



# HANDEL'S GLORIOUS MESSIAH

**Sunday, Dec. 3, 2023 @ 3 p.m.**

Cosette Justo Valdés, conductor  
 Nola Richardson, soprano  
 Patrick Terry, countertenor  
 James Reese, tenor  
 Jesse Blumberg, baritone  
 Lori Loftus, harpsichord  
 Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, artistic director  
 Kibsaim Escárcega, chorus master  
 Pacific Symphony

Handel's Glorious Messiah  
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*Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
 Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall & Lobby*

## PROGRAM

### Part I

Sinfonia  
 Recitative: Comfort ye my people  
 Air: Ev'ry valley shall be exalted  
 Chorus: And the glory of the Lord  
 Recitative: Thus saith the Lord  
 Air: But who may abide the day of his coming?  
 Chorus: And he shall purify  
 Recitative: Behold, a virgin shall conceive  
 Air & Chorus: O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion  
 Recitative: For behold, darkness shall cover the earth  
 Air: The people that walked in darkness  
 Chorus: For unto us a child is born  
 Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony")  
 Recitative: There were shepherds abiding in the field  
 Recitative: And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them  
 Recitative: And the angel said unto them  
 Recitative: And suddenly there was with the angel  
 Chorus: Glory to God  
 Air: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion  
 Recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind  
 Air: He shall feed his flock  
 Chorus: His yoke is easy

### -INTERMISSION-

### Part II

Chorus: Behold the Lamb of God  
 Air: He was despised  
 Chorus: Surely he hath borne our griefs  
 Chorus: And with his stripes we are healed  
 Chorus: All we like sheep have gone astray  
 Recitative: All they that see him laugh him to scorn  
 Chorus: He trusted in God  
 Recitative: Thy rebuke hath broken his heart  
 Air: Behold, and see if there be any sorrow  
 Recitative: He was cut off out of the land of the living  
 Air: But thou didst not leave his soul in hell  
 Chorus: Lift up your heads, O ye gates  
 Chorus: The Lord gave the word  
 Air: How beautiful are the feet  
 Air: Why do the nations so furiously rage together?  
 Chorus: Let us break their bonds asunder  
 Recitative: He that dwelleth in heaven  
 Air: Thou shalt break them  
 Chorus: Hallelujah

### Part III

Air: I know that my redeemer liveth  
 Chorus: Since by man came death  
 Recitative: Behold, I tell you a mystery  
 Air: The trumpet shall sound  
 Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb that was slain

## ABOUT THE CONDUCTOR



**Cosette Justo Valdés has garnered acclaim on both sides of the Atlantic and is a rising star on the world's concert stage.** The Cuban-born-and-raised conductor has been recognized for her "incisive presence on the podium," and her ability to be "emotive in her conducting without being in any sense showy" (*Edmonton*

*Journal*). She is presently Resident Conductor of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra (Canada) where she has won the hearts of musicians and audiences alike. Recent highlights include a "mindblowing" (*Ottawa Citizen*) collaboration with Esperanza Spalding and the National Arts Centre Orchestra in Ottawa, and a celebrated *Così fan tutte* with the Edmonton Opera, conducted from the harpsichord.

Justo Valdés maintains strong ties to her native Cuba, where she is celebrated as Honorary Director of the prestigious Orquesta Sinfónica de Oriente in Santiago, Cuba's musical heartland, which she led for nine years. During that time, seconded by an administrator and a librarian, she single-handedly managed and directed the 80-musician ensemble, developing an extensive repertoire of classical and contemporary music, jazz, and pop, while championing both new and traditional Cuban music. A frequent guest conductor of the Orquesta Nacional de Cuba in Havana, she premiered works by Cuba's musical luminaries including Leo Brouwer, Alfredo Diez Nieto, Roberto Valera, and many more.

With the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Justo Valdés is equally at ease leading programs from the Masters, Pops, or Kids series, garnering praise from critics, audiences, and musicians alike for her "vivacity," and "inspiring, precise, fiery" conducting (*Edmonton Journal*). Her position with the orchestra since 2019 as Assistant Conductor and since March 2022 as Resident Conductor, includes the role of Community Ambassador, through which she has developed an exceptionally warm and rewarding relationship with orchestra patrons as well as the city's arts community. Justo Valdés is also the Artistic Director of the Youth Orchestra of Northern Alberta, the ESO's Sistema-based program that provides free music education to some 200 children from Edmonton's priority neighborhoods and surrounding First Nations.

Justo Valdés holds her bachelor's degree in conducting, with Prof. Jorge López Marín, at the Instituto Superior de Arte (Havana, Cuba) and her master's degree, with Prof. Klaus Arp, at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst (Mannheim, Germany). She has assisted many conductors in Europe and the Americas, including Klaus Arp, Francesco Belli, Alexander Prior, Jean-Marie Zeitouni, Alexander Shelley, Mario Venzagò, and Michael Stern.

## ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE



**Robert Istad, the Phillip N. & Mary A. Lyons Artistic Director of Pacific Chorale, is a GRAMMY® Award-winning conductor who "fashions fluent and sumptuous readings" (*Voice of OC*) with his "phenomenal" artistry (*Los Angeles Times*).** He was appointed Pacific Chorale's Artistic Director in 2017. Under his leadership, the

chorus continues to expand its reputation for excellence for delivering fresh, thought-provoking interpretations of beloved masterworks, rarely performed gems, and newly commissioned pieces. His artistic impact can be heard on two recent recordings featuring Pacific Chorale, including the 2020 GRAMMY® Award-winning "Mahler's Eighth Symphony" with the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Gustavo Dudamel on Deutsche Grammophon (2021), for which he prepared the chorus. It won "Best Choral Performance" and also garnered a GRAMMY® nomination for "Best Engineered Album, Classical." Additionally, Istad conducted the Pacific Chorale's recording "All Things Common: The Music of Tarik O'Regan" released on Yarlung Records (2020). Istad has prepared choruses for such renowned conductors as Esa-Pekka Salonen, John Williams, John Mauceri, Keith Lockhart, Nicholas McGegan, Vasily Sinaisky, Sir Andrew Davis, Bramwell Tovey, Carl St.Clair, Eugene Kohn, Giancarlo Guerrero, Marin Alsop, George Fenton, and Robert Moody. He regularly conducts and collaborates with Pacific Symphony, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Sony Classical Records, Yarlung Records, Berkshire Choral International, and Long Beach Symphony Orchestra.



**Kibsaim Escárcega is the Assistant Conductor for Pacific Chorale, as well as the Chancel Choir Director at Tustin Presbyterian Church.** Born and raised in Southern California, he continues to be an active member of the choral community as both a teacher, conductor, and singer. Escárcega holds

degrees in Vocal Performance and Choral Conducting from the University of California, Irvine, and California State University, Fullerton. He studied voice with Dr. Darryl Taylor and Dubravka Zubovic, and conducting with Seth Houston, Stephen Tucker, Robert Istad, and Kimo Furumoto. While at UCI, Escárcega served as conductor for the student-run BATS choir, Assistant Conductor for the Chamber Singers and Concert Choir, and Chorus Master for numerous UCI opera productions. As a graduate student at CSUF, Escárcega served as



the Graduate Assistant Conductor for the Titan Voices, Concert Choir, Opera Theatre, and University Singers. Escárcega has also recently served as Chorus Master for Lyric Opera of Orange County, Orange County's only professional opera company, and has prepared choirs for conductors in and around the SoCal area.

The GRAMMY® Award-winning PACIFIC CHORALE, an Orange County "treasure" with a "fresh viewpoint" that "can sing anything you put in front of it, with polish, poise and tonal splendor" (*Orange County Register*) has "risen to national prominence" (*Los Angeles Times*) since its inception in 1968. Hailed for delivering "thrilling entertainment" (*Voice of OC*), the resident choir at Segerstrom Center for the Arts is noted for its artistic innovation and commitment to expanding the choral repertoire. It has given world, U.S., and West Coast premieres of more than 40 works, including numerous commissions, by such lauded composers as John Adams, Jake Heggie, James Hopkins, David Lang, Morten Lauridsen, Tarik O'Regan, Karen Thomas, Frank Ticheli, András Gábor Virágh, and Eric Whitacre. In addition to presenting its own concert series each season, Pacific Chorale, led by Artistic Director Robert Istad, enjoys a long-standing partnership with Pacific Symphony, with which the choir made its highly anticipated Carnegie Hall debut in 2018. The chorus also regularly appears with the Los Angeles Philharmonic, with which it won the 2022 GRAMMY® Award for Best Choral Performance for its contribution to the live recording of "Mahler: Symphony No. 8, 'Symphony of A Thousand,'" conducted by Gustavo Dudamel, featuring Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Children's Chorus, Los Angeles Master Chorale, National

Children's Chorus, and Pacific Chorale. The choir has performed with such leading orchestras as the Boston Symphony, National Symphony, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, San Diego Symphony, and Musica Angelica, among others. In addition to receiving national accolades, Pacific Chorale has garnered tremendous international acclaim. In July 2023, the chorus completed its first international tour in seven years with appearances in Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom in collaboration with Bath Philharmonia, Free State Orchestra of Bavaria, and Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Orchestra. Previous tours have taken the choir to 19 countries in Europe, South America, and Asia, including engagements with the London Symphony, Munich Symphony, L'Orchestre Lamoureux and L'Orchestre de St-Louis-en-Île de Paris, National Orchestra of Belgium, China National Symphony, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, Estonian National Symphony, and Orquesta Sinfonica Nacional of Argentina, among others. Deeply committed to making choral music accessible to everyone, the organization has a discography of 14 self-produced recordings and an extensive collection of free digital offerings. Among other artistic highlights, Pacific Chorale's *The Wayfaring Project*, an original concert film conceived and conducted by Istad and produced during the pandemic, will be streamed through Dec. 1, 2024 on pbssocal.org, kcet.org, and the PBS app, reaching audiences around the globe. Pacific Chorale also places significant emphasis on choral music education, providing after-school vocal programs for elementary school students, a choral summer camp for high school students, and an annual community-wide singing event at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. **PacificChorale.org**

Robert Istad • Artistic Director & Conductor

*Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons*  
Artistic Director Chair

Kibsaim Escárcega • Assistant Conductor

Alex Nelson • Director of Artistic Production

**SOPRANO**

Rebecca Hasquet  
*Section Leader*  
Alexandria Burdick  
Ariana Celeste  
Chelsea Chaves  
Katy Compton  
Erika Jackson  
Saousan Jarjour  
Grace J. Lee  
Shannon A. Miller  
Melanie Pedro  
Jessica Pettygrove  
Libby Quam  
Joslyn Sarshad  
Jacqueline Taylor  
Victoria Wu

**ALTO**

Denean R. Dyson  
*Acting Section Leader*  
Shinaie Ahn  
Hannah Black  
Emily Border  
Kathleen Thomsen Gre-  
million  
Brandon Harris  
Stacey Y. Kikkawa  
Kathleen Preston  
Kaleigh Sanchez  
Laurel Sanders  
Stephanie Shepson  
Sammy Yonjai Sohn  
Mya Ujifusa  
Marijke van Niekerk  
Emily Weinberg

**TENOR**

Nicholas Preston  
*Section Leader, Roger W.*  
*Johnson Memorial Chair*  
Daniel Alvarez  
Nate Brown  
Christopher Brush  
Chris Buttars  
Abraham Cervantes  
David Evered  
Alan Garcia  
Dan Haub  
Steven M. Hoffman  
Zachary Lindquist  
Paul Meissbach  
Sammy Salvador  
*Ron Gray Legacy Chair*  
Yngwie Slassh Zamarippa

**BASS**

Ryan Thomas Antal  
*Section Leader, Ron Gray*  
*Legacy Chair*  
Mac Bright  
Michael Fagerstedt  
Louis Ferland  
Randall Gremillion  
Jared Hughes  
Matthew Kellaway  
Jonathan Krauss  
Elliot Z. Levine  
Jackson McDonald  
Martin Minnich  
Kenneth Moore  
Raphael Poon

# ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Soprano Nola Richardson has been making her mark as an “especially impressive” soprano (*The New York Times*).** Her repertoire ranges from medieval to contemporary works, including several world premieres. She has been particularly noted for her performances of Bach, Handel, and Mozart and 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; and Grand Rapids Symphony Linn Maxwell Keller Award, 2019).

In concert, recent seasons have featured her debuts with the Pittsburgh, Seattle, Kansas City, Helena, and Colorado Symphonies in performances of Handel's *Messiah* in which she was described as “agile and crystalline-voiced...a stand-out” (*Seattle Times*). *Messiah* was also the vehicle for her acclaimed Carnegie Hall debut with Musica Sacra under conductor Kent Tritle. She has performed Mozart's *Exultate Jubilate* with Grand Rapids Symphony, a Sondheim review with the Boston Pops, Haydn's *Creation* with the Akron Symphony, Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with Portland Symphony and Musica Angelica and numerous works of Bach with the Baltimore Symphony, Cincinnati Symphony, and the American Classical Orchestra among others. 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*).



**Countertenor Patrick Terry is winner of the Loveday Song Prize at the 2017 Kathleen Ferrier Awards, Second Prize at the 2019 Handel Singing Competition, and is a Samling Artist.** Beseeching readers to “remember his name,” the *London Telegraph* hailed his technique as “excellent” and “virtuosic,” while *The Times* has called his performance of Ruggiero in Handel's

*Alcina* “stunning” and “absolutely fabulous.”

The countertenor began last season in the title role of *Rinaldo* in his debut at Minnesota Opera and performed Brett Dean's *Elbphilharmonie Visions* in concert with the Elbphilharmonie Orchestra. He also appeared as Rosenkrantz in Brett Dean's *Hamlet* with the Bayerische Staatsoper and joined English National Opera as Akhnaten (cover). This season, Terry joins Opera North for their production of *Masque of Might* and joins the Metropolitan Opera roster for their production of *El Niño*.

Terry joined the Jette Parker Young Artists Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in the 2018–19 season where he sang Arsace in *Berenice* and Artemis in Hans Werner Henze's *Phaedra*. Additionally, he traveled to Japan to appear in *Le Promesse* (Gala Concert by Young Opera Singers Tomorrow of the World) at the New National Theatre, Tokyo and returned to the Wigmore Hall for *Heroes and Villains*, appeared in *Beyond Jerusalem: The Life and Times of Sir Charles Hubert Parry* at the London Song Festival, and sang Ruggiero in *Alcina* with La Nuova Musica and *The Choice of Hercules* with the London Handel Orchestra.



**Tenor James Reese, named “a shining tenor” by the *New York Classical Review*, is a GRAMMY® Award-winner.** Last season, James made his Boston Early Music Festival debut in two chamber operas by Lully and Charpentier. He also appears as Mercuré in the Festival's production of Henry Desmarest's *Circé*, recorded under the CPD / Chandos label. James also returned to the Philharmonia Baroque

Orchestra, additionally making solo debuts with the Sebastiani (Bach's *Mass in G Major*) and the American Festival Orchestra (Bach's *St. John Passion*).

Reese is a noted interpreter of Baroque music, giving performances both “splendid” (*San Francisco Chronicle*) and “captivating” (*Broad Street Review*). Describing his Carnegie Hall solo debut in Bach's B minor Mass with the New York Choral Society, the *New York Classical Review* noted “the high, easy tenor of James Reese.” Following a performance of Handel's *Messiah* with the American Bach Soloists, *Classical Sonoma* wrote, “tenor James Reese sang with telling dramatic urgency and effortlessly produced fioritura.” More recently, the *New York Classical Review* wrote, “The most bravura singing was provided by Reese in the ‘Quoniam’ (Bach's *Mass in G Major*),” noting his “shining tenor and forthright delivery.”

A graduate of Northwestern University's Bienen School of Music, Reese holds a master's degree from Yale University's School of Music, where he studied with James Taylor at the Institute of Sacred Music. Reese is the 2018 winner of the Margot Fassler Award for the Performance of Music at Yale, as well as the Career Advancement Award—which recognizes “especially promising young artists”—from the Musical Fund Society. In 2023, he won a GRAMMY® Award as a soloist singing the music of Edie Hill on the record *Born*, released by The Crossing. He lives in Philadelphia.



**Baritone Jesse Blumberg enjoys a busy schedule of opera, concerts, and recitals, performing repertoire from the Renaissance and Baroque to the 20th and 21st centuries.** He has performed featured roles at Minnesota Opera, Boston Lyric Opera, Atlanta Opera, Pittsburgh Opera, Boston Early Music Festival, Opera Atelier, and at Château de Versailles Spectacles and London's Royal Festival Hall. He has sung

major concert works with Amsterdam Baroque Orchestra, American Bach Soloists, Boston Baroque, Apollo's Fire, Oratorio Society of New York, The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Early Music Vancouver, and on Lincoln Center's American Songbook series.

He has been featured on nearly 30 commercial recordings, including the 2015 GRAMMY®-winning and 2019 GRAMMY®-nominated Charpentier Chamber Operas with Boston Early Music Festival. Blumberg's other albums include *Bach: Cantatas* with Montréal Baroque, *Winterreise* with pianist Martin Katz, Rosenmüller cantatas with ACRONYM, and *St. John Passion* with Apollo's Fire. Recognized in several competitions, he was awarded Third Prize at the 2008 International Robert Schumann Competition in Zwickau, becoming its first American prizewinner in over 30 years.

Blumberg received undergraduate degrees in History and Music from the University of Michigan and a Master of Music degree from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. He is also the founding artistic director of Five Boroughs Music Festival in NYC, and recently served as a guest instructor of voice at the Cleveland Institute of Music.