Editor’s Note

George Frideric Handel was born in Halle, Germany in 1685 and died in London in 1759. He was one of the most prolific composers of the Baroque period, generally defined by the years 1600 to 1750. He composed hundreds of pieces of music from solo and chamber instrumental works to oratorios and operas. Handel’s most famous work is the oratorio Messiah.

“Lascia ch’io pianga” is a solo soprano aria from Handel’s opera Rinaldo, written in 1711. He had used the aria’s memorable melody in previous works; however, its popularity has certainly come from Rinaldo and the famous modern-day singers who have recorded the piece. It is sung in the second act by the character Almirena, whose being held captive and longing for her lover, Rinaldo, who has been kept from her. (They are later reunited.) The English translation of the text is loosely, “Let me weep over my cruel fate, and sigh for liberty. May sorrow break the torture of my sufferings, for pity’s sake.” The Italian text should be sung with pure vowels and syllabic stress as the text would dictate.

This arrangement attempts to capture the beauty of the solo, with unison and choral parts throughout the piece. It also retains the simplicity of the accompaniment, which is a major characteristic of the work.

Italian Pronunciation Guide

Lascia ch’io pianga miei crudeli
Láh-shah kee oh pjaan-goh mee-ee-round tawr-tay,

e che sospi/(a) la libertà!
ay kay soh-spee lee-ee-loh lee-behr-tah!

Il duolo, infranga, queste ritar
eel duw-law loh, een-frahng-ah, way-stay ree-tawr-tay

de’ met martiri, sol per pietà.
day mee-ee-ee mih-ee-ee-ree, sohl payr pjay-teh.

Pronunciation Suggestions:

An “r” which is underlined should be rolled. An “r” which is not underlined should be dropped.

The “j” in the transliteration should be pronounced like the “i” in the English word “onion.”

The “ng” of “pianga” and “infranga” should be pronounced like the “ng” in the English word “finger.”
LASCIA CH’IO PIANGA
from Rinaldo

for S.A.T.B. voices and piano
with optional PianoTrax CD*

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sor - te, e che so - spi - ri - la

- r i - l a

li

ber-

E che so -

spi -

la

la
Li - ber - tà!
Las - cia
ch’io

La ga
cro
da
- te,

e
pre
so
spi
ri
la
Li - ber - tà!

moltò rit. 2nd time
Fine

moltò rit. 2nd time
Fine
42

torte
de' miei
mani
tiri,
sol

45

pie
miel
man

D.S. al Fine
(p. 3, m. 9)

decresc.

D.S. al Fine
(p. 3, m. 9)

decresc.