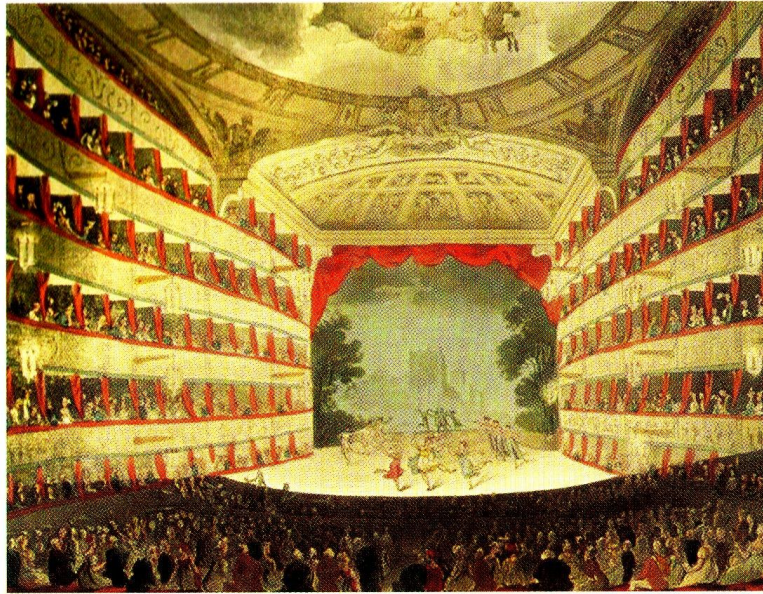


Messiah

under Handel's direction benefited one charity or other, tangible instances of the oratorio doing its work of spreading hope in the world.

The Friday rehearsal of *Messiah* was well



The Opera House, Haymarket, by Augustus Pugin and Thomas Rowlandson for Ackermann's *Microcosm of London* (1808-1811)

attended. The next day's *Journal* reported those who went as "a most Grand, Polite, and crouded Audience" and called the oratorio "the finest Composition of Mu-

sick that ever was heard, and the sacred Words as properly adapted for the Occasion." The article went on to make a most unusual request. Anticipating an over-

capacity crowd in the Music Hall for the

premiere performance the following week, it requested "as a Favour, that the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence would be pleased to come without Hoops [hoop-framed skirts], as it will greatly increase the Charity, by making Room for more company." On the day of the performance, the newspaper printed an article requesting the

"Gentlemen" attending "to come without their Swords" for the same reason.

The first performance of Handel's *Messiah* took place in the Music Hall on Fish-