

Disgruntled Atheists Demand School Stop Playing 'Hallelujah Chorus'

A gaggle of disgruntled atheists is doing a whole lot of hollering about the "Hallelujah Chorus" in Oak Ridge, Tennessee.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation's local chapter is angry after a teacher at Linden Elementary School played a portion of the "Hallelujah Chorus" during morning announcements.

"While this music may be beautiful and even inspirational for Christians, it is not acceptable for broadcasting to the entire student body at Linden Elementary," Aleta Ledendecker wrote in a letter to the school district obtained by the *Oak Ridger*.

The aggrieved atheist group said it was acting on behalf of two parents who had children enrolled in the school.

"In consideration of all the possible choices of music, this piece with its distinctly religious content can be interpreted as proselytizing," Ledendecker wrote.

For the record, there have not been any reports of children spontaneously converting to the Christian faith as a result of George Handel's beautiful song.

"This is the litmus test I use: If I were a Christian parent walking in the school, and I heard over the PA system during morning announcements music with the words 'Praise Allah. Allah is king on high. Bow down to Allah,' how would I feel as a Christian parent with that being broadcast to all the children in the schools?" Ledendecker told the *Oak Ridger*.

The school district told the "Todd Starnes Show" that a

teacher had a good reason for playing a 20-second excerpt from Handel's *Messiah*.

"The passage was selected to correspond with the school's overall music curriculum that, for that particular week, featured the musical works of George Handel," the school spokesperson told me.

Long story short—Handel is not going anywhere.

"The school system strongly disagreed with her position and, through our school board's attorney, we responded promptly to the writer, suggesting that she was in error," the spokesperson told me.

"The criticisms articulated by Ms. Ledendecker appear to have been based upon insufficient information taken entirely out of context, incorrect assumptions about the school's music curriculum and a fundamental misunderstanding of the First Amendment's relationship with historically sacred classical music compositions being taught in a public-school music curriculum," the spokesperson added.

Yeah, that response is probably going to jingle the atheists' bells.

It's about time a school district stood up to those godless bullies and politely told them to blow it out their piccolo.

As George Handel would say, "Hallelujah!"