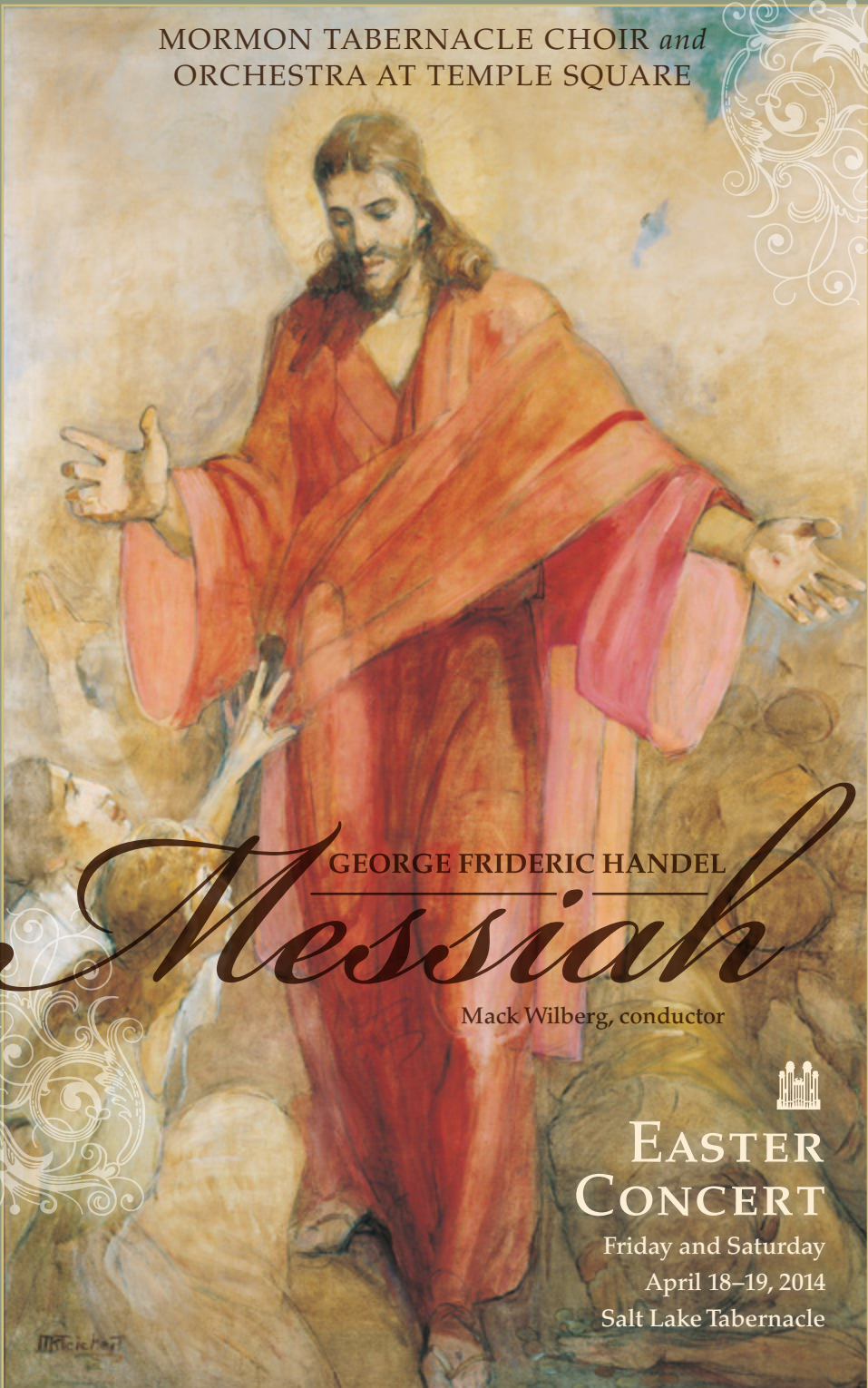


MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR *and*
ORCHESTRA AT TEMPLE SQUARE



GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Messiah

Mack Wilberg, conductor



EASTER
CONCERT

Friday and Saturday

April 18–19, 2014

Salt Lake Tabernacle

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ORCHESTRA AT TEMPLE SQUARE

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GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
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Friday and Saturday, April 18–19, 2014

7:30 p.m.

Salt Lake Tabernacle



SOLOISTS

Melissa Heath
Soprano

Tamara Mumford
Mezzo-Soprano

Brian Stucki
Tenor

Kyle Ketelsen
Bass-Baritone

PROGRAM

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

Messiah

Mack Wilberg
conductor

Richard Elliott, Clay Christiansen, Andrew Unsworth
organists

PART I

1. Sinfonia Overture
2. Recitative Comfort Ye My People Tenor
3. Aria Ev'ry Valley Shall Be Exalted..... Tenor
4. Chorus And the Glory of the Lord
5. Recitative Thus Saith the Lord..... Bass
6. Aria But Who May Abide the Day of His Coming?..... Mezzo-Soprano
7. Chorus And He Shall Purify
8. Recitative Behold, a Virgin Shall Conceive..... Mezzo-Soprano
9. Aria and Chorus O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings to Zion..... Mezzo-Soprano
10. Recitative For Behold, Darkness Shall Cover the Earth Bass
11. Aria The People That Walked in Darkness..... Bass
12. Chorus For unto Us a Child Is Born
13. Pifa Pastoral Symphony
- 14a. Recitative There Were Shepherds Abiding in the Field..... Soprano
- 14b. Recitative And Lo! The Angel of the Lord Came upon Them... Soprano
15. Recitative And the Angel Said unto Them..... Soprano
16. Recitative And Suddenly There Was with the Angel..... Soprano
17. Chorus Glory to God
18. Aria Rejoice Greatly, O Daughter of Zion!..... Soprano
19. Recitative Then Shall the Eyes of the Blind Be Opened..... Mezzo-Soprano
20. Aria He Shall Feed His Flock Like a Shepherd..... Mezzo-Soprano and Soprano
21. Chorus His Yoke Is Easy, and His Burthen Is Light

PART II

22. Chorus Behold the Lamb of God
 23. Aria He Was Despised..... Mezzo-Soprano
 24. Chorus Surely He Hath Borne Our Griefs
 25. Chorus And with His Stripes We Are Healed
 26. Chorus All We Like Sheep Have Gone Astray
 27. Recitative All They That See Him, Laugh Him to Scorn Tenor
 28. Chorus He Trusted in God That He Would Deliver Him
 29. Recitative Thy Rebuke Hath Broken His Heart Tenor
 30. Aria Behold, and See If There Be Any Sorrow..... Tenor
 31. Recitative He Was Cut Off out of the Land of the Living..... Soprano
 32. Aria But Thou Didst Not Leave His Soul in Hell..... Soprano
 33. Chorus Lift Up Your Heads, O Ye Gates
 34. Recitative Unto Which of the Angels Said He at Any Time..... Tenor
 35. Chorus Let All the Angels of God Worship Him
 36. Aria Thou Art Gone Up on High Mezzo-Soprano
 37. Chorus The Lord Gave the Word
 38. Aria How Beautiful Are the Feet..... Soprano
 39. Chorus Their Sound Is Gone Out into All the Lands
 40. Aria Why Do the Nations So Furiously Rage Together Bass
 41. Chorus Let Us Break Their Bonds Asunder
 42. Recitative He That Dwelleth in Heaven Tenor
 43. Aria Thou Shalt Break Them..... Tenor
 44. Chorus Hallelujah!

PART III

45. Aria I Know That My Redeemer Liveth Soprano
 46. Chorus Since by Man Came Death
 47. Recitative Behold, I Tell You a Mystery Bass
 48. Aria The Trumpet Shall Sound..... Bass
 49. Recitative Then Shall Be Brought to Pass..... Mezzo-Soprano
 50. Duet O Death, Where Is Thy Sting?..... Mezzo-Soprano
 and Tenor
 51. Chorus But Thanks Be to God
 52. Aria If God Be for Us, Who Can Be against Us? Soprano
 53. Chorus Worthy Is the Lamb That Was Slain

BIOGRAPHIES



MACK WILBERG, Music Director and Conductor

Mack Wilberg was appointed music director of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir on March 28, 2008, having served as associate music director of the Choir since May 1999. Dr. Wilberg is responsible for all musical and creative aspects of the Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square in rehearsals, concerts, tours, and recordings, as well as the weekly broadcast of *Music and the Spoken Word*. He is a former professor of music at Brigham Young University and is active as a composer, arranger, guest conductor, and clinician throughout the United States and abroad. His compositions and arrangements, currently published exclusively by Oxford University Press, are performed and recorded by choral organizations throughout the world, including the Choirs of King's College and St. John's College, Cambridge, and the choruses of the Chicago, San Francisco, Cleveland, and Dallas Symphony Orchestras. His works have most recently been performed by such artists as Renée Fleming, Bryn Terfel, Deborah Voigt, Frederica von Stade, Nathan Gunn, The King's Singers, Alfie Boe, and Brian Stokes Mitchell, along with narrators Jane Seymour, Michael York, Edward Herrmann, and Claire Bloom. Dr. Wilberg received his bachelor's degree from Brigham Young University and his master's and doctoral degrees from the University of Southern California. He and his wife, Rebecca, are the parents of four children and have one granddaughter.



Photograph by Suzanne Ellertson

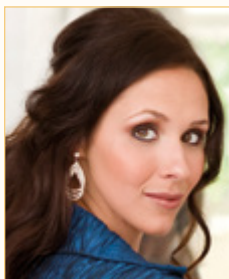
MELISSA HEATH, Soprano

Soprano Melissa Heath, hailed as a "soaring, sparkling soprano" with "vivacious stage presence," enjoys a varied career of opera, concert, and recital work. Past roles include Amy in Mark Adamo's *Little Women*, Cunégonde in Bernstein's *Candide*, La Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi*, Marianne in *Tartuffe*, Gretel in *Hansel and Gretel*, and First Lady in *The Magic Flute*. She has also performed the role of Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* with La Musica Lirica in Novafeltria, Italy.

Ms. Heath has frequented the concert stage as the soprano soloist in Mozart's *Requiem*, the Brahms *German Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah*, the Howells *Hymnus Paradisi*, and in the Fauré and Rutter *Requiems*. She has performed in Ballet West's production of Carl Orff's *Carmina Burana*, John Rutter's *Mass of the Children* with the Salt Lake Choral Artists, Scarlatti's Christmas Cantata with the Salt Lake Symphony, and the 2012 Orchestra at Temple Square concert "A Night in Vienna," and she recently appeared with the Temple Square Chorale in the Vaughan Williams *Dona nobis pacem*. In 2003 Ms. Heath was a state finalist and in 2006 was a district winner in the Metropolitan Opera's National Council Auditions. In 2012 she was a regional finalist in the National Association of Teachers of Singing's biennial art song competition.

Ms. Heath, whose singing has been described as "gorgeous, wonderfully expressive, lyrical, and infused with feeling," received her bachelor's degree in voice from Brigham Young University, where she studied with Drs. Rebecca Wilberg and Lila Stuart-Bachelder. She holds

a master's degree in voice from the University of Utah, where she studied with Dr. Robert Breault. She currently coaches with Jeffrey Price and Dr. Paul Dorgan and continues her vocal studies with Dr. Robert Breault. Ms. Heath resides in Murray, Utah, with her son.



Photograph by Dario Acosta

TAMARA MUMFORD, Mezzo-Soprano

This season, mezzo-soprano Tamara Mumford returned to the Metropolitan Opera for *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Wozzeck*; appeared in concert with the New York Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and Seattle Symphony Orchestra; returned to the Hollywood Bowl for *Cavalleria Rusticana* with Gustavo Dudamel; and made her debut at the Caramoor Festival in *Lucrezia Borgia*.

A native of Sandy, Utah, Ms. Mumford holds a bachelor's degree in music from Utah State University and is a graduate of the

Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program. She made her debut as Laura in *Luisa Miller* and has appeared in numerous Metropolitan Opera productions. Other opera engagements include the title role in the American premiere of Henze's *Phaedra*, the title role in *Dido and Aeneas* at the Glimmerglass Festival, Ciesca in *Gianni Schicchi* with the Orchestra Sinfonica Giuseppe Verdi di Milano in Italy, and the title role in *La Cenerentola* at Utah Festival Opera.

An active concert performer and recitalist, Ms. Mumford recently appeared with Gustavo Dudamel and the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra in U.S. and European tours of the world premiere of John Adams's oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary*. She has appeared with the New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, and Milwaukee Symphony orchestras and at the Hollywood Bowl and the Ravinia, Tanglewood, Grand Teton, and La Jolla summer music festivals. In recital she has been presented by the Marilyn Horne Foundation, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Philadelphia Chamber Music Society. Ms. Mumford has appeared in the Metropolitan Opera's *Met: Live in HD* series broadcasts and has recorded Beethoven's *Cantata on the Death of Emperor Joseph II* with Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony (Avie). She has several Deutsche Grammophon recordings, including a duet with Bryn Terfel on the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's *Homeward Bound* album released last year.



Photograph by Ann Hinchley Stucki

BRIAN STUCKI, Tenor

Hailed as "superb" by the *Boston Globe*, tenor Brian Stucki continues to distinguish himself as an interpreter of opera, oratorio, and song. He returned last season to Arizona Opera in the title role of *Roméo et Juliette* and joined the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra for Handel's *Messiah*, Pacific Symphony for Mozart's *Requiem*, and the Polish National Opera for his third engagement as Roderick in the company's successful production of Glass's *The Fall of the House of Usher*. He sang with the Bar Harbor Music Festival, performed

Messiah with Virginia Symphony and Boise Philharmonic, and returned to the Acadiana Symphony Orchestra for *Carmina Burana*.

Highlights of previous engagements include Ferrando in *Così fan tutte* with New Israeli Opera, Almaviva in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* with the Compañía Nacional de Opera at the Palacio de Bellas Artes in Mexico City, Nadir in *The Pearl Fishers* with Seattle Opera, and Ottavio in *Don Giovanni* with Opera Fuoco in Paris. An accomplished oratorio soloist, he has performed in Haydn's *Creation* with Boston Baroque and the Utah Symphony; Mozart's Mass in C, Requiem, and Mass in C Minor with the Jerusalem Symphony Orchestra; and Handel's *Messiah* with the Handel and Haydn Society in Boston's Symphony Hall. He made his Avery Fisher Hall debut as Achicham in Hiller's *The Destruction of Jerusalem*, made his Carnegie Hall debut in Spohr's *Die letzten Dinge* with the American Symphony Orchestra, and performed Holst's *Psalm 89* with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir at Deer Valley.

Mr. Stucki holds a master of music degree from Indiana University and a bachelor of music from Brigham Young University. Also an accomplished cellist, he has released a recording of Rachmaninoff works on the Tantara label. Residing in Salt Lake City with his wife and three children, he recently joined with two fellow tenors to form a new ensemble, Ultimi.



Photograph by Dario Acosta

KYLE KETELSEN, Bass-Baritone

American bass-baritone Kyle Ketelsen is in regular demand by the world's leading opera companies and orchestras for his vibrant stage presence and his distinctive vocalism. Mr. Ketelsen's 2013–14 season is highlighted by a house debut with Zurich Opera as Méphistophélès in a new production of *Faust*. He also returns to Lyric Opera of Chicago as Basilio in a new production of *Il barbiere di Siviglia*. Mr. Ketelsen reprises two signature roles with the Bayerische Staatsoper as Escamillo in *Carmen* and Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, the latter conducted

by Louis Langrée. Concert work includes Rossini's *Stabat Mater* with the Mostly Mozart Festival conducted by Gianandrea Noseda.

Highlights of Mr. Ketelsen's previous seasons include Leporello in *Don Giovanni*, Escamillo in *Carmen*, and Mr. Flint in *Billy Budd* at the Metropolitan Opera; Basilio in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* and Don Fernando in *Fidelio* at Houston Grand Opera; Enrico VIII in Minnesota Opera's production of *Anna Bolena*; and Leporello and the title role of *Le nozze di Figaro* at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence. He made his Lyric Opera of Chicago debut as Masetto in *Don Giovanni* conducted by Christoph Eschenbach, followed by the title role of *Le nozze di Figaro* and Méphistophélès in *Faust*, both conducted by Sir Andrew Davis. Concert appearances include Brahms's *Deutsches Requiem* with the San Francisco Symphony conducted by Michael Tilson Thomas, Beethoven's *Fidelio* with the National Symphony Orchestra, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Esa-Pekka Salonen conducting the Los Angeles Philharmonic, Stravinsky's *Pulcinella* (available on recording) under the baton of Pierre Boulez, and Hector Berlioz's *Lélio* conducted by Riccardo Muti, both with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Mr. Ketelsen has won first prize in several international vocal competitions, including the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions, the Richard Tucker Music Foundation (Career Grant), the George London Foundation, and the Licia Albanese Puccini Foundation.

LIBRETTO

PART I

1. (Overture)
2. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.
Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned.
The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."
ISAIAH 40:1-3
3. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.
ISAIAH 40:4
4. And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.
ISAIAH 40:5
5. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts; yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heavens, and the earth, the sea, and the dry land;
And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come.
HAGGAI 2:6-7
The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom you delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.
MALACHI 3:1
6. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.
MALACHI 3:2
7. And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.
MALACHI 3:3
8. Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. "God with us."
ISAIAH 7:14; MATTHEW 1:23
9. O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain. O thou that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength: lift it up, be not afraid: say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!
ISAIAH 40:9
Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.
ISAIAH 60:1
10. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and His glory shall be seen upon thee.
And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.
ISAIAH 60:2-3
11. The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
ISAIAH 9:2
12. For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The Mighty God, The Everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.
ISAIAH 9:6
13. (Pastoral Symphony)
14. There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.
LUKE 2:8
15. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and they were sore afraid.
LUKE 2:9
16. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying:
LUKE 2:13
17. Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men.
LUKE 2:14
18. Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee! He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.
19. Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.
ISAIAH 35:5-6
20. He shall feed His flock like a shepherd, and He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.
ISAIAH 40:11
Come unto Him, all ye that labor; come unto Him, ye that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest.
Take His yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.
MATTHEW 11:28-29
21. His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.
MATTHEW 11:30

PART II

22. Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

JOHN 1:29

23. He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.

ISAIAH 53:3

He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair:
He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

ISAIAH 50:6

24. Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows.

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities, the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

ISAIAH 53:4–5

25. And with His stripes we are healed.

ISAIAH 53:5

26. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all.

ISAIAH 53:6

27. All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying:

PSALM 22:7

28. He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him.

PSALM 22:8

29. Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness; He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

PSALM 69:20

30. Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow.

LAMENTATIONS 1:12

31. He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgression of Thy people was He stricken.

ISAIAH 53:8

32. But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell, nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption.

PSALM 16:10

33. Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors, and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in.

Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

PSALM 24:7–10

34. Unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?

HEBREWS 1:5

35. Let all the angels of God worship Him.

HEBREWS 1:6

36. Thou art gone up on high, Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men; yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

PSALM 68:18

37. The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers.

PSALM 68:11

38. How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!

ISAIAH 52:7; ROMANS 10:15

39. Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their words unto the end of the world.

ROMANS 10:18; PSALM 19:4

40. Why do the nations so furiously rage together? and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

PSALM 2:1–2

41. Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

PSALM 2:3

42. He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn; the Lord shall have them in derision.

PSALM 2:4

43. Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; Thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel.

PSALM 2:9

44. Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

REVELATION 19:6

The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever and ever.

REVELATION 11:15

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

REVELATION 19:16

PART III

45. I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.
And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.
JOB 19:25–26
For now is Christ risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep.
I CORINTHIANS 15:20
46. Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.
For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.
I CORINTHIANS 15:21–22
47. Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.
I CORINTHIANS 15:51–52
48. The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality.
I CORINTHIANS 15:52–53
49. Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.
I CORINTHIANS 15:54
50. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?
The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.
I CORINTHIANS 15:55–56
51. But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.
I CORINTHIANS 15:57
52. If God be for us, who can be against us?
ROMANS 8:31
Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again. Who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.
ROMANS 8:33–34
53. Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.
Blessing and honor, glory and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.
Amen.

PROGRAM NOTES

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685–1759)

HANDEL—THE PEOPLE'S COMPOSER

In the 18th century, the commissioning of a statue for public display during one's lifetime was an exceptional honor usually reserved for royalty or great military heroes. It was something of a surprise, then, when in 1738 a statue of England's favorite musician, George Frideric Handel, was unveiled in London's Vauxhall Gardens. Though born in Germany, Handel had lived in London since 1712 and became a naturalized British citizen in 1727. His Italian operas were spectacularly successful during the 1720s and '30s, and he was the favored composer at the king's court. If anyone deserved such a gesture of public acclaim, Handel did.

But the sculptor, a talented young Frenchman named Louis-François Roubiliac, depicted the great composer in an unusually casual fashion. Instead of showing him in formal attire and powdered wig (as was the custom), Roubiliac portrayed Handel as a regular Londoner; he's wearing indoor clothes with his top shirt-button undone, a soft cap on his head, and slippers dangling nonchalantly from his feet. His legs crossed, the composer casually leans his elbow on a pile of his best-known scores, including *Alexander's Feast*, a work premiered only a short time before Roubiliac received his commission. This statue proudly proclaims Handel not as a noble national hero and aristocrat but as a "composer of the people," an ordinary man with an extraordinary gift for music.

The everyday, middle-class English folk that strolled through Vauxhall Gardens would soon prove to be the key to Handel's musical future. By 1738, his Italian opera ventures, which were aimed squarely at the lofty tastes of the aristocratic elite, were struggling and doomed to fail. *Alexander's Feast* was one of his more recent works that had tapped into the British love of choral music in their own language, and Handel knew that his future success relied on winning acceptance with this new audience. The easiest (and most financially viable) way to achieve this was to write English-language oratorios, a genre that Handel had only dabbled in previously but which would now dominate his compositional output for the rest of his career.

ORATORIO AND MESSIAH

The oratorio as a musical genre originated during the 17th century in the churches and monasteries of Italy. In the oratory (a side chapel found in many consecrated buildings), the theatrical presentation of vocal music on a sacred topic was an adjunct to the liturgy of the church. By the early 1700s, when Handel was living in Italy, oratorios were also being performed in private chapels and palaces as a form of entertainment and had taken on the now-standard characteristics of a sung drama on sacred texts, without staging or costumes.

Handel had composed several oratorios earlier in his career. But with the looming failure of his opera ventures, he devoted himself to the oratorio as a form in which he could continue his flair for dramatic vocal writing and combine it with his experience as a composer of sacred choral music. With oratorios, Handel eventually won over his new audience, earned back the esteem of the London critics, and secured his lasting reputation.

None of Handel's oratorios, though, have garnered more audience, esteem, and reputation than *Messiah*, composed in the autumn of 1741 and premiered in Dublin the following Easter. *Messiah* stands alone as the most popular work in the choral and orchestral repertoire today. It is the first "classic" in the musical canon—the oldest composition to have never fallen out of favor—and has remained part of the performing repertoire continuously from Handel's day to our own. It is without peer or precedent.

And yet, as an oratorio, *Messiah* is atypical. Instead of telling its story through narrative and dialogue, as do most works in the genre, it presents a series of tableaux that reflect and meditate on the work's theme, which unfolds conceptually more than narratively. Also, while most oratorios are based on biblical stories, few of them use actual scripture as their text. To produce an oratorio using only scripture, with little direct narrative, on the topic of the Messiah was a bold step for Handel at this precarious point in his career.

THE LIBRETTO

Handel was encouraged in this venture by his librettist, Charles Jennens, an aristocrat, musician, and poet of modest talent and exceptional ego. Jennens had already worked with Handel on *Saul*, an oratorio from 1739, and may also have been the librettist for *Israel in Egypt* later that season. With *Messiah*, though, Jennens seems to have outdone himself in compiling a libretto with profound thematic coherence and an enhanced sensitivity to musical structure. He sent the libretto to Handel in July 1741; Handel began setting it to music the following month and, with customary swiftness, completed it 24 days later.

Jennens structured the libretto in three parts, similar to the three-act format of an Italian baroque opera. But there the similarity with opera ends. Jennens chose to focus each of the three parts of *Messiah* on different aspects of the Savior's life and ministry. Though these tableaux are roughly chronological in order, the combination of Old and New Testament texts makes the prophecies and their fulfillments timeless and ever-present. Part I actually begins with the conclusion—already in the opening recitative, Jerusalem's "warfare is accomplished, . . . her iniquity is pardoned." It then proceeds to outline the prophecies of Christ's coming, the Nativity, and the hope of healing and redemption. Part II begins with Christ's Passion and Crucifixion, followed by His Resurrection and Ascension and the spreading of the gospel, culminating with the grand victory over wickedness and unbelief in the "Hallelujah" chorus. Part III is a relatively short finale that details the promise of a

universal resurrection for all people, addresses Christ's final victory over death and sin, and ends with praise for the Lamb of God.

Jennens's libretto focuses intently on a handful of select themes and images that unify the work's structure. First, and most obviously, is the title itself—the word *Messiah* appears only twice in the Old Testament and twice in varied form ("Messias") in the New Testament, where it is more frequently rendered in its Greek form, "Christ." It was an uncommon method of referring to Jesus, both in the early 17th century when the King James Bible was published and in Handel's time a century later. This oratorio could easily have been called *Redeemer*, *Savior*, *Christ*, or any of the other more common biblical titles for Jesus. But with its connotations of royalty and anointing—"Messiah" literally means "the Anointed One"—Jennens narrows the focus of the lyrics.

In *Messiah*, the theme of royal preeminence recurs frequently, most notably in the choruses "For unto Us a Child Is Born," "Hallelujah," and "Worthy Is the Lamb." But Jennens combines this regal symbolism with prominent pastoral images, creating a composite portrait of a Messiah who is at once both King and Shepherd. Correspondingly, for the narrative of Christ's birth Jennens chose the annunciation to the shepherds, where a pastoral quality prevails, instead of any of the other nativity accounts from the Bible. It's significant that for *Messiah*, Jennens also selected numerous verses from the Psalms of David, a poet whose own life directly foreshadowed the Savior's in its conflation of "shepherd" and "king."

Jennens cleverly wove throughout the text several scriptural threads of metaphysical imagery that reveal central tenets of Christian doctrine. Christ is, for example, portrayed in *Messiah's* text as both the Good Shepherd and the Sacrificial Lamb. He is scorned yet triumphant, humble, and supernal. He offers pastoral peace while waging war against wickedness. We are washed clean with His blood. These instructive mysteries reach a climax in a series of three choruses at the start of Part II in which the audience is repeatedly reminded that "He hath borne our griefs," "with His stripes we are healed," and "the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all."

Another connecting image is the "yoke" of Christian faith, which the believer is assured in Part I is "easy" and "light," only to have the wicked threaten to cast away the "yoke" of Christianity from among them in Part II (in the chorus "Let us break their bonds asunder"). There is a marked chiaroscuro of emotions as well, as the optimistic conclusion of Part I ("His yoke is easy and His burthen is light") leads directly into a sobering realization in Part II that the burden of the world's sins was, in fact, heavy and arduous for the Savior ("Behold the Lamb of God").

With these and other metaphors spread mosaic-like throughout the libretto, Jennens's *Messiah* text stands on its own as a remarkable example of 18th-century doctrinal understanding and scriptural knowledge.

HANDEL'S MUSIC

Once he got hold of the libretto, Handel worked at white-hot speed to set it to music. But this didn't necessarily indicate he was in the throes of devotional fervor, as legend has often stated. Handel composed many of his works in haste, and immediately after completing *Messiah* he wrote his next oratorio, *Samson*, just as quickly.

The rapidity with which Handel composed *Messiah* can be partially explained by some musical borrowings from his own earlier compositions. For example, melodies used in the two choruses "And He Shall Purify" and "His Yoke Is Easy" were taken from an Italian chamber duet Handel had composed a few weeks earlier, "Quel fior che all' alba ride." Another secular duet, "Nò, di voi non vo' fidarmi," provided material for the famous chorus "For unto Us a Child Is Born." "All We Like Sheep" borrows its wandering melismas from the same duet. And a vocal work from 1708, "Se tu non lasci amore," was transformed into the duet-chorus pair at the end of the oratorio, "O Death, Where Is Thy Sting," and "But Thanks Be to God."

In each instance, however, Handel does more than simply provide new words to his own tunes. There is considerable recomposition and in most cases a significant change of emotion as well. These secular works set mostly pessimistic texts about death and soured love. And yet the borrowed material is made to fit perfectly with the meanings and contexts of their new scriptural words. It is proof of Handel's mastery that he could take a musical idea conceived for a very different text and blend it with newly composed thoughts into a new expression of undiminished efficacy.

Handel understood better than most composers how music and drama could work together. When it came to oratorio, which lacked opera's visual elements of sets, costumes, props, and stage action, he had to draw even more keenly on his ability to "paint" the text in the music. It begins in *Messiah* with Handel's decision to open the work with a French overture, a form that traditionally signaled the entrance of the king in French baroque ballets and operas. Then, throughout *Messiah*, Handel's use of state-dotted rhythms almost always connotes royalty.

There are moments when the text-painting is obvious, such as the tracing of the valleys, mountains, and hills in the melodic contours of the tenor's opening aria "Ev'ry valley shall be exalted," or the blissfully careless wandering of the musical lines in "All we like sheep have gone astray." But there are also more subtle touches in *Messiah* that show an extraordinarily skilled hand, treating every musical moment with care and attention. In the chorus "Behold the Lamb of God," for example, the solemn main theme—a descending scale in dotted rhythm—is a variation on the lilting theme of the pastoral duet "He shall feed His flock like a Shepherd," which is itself an inversion of the orchestral "Pifa" from Part I. With this single musical gesture, Handel unites the pastoral lullaby that accompanied Christ's birth with the prophecy of His role as the Good Shepherd and a heart-rending funeral march for the Sacrificial Lamb. To highlight the symbolic

transformation, Handel includes an open-fifth harmony at the end of "Behold the Lamb of God"—the only place in the entire oratorio he uses this effect—to indicate emptiness and emotional desolation. These are the kinds of subtle details that may escape the casual listener, yet they demonstrate the deep awareness of theology and command of musical structure that marks this work as Handel's masterpiece.

Perhaps because of the powerful fusing of scriptural texts and immaculately crafted music, enthusiastic Handelists in the 19th century perpetuated a number of legends regarding the composition of *Messiah*. An often-repeated story relates how Handel's servant found him sobbing with emotion while writing the famous "Hallelujah" chorus, and the composer claiming, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me and the great God Himself." Handel reportedly left some of his meals untouched during this compositional period, in what was subsequently lauded as a display of monastic self-denial. Whether these reports are entirely accurate or not, in the 19th century they helped foster an image of Handel, and this work in particular, as divinely inspired.

THE LEGACY OF MESSIAH

The first public performance of *Messiah* took place in Dublin, Ireland, on April 13, 1742. As this was to be a benefit performance for charity, the ladies were asked not to wear hoop dresses, and the men to leave their swords at home, in order to accommodate more people in the hall. *Messiah* was an unqualified success in Dublin, but when Handel took the oratorio to London the following season, it received a chilly reception. Even though King George II attended the first performance at Covent Garden Theatre (and, it is claimed, initiated the tradition of standing for the "Hallelujah" chorus), London audiences at first found *Messiah's* contemplative texts lacking in drama and narrative action, and it closed after only three performances. Some clergy considered the theater in general a den of iniquity and certainly no place for a work on such a sacred topic. Handel couldn't win—when *Messiah* was scheduled to be performed in Westminster Abbey, other members of the clergy declared it sacrilege for a public entertainment to take place in a consecrated church! And Jennens wasn't entirely pleased with what Handel had done with his text either. After initially expressing thorough disappointment with the musical treatment, Jennens later declared Handel's composition "a fine Entertainment, tho' not near so good as he might & ought to have done."

It wasn't until 1750, when another performance for charity was staged at the Foundling Hospital in London, that English audiences began to take *Messiah* to their hearts, and yearly performances at the hospital from that time on established the lasting popularity of both the work and its composer. Upon Handel's death in 1759, he willed his score and parts for *Messiah* to the Foundling Hospital in a charitable gesture of gratitude.

During Handel's lifetime, performances of *Messiah* typically entailed ensembles of around 20 singers and an equal number of instrumental players. But a tendency toward spectacular gigantism in the second half of the century was already starting to man-

ifest itself in Handel's later music. His 1749 suite of *Music for the Royal Fireworks*, for example, employed a band of more than 50 wind instruments plus strings—potentially nearly 100 players. It was given a stunningly successful dress rehearsal in front of 12,000 paying audience members in the same Vauxhall Gardens that housed Handel's statue. And the music only got bigger after that. For the 25th anniversary of Handel's death, a performance of *Messiah* in Westminster Abbey involved nearly 300 singers and an equal number in the orchestra.

In the 19th century, *Messiah* performances in England were something of a national pastime, often presented on a gargantuan scale and with scant knowledge of Handel's original intentions. Performances in London's Crystal Palace in the middle of the century sometimes engaged thousands of singers, for audiences numbering in the tens of thousands. Even the "standard" 19th- and early 20th-century festival performances of *Messiah* in English cathedrals typically included choirs of 300 or more and orchestras of commensurate size. With recent musical scholarship revealing many details about performance practices in Handel's own time, some scholars today consider these mammoth *Messiah* performances an abomination. But it was a venerable and durable tradition, nevertheless, and the principal manner by which Handel's most famous work was kept alive for nearly two centuries.

Although these large performances were a departure from the scale of Handel's original conception, they still maintained the work's signature attribute as a piece for the people. The 19th-century festival choirs were typically comprised of local townsfolk, farmers, and members of the working classes, for whom this experience was likely their only opportunity to engage with noble and enlightening art. The goal of including as many singers as possible was considered an edifying influence on the community at large, gathered together in this annual act of social, musical, and spiritual unity. And the success of these festivals was not measured in terms of the quality of the musical performance or the sublimity of aesthetic effect, but rather by how much money the festival was able to raise for charity.

In the second half of the 20th century, as leaner, faster, and more "authentic" baroque-style performances of *Messiah* proliferated, communities began to spontaneously organize "sing-along" *Messiah* events, returning the work once more to its populist roots. The volunteer nature of today's *Messiah* sing-alongs, and the communal experience of performing these choruses with thousands of other singers, mirrors closely the *Messiah* traditions from the 1780s to the 1960s.

The custom of performing *Messiah* at Christmas began late in the 18th century. Although the work was occasionally performed during Advent in Dublin, it was usually regarded in England as an entertainment for the penitential season of Lent, when performances of opera were banned. *Messiah*'s extended musical focus on Christ's redeeming sacrifice also makes it particularly suitable for Passion Week and Holy Week, the periods when it

was usually performed during Handel's lifetime. In 1791, however, the Cæcilian Society of London began its annual Christmas performances, and in 1818 the Handel and Haydn Society of Boston gave the work's first complete performance in the United States on Christmas Day, establishing a tradition that continues to the present.

THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR AND MESSIAH

Messiah choruses have long formed part of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's core repertoire, going back well into the 19th century when the tradition of large-scale performances took root in the United States. And the Choir has frequently led the way in making this music available to a wider public. The Choir's first recording in 1910 included the "Hallelujah" chorus in what is almost certainly the first recording of a *Messiah* excerpt made outside of England, and the first recorded by an established choir. (The handful of earlier English recordings used smaller, ad hoc groups of singers.) In June 1927, the Choir recorded "Worthy Is the Lamb" on its first "electrical" recording (recorded with microphones) a week before Sir Thomas Beecham conducted the first electrically recorded complete *Messiah* in London. The Choir's 1959 recording of *Messiah* with Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra is still hailed as a landmark and was inducted into the National Recording Registry in 2005. Richard Condie directed the Choir's 1974 album of *Messiah* choruses with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra; then Sir David Willcocks led the Choir on its 1995 recording of the complete oratorio. And the "Hallelujah" chorus has appeared on more than a dozen of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's albums over the last century.

This current performance of *Messiah* represents another signal event in the Choir's ongoing tradition. With decades of recent scholarly research into the sounds and practices that Handel himself would have recognized, audiences globally are now more accustomed to a different *Messiah* sound than was accepted even 40 years ago. The newly lean textures and sprightly tempos, the brighter timbres of baroque instruments, different styles of ornaments and articulations, and the techniques of early music performance practice have revealed an exhilarating new palette that is now an integral part of the *Messiah* soundscape. And yet these small-scale, historically informed performances can sometimes lack the sublime power, dynamic range, and emotional heft of the modern orchestras and large choirs that sustained *Messiah*'s reputation over the last two centuries.

In his new edition of *Messiah*, Mack Wilberg has synthesized the best of both worlds. He has carefully studied the work of other historical composers who have enlarged upon Handel's score—Mozart, Hiller, Prout, Goossens—and learned from their efforts. Using Handel's original orchestration of strings, oboes, and trumpets as a foundation, Wilberg has retained only the woodwind and brass parts from Mozart's and Prout's editions that remain true to Handel's compositional ideas and the principles of baroque timbre, while also providing the necessary instrumental support for a large choir. He

has also refined the rhythms and articulations of the vocal parts so that the choir can sound as much like a baroque chamber group as possible, while still able to bring its impressive resonance and dynamic variety to the grander choruses. In short, this is a *Messiah* that honors both historical traditions simultaneously: the work's baroque origins and its subsequent development through the Romantic period.

Audiences seem drawn to *Messiah* like no other musical work, particularly as a collective event; they feel a desire to take part, not merely to listen. Perhaps it is the personal expression of devotion that the opportunity affords them. Instead of simply representing "the children of Israel" or "the crowd" as in other oratorios, the choruses in *Messiah* present an occasion for mutual expressions of sincere personal faith. When a choir of believers sings "For unto us a child is born" and "Surely He hath borne our griefs," or when they praise the God "who giveth us the victory" and "hath redeemed us," the pronouns are profoundly personal. They are not only singing great music, they are themselves participants in the grand spiritual drama being represented through that music. That awareness can inflect a performance as deeply as does the knowledge of notes, rhythms, and performance practices.

It is for this reason that Handel's *Messiah* aspires to much more than just an enjoyable musical event or a monument of baroque choral music. It aims to lift souls. After an early performance of the work in London, Handel was congratulated by Lord Kinnoul on the "noble entertainment" he had recently brought to the city. Handel is said to have replied, "My Lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better."

—Program notes by Dr. Luke Howard

HALLELUJAH! MORE WAYS TO ENJOY MESSIAH



HE IS RISEN NOW AVAILABLE ON CD

The Choir's newly recorded and beautifully edited CD *He Is Risen* includes Handel's "Worthy Is the Lamb That Was Slain," the stirring finale to *Messiah*, as well as the classics "He Is Risen" and "Christ the Lord Is Risen Today." Purchase at store.lds.org and at deseretbook.com and other online retailers. Also available for download.

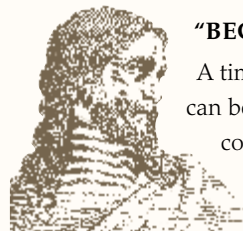
LIVE STREAM OF THE MESSIAH CONCERT

This performance will be available online for on-demand viewing at mormontabernaclechoir.org/messiah through Monday, April 21, 2014, at midnight mountain time. You can relive those dramatic and soul-stirring moments at home with your family this Easter weekend. Or send the link to your friends through social media with the announcement "I was there!"



CHOIR AND ORCHESTRA TO RECORD HANDEL'S MESSIAH

For a 2015 release, the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square will soon make a new recording of *Messiah* in its entirety like the version heard this evening. This time-honored classic will be a must for every music lover and every home. Sign up for updates at mormontabernaclechoir.org/messiah.



"BECAUSE OF HIM"

A timely video tribute to Jesus Christ, the Messiah of the world, can be viewed on motab.org/becauseofhim. This video is a fitting companion to Handel's brilliant score, capturing the essence of the ministry of the Savior for us today. Join the conversation on your social networks using #BecauseofHim.

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Visit mormontabernaclechoir.org for news, features, and links to tonight's concert and for viewing *Music and the Spoken Word*, interviews of Choir leadership and guests, and news about the Choir. Don't miss signing up for the blog, newsletter, and announcements about the upcoming *Messiah* recording.



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THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS