

messiah



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SAINT THOMAS

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Saint Thomas Choir School

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2023 AT 7:30 PM

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 7, 2023 AT 7:30 PM

messiah

A SACRED ORATORIO
BY

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL
(1685–1759)

THE SAINT THOMAS CHOIR
OF MEN AND BOYS
with
NEW YORK BAROQUE INCORPORATED

SOLOISTS

Nola Richardson, *soprano*
Sylvia Leith, *mezzo-soprano*
Rufus Müller, *tenor*
Jonathan Woody, *bass-baritone*

Jeremy Filsell, *conductor*
*The Nancy B. and John B. Hoffmann Organist
and Director of Music*

PROGRAM NOTES

Handel's *Messiah* is arguably the most widely shared musical experience in our culture. Each year the oratorio is sung by tens and perhaps hundreds of thousands of people in choirs and choral societies across the globe. The "Hallelujah" chorus elicits a level of recognition and emotional response achieved otherwise perhaps only by the opening bars of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 5*. No other composition is so generally familiar or so well loved.

Although Handel conceived and executed *Messiah* in a remarkably short time, the circumstances that brought him to do so require an overview of the composer's activities in England. From early in his career Handel was drawn to the theater. His first trip to London in 1710–11 was occasioned by the fact that opera, which at the time meant Italian opera, was becoming a fashionable entertainment among the English nobility. Handel, although German by birth, had mastered the conventions of this genre during a four-year stay in Italy, and during his first English visit he scored a sensational success with his opera *Rinaldo*. Its enthusiastic reception—and profit at the box office, for Handel was as much an entrepreneur as an artist in the opera house—enticed him to return in 1712, this time, as it turned out, to stay more or less permanently.

Further operatic triumphs followed for Handel, as did some failures also, and for the next quarter of a century opera remained the composer's principal concern. But by the late 1720s the English aristocracy, which had provided the audience for opera, started to tire of the contrived plots and outlandish theatricality that characterized the genre at the time. As patronage dwindled through the middle of the next decade, Handel began to offer a new type of work, the oratorio. This was less costly than opera to present, yet it held at least potential appeal for a broader audience drawn from the rising English middle class. Scored for solo voices, chorus, and orchestra, Handel's oratorios recounted classical legends and Old Testament stories, the latter told either through extracts from the Scriptures or in verses by contemporary poets. (*Samson*, the oratorio Handel composed immediately after *Messiah*, for example, is based loosely on a poem by John Milton.)

Handel's oratorio presentations—which generally occurred during Lent, when the opera houses were closed, grew increasingly frequent during the 1730s, though the composer could not bring himself to abandon the theater altogether. But as attendance at his operas continued to shrink, so did his bank balance. In 1737, both companies that had been presenting operas in

London collapsed in financial ruin. Handel spent the next four years trying with mixed success to establish a dependable audience for his oratorios, and with virtually no success to revive the aristocracy's operatic appetite. By 1741, the composer, by then practically an English institution, was rumored to be preparing to return to the continent.

But his departure, if it was indeed planned, was forestalled by a fortuitous development.

Through the office of the King's governor in Ireland, Handel received an invitation to present a series of concerts in Dublin during the coming season. This offer was extended by several musical societies in the Irish capital, which in those days existed for the dual purpose of organizing the city's concert life and raising funds for charitable purposes. Handel was already known for his generous support of several relief organizations, most famously the Foundling Hospital in London. It was understood that in Dublin he would donate his services for certain benefit concerts, whereas the proceeds of other performances would accrue to him.

This unexpected opportunity spurred Handel to composition, the subject of his efforts being a new oratorio text recently compiled for him by Charles Jennens. Jennens, who had already fashioned the librettos for two of Handel's earlier oratorios, based the new text entirely on selections from Scripture. But *Messiah*, as Jennens called the work, was unlike any of Handel's other biblical oratorios. Among other novelties, its subject was nothing less than the story of Christ, a tale previously thought too sacred for a genre so close to the theater as oratorio. (The words theatrical and profane were then essentially synonymous in many quarters, a notion that later would cause Handel a good deal of difficulty when he tried to introduce *Messiah* to London.)

After Handel's death, the story arose that he had been seized by a kind of divine rapture while setting the text ("I did see all of heaven open before mine eyes"). Certainly, he must have worked at a high level of inspiration, for he began the score on August 22, 1741 and finished it 24 days later, on September 12. Even knowing that he habitually composed rapidly, and allowing that certain passages were taken from other works, this seems an astonishing achievement.

In November, Handel arrived in Dublin, the score of *Messiah* in his trunk. After presiding at a well-attended charity event, he quickly scheduled a set of six concerts of his own. These presentations proved so successful that he booked another series in the early months of 1742. All the while he held his

new oratorio in reserve. Finally, in the spring, a Dublin newspaper announced:

For the relief of the prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's Street, and of the Charitable Infirmary . . . [there] will be performed at the Musick Hall in Fishamble Street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, call'd the MESSIAH. . . .

The first performance took place on the morning of April 13. The Dublin Journal reported that "the best Judges allowed it to be the most finished piece of Musick. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crouded Audience" [sic]. (As an aside, for the following performances, gentlemen in the audience were asked not to wear swords, nor ladies hooped skirts, in order to conserve space for the crowds!)

Despite the warm reception his oratorio enjoyed in Dublin, Handel was wary of presenting it in London. When he first did so, in March of 1743, he even omitted the work's title from the program, calling it only "A New Sacred Oratorio," evidently from fear of incurring the wrath of more pious elements of the community. This concern was not groundless, for strong protests were indeed lodged against the presentation in the concert hall of so sacred a subject as the birth, death, and resurrection of Christ. A long letter published in one of London's newspapers complained that if an oratorio

is not performed as an Act of Religion, but for Diversion and Amusement only (and indeed I believe that few or none go to an Oratorio out of Devotion) what a Prophanation of God's Name and Word is this to make so light Use of them?

At first these objections restrained both Handel's willingness to offer the work again and the public's acceptance of it. But the composer finally trumped his zealous critics. Beginning in 1750, he led annual performances of the oratorio for the benefit of the Foundling Hospital, of which he had recently been made a trustee. The self-evident generosity of this gesture won Handel general admiration and secured for *Messiah* a position of esteem and affection that continued to grow steadily during the coming century and more.

The musical riches of Handel's score are too numerous and familiar to discuss in detail here. Its overture is one of the composer's finest. The arias, as has been frequently observed, are close in style to those of his operas. They evince a fine feel for the dramatic nuances of the text, Handel's sympathetic treatment of the verses extending even to pictorial figuration depicting the flight of angels, the shaking of all nations, and more. But above all, it is the great choral movements that make *Messiah* so stirring. The famous story of how King George II rose to his feet in admiration during the "Hallelujah" cho-

rus, prompting those present and generations since to do likewise, is one testament to their power. But majestic expression of praise is by no means their only function. Handel's choruses prove equally adept at conveying sorrow "Surely He has borne our grief" and intimate joy "For unto us a child is born."

In *Messiah*, Handel's intent was neither to preach nor to provide a vehicle for ritualized worship, but rather to draw his listeners into a story whose rich spiritual, emotional, and poetic content lends it universal significance. An innately dramatic composer, he intuitively felt that by fusing music with drama, as *Messiah* does in a special context, he could reach the widest possible audience. That the oratorio continues to move and inspire so many listeners affirms his judgment. In the composer's own words

"I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better."

John Scott

NOLA RICHARDSON – *Soprano*

Making her mark as an "especially impressive" (The New York Times) soprano, Australian/American Nola Richardson has won First Prize in all three major American competitions focused on the music of J.S. Bach (Bethlehem Bach, 2016; Audrey Rooney Bach, 2018; Grand Rapids Symphony Linn Maxwell Keller Award, 2019). These honors have catapulted her to the forefront of Baroque ensembles and orchestras around the country, where she has been praised for her "astonishing balance and accuracy," "crystalline diction," and "natural-sounding ease" (Washington Post). In concert, Nola's repertoire ranges from medieval to contemporary works – including several world premieres – and she has been particularly noted for her interpretations of Bach, Handel, and Mozart. Recent seasons have featured her debuts with the Pittsburgh, Seattle, and Colorado Symphonies in performances of Handel's *Messiah* in which she was described as "agile and crystalline voiced . . . a standout" (Seattle Times). Her debut in Bach's *Coffee Cantata* with Philharmonia Baroque was noted for her "graceful ebullience" (San Francisco Chronicle) and performances in Handel's *La Resurrezione* and a program of French Baroque music with the American Bach Soloists drew praise for her "lusciously polished . . . exemplary impassioned singing" (San Francisco Classical Voice). She has appeared in concert at the Lincoln Center with the American Classical Orchestra, in a Sondheim review with the Boston Pops, and has performed works of Bach with the Baltimore and Grand Rapids Symphony among other noted Baroque ensembles and choral societies. Her operatic roles include a "standout" performance (Opera News) as the First Lady in *Die Zauberflöte* with the Clarion Music Society, and her debut at the Kennedy Center with Opera Lafayette as Fraarte in Handel's *Radamisto* drew praise for her "particularly appealing freshness and directness" (Washington Post). Most recently she has interpreted the role of Apolo in a rare performance of the Baroque Zarzuela *Apolo e Dafne* by Sebastián Durón and next season will feature a performance of Hildegard von Bingen's *Ordo Virtutum* staged by Francesca Zambello with Seraphic Fire.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, Richardson took part in a wide variety of virtual projects including appearances with the Atlanta Symphony in a documentary, "In the Key of Bach" led by Robert Spano, solo concerts with Musica Angelica and the Colorado Bach Ensemble, and programs with the National Cathedral, the Bach Choir of Bethlehem, Seraphic Fire, and Voices of Ascension. Other appearances such as a debut at the Leipzig Bach Festival 2020 as a

soloist with the Bethlehem Bach Society, debuts with the Boston Early Music Festival and Ars Lyrica Houston, and concerts with the American Bach Soloists, Trinity Wall Street and the Baltimore Choral Arts Society were unfortunately cancelled or postponed. Nola is also a devoted chamber musician and has performed, toured, and recorded with Grammy® nominated ensembles Seraphic Fire, Clarion, Musica Sacra and Trinity Wall Street. She performed as the soloist for Arvo Pärt's *Passio* on tour in Russia, Estonia, and Latvia with the Yale Schola Cantorum and at the Aspen Music Festival with Seraphic Fire. She is the first and only soprano to receive the prestigious DMA degree in Early Music Voice from Yale, where she attended the Institute of Sacred Music. Her upcoming season will include performances with the American Bach Soloists, the Kansas City and Grand Rapids Symphonies, Musica Angelica, Seraphic Fire, and debuts with Ars Lyrica Houston, and the Tuscon Baroque Music Festival.

SYLVIA LEITH – *Mezzo-soprano*

Praised for her “plangent mezzo-soprano” (Washington Classical Review), Sylvia Leith is a soloist and consort singer whose repertoire spans the medieval to the contemporary. She has recently appeared as a soloist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Washington Bach Consort, Bach Akademie Charlotte, Ensemble Altera, Tempesta di Mare, the IN Series, Emmanuel Music (Baltimore), St. John's Music (Tulsa), and Washington Young Sinfonia, in repertoire including Handel's *Messiah*, Duruflé's *Requiem*, Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, and Elgar's *Sea Pictures*. Her operatic roles include Nerone in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, the title role in Handel's *Giulio Cesare in Egitto*, Hänsel in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Nancy in Britten's *Albert Herring*, and Lazuli in Chabrier's *L'étoile*. Equally dedicated to ensemble singing, Sylvia appears on the rosters of Washington Bach Consort, Bach Akademie Charlotte, the Oregon Bach Festival Chorus, True Concord, Ensemble Altera, and the Thirteen; this season also marks her ensemble debuts with Bach Collegium San Diego, TENET, Lorelei, and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street. With her special interest in one-per-part chamber singing, she is a founding member of the quartets of the Polyphonists and the Uncommon Music Festival.

Sylvia earned her bachelor's degree in German from Yale University, where she pursued diverse extracurricular performance activities, including seven principal opera roles, the Sprechgesang role in Schoenberg's *Pierrot Lunaire* with players from the Yale School of Music, and a touring concert of the mo-

tets and lais of Philippe de Vitry. She then earned a master's in Voice from Boston University, where she studied with Penelope Bitzas. Sylvia is an alumna of the Boston Early Music Festival Young Artist Training Program, the American Bach Soloists Academy, the SongFest Professional Program, and the Fondazione Giorgio Cini Early Music Seminars in Venice, Italy. She was a finalist in the 2021 Bethlehem Bach Aria Competition, a semifinalist in the 2022 New York Oratorio Society Competition, and a Mid-Atlantic Regional Finalist in the 2019 NATS Artist Awards competition.

RUFUS MÜLLER – *Tenor*

English--German tenor Rufus Müller was acclaimed by The New York Times following a performance in Carnegie Hall as . . . *easily the best tenor I have heard in a live Messiah*. He is a leading Evangelist in Bach's Passions and his unique, dramatic interpretation of this role has confirmed his status as one of the world's most sought-after performers (..a sensational Evangelist – NY Times). He gave the world premiere of Jonathan Miller's acclaimed production of the St Matthew Passion, which he also recorded for United and broadcast on BBC TV; he repeated his performance in three revivals of the production at the Brooklyn Academy of Music in New York.

In demand for oratorio and opera, Rufus Müller has worked with many leading conductors including Franz Welser-Möst, Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Sir Roger Norrington, John Nelson, Ivor Bolton, Richard Hickox, Nicholas McGegan, Gustav Leonhardt, Frans Brüggen, Trevor Pinnock, Philippe Herreweghe, Joshua Rifkin, Andrew Parrott, Nicholas Kraemer and Ivan Fischer. He has given solo recitals in the Wigmore Hall in London as well as for BBC Radio, and in Munich, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Barcelona, Madrid, Utrecht, Paris, Salzburg and New York. Rufus has had a regular partnership with pianist Maria João Pires with whom he has performed in Spain, Portugal, Germany, Ireland, Japan and the UK, notably in a three-concert Schubertiade in Spain and London's Wigmore Hall.

Rufus Müller's numerous performances as the Evangelist include London, New York, Lucerne, Munich, Toronto, Calgary, Birmingham, Göteborg, Stockholm, Copenhagen, Dortmund, Bordeaux, Washington DC. His many performances of *Messiah* include regular appearances at Carnegie Hall in New York, a televised tour in Spain with Trevor Pinnock and the English Concert, as well as performances in Canada, Denmark, Japan, Norway, Sweden and the UK. Numerous other concert engagements have included Bach Cantatas with

John Eliot Gardiner in London, works by Bach and Handel with the Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra and Nicholas McGegan in San Francisco, a European tour of Casals' *El Pessebre* with the Berlin Symphony Orchestra, Bach's *Magnificat* at the BBC Proms, Finzi's *Dies Natalis* with the Orchestra della Svizzera Italiana, Britten's *Serenade* in Toronto and Düsseldorf, and Beethoven's Ninth Symphony in Stockholm and Toronto.

Rufus was born in Kent, England and was a choral scholar at New College, Oxford. He studied in New York with the late Thomas LoMonaco. In 1985 he won first prize in the English Song Award in Brighton, and in 1999 was a prize winner in the Oratorio Society of New York Singing Competition. He is Associate Professor of Music at Bard College, New York.

JONATHAN WOODY – *Bass-baritone*

Jonathan Woody is a versatile and dynamic musician who maintains an active schedule as a performer and composer in New York and across North America. Cited by the Washington Post for singing “with resonance and clarity,” Woody is in demand as a bass-baritone soloist, appearing regularly with historically informed orchestras including Boston Early Music Festival, Apollo's Fire, Pacific MusicWorks, Bach Collegium San Diego, Trinity Baroque Orchestra and New York Baroque Incorporated. In the 2021-2022 season, he served as Artistic Advisor for the Portland Baroque Orchestra, curating a program of 17th-century German music for voices and orchestra.

An accomplished chamber musician, Woody often performs as a member of the GRAMMY®-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street, where he has earned praise from the New York Times for his “charismatic” and “riveting” solos. He has also recently performed in collaboration with Kaleidoscope Ensemble, Les Délices, Seraphic Fire, Byron Schenkman and Friends, and TENET Vocal Artists. Woody's compositional voice blends 17th and 18th-century inspiration with the minimalism and socially conscious subject matter of today. Since 2020, he has received commissions from Apollo's Fire, the Choir of Trinity Wall Street, Chanticleer, the Handel and Haydn Society, the Cathedral Choral Society of Washington, D.C., and the Five Boroughs Music Festival, among others. As a sought-after new music proponent, Jonathan has participated in premiere performances of several leading composers' works, including Ted Hearne's *The Source* (2014), Ellen Reid's *p r i s m* (2019 Pulitzer Prize-winner), Missy Mazzoli's *Breaking the Waves* (NYC premiere, 2018), and Du Yun's *Angel's Bone* (2017 Pulitzer Prizewinner).

In recent seasons, Woody has appeared at the Staunton Music, Portland Bach, Carmel Bach, and Oregon Bach Festivals, the American Bach Soloists Academy, and at the Aldeburgh Festival at Snape Maltings. He has also been seen on the operatic stages of Opera Lafayette, American Opera Projects, and Beth Morrison Projects. Woody can be heard on the Choir of Trinity Wall Street's GRAMMY®-nominated recording of *Israel in Egypt*, released in 2013 on the Musica Omnia label, as well as on ACRONYM's *Cantica Obsoleta* (Olde Focus Recordings), Boston Early Music Festival's *St. Matthew Passion* of J. Sebastiani (RadioBremen), New York Polyphony's *Roma Aeterna* (BIS Records), and the Choir of Trinity Wall Street's *Missa Gentis Humanae* (Musica Omnia). Jonathan is committed to racial equity in the field of the performing arts, and currently serves on Early Music America's Task Force for Inclusion, Diversity, Equity and Access. Presently living on traditional Lenape lands now known as Brooklyn, NY, he holds degrees from McGill University and the University of Maryland, College Park.

JEREMY FILSELL – *Conductor*

Jeremy Filsell is one of only a few virtuoso performers as both pianist and organist. In an extensive solo career, he has appeared as a solo pianist in Russia, Scandinavia, New Zealand and Australia and throughout the USA and UK. His concerto repertoire encompasses Bach, Mozart and Beethoven through to Shostakovich, John Ireland, Constant Lambert and the Rachmaninov cycle. He has recorded the solo piano music of Herbert Howells, Bernard Stevens, Eugène Goossens and Johann Christoph Eschmann and recent releases include discs of Rachmaninov's solo piano music (*Signum*), the first and second Rachmaninov Concertos (*Raven*), the piano music of Francis Pott (*Acis*), and the *Clavier-Übung III* of J. S. Bach, recorded on all five pipe organs in Saint Thomas Church. On this latest recording, Gramophone magazine (February 2023) commented that here was ‘a hundred minutes of masterly insight into this highly organized manifestation of Lutheran principles [played] with fastidious care to mood and scale, Filsell providing yet another masterclass in manual and pedal dexterity packed with interpretative insights; a *Clavier-Übung III* to savour and revisit.’

Jeremy is on the international roster of Steinway Piano Artists and has recorded for BBC Radio 3, USA, and Scandinavian radio networks in solo and concerto roles. His discography comprises more than 35 solo recordings. Gramophone magazine commented on the series of 12 CDs comprising

the premiere recordings of Marcel Dupré's complete organ works for Guild in 2000 that it was 'one of the greatest achievements in organ recording'. In 2005, Signum released a 3-disc set of the six organ symphonies of Louis Vierne, recorded on the 1890 Cavaillé-Coll organ in St. Ouen, Rouen. He has taught at universities, summer schools, and conventions in both the UK and USA and has served on international competition juries in England and Switzerland. In North America, he concertizes under the auspices of Philip Truckenbrod Concert Artists.

As a teenager, Jeremy Filsell was a Limpus, Shinn & Durrant prizewinner for FRCO and was awarded the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. As a student of Nicolas Kynaston and Daniel Roth, he studied as an Organ Scholar at Keble College, Oxford before completing graduate studies in piano performance with David Parkhouse and Hilary McNamara at the Royal College of Music in London. His PhD in Musicology from Birmingham City University/Conservatoire was awarded for research involving aesthetic and interpretative issues in the music of Marcel Dupré. Before moving to the USA in 2008, he held Academic and Performance lectureships at the Royal Academy of Music in London and the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, and was a lay clerk in the Queen's choir at St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. He combined an international recital and teaching career with being director of music at the Church of the Epiphany, and then of St. Alban's in Washington DC, Artist-in-residence at Washington National Cathedral, and Professor of Organ at Peabody Conservatory (Baltimore), before moving to New York in April 2019 to become Organist & Director of Music at Saint Thomas Church, Fifth Avenue.

THE SAINT THOMAS CHOIR OF MEN AND BOYS

THE SAINT THOMAS CHOIR OF MEN AND BOYS is considered to be the leading ensemble of its kind in the Anglican choral tradition in the United States. While its primary raison d'être is to sing five choral services each week, the choir also performs regularly with Orchestra of St. Luke's and New York Baroque Incorporated as part of Saint Thomas Church concert series. Live webcasts of choral services and further information concerning recordings, tours and concerts given by the choir can be found at www.SaintThomasChurch.org.

Over recent years, the choir has toured throughout the US, Europe and Scandinavia with performances at Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's Cathedral in London, King's College, Cambridge, the Aldeburgh Festival, at the Vatican, and in Dresden and at the Thomaskirche in Leipzig. Domestically, the choir has appeared often at National AGO Conventions.

The boy choristers make frequent appearances on local and national television programs, such as the TODAY program, and the classical music radio station WQXR. They have sung with Sting at the tree lighting ceremony in Rockefeller Center, performed at the new Steinway Piano Hall on 6th Avenue, and in 2019 they appeared as the opening act at the Radio City Music Hall Christmas Spectacular.

Besides annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, the choir's concerts at Saint Thomas Church have included presentations of the Fauré, Duruflé and Mozart *Requiems*, the J. S. Bach *Passions*, the *Mass in B Minor*, Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and James MacMillan's *Seven Last Words from the Cross*. The choir has given the US premieres of works by John Tavener and Nico Muhly, and in recent times has commissioned new choral music by Julian Wachner and Francis Pott. In 2016, a concert in memory of former Director of Music John Scott was performed with Orchestra of St. Luke's under the direction of Sir Simon Rattle.

The choir has made many commercial recordings under successive Directors of Music and in 2020 did so under the direction of Jeremy Filsell: *The Music of Gerre Hancock*, an album of music indelibly associated with Saint Thomas Church. The choir marked the 400th anniversary of the death of William Byrd by recording the Byrd Mass and Propers for the feast of Corpus Christi. Both this and an album of music for the Christmas season, *No Small Wonder*, were released in the fall of 2023.

The Gentlemen of the Saint Thomas Choir are all professional singers, and the

Boy Choristers all attend the Saint Thomas Choir School, instituted in 1919; nowadays the only remaining educational establishment of its type in the US. The Saint Thomas Choir of Men and Boys is represented by Karen McFarlane Artists, Inc.

THE SAINT THOMAS CHOIR OF MEN AND BOYS

TREBLE	Arthur Li ²	TENOR
Bakore Camara ¹	Julian Moreno	Daniel Castellanos
Daniel Conrado	Henry Park	Alex Longnecker
Christian Goudge	William Park	John Ramseyer
Rocco Halvey	Emrys Pengelly	Mike Williams
William Hanoian ⁵	Dominic Scarozza ³	
Elias Jeon ⁷	Joshua Shin ⁸	BASS
<i>Head Chorister</i>	Arthur Stowe	Benjamin Howard
Royce Jung		Brian Mummert
Ian Kim	ALTO	Christopher Trueblood
Nathan Kim ⁴	Biraj Barkakaty	Charles Perry Sprawls
Allan Lee	Eric Brenner	
William Lee ⁶	Daniel Moody	
<i>Deputy Head Chorister</i>	David Scarozza	

¹ The Ogden Northrup Lewis, Jr. Choristership

² The Francis S. Falconer Choristership

³ The John G. Scott Memorial Choristership

⁴ The James L. Tuohy MD Choristership

⁵ The Richard Heschke Choristership

⁶ The T. Tertius Noble Centennial Choristership

⁷ The William C. Stubing and Ronald L. Thomas Choristership

⁸ The Rev. Charles Wallace Choristership

NEW YORK BAROQUE INCORPORATED

HAILED as “truly excellent” and “studded with stars in the making” (New York Times), New York Baroque Incorporated (NYBI) is a conductorless orchestra of period instruments in New York City, bringing vital, informed, and fresh performances of a wide range of 17th and 18th-century repertoire while creating a vibrant landscape for collaborations between historical performance and living composers. NYBI has shared the stage with renowned soloists including Richard Egarr, Vivica Genaux, Monica Huggett, and Jakub Józef Orliński, and has graced prestigious venues such as Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, The Morgan Library, Spoleto Festival USA, and Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts. Striving to make music on period instruments a living art form, NYBI has premiered works by Nico Muhly, Hollis Taylor, and Huang Ruo. The orchestra also dedicates itself to bringing to

life unknown works of the Baroque, and has revived and presented modern-day premieres of Cavalli’s *Veremonda* (1652), Aliotti’s *Santa Rosalia* (1687) and Seckendorff’s *Proserpina* (1777).

The 2023-24 season brings NYBI a world-premiere multi-disciplinary mash-up with dancers and a DJ alongside NYBI’s live performance of George Frideric Handel’s *Dixit Dominus*, choral collaborations with Princeton Pro Musica and The Saint Thomas Choir, and a festival devoted to music inspired by the four wind gods of Greek mythology. For information and upcoming events visit www.NYBaroque.org.

WEN YANG – *Artistic Director*

Wen Yang plays double bass and viola da gamba, and has earned praise both for her “angelically played” solos (Charleston Today) and for “knocking people off their seats” (Sarasota Herald-Tribune). She enjoys being a freelance musician, and has performed with musicians including William Christie, Jordi Savall, Masaaki Suzuki, Monica Huggett, Ton Koopman, and Richard Egarr.

An alum of The Juilliard School and Yale School of Music, Wen studied viola da gamba with Sarah Cunningham, and double bass with Don Palma, Timothy Cobb and Robert Nairn. She can also be found cooking, and living in New York City with her husband, cellist Ezra Seltzer, daughter, Mara Pepper Yang and two tuxedo cats, Ollie and Mimi.

VIOLIN I	CELLO	NATURAL TRUMPET
Alexander Woods	Ezra Seltzer	Maximilian Morel
<i>Concertmaster</i>	Adrienne Hyde	Tianyu Wang
Aubrey Woods	Nathan Whittaker	
Karen Dekker	BASS	TYMPANI
Kako Miura	Wen Yang	Daniel Mallon
		HARPSICHORD
VIOLIN II	OBOE	Jeremy Filsell
Beth Wenstrom	David Dickey	<i>Organist and Director of Music, Saint Thomas Church</i>
Ravenna Lipchik	Pablo O’Connell	
Johanna Novom	BASSOON	ORGAN
Jimmy Drancsak	Benjamin Matus	Maks Adach
	CONTRABASSOON	<i>Assistant Organist, Saint Thomas Church</i>
VIOLA	Dirk Wels	Nicolas Haigh
Jessica Troy		<i>Associate Organist, Saint Thomas Church</i>
Alissa Smith		
Nicole Divall		

messiah

PART THE FIRST:

GOD'S PLAN TO REDEEM MANKIND

ISAIAH'S PROPHECY OF SALVATION

SINFONY

Arioso

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*

Air

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain. *Isaiah 40:4*

Chorus

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*

THE COMING JUDGMENT

Recitative

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. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to his temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. *Haggai 2:6-7 and Malachi 3:1*

Air

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*

Chorus

And he shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. *Malachi 3:3*

THE PROPHECIES OF CHRIST'S BIRTH

Recitative

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us." *Isaiah 7:14, Matthew 1:23*

Air and Chorus

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! Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

Isaiah 40:9 and 60:1

Arioso

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

Air

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*

Chorus

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*

THE ANNUNCIATION OF THE SHEPHERDS

PIFA (PASTORAL SYMPHONY)

Recitative

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. *Saint Luke 2:8*

Arioso

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. *Saint Luke 2:9*

Recitative

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. *Saint Luke 2:10-11*

Arioso

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying: *Saint Luke 2:13*

Chorus

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men.

Saint Luke 2:14

CHRIST'S HEALING AND REDEMPTION

Air

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. *Zechariah 9:9-10*

Recitative

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*

Air

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. Come unto him, all ye that labour and 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.

Isaiah 40:11 and Saint Matthew 11:28-29

Chorus

His yoke is easy, and his burden is light.

Saint Matthew 11:30

INTERVAL

15 minutes

PART THE SECOND:

THE REDEMPTION CHRIST'S PASSION

Chorus

Behold, the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world! *Saint John 1:29*

Air

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief. 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 53:3 and 50:6*

Chorus

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; and with his stripes we are healed. 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 53:4-6*

Arioso

All they that see him laugh him to scorn: they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying, *Psalm 22:7*

Chorus

He trusted in God that he would deliver him: let him deliver him, if he delight in him. *Psalm 22:8*

Recitative

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*

Air

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto his sorrow. *Lamentations 1:12*

CHRIST'S DEATH AND REDEMPTION

Recitative

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of thy people was he stricken. *Isaiah 53:8*

Air

But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption. *Psalm 16:11*

THE BEGINNINGS OF GOSPEL PREACHING

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things! *Romans 10:15*

THE WORLD'S REJECTION OF THE GOSPEL

Air

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, 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

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. *Psalm 2:3*

Recitative

He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn: the Lord shall have them in derision. *Psalm 2:4*

GOD'S ULTIMATE VICTORY

Air

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *Psalm 2:9*

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is become the kingdom of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. *Revelation 19:6, 11:15, 19:16*

PART THE THIRD:

AN ANTHEM FOR THANKSGIVING
FOR THE DEFEAT OF DEATH

THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE

Air

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. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep.

Job 19:25-26 and 1 Corinthians 15:20

Chorus

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.

1 Corinthians 15:21-22

THE DAY OF JUDGMENT

Recitative

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.

1 Corinthians 15:51-52

Air

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Corinthians 15:52

THE ACCLAMATION OF THE MESSIAH

Chorus

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.

Revelation 5:12-13



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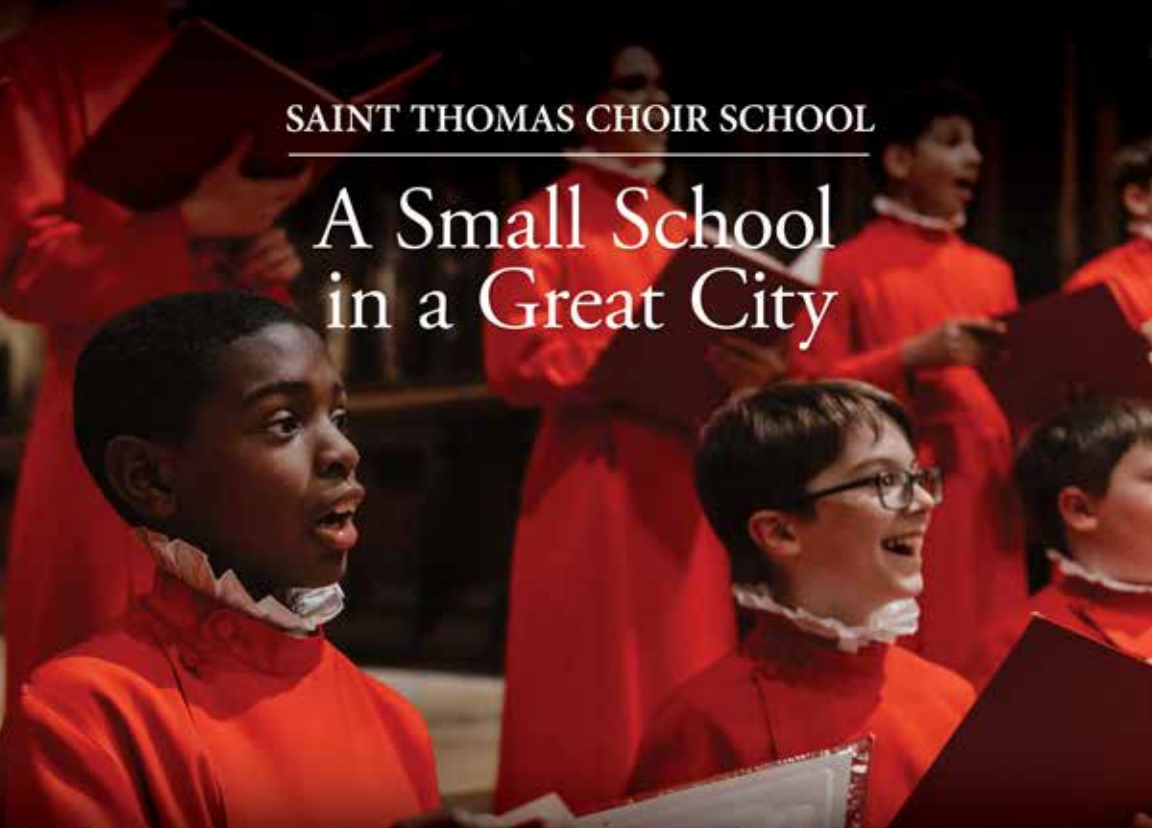
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