# George Frideric HANDEL

# **THEODORA**

AN ORATORIO

Miniature Score

K 01323



## PREFACE.

The Oratorio of THEODORA was composed in the period from the 28th of June to the 31st of July 1749, and was produced for the first time on the 16th of March 1750. The libretto is by Th. Morell, who in a long preface mentions a book by Boyle (London, 1687) and a French play as the sources from which he has drawn. The poet appears to have set as high a value upon his share in this extraordinary work as the composer upon his; but the public behaved coldly towards it. The comparison of the alterations and improvements subsequently introduced by Handel, has enabled us to produce the work in a much correcter form than in previous editions. Later alterations and abbreviations, which are to be undoubtedly regarded as Handel's latest intentions, and in so far as improvements, are found especially in the airs "The raptur'd soul" (p. 34) and "Deeds of kindness to display" (p. 127). In the recitatives also, and in the order of the pieces, a better arrangement has occasionally been restored. The comparison of the conducting score with the original showed clearly enough what was to be done in these cases. In two pieces only, assigned to the part of Valens, Handel's intention could not be clearly discovered, and we had to choose what approved itself to our judgement as most suitable. Valens first air, "Go, my faithful soldier, go" (p. 8) was subsequently replaced by four bars of recitative:



immediately following the recitative which introduced the air. Here we have allowed the original air to stand, as it surely is a more satisfactory filling-up of the gap than a mere recitative. In the third act, on the other hand, when a similar exchange was made on the words "Ye ministers of justice", we have given the later recitative in the body of the drama (p. 208), and the earlier air in an appendix (p. 221); for here, so near the end, a greater rapidity in the action seemed to be desirable. Some airs which are contained in the London editions, are omitted here for the simple reason that they are merely borrowed from Handel's Italian operas,

Thus we are enabled to present this glorious, yet utterly unknown oratorio, to which the fates have hitherto been singularly adverse, to the members of the Handel Society in a much correcter form than heretofore; and we venture to express a hope that some one may be thereby encouraged to endeavour by a noble performance to gain for the work that acknowledgement which it so truly deserves.

LEIPZIG, Dec. 31st, 1860.

Chr.

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# THEODORA.

# Dramatis personae.

VALENS, President of Antioch. Basso.

Didimus, a Roman officer, converted by Theodora. Alto.

SEPTIMIUS, a Roman officer, his friend. Tenore.

THEODORA, a Christian of noble birth. Soprano.

IRENE, a Christian. Alto.

Messenger. Tenore.

Chorus of Christians.

Chorus of Heathens.

VALENS, römischer Statthalter in Antiochien.
Bass.

DIDIMUS, ein römischer Officier, bekehrt durch Theodora. Alt.

SEPTIMIUS, ein römischer Officier, sein Freund. Tenor.

THEODORA, eine Christin von edler Herkunft. Sopran.

IRENE, eine Christin. Alt.

Ein Bote. Tenor.

Chor der Christen. Chor der Heiden.

# ACT I.

### Scene 1.

VALENS, SEPTIMIUS, DIDIMUS. Chorus of Heathers.

Valens. 'Tis Dioclesian's natal day:

Proclaim throughout the bonds of Antioch A feast, and solemn sacrifice to Jove! Whoso disdains to join the sacred rites, Shall feel our wrath in chastisement, or death; And this, Septimius, take you in charge.

Go, my faithful soldier, go,
Let the fragrant incense rise
To Jove, great ruler of the skies!

CHORUS.

And draw a blessing down

On his imperial crown, Who rules the world below!

Didimus. Vouchsafe, dread Sir, a gracious ear
To my request. Let not thy sentence doom
To racks and flames all, all, whose scrup'lous
minds

Will not permit them, or, to bend the knee To Gods.they know not, or, in wanton mood, To celebrate the day with Roman rites.

Valens. Art thou a Roman? and yet dar'st defend A sect', rebellious to the Gods, and Rome?

### 1. Scene.

VALENS, SEPTIMIUS, DIDIMUS. Chor der Heiden.

Valens. Diess ist des Kaisers Ehrentag

Ruft aus ein heilig Fest durch Antiochien's Stadt Und frommen Opferdienst für Zeus! Wer immer wagt dem Brauch sich zu entziehn, Fühl' unsern Zorn in Kerker oder Tod; Und dein, Septimius, sei diess Geschäft.

Geh, mein treuer Krieger, geh, Süsser Duft des Weihrauch's wall' Zu Zeus empor, dem Herrn des All!

CHOR. Und Segensfülle fleh' Auf Kron' und Herrscherstab Des Herrn der Erd' herab!

Didimus. Gewähr', o Herr, Willfahrung mir Für mein Gesuch. Nicht strafe dein Gebot Mit Feu'r und Schwert auch ihn, dem seine Pflicht,

> Dem sein Gewissen nicht zu knie'n erlaubt Vor fremden Göttern, oder leichten Sinn's Die Feier zu begehn in röm'schem Brauch.

Valens. Bist du ein Römer, der du auf dich wirfst Für sie, die unsern Göttern feind und Rom?

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