

## **Performance interpretation and technical review of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion* by G. F. Handel**

**Alfred Gelles Albert, Ph.D**

Department of Music  
University of Portharcourt  
Portharcourt, Nigeria

**Kinye Oribim Georgewill, Ph.D**

Department of Music  
Ignatius Ajuru University of Education  
Portharcourt, Nigeria

**Jeremiah Sampson Abu**

Department of Music  
University of Portharcourt  
Portharcourt, Nigeria

### **Abstract**

In Nigeria, the foundation of serious sacred or liturgical musical knowledge and practice is mostly laid and grown in local churches, where many choir leaders who provide musical guidance lack formal music training. As a result, limited musical knowledge is passed down to the soloists and the accompanists they lead. Having noted this inadequacy as it affects the interpretation of serious vocal forms such as arias, this study aims to provide a performance interpretation framework, serving as a practical and creative guide among church musicians in Nigeria. The study adopts a qualitative descriptive-analytical research methodology grounded in performance practice and interpretative musicology. The study provides a technically grounded review and stylistically compelling performance interpretation of Handel's *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion*, highlighting critical areas for technical emphasis and improvement in performance practice within Nigerian churches. The study concludes that technical competence is a sine qua non for effective performance interpretation of any set art musical piece, and offers recommendations to enhance expressive delivery of the piece, taking into account the background of the composition and its liturgical essence.

**Key words:** interpretation, *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion*. performance, technical review

## Introduction

Sacred music is defined as songs whose texts are rooted in religious scriptures or spiritual narratives, with themes that are conveyed to reflect pastoral, theological, and congregational values. The embedding of these musical expressions is often observed within the liturgical practices of various Christian denominations, particularly within traditions that follow structured church calendars such as the Anglican Church. Across the liturgical seasons of Advent, Easter, Pentecost, and Trinity, among others, sacred music plays a vital role in the communication of doctrinal messages, the guidance of worship, and the nurturing of spiritual growth among members of the congregation. Distinct theological focuses are attached to each liturgical season, and sacred compositions are intentionally crafted to align with these periods, whether in the form of carols, chorales, psalms, hymns, or anthems. One of such compositions is *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion* by George Frideric Handel, taken from his celebrated oratorio *Messiah*. The prophetic excitement of the Advent season is encapsulated in this piece, with Isaiah's message of hope and divine reassurance being echoed. Beyond its scriptural basis, the aria is presented as a compelling blend of text and musical artistry, through which both technical scrutiny and expressive interpretation are invited. Although the glorification of God and the edification of worshippers are intended as the spiritual purposes of such works, the performance of sacred music, particularly in formal or liturgical settings is required to be approached with a nuanced understanding of vocal technique, musical phrasing, diction, and stylistic authenticity, especially within the Baroque tradition in which Handel composed.

In this study, *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion* is examined not only as a sacred work within the Christian musical heritage but also from a performer's perspective, with emphasis placed on the technical demands and interpretative strategies required for its effective rendition. Through this approach, an attempt is made to bridge the gap between musical theology and performance practice, with insights offered that are intended to be both academically enriching and practically relevant for vocalists and church leaders in Nigeria.

## Overview of sacred/church and liturgical music

Etymologically and epistemologically, liturgy is coined from the Greek word *liturgia*, although it is a compound (dual) word as presented above but its broken parts cuts across Latin and Italian origins too. The first part of the word *Litus* (meaning public) and the second part of the word *orgia* (meaning work). The fully combine meaning becomes Public Work. In time the meaning moved from just public work to become free public work by the rich/elitist people/class of Athens. Thereby making the word now meaning public work done voluntarily free of charge, this is also the ideology with the Rotarians present day worship with arms giving and philanthropist acts. Liturgy integrates service as an element of worship. Foley, (1990) and Jungman (1975).

Sacred music refers to music used in religious contexts to inspire devotion and enhance worship experiences. In the Christendom, sacred music forms a central component of the services, particularly as seen in the hymns, psalms and spiritual songs and conceptualizes sacred music not just as an artistic element, but as a vital part of worship, where it is believed to facilitate divine encounters and emotional expression (Johnson, 2019). In a broader view, sacred music foster congregational engagement which includes active participation by church members in singing, clapping, and dancing during worship services. Sacred music is conceptualized as a stimulus for engagement, as it encourages physical and emotional responses that foster a sense of community (Hays & Moore, 2020) and orthodox churches congregational unity and involvement. The emotional well-being of a church is both an outcome of engaging with sacred music and a mechanism through which individuals feel spiritually rejuvenated. Emotional well-being refers to the psychological benefits derived from engaging with sacred music. Literature suggests that sacred music can have a therapeutic effect, providing comfort, stress relief, and emotional healing (Baker, 2019). This experience causes spiritual growth of a church. Spiritual growth is defined as the development of faith, devotion, and connection with God by an individual. In Pentecostal worship settings, deep personal reflection and spiritual encounters are often facilitated through sacred music, by which a closer connection with God is felt and spiritual journeys are reinforced (Stevenson, 2018). Within this context, sacred music is regarded as a conduit through which a heightened sense of faith and spiritual awareness is achieved, and the sense of community within the church is reinforced (Hays & Moore, 2020). By the fostering of a supportive worship atmosphere, emotional relief is provided through sacred music, and the free expression of feelings is enabled (Baker, 2019). Personal spiritual reflection is facilitated by sacred music, and a sense of closeness to God is fostered, leading to deeper faith and devotion (Johnson, 2019). The impact of sacred music is moderated by factors such as personal background, familiarity with the music, and individual beliefs, by which the intensity and personal significance of its influence are determined.

While discussing church music and its functions, Hustad (1987:11) mentioned the fact about “church music as divine expression” in which the godly composer makes the lyrics of his music speak as the voice of God to it hearers. True as it is that church music serves as divine expression as posited here, equally true it will be to say that it does serve as human expression as well. Humans use music to express their praise, thanksgiving and adoration to God. It is also used to make petitions and requests to God. On a horizontal level, humans express their love and concern towards one another through music - whether as individual to individual or as group to group or individual to group or group to individual. These pieces of music are used free of charge in the liturgy which in a sense divulges the sacrament as the ritual engaged by the church as its high point and climax. The nature of church music in Nigeria is reflected in the broader functions of sacred music within Pentecostal and Charismatic worship. Church music is not merely regarded as a component of the service but is understood as a dynamic tool through which deeper worship is fostered, emotional expression is facilitated, and the spiritual experiences of the

congregation are strengthened. The distinctive nature and roles of sacred music within this context are explored with specific attention to its functions in fostering worship engagement, emotional support, and spiritual growth.

The nature of church music is designed to ensure the active engagement of the congregation. Worship songs, hymns, and praise choruses are given a central role in the creation of a worshipful atmosphere, through which full participation in the service is encouraged (Stevenson, 2018). Such active participation expressed through singing, clapping, and dancing is understood to create unity and reinforce communal identity among worshippers (Johnson, 2019). Through this shared musical experience, stronger connections are felt both among congregants and with the divine, a dynamic aligned with Pentecostal worship's focus on communal expressions of faith (Hays & Moore, 2020).

Within Pentecostal churches, church music is also regarded as an emotional anchor by which a sense of comfort and psychological relief is provided. This role is particularly significant in Pentecostal traditions, where emotional expression and healing are integral to worship. It has been suggested by Baker (2019) that sacred music possesses therapeutic qualities through which emotional stress is released, joy is experienced, and connections with others facing similar challenges are enabled. In this context, music serves as a medium through which emotions are processed and encouragement is found, thereby reinforcing resilience and emotional well-being during worship.

A key element of sacred music is identified in its role of fostering spiritual growth and facilitating encounters with the divine. Music is seen as a bridge to spiritual experience, enabling deeper connection with God. According to Pentecostal theology, music is considered a catalyst for spiritual encounters and personal revelation (Johnson, 2019). Lyrics and melodies of sacred music are crafted in such a way as to convey biblical messages and to encourage reflection, thereby creating an environment in which faith can be deepened and spirituality explored (Stevenson, 2018).

Engagement in both personal and communal dimensions of worship is enabled through music. On a personal level, a reflective space for faith journeys, personal devotion, and divine guidance is provided. On a communal level, worshippers are united in shared spiritual activity, whereby the identity of the community is strengthened and a sense of belonging is fostered (Hays & Moore, 2020). This dual role highlights the inclusive nature of church music, by which each congregant is enabled to participate in ways personally meaningful while also engaging in the collective life of the church.

### **Profile of George Frederick Handel (1685-1759)**

According to Kennedy (1996), George Frederick Handel is a German composer born in the city of Halle but lived with his relative in Hamburg upon the death of his late father. He played the harpsichord and organ. He was also a musicologist and worked

for Prince George I of London in the king's court of Hanover as a Capel (Chapel) master, which facilitated the composition of the coronation anthems and water music for different events during the Prince's coronation. As a metropolitan political composer who wrote commissioned works for his pay masters, he also composed Chandos anthems books numbering 1-11 written from 1717 -18, as part of what led to the fruitful outcome of his appointment to work for the Duke of Chandos. He also wrote many operatic works. Due to health challenges, and when he could no longer enjoy vibrant outing schedules, he wrote the Messiah in 1742, within twenty-three days according to available documentations. With this work, he got global stardom, although it is something of oddity in Handel's work since he was not a religious composer. But the power in the music, lyrics, sincerity and profundity makes it one of the outstanding masterpiece musical creations, especially as devotional art. The success of his religious compositions gave him popularity to become the idol of England for about 150 years after his death.

### **Musical structure and features of baroque aria and recitative**

The word Baroque represents a historical period in music. It is the period when avant-gardes and giants in music like Handel, Bach and Vivaldi were the notable composers. Baroque music is serious and has characteristics of elaborate text and elegance, ornaments and much embellishment. Its melody is relatively complex but interestingly lyrical and melodious for retention. Often directing performers to implore ad-libitum implying personalised ornamentations and grace notes at performers' discretion, using all complete ranges of the tessitura in some extreme cases. Its compositional structure is basically designed in through-composed form and polyphonic texture in nature with grandioso richness in effects. But its most observed performance characteristic is the coloratura effects in the voicing as a techniques. It often uses appoggiatura or some other soothing unessential notes as a technique of embellishment especially at the conclusion of recitatives.

A recitative is an informative song of conversation or dialogue serving as antecedence to a proper song with rhythm (movement) imitating the natural flow of the talking voice. Recites or recitatives are usually sung in speech rhythmic techniques, with the rhythms in the speeches (otherwise known as speech rhythms) yet maintaining organised cooperate articulations with managed speed spontaneously and sung to organised well-articulated speeches. It is necessary for soloist to know this and observe it consciously and holistically aligning in synergy with the accompanying instrument, either the organ or the orchestra.

The western art music handed down to us by our forbearers uses the symphony orchestra instruments (woodwinds, brass, percussion and strings). The piece in review because of its character, do not need the brass and percussion instruments even though there exist an audio-visual recorded Compact Disk album done by the Baptist Church called the young messiah which made use of both the percussion

(drums) and brass (trumpet) instruments, as well as the strings and synthesizers. However, the global standard in accompanying instruments used for the performance of the piece under review, are those mentioned earlier. Here in Nigeria, such orchestra instruments are not generally realistic to use due to its cost implication. A few denominations like the Deeper Life Church, The Apostolic Faith Church, The Apostolic Church and some Anglican Churches have incorporated the usage of the above stated standard instruments like the westerners in their corporate worship, bringing to fore its regular use. The rest of the Protestant and ecumenical churches and a few Pentecostal churches make continual use of the synthesizer and or the impersonated orchestra instrument being the organ (analogue/traditional or digital pipe organ), depending on what is available. Also, the latter group of churches mentioned resort to hiring the services of private ensemble orchestral groups for use at performances. Conclusively, the model of orchestra is adhered to either in full or partly.

### **Western sacred music performance in Nigerian contexts**

Generally, the performance practice styles of arias in the church are diverse, reflecting the rich tapestry of church liturgical music. The goal is to create a musical atmosphere that enhances the musical, prayerful and worshipful experience of the church as reflected in the arias, while respecting the liturgical norms and traditions of the church. The musical composition serves to enhance the words of the arias, fostering a prayerful and spiritual atmosphere in the liturgy and facilitating the active participation of the faithful. In doing so, the manner and style mostly observed is the articulation marks.

Articulation is the manner in which the performer sounds notes, for example, the shortening of duration compared to the written note value, legato performs the notes in a smoothly joined sequence with no separation. Articulation is often described rather than quantified, therefore, there is room to interpret how to execute precisely each articulation. In stating further example, staccato is often referred to as “separated” or “detached” rather than having a defined or numbered amount by which to reduce the notated duration. But, for example, violin players use a variety of techniques to perform different qualities of staccato. The manner in which a performer decides to execute a given articulation is usually based on the context of the piece or phrase, but many articulation symbols and verbal instructions depend on the instruments and musical period (e.g. viol, wind; classical, baroque; etc). There is a set of articulations that most instruments and voices perform in common. They are, in order of long to short: legato (smooth, connected); tenuto (pressed or played to full notated duration), marcato (accented and detached); martele (heavily accented or “hammered”). However, many of these can be combined to create certain “in-between” articulations. One exemplification is the potato, potato is the combination of tenuto and staccato. Some instruments have unique methods by which to produce



sounds, where the bow bounces off the string. Therefore the main articulations are shown below chronologically as staccato, staccatissimo, martellato, marcato and tenuto.

The choice of instruments and their use in the liturgy can vary widely from one parish or community to another and also depending on the liturgical season.

### **Organ**

The pipe organ is the traditional and commonly used instrument in the liturgy. It provides a rich and majestic sound that complements the liturgical music. The use of the organ to accompany the arias in the Church is a longstanding tradition and remains a common practice in many liturgical settings. The pipe organ is often considered the king of instruments in the tradition due to its versatility, rich sound, and ability to provide a sense of solemnity and grandeur to liturgical music, including the accompaniment of the arias, either as a solo instrument or in combination with other instruments of the orchestra. The organ's ability to produce a wide range of sounds and its ability to sustain notes makes it well-suited to accompany the varied emotions and moods found in the arias. It can provide a majestic and powerful sound for the more triumphant and joyful arias, while also being able to create a softer and more introspective mood for the more contemplation.

### **Piano**

In some churches, especially those without an organ, a piano may be used to accompany the arias. Pianos can provide a versatile and expressive musical backdrop. They offer a different sound and character compared to the organ. It allows for a wide range of musical styles and expressions to accompany the singing of the arias.

### **String instruments**

Violins, violas, and cellos are veritable instruments to be used to accompany arias, especially in classical or orchestral arrangements. They enhance the solemnity and meditative quality of the songs. They equally provide a delicate and introspective accompaniment for reflective contemplation, allowing for a deeper connection between the music and the worshipper's personal prayer.

### **Woodwind instruments**

Flutes, clarinets, and other woodwind instruments can be employed to enhance the musical accompaniment of arias, particularly during special liturgical seasons or celebrations.

### **Electronic keyboards/synthesizers**

The use of electronic keyboards and synthesizers to accompany the arias in the Churches has become more common in recent years, especially in contemporary and modern worship settings. They offer a wide range of sounds, from traditional organ

and piano tones to contemporary electronic sounds, and effects that can enhance the musical accompaniment of arias and other liturgical music.

### **General Review of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings To Zion***

Music Composer: George Frederick Handel

Source of Text: The Holy Bible, King James Version (Isaiah 40:9)

#### **Brief introduction of the piece**

This composition, a western art music anthem is to be performed by an Alto soloist with an appreciable dexterity. The solo is usually sung during the yellow tide in the faith-based Christian religion amongst orthodox churches especially during Christmas season. There are also much more complex yet exciting dialoguing polyphonic rhythmic sections as part of the well suiting structural form in the creativity, all intended to ameliorate the work for the desire during performance practice realisations.

#### **Pre-performance considerations**

Key: D major

Time:  $\frac{4}{4}$

Metronome: ♩ = 144

Interpretable terminologies: Andante

Length: 106 bars

#### **Musical forms**

- (a) Compositional form: Through-composed
- (b) Structural form: Theme and variation
- (c) Textual forms: Syllabic and mellismatic
- (d) Textural form: Monophony
- (e) Rhythmic forms: Monorhythm, polyrhythm and speech rhythm
- (f) Stylistic form: Solo
- (g) Performative forms: Art and Sacred
- (h) Instrumentation: Solo and Piano accompaniment
- (h) Media: Alto voice and piano
- (i) Scale: Diatonic
- (j) Modulation: C major
- (k) Dynamics: None
- (l) Mode: Tonal
- (m) Mood: Exultant. Bright and triumphant
- (n) Audience: Mixed audience
- (o) Performance location: Church/Concert hall
- (p) Language/text: English



### **Synopsis of the song text**

The song *O thou that tellest* is from the book Isaiah. Isaiah is like a miniature Bible. The first thirty-nine chapters (like the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament) are filled with judgement upon on immoral and idolatrous men. Judah has sinned; the surrounding nations have sinned; the whole earth has sinned. Judgement must come, for God cannot allow such blatant sin to go unpunished forever. But the final twenty-seven chapter (like the twenty-seven books of the New Testament) declare a message of hope. The messiah is coming as a saviour and sovereign to bear a cross and wear a crown. Yesha yahu is the short form of Yeshaian which means “Yahweh. Yahweh means salvation. Off course, the name is an excellent summary of the contents of the book. The Greek name in the Septuagint is Hesaias, and the Latin is Esaias or Isaias. It was in this book Isaiah Chapter 40 verse 9, that George Frederick Handel sourced the text for the song. Although, the composer did not use it in its original direct form of writing as seen in the Bible, but paraphrased it by modifying the text for its suitable desires as granted by artistic freedom. O thou that tellest is the book Messiah, captured in part one of the three parts of the book. The Book Messiah is a story of a musical journey on the birth of Jesus Christ in part one, His life, shepherd/pastoral work in part two, and the death of our Saviour and Lord Jesus Christ in part three.

### **Performance interpretation**

The beginning of this piece is introduced with a recitative as a prelude. A recitative is an informative song of conversation or dialogue serving as antecedence to a proper song with rhythm (movement) imitating the natural flow of the talking voice. There are two types of recitatives called Secco (accompanied) and Strawmento (unaccompanied). While the strawmento recitative employs a dry prompting type of accompaniment in the form of simple chords following a vocal dialogue, the secco recitative is patterned to accompany with free instrumental musical lines as a strong inspiring support to the sonorous voices. Recites or recitatives are usually sung in speech rhythmic techniques, with the rhythms in the speeches (otherwise known as speech rhythms) yet maintaining organised cooperate articulations with managed speed spontaneously and sung to organised well-articulated speeches. It is necessary for soloist to know this and observe it consciously and holistically (see score below for reference).

**Nº 8 Recitative – BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE**

The image shows a musical score for a recitative piece. It is titled 'Nº 8 Recitative – BEHOLD, A VIRGIN SHALL CONCEIVE'. The score is written for an Alto voice and a Piano or Organ accompaniment. The Alto part is in the treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature (C). The lyrics are: 'Be-hold, a vir-gin shall con-ceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Em-man-u-el. "God with us."'. The Piano or Organ part is in the bass clef with the same key signature and time signature. It features simple chords and sustained notes, with a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking. The score is divided into two systems, each with a vocal line and a piano/organ line.

- i. The accompaniment has been written for in stramento recitative (a dry prompting type of accompaniment in the form of simple chords leading the voice in motion).
- ii. The performer should be distinct in diction to enable the audience/receivers of the message comprehend the message in the recite as a forerunner and anticipatory music to the main air awaited shortly.

### **O THOU THAT TELLEST GOOD TIDINGS TO ZION**

#### **Melody and thematic strand interpretation**

The main (theme in the) solo on key D in Andante speed now begins with a twelve (12) bars introductory connective using prelude (with others like interludes and postludes as will be observed) ongoing in the music. The introductory prelude began with an anacrusis beat, which became the model for almost all cues in the entire music (view score below for reference).

**Nº 9 Air and Chorus**  
**O THOU THAT TELLEST GOOD TIDINGS TO ZION**

Andante (♩ = 144)

**PIANO  
or  
ORGAN**

The musical score is divided into two systems. The first system is for the Piano or Organ, consisting of two staves (treble and bass clef) in D major (two sharps) and 8/8 time. It begins with a forte (f) dynamic and includes a piano (p) dynamic marking. The second system includes an Alto vocal line on a single staff and continues the Piano/Organ accompaniment. The Alto part enters with a vocal line starting on a whole note 'O'. The Piano/Organ part in the second system includes a crescendo (cresc.) marking and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking, ending with a piano (p) dynamic marking.

### Cue in and internal entries

It is expected that the soloist must be at alert to cue in effectively with much charisma to show the new instrument that has just made an appearance in the ongoing music. In the same vein, the voice must be quite projected, audible, sonorous, commanding and in-charge to charge up the scenario and create quite a good presence on stage as the principal performer. The score above and the one below combined divulges the theme in its entirety, every other addition are simply thematic developments, expansion, elaboration and repetition respectively. However, there are short fragments and ornaments including colorations and melismatic passages that characterised the music for audience auditory suspense/relaxation.

thou that tell-est good ti-dings to Zi-on, get thee up in-to the high

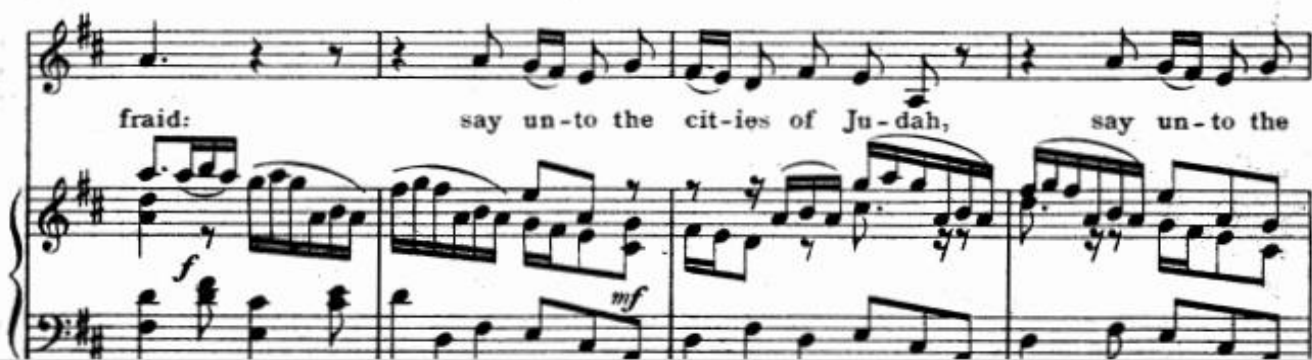
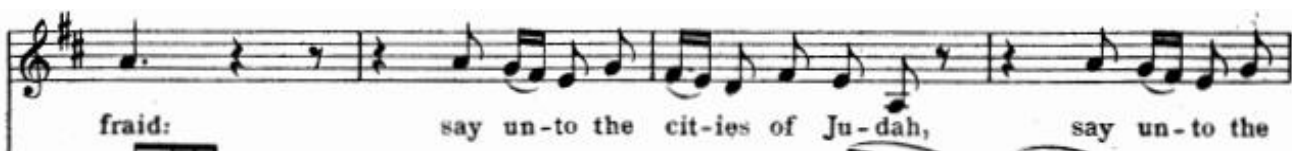
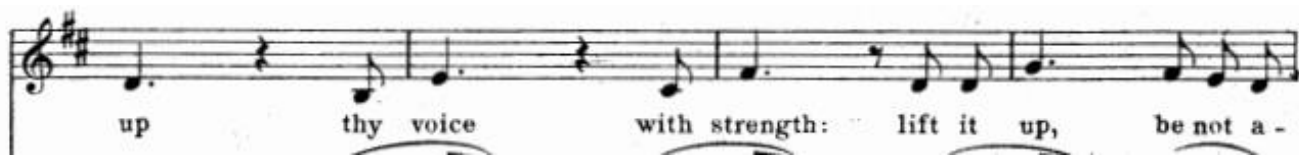
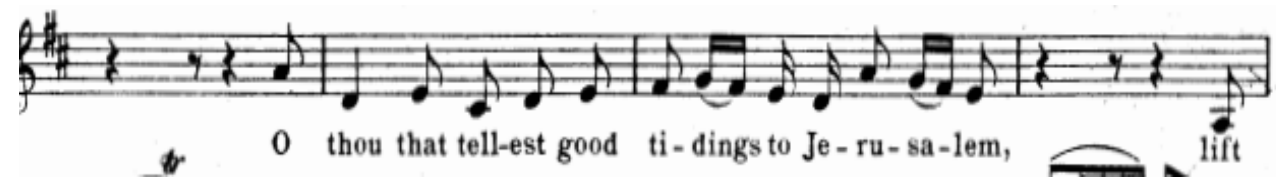
moun - tain, O thou that tell-est good

ti-dings to Zi-on, get thee up in-to the high moun -

### Motives and phrases

As a techniques of composing for solo voices with accompaniment in theme and variation form, especially during the baroque era, the compositional and structural forms of the piece makes it relatively difficult to specifically distinguish and discriminate phrases chronologically and sequentially, rather they are lengthy stretched complex phrases making up the totality of the melody line. The phrases are intertwined and interwoven as call and responses between the principal voice (the soloist) and the accompaniment, making it uninteresting to unbundle the phrases into independent lines but rather complimentary between one another both in the musical flow, textual organisation of taught including blend, balance, suitability and continuity. However, some stand-out motives were identified (as shown below). Such includes words like lift up, thy voice, with strength, lift it up, be not afraid, say unto thy cities of Judah, behold thy God etc. See score excerpts below for more analytical observations of the referred motifs each separated on both vocal and with accompaniment.





### Diction, articulation and enunciation

In the just discussed motives and many other words in the music requires proper pronunciation to enable the listener auditory sensory organs encode the sound and assimilate effectively the message transmitted by the artist/performer. Of course, enough inhalation and exhalation of air is responsible for the quality of sound produced. As well, when the consonant is removed at end consonants of the words, it changes the meaning, understanding and comprehension of the sentence. Therefore, the quality of breath produced and the good application of phonation combined makes singing and understanding efficient because diligence has been done in the interpretation which has eased the flow of communication between the giver (performer) and the receiver (the audience). A good approach is to be deliberate in pronouncing end consonants which require proper clarity like tellest, good, tidings, arise, light, come, Lord, behold, God, Judah, risen. In pronouncing these words, the full value of the allotted notes/pitches must be exhausted intentionally before conscious and deliberate cut off of the sound will be made/done. Additionally, words like arise, shine should be pronounced with detached from others, with cue out independently so that the meaning of the words will be mentally/audibly understood.

### Melismatic passage

The musical score is written in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'thy light is come: and the glo - - - - -'. The piano accompaniment features a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics '- - - - - ry of the Lord, the glo - ry of the Lord'. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The third system shows the vocal line with lyrics 'is ris - en, / is ris - en up - on - - - - - thee, is ris - en, is'. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand, with dynamics *mf* and *p*. The score is marked with 'mf' and 'p' dynamics, and includes a 'ted.' marking at the end of the second system.



Melisma in music is a word associated with one of the five types of textual organisation and application. They are psalmodic, syllabic, melismatic, onomatopoeic and macronic. The melismatic style uses many musical notes/pitches for one syllabic word. The implication in performance practices is that the performer must use one single breath to sing all the allotted notes to that single syllable so that it becomes a phrase with the understanding of symmetrical balancing. The spontaneous rising and falling sequences in the melismatic passage desire good inhalation of breath, strength and projection of the voice to enable efficient and effective execution. The sequence pattern in the note groupings regarding the note weavings is a style that requires much understanding in techniques especially in matters of flexibility and smoothness in the application of such passages. See score excerpt above for reference of the models both in the generality of the full passage and independent motives in sequences for critical observation for clarity.

**First model of the ascending motif**



**Second model of the ascending motif**



### Third model of the ascending motif with broken modification of two notes to conclude



Below is another miniature slightly varied and technical short ascending melodic strand motif of three notes on each model beginning with the first note of the first bar to the first note of the last bar. A careful observation of the six spontaneous models of the motives in reference will note the exact quality of intervals between every three notes with exact imitations.

A musical score for a vocal and piano piece. The top staff is a vocal line in treble clef, key of D major. It contains the lyrics: "is ris - en, / is ris - en up - on — thee, is ris - en, is". The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in grand staff. It features a complex, technical accompaniment with rapid sixteenth-note passages in both hands, creating a rhythmic and harmonic foundation for the vocal line.

### Chromatic pitches

The diatonic scale chromatic 7<sup>th</sup> note beginning from the last note, ending the first system into the second system should be audibly applied and executed deliberately with the required breath and diction. The connecting slurs leading to the complex phrase too. See excerpt score below for reference.

The image shows a musical score excerpt for a piece titled "The glory of the Lord". The score is written for voice and piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 4/4. The vocal line is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The lyrics are "The glory of the Lord, the glory of the Lord". The score features a chromatic 7<sup>th</sup> note in the vocal line, which is a half note G#4, followed by a half note A4. The piano accompaniment includes a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The dynamic marking *mf* (mezzo-forte) is present. The score ends with a double bar line and a "2ed." marking, indicating a second ending.

## Conclusory Postlude

Although the original music written by Handel did not create a postlude for the solo voice

The image displays a musical score for a 'Conclusory Postlude'. It is divided into two main systems. The first system is for 'PIANO OR ORGAN' and is marked 'Andante (♩ = 144)'. It features a treble and bass staff with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a time signature of 6/8. The music begins with a forte (f) dynamic, followed by a trill (tr) and then a piano (p) section. The second system is for 'ALTO' and also features a treble and bass staff with the same key signature and time signature. It begins with a rest for the alto voice, followed by a piano (p) section. The piano part in the second system includes a crescendo (cresc.) and a mezzo-forte (mf) section. The score is written in a clear, legible style with standard musical notation.

because it moved on with the attacca instruction to the chorus, however, solo voice performance could make modifications so that the music do not end as an anti-climax. It is on this backdrop that it is advised that the introductory prelude be repeated as a conclusory postlude. In that regard, it should be noted that the conclusory connective (postlude) is an important part of the performance too. Of course, preludes reminds and assist the performer to prepare and be at alert in readiness for the performance in relation to actual key, time signature, tempo, phrasing, texture etc, interludes guides, instructs, reinforces, provides morale and reminds of critical and aesthetical sections including contrapuntal sections, modulatory passages, word painting application aesthetics while postludes concludes. Therefore, the performer must observe that ethics and await the accompaniment conclusion before taking the audience appreciative bows

which naturally rolls out with the hand claps and perhaps sensational noises. On a note of ending, the performer must show and portray dexterity and technical brilliance as an evidence adequate and appropriate knowledge of the piece, both in phrasing, vocal strength and power, texture, blend and balance in addition to stage charisma and audience perception, as a totality in the execution of the performance.

### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, the performance interpretation and technical review of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion* reveals the enduring depth of Handel's artistry, as well as the intricate nature of the work for both vocalist and accompanist. The performance review of the score shows that to effectively realise the vertical and horizontal structures in performance situation, proper training and technical competence is a sine qua non.

To that extent, the study highlights critical areas for technical emphasis and improvement among performers in Nigerian churches, considering their peculiar cultural background and social conditions.

### **Recommendations**

To enhance solo vocal performances of *O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion* with piano accompaniment, especially among church musicians, the study recommends the following.

1. Soloists should endeavour to engage in serious score study and analysis.
2. Soloist should engage in vocal training and warm-up exercises with appropriate and suitable classified exercises during pre-study or pre-practice sessions.

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