

Choral Societies and Nationalism in Europe

Edited by

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The Large-Scale Oratorio Chorus in Nineteenth-Century England

Choral Power and the Role of Handel's Messiah

Fiona M. Palmer

We, as an imperial race, should appreciate the master's imperial effects. Handel is the Napoleon of his order, without a Moscow. The French Caesar used to win victories by launching masses at his enemy's centre. Handel too fights in masses and overwhelms by straightforward blows. You cannot give him too large a force. Expand the Sydenham transept till twice four thousand executants find room on its orchestra, and his power is doubled without encumbrance. Such a musician deserves to be the musician of an empire. Rome would have decreed him divine honours, and sent her legions to battle with his music at their head.¹

The lives of many Englishmen and women, regardless of class, were touched by large-scale choral singing in the nineteenth century. As both audience members and practitioners (amateur and professional), vast numbers of people experienced the striking effect of grand oratorio performances via regular concert life and festival culture nationwide. This article examines the contexts and origins of this choral culture and considers its role in shaping a sense of national belonging and identity. Handel's *Messiah* plays an important role in this process because of its canonical status, its longevity and widespread familiarity. As Charles Dibdin observed while touring northern England in 1788, "Children lisp 'For unto us a child is born' and cloth makers, as they sweat under their loads in the cloth-hall, roar out 'For his yoke is easy and his burden is light,'" which confirms both the place of Handel and the role of choral activity in the lives of working people.²

A comprehensive and detailed study of the multiple kinds of choral activity in nineteenth-century England remains to be undertaken. Available scholarship currently includes focal studies of important institutions (such as the Bach Choir and the Huddersfield Choral Society), of sacred choral activity

1 Joseph Bennett, *The Musical Times* (1877), cited in Smither (1985), 346.

2 Charles Dibdin, *The Musical Tour of Mr. Dibdin* (Sheffield, 1788); cited in Ehrlich (1985), 22.

(the work of Nicholas Temperley is crucial here), and of educational movements including the transformational Tonic Sol-Fa method. In the meantime, the main survey available is found in Dave Russell's thought-provoking chapter in his monograph, *Popular Music in England 1840–1914*.³ Russell exposes the absence of systematic comparative studies of the social origins of choir members among these many thousands of organizations. In short, no large-scale study currently exists which attempts to explore fully the data relating to the choral activities of various kinds across the nation in this period. Such extensive work would require a dedicated grant-funded project.

From the separate studies that have been undertaken, and from evidence available in the newspaper columns of the period, it is possible to trace the standing and role of grandiose performances of oratorio in England during the nineteenth century. The trajectory of large-scale choral activity from the watershed performances of Handel's *Messiah* in 1784 makes it clear that the appetite for momentous performances of oratorio with highly-populated choruses continued throughout the Victorian era. The reasons for this undiminished appetite, and the nature of the structures supporting its continuity, reveal a great deal about the socio-economic tapestry of the period.

The status of the Handelian tradition, the overwhelming importance of grandiosity, and the impact of the visual and aural power of the masses is encapsulated within the epigraph to this article. The quote is apposite because it captures the force of the Handel oratorio tradition in England, invested as it was with intensity, enterprise, widening education, communal effort, and the dissemination of culture. The choruses of Handel's *Messiah* were popularly considered to be 'sublime.'

The author of the epigraph adopted for this article, Joseph Bennett (1831–1911), occupied an influential role from the 1870s until his retirement. He depicted and commented upon England's musical life via the pages of *The Daily Telegraph* and *The Musical Times*, among other widely-read publications. His rousing comment quoted here dates from thirty years after the death of Mendelssohn. Portraying Handel as omnipotent Emperor, Bennett leaves us in no doubt that the composer's music enjoyed primary popularity. This emblematic metaphor, bolstered by the military terms employed, resonates ideally with the empowering sense of a masterful, far-reaching and still expanding British Empire. After all, Queen Victoria had become Empress of India as recently as May 1876.

In his 1985 article, Howard Smither examined the fortunes of Handel's *Messiah* in Victorian England and traced its provincial and metropolitan progress employing the contemporary periodical literature as his source. His

3 Russell (1997), ch. 10: "Choral Societies," 248–71.

findings revealed that Handel was regarded as “the imperial composer *par excellence*” and that *Messiah* was the most-performed oratorio of the era.⁴ The conclusions that Smither drew relate to the role of this work in uniting the lives of otherwise disconnected people. He summarized the power of this oratorio as a popular, familiar, acceptable manifestation of positive endeavour and shared knowledge, as follows:

From a social aspect, *Messiah* participated in the progress of choral music away from being the exclusive preserve of the élite to the humble classes, a progress which resulted from Victorian efforts toward 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 social strata. Those performances symbolized metropolitan, national and imperial progress and achievement. And underlying all this progress, from early to late Victorian times, was the strong religious and moral significance of oratorio, as embodied by *Messiah*.⁵

The accession of the young Queen Victoria to the throne in 1837 brought with it a new impetus for social change and improvement. The need to create a national education that included music was topical.⁶ By the time of the six-month Great Exhibition in 1851—an international showcase of Victorian industry and culture in the largest industrial city in the world—the census shows that half the country’s population was settled in urban areas.⁷ Nineteenth-century England was at the heart of a vast and far-reaching conglomeration: the British Empire.

English society was adapting to urbanization and industrialization. In his discussion of models of civic nationalism across Europe in the early nineteenth century, Jim Samson argues that to the view of industrialization and its community-creating agency should be added the understanding that it enhanced a greater sense of cosmopolitanism.⁸ The impact of industrialization and of laws that reduced the working week and increased the size of wage packets allowed the working classes increased access to free time and leisure pursuits. These changes engendered an ever-increasing emphasis on education and culture.

4 Smither (1985), 346.

5 Ibid., 347.

6 Mackerness (1966), 153.

7 Evans (1999), 306.

8 Samson (2002), 569.

The emerging middle class, with its encouraged desire for self-improvement via rational recreation (and its philanthropic attitude to education) found an aspect of its leisure time satisfactorily served through diverse musical activities. As the century progressed, music was performed domestically, in church, in schools, at the seaside, in parks and in the streets.

We need only look at the statistics relating to domestic piano activity in order to appreciate the daily role of music in the lives of many. By the 1850s it was *de rigueur* for middle-class homes to contain a piano. Cyril Ehrlich's groundbreaking study *The Piano: A History* shows that by 1850 approximately half of the world's pianos were manufactured in England; he estimates that 50,000 pianos were made worldwide per annum.⁹ Entirely possible without investment in equipment, singing featured within mechanics institutions, which established their own choruses, and also in junior, infant, day, and Sunday schools. In the mechanics institutes the working classes were provided with a curriculum encompassing intellectual, moral, and religious aspects.

Musical institutions including choral societies, orchestras, brass bands and travelling opera companies—all aided by the railway network—were commonplace. In his comprehensive essay on choral music in the nineteenth century, John Butt situates the role of oratorio and choral society performances in England within the wider European festival context and traces the secularization of choral activity and its establishment as a leisure pursuit via amateur choral institutions.¹⁰ Dave Russell has outlined the presence of a choral society in all English towns with a population of 20,000 or more by mid-century. Russell defines three common ensemble units: the medium-sized mixed-voice choir; the large mixed oratorio choir (often ca. 300 voices or more); and the male-voice choir (relatively unknown in England until the 1880s).¹¹

The infrastructures that produced such large numbers of musically educated and flexible people able to contribute usefully to a chorus were gradually embedded in the routines and expectations of work, faith, education, and purposeful leisure and self-improvement. Various influences were at play in helping to improve musical literacy. The rise of Methodism and evangelical faiths led to an increased involvement in hymn singing within these denominations. The publication of hymn-books and associated music theory and Sol-Fa materials was incorporated into the extensive activities of Sunday schools and mechanics institutes.¹² Educationalists and social reformers led

9 Ehrlich (1990), 9, 10.

10 In Samson, ed. (2002), 213–36.

11 Russell (1997), 248.

12 Smith and Young, "Chorus (i)"; accessed 5 Jan. 2011.

what was described as a ‘mania’ for choral sight-singing. This widening of access to printed music originated in London in 1841 with the pioneering work of Joseph Mainzer (1801–51; *Singing for the Million*) and John Hullah (1812–84; *Wilhem’s Method of Teaching Singing*).¹³ Hullah was inspired by Mainzer’s work, having observed him in Paris. Through his collaboration with James Kay, the Secretary to the Committee of Council on Education, Hullah was commissioned to translate *Wilhem’s Method* and was appointed as music instructor at a college in Battersea (later named St John’s) in 1840. St John’s was the training ground for four hundred schoolmasters and mistresses per week.¹⁴ A sense of the vitality and reach of Hullah’s work in these early years can be detected in the following review, taken from *The Era*, and dating from 1860:

Mr. Hullah gave a sublime performance of this grand oratorio [*Messiah*] on Tuesday evening at St. Martin’s Hall, which was very fully attended. There was, as usual, a fine and complete orchestra and the numerous choral phalanx from the members of the first upper singing school. . . . There is nothing to say about this *Chef d’Oeuvre*, which has been so frequently executed of late years, but as it contains some of the grandest choruses of Handel, it offered many opportunities for displaying the strength and efficiency of the members of Mr. Hullah’s upper singing school, whose training does great credit to the talent and perseverance of their director. Most of the choruses were admirably rendered, but the greatest effects were produced in “And the glory of the Lord,” “For unto us a Child is born,” “Glory to God,” “Lift up your heads,” “The Hallelujah,” and the final “Amen.” All through the *piano* passages were sung with the utmost truth of intonation, and the balance of power was admirably preserved in the different parts.¹⁵

However, the limitations of the Hullah-Wilhem system—*solfège*—which employed a fixed ‘doh’ were criticized; as D. Leinster-MacKay puts it, “Kay had backed the wrong horse”;¹⁶ and gradually John Curwen’s method (with its

13 Hullah was appointed as Government Inspector for musical subjects in 1872.

14 See Rainbow, “Hullah, John,” in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*, accessed 28 Jan. 2012.

15 “Handel’s ‘Messiah’ as performed under the direction of Mr. John Hullah,” *The Era*, no. 1124 (Sunday 8 April 1860), p. 12, col. 1.

16 Leinster-MacKay (1981), 165.

movable ‘doh’) supplanted Hullah’s system.¹⁷ The congregational minister John Curwen (1816–1880) promoted his more flexible Tonic Sol-Fa Method (*Singing for Schools and Congregations*, 1842) which drew on the work of Sarah Glover. In 1867 he founded his Tonic Sol-Fa College, and networks of singing teachers continued to spread around Britain.¹⁸ Mackerness asserts that the outcome of the singing-class movement was felt by the second half of the century via its generation of “a great enthusiasm for singing among the lower and middle classes.”¹⁹ It was considered that singing instilled moral virtue and was thus a force for good. According to statistics in a report relating to Curwen’s Sol-Fa College dating from 1897, the reach of the system by then extended to millions of people across the colonies.²⁰ The data provided shows that nearly four million children in the English and Scottish education system were taught according to the Curwen method, and that more than 25,000 examination certificates were issued, mainly to the adult evening class students. These extraordinarily high numbers underline the continued strength of choral singing as recreational activity at the end of the nineteenth century. They also make explicit the role of the Sol-Fa movement as an agent. The movement allowed access to underprivileged and privileged alike. The value and effect of music within the education system was continually promoted and developed in this period. In 1882 Hullah was succeeded by John Stainer (1840–1901) as Music Inspector. Thus, Tonic Sol-Fa played a vital role in demystifying music among the masses.

Dave Russell shows that there was considerable diversity in relation to the make-up of choirs which could be exclusive or inclusive. There were socially élite groups (e.g. the Bradford *Liedertafel*) together with those drawn from a cross-section of class in the Yorkshire textile community in the 1890s.²¹ Russell believes that there was no defined ‘choral movement’ in England. He paints a picture of the choirs derived from northern industrial clubs, and those from local festivals which became more continuous in their activity (e.g. the Birmingham Festival Choral Society and the Bradford Festival Choral Society). Choral competitions began to feature only late in the century—this was very different from the infrastructure of competition that underpinned the brass band movement. Later in the century, choirs came from every conceivable

17 For fuller background on these developments see, for example, Cox and Stevens (2010). The work of the Norwich-based Sarah Glover as a springboard for Curwen is touched upon here and the broader context of music education and its systems is explored.

18 Smither (1985), 343.

19 Mackerness (1966), 164.

20 “The Tonic Sol-Fa College,” *The Daily News*, no. 15956 (18 May 1897), p. 8, col. 5.

21 Data is provided for Huddersfield and Leeds.

organizational background, due in no small measure to the exponential increase in the numbers of voluntary organizations. As Russell states, such organizations as “Temperance societies, chapels, Pleasant Sunday Afternoon organizations, banks, mills, political parties, and numerous other bodies spawned choirs.”²²

In London the division was clearly drawn between professional choristers—used exclusively at such occasions as the 1834 Westminster Abbey Commemoration—and the amateur choristers who founded the Sacred Harmonic Society (1832) and based themselves in Exeter Hall until 1880.²³ In his history of the London Bach Choir (established 1875), Basil Keen notes that the initial rules of the Sacred Harmonic Society dictated that members should be admitted only if they were of ‘high moral character’ and that the repertoire should be restricted exclusively to sacred music.²⁴

From the 1730s onwards, the inclusion of large choirs in state and civic occasions became established as a regular feature in English culture. Towards the end of the eighteenth century these choruses increased in size still more. Indeed, large numbers of voices came to be regarded as a prerequisite for a satisfactory and worthwhile oratorio performance. Central to these events in England was a work by a German-born composer. Handel’s oratorios and in particular his *Messiah* formed the bedrock of the repertoire.²⁵ The British composer Dr. Samuel Arnold issued a collected edition of folio scores of Handel’s music between 1787 and 1797.²⁶ From its beginning *Messiah* was strongly associated with charitable events. Donald Burrows has traced its journey through the English provinces in the eighteenth century.²⁷ As he notes, *Messiah* was designed to be performable by professional singers after a very limited number of rehearsals, and was therefore generally within the compass of amateur singers within a matter of months. Appropriate rehearsal provision, with its logistical complexities in harnessing the effort and energy of hundreds of singers, was a crucial component in the oratorio-performing process. As we shall see in relation to the Westminster Abbey and Crystal Palace Handel Festivals, when

22 Russell (1997), 249.

23 Smither (1985), 342.

24 Keen (2008), 2–3.

25 Smith and Young (accessed 10 Dec. 2010) provide details of the emergence of *Messiah* performances in venues other than churches; they state that the oratorio was first performed in a cathedral in 1759 at the Three-Choirs Festival. The link between the performances and charitable causes (e.g. hospitals) reinforced the sense of purpose and the association with the collective good.

26 Landon (1992), 232.

27 Burrows (1991), 57.

gathering up individuals from the provinces in combined scratch choirs, the allocation of adequate rehearsal time was a priority and a problem.

Rather than the opera, which featured large in Europe, it was oratorio that dominated musical life in Britain in the nineteenth century. Nigel Burton provides a convincing explanation for this: “oratorio, a form that was sacred but not liturgical, unstaged and yet dramatic, was an ideal compromise for a nation whose Established Church sought to combine and resolve both Catholic and Calvinist traditions in its worship and theology.”²⁸ Nineteenth-century music festivals around the English provinces provided local opportunities for large-scale, visually and aurally striking performances of choral music. These were obvious manifestations of civic activity and business prowess, a by-product of the industrial revolution. Handel’s status as an adopted Englishman was unquestioned. Coronations and commemorations featured his music (e.g. Westminster Abbey in 1784, involving 300 singers)²⁹ and this was also the case in Germany.³⁰ The Three-Choirs Festival (established in 1754) featured his music performed by the members of the three cathedral choirs (Gloucester, Hereford, and Worcester) and amateur members of music clubs in the towns. In 1834 Sir George Smart, himself a veteran of the festival circuit and propagator of Handel, directed a festival in Westminster Abbey at the command of William IV. Like its predecessors, the event incorporated performers from throughout the country. The large forces—644 performers—comprised singers from cathedral choirs and other professional choristers.³¹ However, religious non-conformists were excluded, leading to the formation of the Sacred Harmonic Society, whose membership was drawn from the middle classes.³²

Starting from the 1820s and 1830s festivals were held in Birmingham, Derby, Hull, Manchester, Norwich, and York which nearly always included performances of *Messiah*. The Lenten Oratorio tradition—in which performances of oratorios, in full and in part, were delivered in combination with secular instrumental and vocal music in concert halls for profit—offered another arena for choral activity. The case of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society (founded 1840) provides a useful example of an organization whose origins lay in oratorio performance via the town’s festivals. Musical festivals were held in Liverpool

28 Burton (1981), 214.

29 This involved 300 singers (drawn from around England) and 250 instrumentalists. Smith and Young detail the growth in forces associated with commemorations later in the eighteenth century. Such events were held in 1785–87, 1790, and 1791.

30 Ferdinand Hiller’s Berlin *Messiah* in 1786. See Butt, in Samson, ed. (2002), 213–36.

31 Smither (1985), 341.

32 Keen (2008), 2–3.

in early October in 1794, 1799, and 1805; the French wars intervened and the Festival was revived again in 1817, 1823, 1827 and held triennially thereafter until 1836.³³ This final Festival included the English premiere of Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* conducted by Sir George Smart. The Society's remit stemmed from the long-standing, large-scale choral festival activities so popular in the town. The new institution, comprising an orchestra and a choir, was built on amateur involvement; professional musicians had no obvious means to develop an economically viable career in the town. Indeed, the process of professionalization was a very slow one for the Society.³⁴ The Liverpool Festival Choral Society, which included amateur and professional musicians, was already in existence and continued its work. It became known as the Auxiliary Society and exercised powerful brokerage rights in the running of the Liverpool Philharmonic Society for many decades. This power was derived from the central core of repertoire programmed by the Society's orchestra and choir—choral repertoire.

A telling example of the demanding, indeed limiting, attitude of the chorus dates from 1850 when the Society mounted a catastrophic performance of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. So badly did the performance go astray that it provoked published rebukes from the critics, denial of any responsibility on the part of the organist, letters of complaint from the Auxiliary Society to the Society's Directors, and a strong rebuttal from the conductor of the ill-fated event, J. Zeugheer Herrmann. This very public unravelling of reputations came about because of the historic power of the Society's chorus. In their combined strength and shared negativity towards the conductor, they managed to derail the performance. The subsequent restructuring of power in the Society was to take time, but by 1851 the Auxiliary Society had been disbanded.

Back in the capital city, a significant trial event took place in 1857. On this occasion the Sacred Harmonic Society (whose secretary was Sir George Grove) marshalled 1,200 singers from London and 800 more from towns around the country. A three-day festival was mounted garnering audiences of 48,474 and performing *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabeus*, and *Israel in Egypt*. From this large audience a profit of £9,000 was realized.³⁵ Two years later, the Handel centenary of 1859 spawned the Great Handel Festival Chorus with its linked

33 Pritchard (1969), p. 1.

34 The Liverpool orchestra remained entirely local and did not perform its first London concert until 1944. In the mid-1940s signings with *His Master's Voice* and *Columbia Recordings* increased its notoriety. All of this came more than a century after the Society was instituted on 10 January 1840.

35 Keen (2008), 3.

amateur divisions around England.³⁶ This 1859 Crystal Palace performance in Sydenham marshalled a gigantic chorus of 2,765 singers and an orchestra of 460 players under the baton of Sir Michael Costa.³⁷ The chorus thus outnumbered the orchestra five times over, giving us pause to consider quite what the aural effect was of the gathered ensemble. There were over 81,000 people in the audience across the four days, and they listened to Handel's *Messiah* and *Israel in Egypt*. This event illustrates not only the dominant role of the chorus in oratorio but also the outreach of Handel's music to vast numbers of the listening public. The Crystal Palace Festival was held on a triennial basis until 1926. The bicentennial anniversary of Handel's birth in 1885 was an exception to this triennial pattern, and events under the direction of August Manns began on Monday 20 June with *Messiah*.³⁸ Wednesday's fare comprised a 'selection' and Friday brought a performance of *Israel in Egypt*. Manns had undertaken extra rehearsals with the chorus, and it was reported in the press that of the 2,782 singers, 2,008 were drawn from London while the remaining 774 emanated "from Yorkshire, from Wales, from Cornwall and Devon, from Norwich, from Ireland and Scotland."³⁹ The status of Handel remained undiminished, continually drawing on the commitment and enterprise of singers from across the nation.

As we have noted, festivals and choral societies were found in nearly every town in England. The association of many of these oratorio and festival activities with charitable causes added to their moral status. These events brought an upsurge in local trade at performance time and must have boosted a feeling of collective engagement and even a sense of 'national morale,' as E.D. Mackerness puts it.⁴⁰ The promotion of oratorios by Handel (always dominant), Beethoven, Haydn, Mendelssohn, Mozart, and composers such as Spohr and Neumann was widespread.

Improvements in the economies of music publishing helped to allow cheap printed copies to be widely disseminated and individually owned. Composers who wished to raise their profiles and to succeed had to write oratorios. Festivals commissioned choral works—one obvious example being

36 Smith and Young (accessed 10 Dec. 2010).

37 Smither (1985), 345.

38 August Manns (1825–1907) had become conductor of the Crystal Palace concerts in 1855; his Saturday Concerts (1855–1901) operated with Sir George Grove were a vital source of popular classical music. Costa died in 1884 and Manns was asked to conduct the Handel Bicentenary. Manns was given a knighthood in 1903.

39 "Handel Festival," *The Era*, no. 2440 (27 June 1885), p. 9, cols. 1–3.

40 Mackerness (1966), 209.

the Birmingham Festival's premiere of Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in 1846. After Handel it was Mendelssohn who had the greatest influence on musical society in England during the nineteenth century. His friendship with Victoria and Albert, his popularity as performer, composer, and conductor, and his ties with the house of Novello all contributed to the security of his position in English consciousness.

Founded in 1811, via the entrepreneurial work of the Roman Catholic organist and choirmaster Vincent Novello (1781–1861), the Novello publishing house capitalized throughout the nineteenth century on the appetite for choral music making. It also nurtured the sense of piety associated with the owning, learning and performance of sacred works at home, in church, and in concert venues. Vincent Novello ardently believed in opening up general access to the great works of the masters. By supplying cheap octavo vocal scores in large numbers, Vincent's son, Alfred Novello (who was a sought-after bass soloist on the oratorio circuit), equipped a burgeoning market with material suited to amateurs.⁴¹ From 1846 the Novello firm's bound *Messiah* vocal score (priced six shillings and sixpence) or the unbound six-shilling vocal score became affordable. This was followed by the Novello pocket-sized score in 1856 at the bargain price of one shilling and sixpence. Obtaining the English copyright to Mendelssohn's *St. Paul* in 1836 fuelled Novello's market share and reflected and supported the taste for oratorio fare. The company harnessed the power of the press in promulgating taste by establishing the periodical *The Musical World* as a mouthpiece for the promotion of *St. Paul*. By the time of its premiere in Liverpool the publisher had made *St. Paul* available in full- and piano-score formats. The Novello company also sponsored oratorio concerts, thus creating practical opportunities for the application of its products. The firm of Novello was responsible for providing its customers with accessible copies of seminal works in a format designed to be not only affordable but clear and practical. At the same time it built on the popularity of the familiar and the trust that this created among its customers, and used this as a springboard for investment in new works in the genre.

Doubtless the massive choral phenomenon brought with it a sense of collective unity and mutual agreement. Handel's *Messiah* sung in English represented a link with the past and an endless tradition of performance and familiarity, and therefore provided a solid foundation. Activities originating in the eighteenth century provided a training ground by establishing madrigal and glee clubs which fostered musical knowledge, creativity, and participation

41 See Palmer (2006).

among middle-class males.⁴² The concert and town hall, designed to accommodate large forces, effectively became a place of religious communion. The work of the Sol-Fa movement, combined with affordable printed music, allowed formerly musically illiterate people access to repertoires, memberships, rehearsals and performances.

Much more remains to be discovered about the separation and interrelation of people of varying classes and backgrounds within these and other abundant choral activities across England. Statistics relating to the supply of women and children within these choruses are currently unavailable. Handel's *Messiah*, a work accepted as the epitome of canonized music in the repertoires of choirs nationwide, provided a vital and accessible continuity, connecting disparate choirs in combined performances and making possible participation from diverse locations and social backgrounds. *Messiah* can thus be seen as a force for positive leisure-time activity with its built-in personal and collective development and enjoyment. As such, and perhaps particularly in its large-scale performances, *Messiah* was a vehicle for national pride and unity.

42 The Madrigal Society (1741); Anacreontic Society (1766); Noblemen and Gentlemen's Catch Club (1761); Glee Club (1783). See Smith and Young (accessed 10 Dec. 2010).

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