

Too Hot to Handel is a Messiah with a twist! This creative adaptation encompasses jazz, gospel, rock and funk to break the classical sound barrier. You will hear an 80 person choir, piano, saxophone, jazz bass, keyboard, bass guitar, drums and electric guitar.

What is the background of Handel's Messiah?



- George Frideric Handel composed *Messiah* in 1741 in England.
- *Messiah* is an oratorio. An oratorio is a musical composition for voices and instruments that has a religious theme, often telling a sacred story without using costumes, scenery or dramatic staging.
- At the time, many thought that *Messiah* was blasphemous. They felt that it was not possible to include religious themes without being disrespectful. During the 1700's, opera and classical performers were often the subject of moral outrage.
- Handel wrote the original *Messiah* in 3-4 weeks. This is incredibly fast for a 259 page score!
- Although it is now performed around Christmas, it originally premiered the week before Easter.
- In most instances, it is performed with a full orchestra.

What is the background of Too Hot to Handel?



- It grew from an idea to realization in the hands of Gary Anderson and Bob Christianson, who created the gospel-jazz adaption in 1992.
- Conductor Marin Alsop collaborated with Anderson and Christianson to encompass jazz, gospel, rock and funk to capture a fresh feel and thrill.
- Too Hot to Handel is performed in the Detroit Opera House which seats 2,700 people.
- It includes:
 - African musical forms
 - Rhythm and Blues, Jazz, Swing, Rock, Gospel forms
 - Walking Bass
 - Hammond Organ
 - Amplification
 - Drums, Guitars, Saxophones and more!

What are the defining elements of music?



What are dynamics?

Dynamics refers to the volume of a performance. In written compositions dynamics are indicated by abbreviations or symbols that signify the intensity at which a note or passage should be played or sung. They can be used like punctuation in a sentence to indicate precise moments of emphasis.



What is tone?

In music, tone can have many definitions. For the following activity, we will refer to tone as the color or mood. On different instruments and in vocal music, a tone may be expressed in many different ways. On the piano, a delicate tone will contrast with a sharp and jarring tone

A singer may vary her tone by altering the quality of her voice by making it soft and gentle or loud and passionate.

What are some words you can use to describe tone?

Happy Droll Mournful
Humorous
Soothing Dreamy Angry

What can you add to this list? Give examples of songs you know that have some of the listed tones.

What is pitch?

The pitch of a sound is based on the frequency of vibration and the size of the vibrating object. The slower the vibration and the bigger the vibrating object, the lower the pitch, the faster the vibration and the smaller the vibrating object, the higher the pitch. Can you think of an instrument with a low pitch? A high pitch?

What are rhythm, beat, meter, and tempo?

Rhythm is defined as the pattern or placement of sounds in time and beats in music. It is the arrangement of note lengths in a piece of music..

Tempo is the speed at which a piece of music is played. Largo describes a very slow pace. Moderato indicates a moderate pace. Presto is a very fast pace. Ritenuto tells musicians to slow down suddenly.

A beat is what gives music its rhythmic pattern, it can be regular or irregular.

Meter refers to rhythmic patterns produced by grouping together strong and weak beats.

What are harmony and melody?

Harmony is what you hear when two or more notes or chords are played at the same time. In a barbershop quartet, for example, one person will sing the melody. The harmony is provided for three others—a tenor, a bass, and a baritone.

Melody is the overarching tune created by playing a succession or series of notes, and it is affected by pitch and rhythm. A composition may have a single melody that runs through once or there may be multiple melodies arranged in a verse-chorus form, as you would find in rock 'n' roll. In classical music, the melody is usually repeated as a recurring musical theme that varies as the composition progresses.

How are Handel's Messiah and too Hot to Handel Alike and Different?

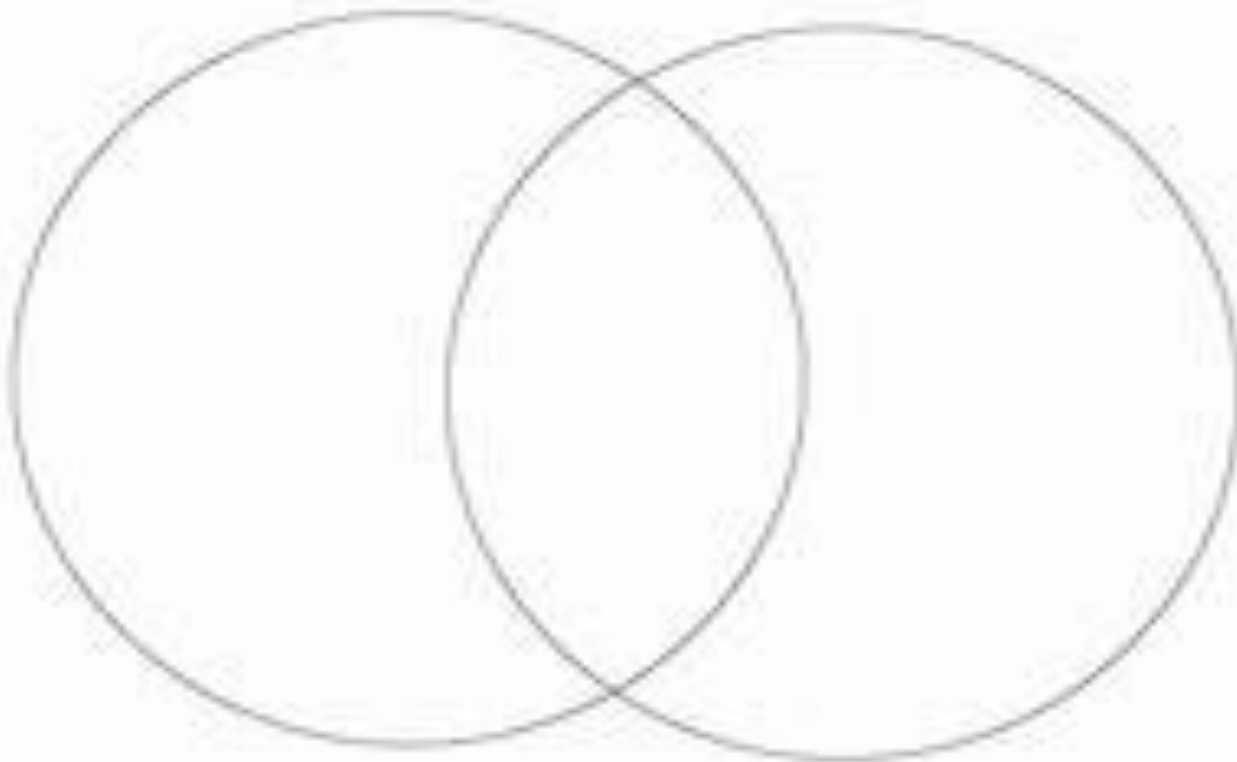


<https://youtu.be/o0fcrsiwlw>



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Compare and Contrast what you heard.



Discuss

What did you notice about the elements of music in each?

What did you enjoy about each?

How do you think culture impacted the creation of each?

TRY THIS

1. Pick one of the following Christmas songs written around the same time period as Handel's Messiah.

- Hark the Herald Angels Sing
- Joy to the World
- The Twelve Days of Christmas

2. Pick the tune to a song that is currently popular.

4. Perform the original lyrics to the new tune.

How did you do? Now imagine the process to create Too Hot to Handel!

What are the roles of the performers in Too Hot to Handel?



Vocal Soloists



Alfreda Burke, Soprano
(highest female voice)



Rodrick Dixon, Tenor
(highest adult male voice)



Karen Marie Richardson, Alto
(lowest female voice)

Jazz Trio



Left to Right
Alvin Waddles: Piano
Marion Hayden, Bass
Dave Taylor, Drums

Orchestra, Choir, Conductor



Suzanne Mallare Acton (Conductor)



Focus your thinking as you enjoy the show.
Make observations to answer these questions.

- How long do you think it takes to prepare for a performance?
- What actions do you see the conductor take to direct the performers?
- How do you see the performers expressing emotion with their bodies during the show?
- What do you think Handel would have thought about the performance if he lived during this time?
- At what points in the performance did you feel changes in the tone?
- Which role would you enjoy most and why?

Last but not least...

As you enjoy the show, remember to display theater etiquette.

- Show respect to the performers.
- Avoid side conversations.
- Clap and show appreciation where appropriate.
- Keep food and beverages out of the theater.
- Stay in your seat and be an attentive audience member.
- Cameras, phones, and other recording devices are not allowed.
- Enjoy the show!