

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC

PRESENTS

George Frideric Handel's

MESSIAH



University of Notre Dame Chorale
&

Festival Baroque Orchestra

Alexander Blachly, Director

Jessica Bush, Clarisse Wilson, Morgan Rice - *soprano soloists*

Joshua Boggs - *countertenor soloist*

Wesley Dunnagan, Matthew Kelly - *tenor soloists*

Greg Demet, Emorja Roberson, Edward Vogel - *bass soloists*

8:00 p.m., Friday, December 4, 2015

8:00 p.m., Saturday, December 5, 2015

Leighton Concert Hall

Marie P. DeBartolo Center for the Performing Arts

Sinfony [Overture]

Comfort ye (Isaiah 40: 1-3); Ev'ry valley shall be exalted (Isaiah 40: 4)
(tenor recitative and aria – Wesley Dunnagan)

And the glory of the Lord (Isaiah 51: 5)
(chorus)

Thus saith the Lord (Haggai 2: 6-7; Malachi 3: 1)
(baritone recitative – Greg Demet)

But who may abide (Malachi 3: 2)
(alto aria – Joshua Boggs)

And he shall purify (Malachi 3: 3)
(chorus)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive (Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23); O thou that tellest good tidings (Isaiah 40: 9; 40: 1)
(alto recitative and aria with chorus – Joshua Boggs)

For behold, darkness (Isaiah 40: 2-3); The people that walked in darkness (Isaiah 40: 2)
(baritone recitative and aria – Edward Vogel)

For unto us a child is born (Isaiah 9: 6)
(chorus)

Pifa [Pastoral Symphony]
(strings and continuo)

There were shepherds (Luke 2: 8); And, lo, the angel (Luke 2: 9);

And the angel said (Luke 2: 10-11); And suddenly (Luke 2: 13)
(soprano recitatives – Jessica Bush)

Glory to God (Luke 2: 14)
(chorus)

Rejoice greatly (Zechariah 9:9-10)
(soprano aria – Jessica Bush)

He shall feed his flock (Isaiah 40: 11; Matthew 11: 28-29)
(soprano aria – Clarisse Wilson)

His yoke is easy (Matthew 11: 30)
(chorus)

INTERMISSION

Behold the Lamb of God (John 1: 29)
(chorus)

Surely He hath borne our griefs (Isaiah 53: 4-5)

And With his Stripes (Isaiah 53: 5)

All we like sheep (Isaiah 53: 6)
(chorus)

Thy rebuke hath broken his heart (Psalm 49: 21); Behold and see (Lamentations 1: 12);

He was cut off (Isaiah 53: 8); But thou didst not leave (Psalm 16: 10)
(tenor recitatives and arias – Wesley Dunnagan)

The Lord gave the word (Psalm 68: 11)
(chorus)

How beautiful are the feet (Romans 10: 15)
(soprano aria – Morgan Rice)

Why do the nations (Psalm 2: 1-2)
(baritone aria – Emorja Roberson)

I know that my redeemer liveth (Job 19: 25-26; Cor. 15: 20)
(soprano aria – Jessica Bush)

Behold, I tell you a mystery (I Corinthians 15: 51-52); The trumpet shall sound (I Corinthians 15: 52-54)
(bass recitative and aria – Edward Vogel)

Let us break their bonds asunder (Psalm 2: 8)
(chorus)

He that dwelleth in heaven (Psalm 2: 4); Thou shalt break them (Psalm 2: 9)
(tenor aria – Matthew Kelly)

Hallelujah (Revelation 19: 6; 11: 15; 19: 16)
(chorus)

Program Note

Handel's *Messiah* has long enjoyed a unique and undisputed status as the most beloved sacred musical work in the English language. Composed in a white heat of creative activity in the short space of just over three weeks (August 22 to September 14, 1741), it numbers among a group of works Handel wrote for presentation in Dublin, where the composer resided for an extended stay upon the invitation of the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, William Cavendish, third Duke of Devonshire. In the event, Handel did not give the premiere of *Messiah* upon disembarking in November of 1741; he waited until April 13, 1742, five months later.

First presented as a benefit for three Dublin charitable organizations, *Messiah* continued to be associated with a charity—London's Foundling Hospital—when it finally gained acceptance in England, beginning in 1750. Amazingly, the London public had mounted a spirited opposition to *Messiah* at its first performance in that city on March 23, 1743. The matter of greatest offense was the venue, the Theatre Royal in Covent Garden, a disreputable place "peopled by actors and actresses of loose morals" (H.C. Robbins Landon). The more Puritanical elements in English society also objected to having the words of Holy Scripture set to music in the theatrical, operatic manner. Today, on the other hand, *Messiah* wins only unqualified praise. Paul Henry Lang in 1977 called it "as seemingly immune from criticism as the articles of faith." In London alone Handel conducted 36 performances of *Messiah* before his death in 1759, showing that it quickly became as popular in his day as it continues to be in ours.

The texts for *Messiah* were compiled by Charles Jennens, who sent them to Handel in June 1741. As Robbins Landon has pointed out, much of the libretto comes from the Church of England's *Book of Common Prayer*. The resulting collection of Biblical passages presents not a story as such, but rather a collection of texts devoted to the history of Christianity, the whole arranged in a form that Lang terms "an English anthem-oratorio." Already in 1763, a Dr. John Brown observed that though "called an *Oratorio*, yet [*Messiah*] is not dramatic but properly a Collection of *Hymns* or *Anthems* drawn from the sacred Scriptures." Yet while *Messiah* may not be a drama, strictly speaking, it does narrate the extraordinary story of Christianity from its first prophecies and the birth of Christ (Part I), to Christ's passion and resurrection (Part II), to the predictions of a future day of reckoning (Part III) in powerful choruses and memorable arias.

Like nearly every large-scale 18th-century work, *Messiah* underwent a degree of alteration and rearrangement at each new performance during its composer's lifetime. Tonight's presentation, which includes most of Parts I and II plus three numbers from Part III ("I know that my Redeemer liveth," "Behold, I tell you a mystery," and "The trumpet shall sound"), follows the 1958 edition by English musicologist Watkins Shaw, who drew on the large number of performance parts surviving from Handel's own presentations of the work. The text of the "Hallelujah" chorus celebrates an Apocalyptic victory heralded by a trumpet, as does "The trumpet shall sound," with its text from Corinthians I. These two rousing numbers bring to a fitting close tonight's presentation of Handel's popular oratorio, unsurpassed in its universal appeal.

—Alexander Blachly

The **University of Notre Dame Chorale**, Notre Dame's official concert choir, is open to students from every field of study. In its campus concerts and on tour throughout the USA the Chorale presents music drawn from the finest choral tradition. It has appeared frequently with orchestra in works by Bach, Handel, Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert, Mendelssohn, Stravinsky, Britten, and Poulenc. Director **Alexander Blachly** is known outside the University of Notre Dame for his New York-based vocal ensemble Pomerium, with which he has released fourteen recordings of Renaissance *a cappella* music on the Old Hall, Pure Classics/Glissando, Deutsche Grammophon/Archiv, Dorian, Classic Masters, and Nonesuch labels. Pomerium has performed at Notre Dame numerous times, most recently on September 14, 2012, and will return to Leighton Concert Hall again on April 8, 2016, for a performance of music by J.S. Bach and his predecessors.

The **Notre Dame Festival Baroque Orchestra** is a select ensemble comprised of professionals augmented by students drawn from the ranks of the Notre Dame Symphony Orchestra. This year, for the first time, the Notre Dame Festival Orchestra is performing entirely on Baroque instruments tuned a half-step lower than their modern counterparts, hence its longer name: the Notre Dame Festival Baroque Orchestra.

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME CHORALE

| <i>Sopranos</i> | <i>Altos</i> | <i>Tenors</i> | <i>Basses</i> |
|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| Erin Bishop (1) | Mary C. Aloia | Jack Cahill | Justin Appel |
| Jessica Bush | Sarah Brown | Wesley Dunnagan | Brian Celeste (7) |
| Meghan Cain | Joshua Boggs | Nick Herzog (2) | Christopher Daniel |
| Elizabeth Greason | Melissa Cross (5) | Christian Hokaj | Greg Demet |
| Lauren Hann | Becca Fritz (6) | Stephen Jackson | Mateo Garcia-Novelli |
| Alice Hou | Erin Graney | Matthew Kelly | Edward Lim (7) |
| Maya Jain | Alexis Green | Eric Krebs | Cole Maberry |
| Anna Kalkman | Maria Gund | Michael LeGrand | Sid Magdaong |
| Molly Knapp (6)(8) | Anne Horcher | Justin McDevitt | Trey Murphy |
| Rachel Kong | Daniela Iezza | Corey Pennycuff (8) | Brendan Pelkey |
| Claire Maxa | Brooke McGill | James Pratt | Emorja Roberson |
| Mary Mecca | Jarissa Sabal | David Swenson | Paul Stevenson |
| Maura Monahan | Katie Surine | Joseph Wells | Ian Tembe |
| Shelby Niemann | Katie Ward | | Patrick Tingleff (3) |
| Jennifer Richardson | Julaine Zenk | | Lucas Unruh (8) |
| Morgan Rice | | | Edward Vogel |
| Weixing Song | | | Kelvin Wu |
| Zoë Usowski | | | |
| Michelle Williams (4) | | | |
| Clarisse Wilson | | | |
| Mara Wilson | | | |

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(6) SOCIAL COMMISSIONERS; (7) PUBLICITY COMMISSIONER; (8) NEWSLETTER EDITOR

NOTRE DAME FESTIVAL BAROQUE ORCHESTRA

| | | |
|---|------------------------------|--|
| Violin I Daniel Stein (Concertmaster) Jaesung Lee Timothy Michuda | Cello Brady Lanier | Oboe Sarah Huebsch (Principal) Sung Lee |
| Violin II Tamara Stojanovic Albahari (Principal) Emily Campagna | Bass Phillip Serna | Trumpet Ryan Berndt (Principal) William Baxtresser |
| Viola Luis Vargas (Principal) Cesar Silva | | Timpani Sam Sanchez |
| | | Harpichord Päivi Ekroth |