

George Friderick Handel was born in 1685 (the same year as J.S. Bach and Domenico Scarlatti) in the town of Halle, Germany. Handel's father opposed his musical pursuits, but Handel's talent was so compelling that he was allowed to study with musicians in the Cathedral and University of Halle. By the age of eighteen, Handel was an accomplished organist and harpsichordist, and was well versed in composition. He was invited to Italy in 1706 by Gian Gastone de' Medici. During that 3-year tenure, Handel wrote sacred music, an opera and two oratorios. In 1710, he was appointed Kapellmeister to George, Elector of Hanover (who later became King George I of England.) Handel moved to England permanently in 1712.

Handel served for several years (1717-1718) as the resident composer at Cannons, the home of his patron James Brydges, the 1st Duke of Chandos. During this period, he wrote the 12 large-scale anthems now called the Chandos Anthems. Although catalogued as Anthem #6, *As Pants the Hart* (a setting of Psalm 42) was the first he composed, using as its inspiration a much earlier shorter version. In fact, there are at least four different accepted versions of this anthem. In a time when there were no recordings of performances and when many works were not published, each performance opportunity provided the composer the option to make 'improvements' and alterations to fit the new venue or performance resources. Composers frequently 'recomposed' or 'borrowed' material from themselves. Tonight's performance reflects that tradition. AVM presents a Samuel Adler edition of *As Longs the Hart* that is largely based upon version VI B, but substitutes movements 3 and 4 from version VI D for increased dramatic effect. Adler also updates some of the antiquated English.

Let God Arise is one of three Chandos Anthems that Handel 'recomposed' for the Chapel Royal. The Chapel Royal is an establishment of the Royal Household, rather than a building, and consists of clergy and vocalists serving the needs of the sovereign. The choir of Chapel Royal, six Gentlemen-in-Ordinary and ten Children of the Chapel (all boys) was at one time considered the finest choir in England. In order to make full use of these exceptional resources Handel re-wrote the first and last movements for chorus. The central movements for soloists were completely new, featuring outstanding arias for Bass and Alto and culminating in a rich duet accompanied by oboe and bassoon.