.

The Yorkshire Gazette, 16 October 1880.

The Musical World, 16 October 1880.

‘The Handel Festival’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 27 June 1880.

Punch, 30 October 1880.

The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post, 2 September 1882.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival: Meeting of the Festival Committee’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 4 September 1882.

‘Gounod’s Oratorio’, *The Era*, 22 July 1882.

‘Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Leeds Mercury*, 31 August 1882.

‘The Birmingham Musical Festival’, *The Times*, 31 August 1882.

‘The Birmingham Musical Festival: M. Gounod’s “Redemption”’, *Aberdeen Weekly Journal*, 31 August 1882.

‘Handel Bi-Centennial Festival’, *The Musical Times and Singing Class Circular*, 26 /509 (1 July 1885), 397-99.

- 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 20 June 1885.
- 'Bristol Musical Festival: First Day's Performances', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 21 October 1885.
- The Dart: The Midland Figaro*, 22 May 1885.
- 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Times*, 23 October 1885.
- 'Handel's *Messiah* according to the original score', *Monthly Musical Record*, 16 /181 (1 January 1886), 18.
- 'The Bristol Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 23 October 1888.
- 'Bristol Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 27 August 1888.
- 'Bristol Musical Festival: First Day', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 23 October 1890.
- The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 27 December 1890.
- 'The Birmingham Festival', *Daily News*, 10 October 1891.
- 'Musical Festival Society: Meeting of Guarantors', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 15 December 1893.
- 'Music in Bristol', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 15 September 1896.
- 'The Musical Festival', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 18 January 1896.
- 'The State Pageants of the Victorian Era', *English Illustrated Magazine*, 166 (July 1897), 381.
- 'After the Fire', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 3 September 1898.
- 'The Talk of Bristol', *The Bristol Mercury and Daily Post*, 8 September 1898.
- 'The Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 October 1900.
- 'Birmingham Musical Festival', *The Graphic*, 6 October 1900.
- 'Musical and Dramatic Notes: the Birmingham Festival', *The Leeds Mercury*, 12 October 1900.
- 'St. George's Hall Organ Changes: It's 75 Year History', *Liverpool Post and Mercury*, 10 March 1930.
- 'Why St. George's Was Built', *Evening Express* (Liverpool), 21 March 1934.
- 'The Crystal Palace: Mystery of the Fire', *The Times*, 2 December 1936.
- The Times*, 17 December 1936.

The Daily Telegraph, 12 December 2001.

Liverpool Daily Post, 9 June 2005.

BENNETT, JOSEPH, 'Handel: Some Remarks on the Man and His Genius', *The Musical Times*, Supplement (14 December 1893), 5-14.

CECILIA, 'Handel's "Messiah": When First Performed in Bristol?' *To the Editor of the Bristol Times and Mirror*, 3 November 1890.

HILLER, JOHN ADAM, 'Account of the Performance of Handel's "Messiah" (Berlin, 1786)', *New York Times*, 1 May 1892.

JERROLD, DOUGLAS, 'Crystal Palace', *Punch*, 2 November 1850.

KETTLE, MARTIN, *The Guardian*, 23 August 2002.

SALA, GEORGE AUGUSTUS H. F., *Twice Round the Clock; or, The Hours of the Day and Night in London* (London, 1859).

SULMAN, T., 'The Bristol Music Festival: Views in Bristol', *Illustrated London News*, 25 October 1873.

WINTOUR, PATRICK, 'In Liverpool's Footsteps: Now Every City can aim to be Britain's Capital of Culture', *The Guardian*, 7 January 2009.

Primary sources

An Account of the Manchester Musical Festival, 1828, ... with a description of the characters who attended the Grand Fancy Dress Ball (Manchester Musical Festival, 1828).

Sacred Harmonic Society Annual Reports, 9 vols. (Royal College of Music Collection, 1832-1878).

'Festival at Westminster Abbey', in *The Hansard Catalogue and Breviate of Parliamentary Papers* (House of Lords, 22; London, 1834).

The Musical Times (1844-1900).

Rimbault's Recollections of the Handel Festival. No.1: The Messiah (London: Chapell & Co., 1857).

Bristol Triennial Festival Programme, 1873.

The Fourth Bristol Triennial Festival Programme, 1882.

Bristol Triennial Festival Programme, 1896.

'The Music in the Provinces', *Musical Times*, 55 /860 (1 October 1914), 626-28.

ARGENT, W. I., *Half-a-Century of Music in Liverpool: The Philharmonic Jubilee* (reprinted from the *Liverpool Mercury*; Liverpool: Egerton Smith & Co., 1889).

BERLIOZ, HECTOR, *A Treatise upon Modern Instrumentation and Orchestration: containing an exact table of the compass, a detail of the mechanism, and a study of the quality of tone, and expressive character of various instruments; accompanied by numerous examples in score*, trans. Mary Cowden Clarke (2nd edn., Novello's Library for the Diffusion of Musical Knowledge: Theoretical Series 7; London: Novello Ewer and Co., 1858).

---, 'Post-Scriptum: Lettre adressée avec le manuscrit de mes mémoires à M*** qui me demandait des notes pour écrire ma biographie', in *Mémoires de Hector Berlioz* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1878).

BOWLEY, ROBERT, *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1862: Programme of Arrangements* (London, 1862).

---, *The Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1865: Programme of Arrangements* (London: Robert K. Burt, 1865).

---, *The Sacred Harmonic Society: A Thirty-Five Years' Retrospective* (London: Sacred Harmonic Society, 1867).

BOWLEY, ROBERT K., *The Handel Commemoration Festival at the Crystal Palace in 1859: Programme of Arrangements* (London, 1859).

- BOWLEY, ROBERT KANZOW, *The Third Great Triennial Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace, June, 1868: Programme of Arrangements* (London: Robert K. Burt, 1868).
- BUNCE, JOHN THACKRAY, *The Birmingham General Hospital and Triennial Musical Festivals: a series of papers from 'Aris's Birmingham Gazette' ... with additions.* (Birmingham: Benjamin Hall, 1858).
- , *A History of the Birmingham General Hospital and the Musical Festivals* (Birmingham: Cornish Brothers, 1873).
- BUNYAN, JOHN, *The Pilgrim's Progress, from this World to that which is to Come* (new edn.; Edinburgh, 1799).
- BURNEY, CHARLES, *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, and the Pantheon, May ... and June ... 1784, in Commemoration of Handel* (London, 1785).
- CATT, GEORGE R., *The Pictorial History of Manchester* (London: Pictorial Times Office, 1845?).
- COSTA, MICHAEL, BARTHOLOMEW, WILLIAM and LUCAS, CHARLES, *Eli: an Oratorio* (London: Addison Hollier & Lucas, 1856).
- COSTA, MICHAEL, *Eli: Favourite Airs for Piano* (London: Joseph Williams, 1884).
- COSTA, SIR MICHAEL, *Philistines, Hark! Solo and Chorus* (Popular Choruses in Tonic Sol-fa 4; London: J. Williams, 1896).
- CROSSE, JOHN, *An Account of the Grand Musical Festival held in September 1823 in the Cathedral Church of York. To which is prefixed, A sketch of the rise and progress of musical festivals in Great Britain* (York, 1825).
- CURWEN, JOHN SPENCER, BANKS, MRS. T. L. and CURWEN, JOHN, *Memorials of John Curwen* (London: J.S. Curwen, 1882).
- GADSBY, WILLIAM and PARKINSON, RICHARD, *Musical Festivals and their Patronizing Clergy dissected by the knife of God's Truth ... together with a letter to the Rev. Richard Parkinson ... and a few thoughts for the consideration of the evangelical clergy* (4th edn.; London /Manchester: R. Groombridge and Son, 1846).
- GROVE, GEORGE, FULLER-MAITLAND, J. A. and WODEHOUSE, EDMUND R., 'Mendelssohn', in *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians: (A.D. 1450-1880)*, 4 vols. (2; London: Macmillan, 1879).
- HANDEL, GEORGE FRIDERIC, JENNENS, CHARLES and MOZART, WOLFGANG AMADEUS, F.G. *Händel's Oratorium: Der Messias* (Leipzig: Bei Breitkopf & Härtel, 1803).
- , *Handel's Sacred Oratorio, The Messiah* (London: J. Alfred Novello, 1859).
- HAWEIS, HUGH REGINALD, *Music and Morals* (London, 1871).

- HILL, DANIEL, *A History of the Sacred Harmonic Society: Its Origin, Rise, and Progress* (London: Published at the office of the Society, 7 John Street, Adelphi, 1882).
- HOOPER, JOSEPH GRAHAM, 'A Survey of Music in Bristol', (1963).
- HUSK, WILLIAM HENRY, *An Account of the Musical Celebrations on St. Cecilia's Day in the Sixteenth, Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: To Which is Appended a Collection of Odes on St. Cecilia's Day* (London: Bell and Daldy, 1857).
- LIU, YEN-LING, 'Musical Effects and Musical Architecture: Two Models of Monumentality and the Case of Liszt's Symphonic Style', paper given at American Musicological Society (Allegheny Chapter), West Virginia University, 25 October 2008.
- MADDISON, ROBERT, *An Examination of the Oratorios Which Have Been Performed This Season at Covent-Garden Theatre* (London: G. Kearsly, R. Davis, J. Walter, 1763).
- Manchester, The Henry Watson Music Library, McRQ 780.69 Me9.
- MASON, LOWELL, *Musical Letters from Abroad, including detailed accounts of the Birmingham, Norwich and Dusseldorf Music Festivals of 1852* (Boston, 1853).
- MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY, FELIX, *Elia: ein Oratorium nach Worten des alten Testaments: Op. 70* (Bonn: N. Simrock, 1847).
- MENDELSSOHN BARTHOLDY, FELIX and MOSCHELES, FELIX, *Letters of Felix Mendelssohn to Ignaz and Charlotte Moscheles* (London: Trèubner, 1888).
- OUSELEY, FREDERICK ARTHUR GORE, WILLIS, ROBERT and DONALDSON, JOHN, *Crystal Palace Company: Grand Organ: Preliminary Report to the Directors* (London: Blades East & Blades, 1853).
- PARRY, JOHN, *An Account of the Royal Musical Festival, Held in Westminster Abbey, 1834, Drawn up from Official Documents* (London: Cramer, Addison and Beale, 1834).
- PAXTON, JOHN, *What is to Become of the Crystal Palace?* (London: Badbury & Evans, 1851).
- PYE, CHARLES, *A Brief Account of the General Hospital near Birmingham, together with the Musical Festivals Celebrated for its Benefit* (Birmingham, 1820).
- ROCKSTRO, WILLIAM, 'Oratorio', in George Grove and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (eds.), *A Dictionary of Music and Musicians: A.D. 1450-1880*, 4 vols. (2; London: Macmillan, 1879).
- RYLEY, JOHN, *A History of the Town and Parish of Leeds* (Leeds: s.n., 1797).
- SHAW, WILLIAM ARTHUR, *Manchester Old and New* (London, 1894-6).
- SMITH, ADAM, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (2; Dublin: Printed for Messrs. Whitestone and 19 others, 1776).

SPARK, FREDERICK R. and BENNETT, JOSEPH, *History of the Leeds Music Festivals 1858-1889* (2nd edn.; Leeds: Novello Ewer, 1892).

TALLIS, JOHN and STRUTT, JACOB GEORGE, *Tallis's History and Description of the Crystal Palace, and the Exhibition of the World's Industry in 1851* (London, 1852).

Secondary literature

The Colston Hall, Bristol (Bristol: Harvey Barton & Son, 1903).

A Century and a Half in Soho: A Short History of the Firm of Novello, Publishers and Printers of Music, 1811-1961 (London: Novello, 1961).

Handel's Conducting Score of 'Messiah': reproduced in facsimile from the manuscript in the library of St Michael's College, Tenbury Wells, ed Watkins Shaw (London: Scholar Press for the Royal Musical Association, 1974)

The Oxford English Dictionary, eds. J. A. Simpson and E. S. C. Weiner, 20 vols. (2nd edn., 17; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989)

A Collector's Messiah-Historic Handel Recordings (1994) (Koch Historic, B000001SKS) 2 Discs.

A Brief History of Leeds Town Hall (Leeds: Leeds Leisure Service, 1996).

'The Elusive Metropolitan Culture', in Peter Clark (ed.) *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

The Concise Oxford Dictionary of Music, eds. Michael Kennedy and Joyce Bourne Kennedy (5th edn., Oxford Paperback Reference; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).

The Holy Bible: King James Version (Reference edn.; Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 2008).

St. George's Hall (Liverpool Architectural Society, 2008).

19th-Century Music, ed. Lawrence Kramer (Berkeley: University of California Press, c1977-).

ABRAHAM, GERALD, *A Hundred Years of Music* (London: Duckworth, 1938).

ADAMS, RICHARD, *A Book of British Music Festivals* (London: Royce, 1986).

AHRENS, CHRISTIAN, 'Technological Innovations in Nineteenth-Century Instrument Making and their Consequences', *The Musical Quarterly: Orchestra Issue*, 58 /2 (Summer 1996), 332-40.

ALLESCH, CHRISTIAN G., *Geschichte der Psychologischen Aesthetik [History of Psychological Aesthetics]* (Göttingen: Verlag für Psychologie, 1987).

ALLIS, WILFRED, 'The Gentlemen's Concerts: Manchester, 1777-1920', M. Phil. Thesis (University of Manchester, Department of Sociology 1995).

ASPDEN, SUZANNE, "'Fam'd Handel Breathing, tho' Transformed to Stone": The Composer as Monument', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 55 /1 (Spring 2002), 39-90.

- AUERBACH, EMILY, 'John Bull and His "Land Ohne Musik"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 21 (1993), 67-88.
- AUERBACH, JEFFREY and HOFFENBERG, PETER, *Britain, the Empire, and the World at the Great Exhibition of 1851* (London: Ashgate, 2008).
- AUERBACH, JEFFREY A., *The Great Exhibition of 1851: A Nation on Display* (London: Yale University Press, 1999).
- BAINES, ANTHONY C. and MYERS, ARNOLD, 'Cornet', in S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (eds.), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd. edn., 6; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- BARBIER, PATRICK, *La Malibran: Reine de l'Opéra Romantique* (Paris: Pygmalion, 2005).
- BARKER, DUNCAN, 'Mackenzie's *Rose of Sharon*: Continental Prima Donna or Norfolk Lass?' in *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (2; Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999).
- BARKER, KATHLEEN, *The Theatre Royal, Bristol, 1766-1966: Two Centuries of Stage History* (London: Society for Theatre Research, 1974).
- BARKER, THEO, 'London: A Unique Megalopolis', in Theo Barker and Anthony Sutcliffe (eds.), *Megalopolis: The Giant City in History* (New York: St Martin's Press, 1993).
- BARRETT, MARY and CLARKE, CYNTHIA, *Old Leeds: a Collection of Local History Stories* (Leeds Royal Park Middle School, 1979).
- BATE, PHILIP and TARR, EDWARD H., 'Wieprecht, Wilhelm', in S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (eds.), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd. edn., 27; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- A Temple for the Merchant Princes* (BBC Radio 3, 1977), BAYLEY, STEPHEN (dir.).
- BEALE, ROBERT, *Music, Money, Maestros & Management: the Hallé, a British Orchestra in the 20th Century* (Manchester: Forsyth Brothers, 2000).
- BEAVER, PATRICK, *The Crystal Palace, 1851-1936: a Portrait of Victorian Enterprise* (London: Hugh Evelyn Ltd, 1970).
- BEINER, RONALD, *Theorizing Nationalism* (SUNY Series in Political Theory; Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1999).
- BELL-KNIGHT, C. A., *The Rise and Fall of the Biggest Ever Glass Container* (Bath: Bell-Knight, 1977).
- BENNETT, WILLIAM, *Birmingham Town Hall Centenary, 1834-1934* (Birmingham, UK: City of Birmingham School of Printing Central School of Arts & Crafts, 1934).
- BENNETT, WILLIAM STERNDALÉ, 'Lecture 1: London and Sheffield 1858-1859', in Nicholas Temperley (ed.) *Lectures on Musical Life* (Footbridge: Boydell, 2006).

- BERLIOZ, HECTOR and STRAUSS, RICHARD, *Treatise on Instrumentation*, trans. Theodore Front (New York: Dover, 1991).
- BEVAN, CLIFFORD, 'Sommerphone', in S. Sadie and J. Tyrrell (eds.), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd. edn., 23; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- BIGET, MICHELLE, 'De l'idée du monumental dans la musique française', *Les Cahiers du CIREM* /14-15 (Dec-March 1989-1990), 57-63.
- BIRD, ANTHONY, *Paxton's Palace* (London: Cassell, 1976).
- BLANNING, TIM C. W., *The Culture of Power and the Power of Culture: Old Regime Europe, 1660-1789* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).
- BODEN, ANTHONY and WILSON, CHRISTIAN, *Three Choirs: a History of the Festival: Gloucester, Hereford, Worcester* (Stroud: Alan Sutton, 1992).
- BORN, GEORGINA, *Rationalizing Culture: IRCAM, Boulez, and the Institutionalization of the Musical Avant-garde* (Berkeley University of California Press, 1995).
- BORN, GEORGINA and HESMONDHALGH, DAVID, *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
- BORN, GEORGINA, *Uncertain Vision: Birt, Dyke and the Reinvention of the BBC* (London: Vintage, 2005).
- BORSI, FRANCO, *The Monumental Era: European Architecture and Design 1929-1939* (London: Lund Humphries, 1987).
- BOWEN, JOSÉ ANTONIO (ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Conducting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003)
- BRIERLY, PETER, 'Christian' England: *What the Church Census Reveals* (London: MARC Europe, 1991).
- , *The Tide is Running Out* (London: Christian Research, 2000).
- BRIGGS, ASA, *Victorian Cities* (London: Odhams Press, 1963).
- BROWN, A. PETER, *Performing Haydn's The Creation: Reconstructing the Earliest Renditions* (Bloomington: Indiana Press, 1986).
- BUHLER, JAMES, review of Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge, 1999), in *19th-Century Music*, 26/2 (2002), 184-91.
- BURROWS, DONALD, *The Cambridge Companion to Handel* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- BURTON, NIGEL, 'Oratorio and Cantatas', in Nicholas Temperley (ed.) *The Romantic Age 1800-1914* (1; London: Athlone, 1981).

- BURTON, NIGEL and HORNER, KEITH, 'Costa, Sir Michael', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 6; London: Grove, 2001).
- BURTON, NIGEL and FULLER, SOPHIE, 'Sainton-Dolby [née Dolby], Charlotte (Helen)', in S. Saide and J. Tyrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 22; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- BUSHNELL, HOWARD, *Maria Malibran: A Biography of the Singer* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1979).
- BUTT, JOHN, 'Choral Music', in Jim Samson (ed.) *Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).
- BUZARD, JAMES, CHILDERS, JOSEPH W. and GILLOOLY, EILEEN, *Victorian Prism: Refractions of the Crystal Palace* (London: University of Virginia Press, 2007).
- CALDWELL, JOHN, *The Oxford History of English Music: Volume 2 from c.1715 to the Present Day*, 2 vols. (2; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999).
- CANNADINE, DAVID, *Lords and Landlords: the Aristocracy and the Towns, 1774-1967* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1980).
- , *Patricians, Power, and Politics in Nineteenth-Century Towns* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).
- , 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c.1820-1977', in Eric Hobsbawm and Terrence Ranger (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- CARRINGTON, DOUGLAS R., *St. George's Hall: The Hall, Organ and Organists* (Liverpool City Council, 1981).
- CHARTROU-CHARBONNEL, JOSEPHE, *Les Entrées solennelles et triomphales à la Renaissance* (Paris, 1928).
- CHUA, DANIEL K. L., 'On Monuments', in *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- CLARK, PETER, *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981).
- CLARKE, ERIC F. and COOK, NICHOLAS (eds.), *Empirical Musicology: Aims, Methods, Prospects* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004)
- COLLEY, LINDA, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (electronic edn.; London: Pimlico, 2003).
- COOK, NICHOLAS, *Music: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

- COSGROVE, DENIS E., *Social Formation and Symbolic Landscape* (Totowa, N.J.: Barnes & Noble Books, 1985).
- COWGILL, RACHEL and RUSHTON, JULIAN (eds.), *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2006)
- CUNNINGHAM, COLIN, *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1981).
- DAHLHAUS, CARL, *Das Problem Mendelssohn* (Studien zur Musikgeschichte des 19 Jahrhunderts 41; Regensburg: Gustav Bosse Verlag, 1974).
- , *Between Romanticism and Modernism: Four Studies in the Later Nineteenth Century*, trans. Mary Whittall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1980).
- , *Ludwig van Beethoven: Approaches to his Music*, trans. Mary Whittall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
- DALE, CATHERINE, *The Bridlington Musical Festival 1894-1903* (Leicester: Matador, 2004).
- DEAN, WINTON, *Handel's Dramatic Oratorios and Masques* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).
- DENNIS, RICHARD, *English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography* (Cambridge Studies in Historical Geography, 4; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).
- DEWEY, JOHN, *Art as Experience* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1934).
- DIBBLE, JEREMY, *C. Hubert H. Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998).
- , *John Stainer: A Life in Music* (Music in Britain, 1600-1900; U.K.: Boydell & Brewer, 2007).
- DICKENS, CHARLES, *Hard Times for These Times* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1854).
- DOORDAN, DENNIS P., review of Franco Borsi, *The Monumental Era* (London, 1987), in *The Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, 48/1 (1989) 88-9.
- DOUGHTY, MARTIN, *Building the Industrial City* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986).
- DRIVER, FELIX and GILBERT, DAVID, *Imperial Cities: Landscape, Display and Identity* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999).
- DUNNETT, RODERIC, 'Seven Ages of Oratorio', *Church Times*, 1 February 2004.
- DYOS, H. J. and WOLFF, MICHAEL, *The Victorian City: Images and Realities*, 2 vols. (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973).

- DYOS, H. J., *Exploring the Urban Past: Essays in Urban History*, eds. David Cannadine and David Reeder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).
- EDWARDS, F. G., *The History of Mendelssohn's Oratorio 'Elijah'* ([S.l.]: Novello, 1896).
- EHRlich, CYRIL, *The Music Profession in Britain since the Eighteenth Century: A Social History* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).
- , review of Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, in *Music & Letters*, 77/1 (1996), 130-1.
- ELLIOTT, ANNE, *The Music Makers: a Brief History of the Birmingham Triennial Music Festivals 1784-1912* (Birmingham Library Services, 2000).
- ELLIS, KATHARINE, *Interpreting the Musical Past: Early Music in Nineteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).
- ELLSWORTH, THERESE and WOLLENBERG, SUSAN (eds.), *The Piano in Nineteenth-Century British Culture: Instruments, Performers and Repertoire* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007)
- ENGELS, FRIEDRICH and KELLEY, FLORENCE, *The Condition of the Working-Class in England in 1844* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1892).
- ETLIN, RICHARD A., *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002).
- EXELL, KAREN, 'Whose Monument? Ancient Egyptian votive stelae as Markers of Identity', *Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph*, 66 (2007), 125-38.
- FITZLYON, APRIL, *Maria Malibran: Diva of the Romantic Age* (London: Souvenir, 1987).
- FLANDERS, JUDITH, *Consuming Passions: Leisure and Pleasure in Victorian Britain* (London: Harper Press, 2006).
- FOSTER, ANDY and DEMIDOWICZ, GEORGE, *Birmingham* (Pevsner Architectural Guides; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005).
- FRASER, DEREK, *Municipal Reform and the Industrial City* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).
- FRIEMERT, CHUP, *Die Gläserne Arche: Kristallpalast London 1851 und 1854* (München: Prestel-Verlag, 1984).
- FUJINO, KAZUO, 'Burukkuna to "monyumentaru" hyosho', in *Anton Burukkuna botsugo 100 nen* (Ongakugeijutsu [Japan]: Festschrift, June 1995).
- GOEHR, LYDIA, *The Imaginary Museum of Musical Works: an Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (rev. edn.; New York: Oxford University Press, 2007).
- GOMME, ANDOR HARVEY, JENNER, MICHAEL and LITTLE, BRYAN D. G., *Bristol: An Architectural History* (London: Lund Humphries, 1979).

- GOODALL, HOWARD, *Music Manifesto Report No.2* (Dfes Publications, 2006).
- GORSKY, MARTIN, *Patterns of Philanthropy: Charity and Society in Nineteenth-Century Bristol* (Royal Historical Society Studies in History; Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 1999).
- GREY, THOMAS, review of Alexander Rehding, *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth Century Germany*, in *The Oxford University Press Catalogue* (2009).
- GROVE, GEORGE, 'Mendelssohn's Oratorio "St. Paul"', *The Musical Times*, 50 /792 (1909), 92-94.
- GUNN, SIMON, *The Public Culture of the Victorian Middle Class: Ritual and Authority and the English Industrial City, 1840-1914* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2000).
- HALL, DONALD E., *Muscular Christianity: Embodying the Victorian Age* (Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth-Century Literature and Culture 2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994).
- HANAGAN, MICHAEL, 'Population Change, Labor Markets, and Working-Class Militancy: the Regions around Birmingham and Saint-Etienne, 1840-1880', in John R. Gillis, Louise A. Tilly and David Levine (eds.), *The Quiet Revolution*. (Studies in Social Discontinuity; Cambridge: Blackwell, 1992).
- HANDEL, GEORGE FRIDERIC, *Israel in Egypt: Oratorio in Three Parts. HWV 54*, eds. Annette Landgraf and Edward Willes (Hallische Händel-Ausgabe: Ser. 1, Bd 14; Kassel; London: Bärenreiter, 1999).
- HANDFORD, MARGARET, *Sounds Unlikely: Six Hundred Years of Music in Birmingham, 1392-1992* (Birmingham: Birmingham and Midland Institute, 1992).
- HARPER-SCOTT, J. P. E., 'Medieval Romance and Wagner's Musical Narrative in the Ring', *19th-Century Music*, 32 /3 (Spring 2009), 211-34.
- HARRIS, ELLEN T., review of Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios* (Cambridge, 1995), in *The Journal of Modern History*, 69/2 (1997), 337-40.
- HAWEIS, HUGH REGINALD, *My Musical Life* (8th edn.; London: Longmans Green, 1912).
- HERBAGE, JULIAN, 'The Oratorios', in Gerald Abraham (ed.) *Handel: A Symposium* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954).
- HERBERT, TREVOR and WALLACE, JOHN, *The Cambridge Companion to Brass Instruments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
- HERBERT, TREVOR, 'Victorian Brass Bands', in Andrew Leyshon, David Matless and George Revill (eds.), *The Place of Music* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998).

- HIGGINS, PAULA, 'The Apotheosis of Josquin des Prez and Other Mythologies of Musical Genius', *Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 57 /3 (2004), 443-570.
- HOBBSAWM, E. J. and RANGER, T. O., *The Invention of Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- HOBBSAWM, E. J., *Nations and Nationalism since 1780: Programme, Myth, Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- , *The Age of Capital, 1848-1875* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1995).
- , *The Age of Empire, 1875-1914* (London: Phoenix, 2000).
- HOGWOOD, CHRISTOPHER, *Music at Court* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1980).
- HOGWOOD, CHRISTOPHER, et al., 'Recordings of Purcell, Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn: a Survey of the Past, an Assessment of the Present, and Speculation about the Future', paper given at Purcell, Handel, Haydn and Mendelssohn: Anniversary Reflections, New College, Oxford, 28 March 2009.
- HORN, PAMELA, *Pleasures and Pastimes in Victorian Britain* (Stroud: Sutton, 1999).
- HORNER, KEITH, 'Louis Jullien', in George Grove, Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 13; London: Grove, 2001).
- HORTON, PETER, '“A Organ should be an Organ”: S. S. Wesley and the Organ in St George's Hall, Liverpool', *Journal of the British Institute of Organ Studies*, 22 (1998), 84-125.
- HOWES, FRANK STEWART, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1966).
- HUGHES, MEIRION and STRADLING, R. A., *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music* (2nd edn., Music and Society; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
- HUGHES, MEIRION, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press, 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).
- HUME, ROBERT D., *Reconstructing Contexts: The Aims and Principles of Archaeo-Historicism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999).
- HUNT, DONALD, *Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival* (Worcester: Osborne Heritage, 1999).
- HUYSSSEN, ANDREAS, 'Monumental Seduction', *New German Critique*, 69 (Autumn 1996), 181-200.
- , *Present Pasts: Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory* (Cultural Memory in the Present; Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 2003).

- HYAM, RONALD, *Britain's Imperial Century, 1815-1914: A Study of Empire and Expansion* (3rd edn.; New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).
- HYDE, DEREK, *New Found Voices: Women in Nineteenth-Century English Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998).
- JENKINS, JANE and EVANS, ERIC J., *Victorian Social Life: British Social History 1815-1914* (Advanced History Sourcebooks; London: John Murray, 2002).
- JOHNSON, JAMES H. and POOLEY, COLIN G. (eds.), *The Structure of Nineteenth Century Cities* (London: Croom Helm, 1982)
- KAIKA, MARIA and THIELEN, CORINNA, 'Form Follows Power: a Genealogy of Urban Shrines', *City*, 10 /1 (April 2006), 59-69.
- KAMHI, MICHELLE MARDER, 'Thought and Feeling in Art: an Integrated View', *Aristos*, (November 2007) <<http://www.aristos.org/aris-07/thoughtinart.htm>>, accessed 2 February 2009.
- KAUFMAN, TOM, 'Wagner vs. Meyerbeer', *The Opera Quarterly*, 19 /4 (2003), 644-69.
- KENNEDY, MICHAEL, *The Hallé Tradition: a Century of Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1960).
- , 'Manchester before Hallé', *Manchester Sounds*, 1 (2000), 5-11.
- , 'Manchester 2', in George Grove, Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 15; Oxford: Grove, 2001).
- KENYON, NICHOLAS (ed.), *Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd, 2007)
- KING, ED, '19th Century British Library Newspapers', < http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2138bncn?BNCN_researchguide.htm >, accessed 1 September 2010.
- KLEINERTZ, RAINER, 'Subjektivität und Öffentlichkeit: Liszt's Rivalität mit Thalberg und ihre Folgen', *Europaischen Liszt-Symposions*, Wien (1991), 58-67.
- KOURY, DANIEL J., *Orchestral Performance Practices in the Nineteenth Century: Size, Proportions, and Seating* (Studies in Musicology; No. 85; Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1986).
- KUMAR, KRISHAN, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).
- LANDGRAF, ANNETTE, 'The Handel Festival at the Crystal Palace: Cultural and Economic Achievement Combined', paper given at The Handel Institute: Commemorating Handel, London, 24 November 2007.
- LANGFORD, PAUL, 'Review of *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* by Susan Wollenberg', *Music and Letters*, 85 /1 (2004), 107-8.

- LANGLEY, LEANNE, 'The Musical Press in Nineteenth-Century England', *Notes*, 46 /3 (1990), 583-92.
- , review of Jeremy Dibble and Bennett Zon (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies* (Aldershot, 2002), in *Victorian Studies*, 46/2 (2004), 349-51.
- LE HURRAY, PETER and DAY, JAMES, *Music and Aesthetics in the Eighteenth and Early-Nineteenth Centuries* (Abridged edn.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
- LEVIN, HARRY, 'Two Monumental Death-Scenes', in Bernhard Fabian and Kurt von Rosador (ed.) *Shakespeare: Text, Language, Criticism: Essays in Honour of Marvin Spevack* (Hildesheim: Olms-Weidmann, 1987).
- LINDGREN, LOWELL, 'Oratorios Sung in Italian at London, 1732-82', paper given at the International Symposium *L'Oratorio Musicale Italiano e i Suoi Contesesti*, Perugia, 18-20 September 1997.
- LINSTRUM, DEREK, *Towers and Colonnades: the Architecture of Cuthbert Brodrick* (Leeds: Leeds Philosophical and Literary Society, 1999).
- LITTLE, STEPHEN, --- *Isms: Understanding Art* (London: Herbert Press, 2004).
- MACDONALD, HUGH, *Berlioz's Orchestration Treatise: a Translation and Commentary* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).
- MACKENZIE, JOHN M., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).
- MACKERNES, ERIC DAVID, *A Social History of English Music* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul 1964).
- MALLGRAVE, HARRY FRANCIS, *Gottfried Semper: Architect of the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 1996).
- MARSHALL, CATHERINE and ROSSMAN, GRETCHEN B., *Designing Qualitative Research* (4th edn.; London: SAGE, 2006).
- MARTIN, ELIZABETH, *Architecture as a Translation of Music* (Pamphlet Architecture, 16; New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994).
- MCCRONE, KATHLEEN E., review of Michael Musgrave, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace*, in *The American Historical Review*, 102/3 (1997), 815-6.
- MCGUINNESS, ROSAMOND, 'English Court Odes, 1600-1800', D. Phil. (Oxford University, 1963).
- MCGUIRE, CHARLES EDWARD, *Elgar's Oratorios: the Creation of an Epic Narrative* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002).

- , *Music and Victorian Philanthropy: the Tonic Sol-fa Movement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- MCKEAN, JOHN, *Crystal Palace: Joseph Paxton and Charles Fox* (London: Phaidon, 1994).
- MEYER, LEONARD B., *Style and Music: Theory, History, and Ideology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989).
- MILESTONE, RACHEL, 'The Exponent of the Life and Soul of the City': The Town Hall as a Music Venue in the Nineteenth Century', in Martin Hewitt and Rachel Cowgill (eds.), *Victorian Soundscapes Revisited: Leeds Centre Working Papers in Victorian Studies* (9; Leeds: Trinity and All Saints/Leeds Centre for Victorian Studies, 2007).
- MOHN, BARBARA, *Das Englische Oratorium im 19. Jahrhundert: Quellen, Traditionen, Entwicklungen* (Paderborn: F. Schöningh, 2000).
- MORLEY-PEGGE, REGINALD, BATE, PHILIP and WESTON, STEPHEN, 'Ophicleide', in Stanley Sadie (ed.) *The New Grove Dictionary of Musical Instruments*, 3 vols. (2; London: Macmillan, 1984).
- MORRIS, R. J., *Class, Power and Social Structure in British Nineteenth-Century Towns* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1986).
- MORRIS, R. J. and RODGER, RICHARD (eds.), *The Victorian City: A Reader in British Urban History, 1820-1914* (London: Longman, 1993)
- MUMFORD, LEWIS, *The Culture of Cities* (New York: Hancort, Brace and Company, 1938).
- , 'Monumentalism, Symbolism and Style', *The Architectural Review*, 105 (April 1949), 173-80.
- , 'Urbanism and Monumentality', in *The City in History: Its Origins, Its Transformations, and Its Prospects* (London: Secker & Warburg, 1961).
- MUSGRAVE, MICHAEL, *The Musical Life of the Crystal Palace* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- , *An Audience for Classical Music: the Achievement of August Manns at the Crystal Palace* (Goldsmiths' College, 1996).
- (ed.), *George Grove, Music and Victorian Culture* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003)
- MYER, ISAAC, *Oldest Books in the World: An Account of the ... Book of the Dead* (London: Trench & Trübner, 1900).
- NETTEL, REGINALD, *The Orchestra in England: a Social History* (St Clair Shores, Mich: Scholarly Press, 1972).
- NEUHOFF, T., review of Barbara Mohn, *The English Oratorio in the 19th Century: Sources, Traditions, Developments* (Paderborn, 2000), in *Archiv für das Studium der Neuren Sprachen und Literaturen*, 240/1 (2003), 196-7.

- NEWMARCH, ROSA, *Mary Wakefield: a Memoir* (London: Atkinson & Pollitt, 1912).
- NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH WILHELM, 'On the Uses and Disadvantages of History for Life', in *Untimely Meditations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).
- OBELKEVICH, JAMES, 'Music and Religion in the Nineteenth Century', in Raphael Samuel, Jim Obelkevich and Lyndal Roper (eds.), *Disciplines of Faith: Studies in Religion, Politics and Patriarchy* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987).
- OLSEN, DONALD J., *The Growth of Victorian London* (London: B. T. Batsford Ltd., 1976).
- PAHLEN, KURT, et al., *The World of the Oratorio: Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, Te Deum, Stabat Mater and Large Cantatas*, trans. Judith Schaefer (Aldershot: Amadeus Press, 1990).
- PALIOTTI, VITTORIO, *Maria Malibran: Casta Diva Scandalosa* (I Libri di Bron, No. 10; Rome: Pagano, 1992).
- PALLISER, D. M., CLARK, PETER and DAUNTON, M. J. (eds.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain* (2; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000)
- PALMER, FIONA M., *Vincent Novello (1781-1861): Music for the Masses* (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2006).
- PARDEE, KATHARINE, 'The Earliest Complete Performance of the St. Matthew Passion?' *Riemenschneider Bach Journal*, 40 /1 (2009), 80-81.
- PATTERSON, ANNIE W., *The Story of Oratorio* (London: Walter Scott, 1902).
- PAVORD, ANNA, *The Tulips* (London: Bloomsbury, 1999).
- PAYN, JAMES, 'Chapter IV: A Trip to Fairyland', in *Lights and Shadows of London Life* (1; London, 1867).
- PEARCE, ERNEST HAROLD, *The Sons of the Clergy, 1655-1904* (London, 1904).
- PEYSER, JOAN, *The Orchestra: Origins and Transformations* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1986).
- PIEPER, ANTJE, *Music and the Making of Middle-Class Culture: A Comparative History of 19th-Century Leipzig and Birmingham* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).
- PLANTINGA, LEON, 'The Nineteenth Century', *The Journal of Musicology*, 1 /1 (January 1982), 54-58.
- PLUNKETT, JOHN and KING, ANDREW (eds.), *Victorian Print Media: A Reader* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)
- PRIESTLEY, J. B., *English Journey* (London: W. Heinemann in association with V. Gollancz, 1937).

- PRITCHARD, BRIAN, 'Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: I: Salisbury and Winchester', *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 5 (1967), 51-79.
- , 'Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries 3. Liverpool and Manchester', *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 7 (1970), 1-25.
- , 'Some Festival Programmes of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: 4. Birmingham, Derby, Newcastle upon Tyne and York', *R. M. A. Research Chronicle*, 8 (1970), 1-22.
- PRITCHARD, BRIAN W., 'The Musical Festival and the Choral Society in England in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries: A Social History', Ph.D. diss. (Birmingham, 1968).
- PURBRICK, LOUISE (ed.), *The Great Exhibition of 1851: New Interdisciplinary Essays* (Texts in Culture, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001)
- RAMSBOTTOM, B. A., *William Gadsby* (Harpenden: Gospel Standard Trust, 2003).
- RAYNOR, HENRY, *A Social History of England* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1972).
- , *Music and Society since 1815* (London: Barrie and Jenkins, 1976).
- REES, C. B. and BARBIROLI, JOHN, *One Hundred Years of the Hallé* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1957).
- REHDING, ALEXANDER, 'Liszt's Musical Monuments', *19th-Century Music*, 26 /1 (Summer 2002), 52-72.
- , "'Ode to Freedom": Bernstein's Ninth at the Berlin Wall', *Beethoven Forum*, 12 /1 (Spring 2005), 36-48.
- , 'Souvenirs aus Weimar', in Lothar Ehrlich, Detlev Altenburg and Jürgen John (eds.), *Im Herzen Europas: Nationale Identitäten und Erinnerungskulturen* (Weimar: Böhlau, 2008).
- , *Music and Monumentality: Commemoration and Wonderment in Nineteenth Century Germany* (New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- RICHARDS, JEFFREY, *Films and British National Identity: from Dickens to Dad's Army* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1997).
- , *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876-1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).
- RICHARDS, THOMAS, *The Commodity Culture of Victorian England: Advertising and Spectacle, 1851-1914* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990).
- RICHARDSON, A. E., *Monumental Classic Architecture in Great Britain and Ireland* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2001).

- ROBINSON, CYRIL, *Lives and Times of the Modern Painters* (Pittsburgh: Dorrance, 1993).
- ROSE, MICHAEL E., *The Poor and the City: the English Poor Law in its Urban Context, 1834-1914* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1985).
- ROSTON, MURRAY, 'The Handelian Compromise', in *Biblical Drama in England: From the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (London: Faber & Faber, 1968).
- RUBERY, MATTHEW, *The Novelty of Newspapers: Victorian Fiction after the Invention of News* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).
- RUSSELL, DAVE, *Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: a Social History* (2nd edn., Music and Society; Manchester: Manchester University, 1997).
- RUTHERFORD, SUSAN, *The Prima Donna and Opera, 1815-1930* (Cambridge Studies in Opera; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).
- , "'La cantante delle passioni": Giuditta Pasta and the Idea of Operatic Performance', *Cambridge Opera Journal*, 19 /2 (July 2007), 107-38.
- RYAN, RACHEL MONTAGUE, *A Biography of Manchester* (London: Methuen, 1937).
- SAID, EDWARD W., *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994).
- SAMSON, JIM (ed.), *The Cambridge History of Nineteenth-Century Music* (Cambridge History of Music, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001)
- SANDERS, L. G. D., 'A Forgotten Westminster Abbey Festival', *The Musical Times*, 95 /1339 (1954), 470-72.
- SARGENT, SIR MALCOLM, 'Messiah', *The Gramophone Classical Music Guide* (April 1955), 19-21.
- SCHERING, ARNOLD, 'Über den Begriff des Monumentalen in der Musik', in *Von Grossen Meistern der Musik* (2. Auflage edn.; Leipzig: Koehler & Amelang, 1940).
- SCOTT, JOHN, *A Matter of Record: Documentary Sources in Social Research* (Cambridge: Polity, 1990).
- SEARLE-WHITE, JOSHUA, *The Psychology of Nationalism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001).
- SEMPER, GOTTFRIED, *The Four Elements of Architecture and Other Writings*, trans. Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989).
- SENNETT, RICHARD, *Conscience of the Eye: The Design and Social Life of Cities* (London: Faber and Faber, 1991).
- SHAW, BERNARD, 'Oratorios', in Louis Crompton (ed.) *The Great Composers: Reviews and Bombardments* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1961).
- SHAW, GEORGE BERNARD, *Music in London, 1890-94*, 3 vols. (1; London: Constable, 1932).

- SHAW, HAROLD WATKINS, *The Three Choirs Festival: The Official History of the Meetings of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, c. 1713-1953* (Worcester & London: Ebenezer Baylis & Son, 1954).
- SHI, SHUMEI, *The Lure of the Modern* (Berkeley Series in Interdisciplinary Studies of China 1; Berkeley ; London: University of California Press, 2001).
- SMITH, ANTHONY D., *Nationalism and Modernism* (New York: Routledge, 1998).
- SMITH, JOSEPH SUTCLIFFE, *The Story of Music in Birmingham* (Cornish Bros.: Birmingham, 1945).
- SMITH, RUTH, *Handel's Oratorios and Eighteenth-Century Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).
- SMITH, WILLIAM C., 'Handelian Research', *The Musical Times: Handel Bicentenary Number*, 100 /1394 (April 1959), 194-96.
- SMITHER, HOWARD E., *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era, Protestant Germany and England* (2; Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 1977).
- , *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Baroque Era: Italy, Vienna, Paris* (1; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977).
- , 'Messiah and Progress in Victorian England', *Early Music*, 13 /3 (1985), 339-48.
- , *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Classical Era* (3; Oxford: Clarendon, 1987).
- , *A History of the Oratorio: The Oratorio in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* (4; Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).
- , 'Oratorio', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 18; London: Grove, 2001).
- SPOSATO, JEFFREY S., *The Price of Assimilation: Felix Mendelssohn and Nineteenth-Century Anti-Semitic Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).
- STOCKLEY, WILLIAM CHARLES, *Fifty Years of Music in Birmingham: Being the Reminiscences of W. C. Stockley from 1850 to 1900* (Birmingham: Hudson & Son, 1913).
- SUPIČIĆ, IVO, 'Early Forms of 'Mass' Culture', in Allan W. Atlas (ed.) *Music in the Classic Period* (New York: Pendragon Press, 1985).
- SUTCLIFFE, ANTHONY, *British Town Planning: the Formative Years* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1981).
- TAHA, ABIR, *Nietzsche, Prophet of Nazism: The Cult of the Superman: Unveiling the Nazi Secret Doctrine* (Bloomington: Author House, 2005).

- TAYLOR, BRANDON and WILL, WILFRIED VAN DER (eds.), *The Nazification of Art: Art, Design, Music, Architecture and Film in the Third Reich* (Winchester: Winchester School of Art Press, 1990)
- TAYLOR, STANTON DE B., *Two Centuries of Music in Liverpool* (Liverpool: Rockliff Brothers Limited, 1976).
- TEMPERLEY, NICHOLAS, 'Handel's Influence on English Music', *Monthly Musical Record*, 90 (1960), 163-74.
- , 'Mendelssohn's Influence on English Music', *Music and Letters*, 42 (1962), 224-33.
- (ed.), *The Romantic Age* (The Blackwell History of Music in Britain, 1; London: Athlone, 1981)
- , *Music in Victorian Society and Culture: a Special Issue* (Victorian Studies; Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 1986).
- , *The Lost Chord: Essays in Victorian Music* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989).
- THOMPSON, F. M. L., *The Rise of Suburbia* (Themes in Urban History; Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1982).
- , *The Cambridge Social History of Britain 1750-1950*, 3 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).
- THOMPSON, PETER, *Social Authoritarianism and the Left: Monumentalism, Antiquarianism and Critical History in the German Workers' Movement from Marx to the PDS*. (University of Sheffield, 2000).
- TOFT, ROBERT, *Heart to Heart: Expressive Singing in England 1780-1830* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- TORKILDSEN, GEORGE, *Leisure and Recreation Management* (5th edn.; London: Routledge, 2005).
- TRILLING, JAMES, *Ornament: a Modern Perspective* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2003).
- TROPP, MARTIN, *Images of Fear: How Horror Stories Helped Shape Modern Culture, 1818-1918* (London: McFarland, 1990).
- TROWLES, TONY ALBERT, 'The Musical Ode in Britain, c.1670-1800', D.Phil. (University of Oxford, 1992).
- VANCE, NORMAN, *The Sinews of the Spirit: the Ideal of Christian Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

- VRIES, LEONARD DE and ROBERTSHAW, URSULA, *History as Hot News 1842-1865: The World of the Early Victorians as seen through the Eyes of The Illustrated London News* (London: John Murray, 1995).
- WAGNER, RICHARD, *My Life* (London: Constable, 1994).
- WAGSTAFF, JOHN, review of Katharine Ellis, *Interpreting the Musical Past* (Oxford, 2005), in *Notes*, 63/2 (2006), 355-58.
- WALKLING, ANDREW R., review of Ruth Smith, *Handel's Oratorios* (Cambridge, 1995), in *Music & Letters*, 80/1 (1999), 120-22.
- WALLER, P. J., 'Book Review: *Victorian and Edwardian Town Halls* by Colin Cunningham', *The English Historical Review*, 98 /389 (1983), 913-14.
- , *Town, City and Nation: England 1850-1914* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983).
- WEBB, JOHN, '19th-Century Keyed Brass', *The Musical Times*, 127 /1716 (1986), 83-85.
- WEBER, WILLIAM, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: a Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1992).
- , *Music and the Middle Class: the Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848* (2nd edn., *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*; Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004).
- , *The Musician as Entrepreneur, 1700-1914: Managers, Charlatans, and Idealists* (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2004).
- , *The Great Transformation of Musical Taste: Concert Programming from Haydn to Brahms* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).
- WELIVER, PHYLLIS, *The Musical Crowd in English Fiction, 1840-1910: Class, Culture and Nation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).
- WHITALL, ARNOLD, 'Thinking Big', *The Musical Times*, 151 (Spring 2010), 99-105.
- WILLIAMS, C. LEE, CHANCE, H. GODWIN and HANNAM-CLARK, THEODORE, *Annals of the Three Choirs of Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester: Continuation of History of Progress from 1895 to 1930* (Gloucester: Minchin & Gibbs, 1931).
- WINSTONE, REECE, *Bristol As It Was, 1845-1900* (Bristol: R. Winstone, 1983).
- WOLFF, JANET and SEED, JOHN, *The Culture of Capital: Art, Power and the Nineteenth-Century Middle Class* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988).
- WOLLENBERG, SUSAN, *Music at Oxford in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001).
- , 'Handel in Oxford: The Tradition c. 1750-1850', *Göttinger Händel Beiträge*, 9 (2002), 161-76.

- , 'The Oxford Commemorations and Nineteenth-Century British Festival Culture', in Bennett Zon and Peter Horton (eds.), *Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, 3 vols. (3; Ashgate: Aldershot, 2003).
- WOLLENBERG, SUSAN and MCVEIGH, SIMON (eds.), *Concert Life in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004)
- WOOD, SIR HENRY JOSEPH, *My Life of Music* ([S.l.]: Gollancz, 1949).
- WYKE, TERRY, *The Hall of Fame: The History of the Free Trade Hall* (Manchester: Radisson Edwardian Manchester Hotel, 2004).
- YORKE-LONG, ALAN, *Music at Court: Four Eighteenth-Century Studies* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1954).
- YOUNG, BARBARA, *In Our Dreaming and Singing: the Story of the Three Choirs Festival Chorus* (Woonton Almeley: Logaston Press, 2000).
- YOUNG, GEORGE MALCOLM, *Victorian England: Portrait of an Age* (London: Oxford University Press, 1936).
- YOUNG, PERCY M., *The Oratorios of Handel* (London: D. Dobson, 1949).
- , *George Grove 1820-1890: A Biography* (London: Macmillan, 1980).
- , review of Anthony Boden, *Three Choirs: A History of the Festival* (Stroud, 1992), in *Music & Letters*, 74/4 (1993), 591-93.
- , 'Festival: §3 Choral Festivals in England, Germany and Austria, c1650-c1900', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* 29 vols. (2nd edn., 8; London, 2001).
- , 'Festival: §4 Commemorative Festivals, c1750-c1790', in Stanley Sadie and John Tyrrell (eds.), *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (2nd edn., 8; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- , 'Leeds: 1. Concert Life, Choirs and Church Music', in S. Sadie and J. Tyrell (eds.), *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 29 vols. (2nd edn., 14; London: Macmillan, 2001).
- ZALAMPAS, SHERREE OWENS, *Adolf Hitler: a Psychological Interpretation of his Views on Architecture, Art, and Music* (Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1990).
- ZHAO, D., 'The Collision, Interaction, and Integration of Heterogeneous Cultures in the Global Context: The Impact of The Monument on Huaju (Modern Chinese Drama)', *American Review of Canadian Studies*, 37 /2 (2007), 161-76.
- ZILCOSKY, JOHN, 'Modern Monuments: T. S. Eliot, Nietzsche, and the Problem of History', *Journal of Modern Literature*, 29 /1 (2005), 21-33.
- ZÖLLNER, EVA, *English Oratorio after Handel: the London Oratorio Series and its Repertory, 1760-1800* (Marburg: Tectum Verlag, 2002).

ZON, BENNETT, DIBBLE, JEREMY and HORTON, PETER (eds.), *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, 3 vols. (Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain, Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999-2003)

