

Even when the *obbligato* instruments have a definite counter-theme against the voice they still must play *piano*. In the same air ('Thou art gone up on high' in the Autograph score) where the violins have a passage of marked character to play in bars 67–72, a quotation from the introduction, Handel expressly marked it *pian*.

In the air 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' the dotted *motif* in bar 84 is marked *piano* even though the preceding figure in bar 78 was marked *piano*. Note also the *pianissimo* in bar 58 of the air 'Rejoice greatly'.

In those days the reign of the soloist was undisputed. The function of the accompanist was to accompany. It was expressed somewhat later in the century by Burney in the preface to his 'Four Sonatas or Duets for two performers on one Pianoforte or Harpsichord' (dated St. Martin's Street, 1777): 'And with respect to the Pianos and Fortes, each performer should try to discover when he has the *Principal Melody* given to him or when he is only to accompany that melody; . . . There is no fault in accompanying so destructive of good melody, taste, and expression, as the vanity with which young and ignorant Performers are too frequently possessed of becoming *Principals*, when they are only *Subalterns*; and of being heard when they have nothing to say that merits particular attention. If the part which would afford the greatest pleasure to the hearer be suffocated, and rendered inaudible, by too full and too loud an accompaniment, it is like throwing the capital figure of a piece into the background, or degrading the Master into a Servant.'

The matter is well summed up by another quotation from the air 'I know that my Redeemer liveth', bars 104–108:

Violins *forte* *p*

Voice yet in my flesh— shall I see God

Points of Imitation in a Higher Register

Orchestral points of imitation or quotations, no matter how short in length, are *forte* if pitched in a high register. Take, for example, the point of imitation that begins on the last quaver of bar 42 in the air 'O Thou that tellest'. This is not marked *forte* but is clearly so by implication as the quotation in bar 44 is marked *piano*.

Violins 42 43 44 *p*

Voice good ti-dings to Je-ru-sa-lem lift up

Again, in 'Thou shalt break them' the quotation in bar 43 is *forte* by implication as the following bar is marked *p*. The air 'I know that my Redeemer liveth' makes this point very clear. The point of imitation that begins in bar 22 is marked *piano* but the similar point of imitation that begins in bar 35 is marked *forte*—it is a fifth higher than that of bar 22. This is emphasized by the exception in bars 137–141 where Handel marked the quotation of the dotted figure pitched above the stave *piano*.

Dynamics by Implication

Many passages though not marked are nevertheless marked by implication. For example, in 'The trumpet shall sound' Handel has not marked a single *piano*; but a *piano* against the voice is made clear by his *forte* at the beginning of the following *ritornello*.

Immediate Repetitions

An immediate repetition should generally be treated as an echo. The echo was not merely a part of the technique of performance by means of which repetition was made bearable, it was part of the very stuff of the Baroque.

The Da Capo

In the *da capo*, as distinct from the immediate repetition of a passage, the dynamics are unchanged except for the intensification caused by added ornamentation. But the middle section of a *da capo* air is almost invariably contrasted in tone with the first section; note the *un poco piano* at the middle section of 'He was despised'.

Sudden Dynamic Contrasts

Dynamic contrasts, such as the introduction to 'Rejoice greatly', where the trilled couplets marked *p* are followed by a sudden *f* on beat 3 of bar 8, and the introduction to 'Every valley', where the slurred quavers in the violins in bar 6 marked *p* are followed by a sudden *forte* of the whole strings on the last quaver of the same bar, must be most clearly marked. (See also the chorus 'His yoke is easy' and the air 'He was despised'.) The 'Every valley' example is frequently completely spoiled by a *crescendo* through the couplets. This is unquestionably contrary to the composer's intentions. Interpretation must not be superimposed upon the music, it must arise from the music.

Detailed Analysis

'Glory to God'; 'If God be for us'.

The application of these general rules is shown by way of example in the following detailed analysis of just two numbers from *Messiah*, the chorus 'Glory to God' and the air 'If God be for us'. The only indication at the head of the chorus 'Glory to God' is one of tempo, *allegro*. The indication of dynamic, *da lontano e un poco piano*, is clearly written between the two trumpet staves and refers to these instruments only; the first indication was *in disparte* (aside), also written between the two trumpet staves.