



# HANDEL'S GLORIOUS MESSIAH

Sunday, Dec. 8, 2024 @ 3 p.m.

Christopher Warren-Green, conductor

Julie Roset, soprano

Lawrence Zazzo, countertenor

David Walton, tenor

Joshua Conyers, baritone

Michael Leopold, theorbo and baroque guitar

Lori Loftus, harpsichord

Pacific Chorale—Robert Istad, Artistic Director



Handel's Glorious Messiah is generously sponsored by **Mark Chapin Johnson**.

Performance at the Segerstrom Center for the Arts  
Renée and Henry Segerstrom Concert Hall

## 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

Chorus: Their sound is gone out

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

## Christopher Warren-Green, conductor



Christopher Warren-Green, British conductor, is Conductor Laureate of the Charlotte Symphony and Music Director of the London Chamber Orchestra. Chair of the Foundation for Young Musicians, he celebrated 50 years in music in 2022. During the 2023-24 season, he returns to lead the Royal Philharmonic, Minnesota

Orchestra, and Macau Orchestra, while also conducting *Swan Lake* and Vaughan Williams' *Symphony No. 1* with the Charlotte Symphony. He has conducted renowned orchestras worldwide, including The Philadelphia Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and Hong Kong Philharmonic. Warren-Green is also known for his work with the British royal family, having conducted at the wedding services of HM King Charles III, HM Queen Camilla, and other significant royal events. Warren-Green has recorded for major labels like Sony and Deutsche Grammophon and frequently performs as a soloist. He began his career as Concertmaster of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and Academy of St Martin in the Fields under Sir Neville Marriner.



music, premiering roles such as Trinculo in Thomas Adès' *The Tempest* at Covent Garden. Zazzo has worked with leading conductors in Baroque and modern music and made history as the first western countertenor to sing *Messiah* in China. His extensive discography includes recordings of Handel's *Rinaldo* and *Saul* for Harmonia Mundi and Jonathan Dove's *Hojoki* with the BBC Philharmonic. Zazzo also serves as Senior Lecturer in Music at Newcastle University, frequently giving masterclasses and workshops worldwide.



## David Walton, tenor



Praised for his "clean, clear voice," lyric tenor David Walton has earned critical acclaim across the country. Recent roles include Frederic in *The Pirates of Penzance* where he delivered a "charismatic presence and a sweet pleasing tenor" (*Cincinnati Business Courier*) and Dorvil in Rossini's *La scala di seta* with a "ringing high register" (*concerto.net*). A favorite

in bel canto repertoire, Walton has performed as Ernesto in *Don Pasquale*, Tonio in *La fille du régiment*, Ramiro in *La Cenerentola*, and Almaviva in *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. Described as "the sweetest singing of the evening" (*Star Tribune*), Walton has appeared with companies including Cincinnati Opera, Virginia Opera, Minnesota Opera, and Glimmerglass Festival. He is also known for his work in contemporary opera, premiering roles like Tom in *Companionship* by Rachel Peters and Younger Thompson in *Glory Denied* by Tom Cipullo. Upcoming performances include Ramiro with Toledo Opera and Tamino with Annapolis Opera.



# ABOUT THE ARTISTS

## Julie Roset, soprano



Julie Roset, winner of the 2023 Operalia First Prize and 2022 Metropolitan Opera Laffont Competition, has swiftly risen as one of the finest coloratura sopranos of her generation. Her acclaimed 2023 performance as Zémire in *Zémire et Azor* at Opéra Comique was praised by *Le Figaro* for its natural and intelligent singing. Highlights of Roset's 2024/25 season

include debut appearances with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and Orchestre de Paris in Mahler's *Symphony No. 2*, performances with Danish National Symphony Orchestra in *Dido and Aeneas*, and a debut at the Musikverein with *Messiah*. She will also return to Opéra Comique and Teatro Real in *Samson* and *Les Indes galantes*. Recent successes include roles at Opéra de Paris, Festival d'Aix-en-Provence, and Teatro Real. A sought-after concert performer, Roset has performed with top orchestras including the Mozarteum Orchestra and Stavanger Symphony. Her recordings include *Salve Regina* with Millenium Orchestra.



## Joshua Conyers, baritone



GRAMMY®-nominated baritone Joshua Conyers captivates audiences with what *Opera News* calls a "deliciously honeyed baritone that would seduce anyone." Recognized as one of today's most promising dramatic voices, the Bronx native's 2023-24 season includes performing and covering Reginald in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* with Seattle Opera

and the Metropolitan Opera, *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, Hollis in the world premiere of *Two Corners* with Finger Lakes Opera, and his role debut as Scarpia in *Tosca* with Opera Wilmington. Upcoming engagements include his debut as Hassan in Edmond Dede's *Morgaine* with Opera Lafayette and Opera Créole, Pierre Cauchon in *The Trial at Rouen* with Piedmont Opera, and his first Falstaff. Concert highlights include *Messiah* with the Phoenix Symphony and a recital with the Brooklyn Art Song Society. Conyers is on the voice faculty at the Eastman School of Music.



## Lawrence Zazzo, countertenor



American countertenor Lawrence Zazzo is renowned as one of the finest singers of his generation. A Philadelphia native, he studied English and Music at Yale and King's College, Cambridge, before making his operatic debut as Oberon in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* while completing his studies at London's Royal College of Music. Zazzo has performed in

prestigious opera houses worldwide, with notable roles including Giulio Cesare (Metropolitan Opera, Paris, London), Orfeo (Vienna, Toronto, Tokyo), and Farnace in *Mitridate* (Munich). He also champions contemporary

## Michael Leopold, theobo and baroque guitar



Michael Leopold holds degrees in music and historical plucked instruments from American universities and a degree in lute and theorbo from L'Istituto di Musica Antica in Milan. Originally from Northern California, he lived in Milan for 16 years and Canada for five before returning to the United States. He has performed as both soloist and accompanist

across Europe, Australia, Japan, South America, Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Leopold has collaborated with leading Italian early

music ensembles such as Concerto Italiano and La Risonanza, as well as with major orchestras and opera companies including Opera Australia, San Francisco Opera, Los Angeles Opera, and Chicago Opera Theater. His performances have been praised for their sensitivity and brilliance. Reviews noted his “sensitive and heartfelt” playing (*Chicago Classical Music*) and “dazzling” recitatives (*Seen and Heard International*). His recordings appear on labels such as Stradivarius, Glossa, Linn, and Naxos.



## Lori Loftus, harpsicord



Lori Loftus is the founding director of the Southern California Children’s Chorus (SCCC), leading a faculty that serves young singers ages 5 to 18 in six choral levels. Under her leadership, SCCC has been recognized with three Emmy Awards for its distinguished choral music education and performances on prestigious stages, including Carnegie

Hall and the Sydney Opera House. A frequent guest keyboardist with Pacific Symphony since 1976, Loftus performs regularly on the organ at Segerstrom Hall and harpsichord for annual performances of *Messiah* with the Pacific Chorale and Pacific Symphony. In 2007, she received the Outstanding Alumni Award for Excellence in Choral Music from California State University, Fullerton, and in 2022, the Titan of Music Award from CSUF’s School of Music. Beyond music, Loftus enjoys tournament golf, raising monarch butterflies, and traveling. She and her husband, John, have six grandchildren and two Siamese cats who bring her great joy.



# ABOUT PACIFIC CHORALE

## Robert Istad, artistic director



Grammy Award-winning conductor who “fashions fluent and sumptuous readings” (*Voice of OC*) with his “phenomenal” artistry (*Los Angeles Times*), 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. In July 2023, he led Pacific Chorale’s first international tour in seven years, conducting performances at leading venues in Austria, Germany and the United Kingdom. His artistic impact can be heard on two recent recordings featuring Pacific Chorale, including the 2022 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). He regularly conducts and collaborates with Pacific Symphony, Berkshire Choral International, and Yarlung Records. His extensive credits also include recording for Sony Classical and guest conducting Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, Bach Collegium San Diego, Musica Angelica Baroque Orchestra, Bath Philharmonia, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Tesseræ Baroque, and Freies Landesorchester Bayern. 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. An esteemed educator, Istad is Professor of Music and Director of Choral Studies at California State University, Fullerton, where he was recognized as CSUF’s 2016 Outstanding Professor of the Year. He conducts the University Singers and manages a large graduate conducting program, in addition to teaching courses on conducting and performance practice. Istad, who is on the Executive Board of Directors of Chorus America and serves as Dean of Chorus America’s Conducting Academy, is in demand as guest conductor, lecturer, and clinician.

## Kibsaim Escárcega, assistant conductor



Kibsaim Escárcega serves as Assistant Conductor for the Grammy Award-winning Pacific Chorale. Born and raised in Southern California, he is an active presence in the choral community as a conductor, teacher, 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 under Dr. Darryl Taylor and Dubravka Zubovic, and conducting with Seth Houston, Stephen Tucker, Robert Istad, and Kimo Furumoto. At UC Irvine, Escárcega conducted the student-led BATS Choir, served as Assistant Conductor for the Chamber Singers and Concert Choir, and was Chorus Master for various UCI opera productions. During his graduate studies at CSUF, he held the position of Graduate Assistant Conductor for Titan Voices, Concert Choir, Opera Theatre, and University Singers, conducting numerous concerts and preparing choruses and instrumental ensembles for opera productions. Escárcega has also served as Chorus Master for Lyric Opera of Orange County, the region’s professional opera company, and has prepared choirs for distinguished international conductors in renowned venues, including the Segerstrom Concert Hall and the Hollywood Bowl. His work has extended to significant public events, such as preparing choirs for memorial services, underscoring the role of music in bringing communities together.

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, was streamed to audiences around the globe on pbsocal.org, kcet.org and the PBS app. 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.



Robert Istad / Artistic Director and Conductor  
*Phillip N. and Mary A. Lyons Artistic Director Chair*  
 Kibsaim Escárcega / Assistant Conductor & Chorusmaster

Rhett M. Del Campo / President & CEO  
 Alex Nelson / VP, Artistic Production & Operations

**SOPRANO**

Rebecca Hasquet  
*Section Leader*  
 Lauren Adaska  
 Alexandria Burdick  
 Andria Nuñez Cabrera  
 Ariana Celeste  
 Chelsea Chaves  
 Jessica Dalley  
 Rosiana Falzon  
 Saousan Jarjour  
 Hannah Kim  
 Anne McClintic  
 Shannon A. Miller  
 Melanie Pedro  
 Libby Quam  
 Joslyn Sarshad

**ALTO**

Jane Hyun-Jung Shim  
*Section Leader*  
 Shinaie Ahn  
 Emily Border  
 Denean R. Dyson  
 Kathleen Thomsen Gre-  
 million  
 Brandon Harris  
 Eleen Hsu-Wentlandt  
 Kristen Kleinhans  
 Elizabeth Provencio  
 Kaleigh Sanchez  
 Stephanie Shepson  
 Rachel Steinke  
 Mya Ujifusa  
 Marijke van Niekerk

**TENOR**

Nicholas Preston  
*Section Leader,*  
*Roger W. Johnson Memorial Chair*  
 Jephthe Acosta  
 Daniel Coy Babcock  
 Abraham Cervantes  
 David Evered  
 Alan Garcia  
 Johnny Gonzales  
 Steven M. Hoffman  
 Craig S. Kistler  
 David Melendez  
 Jared Pugh  
 Sammy Salvador  
*Ron Gray Legacy Chair*  
 Christiaan Westerkamp  
 Yngwie Slassh Zamarippa

**BASS**

Ryan Thomas Antal  
*Section Leader,*  
*Ron Gray Legacy Chair*  
 Aram Barsamian  
 Louis Ferland  
 Randall Gremillion  
 Mark Hamilton  
 Jared Hughes  
 Matthew Kellaway  
 Jonathan Krauss  
 Dylan Leisure  
 Elliot Z. Levine  
 Jackson McDonald  
 Kenneth Moore  
 Ryan Morris  
 David Tkach

**PROGRAM NOTES**

George Frideric Handel

**Messiah, HWV 56**

**Born:** Feb. 23, 1656 in Halle Germany  
**Died:** Apr. 14, 1759 in London, England  
**Composed:** Sept. 14, 1741  
**Premiered:** Apr. 13, 1742 in Dublin, Ireland  
**Most recent Pacific Symphony performance:** Dec. 3, 2023, with Cosette Justo Valdés conducting  
**Instrumentation:** two oboes, two bassoons, two trumpets, timpani, continuo, and strings, with soprano, alto, tenor, and bass soloists, and chorus  
**Approximate duration:** 105 minutes



Filled with music, light, and the joys of the season, our year-end holiday traditions seem like they have always been here. But the sound and style of Christmas in America continue to be shaped by two giants of English arts and letters: George Frideric Handel, whose 1741 masterpiece *Messiah*

has become the best-known oratorio in the world, and Charles Dickens, whose short novel *A Christmas Carol* was published in 1843, establishing a benchmark for the generosity and goodwill we now associate with Christmas. Together, these influences have made annual performances of *Messiah*—which was not originally composed for Christmas—an indispensable yuletide tradition.

*Messiah* is inexhaustible not only in its outpouring of inspired melody and dramatic effects but also in the commentary surrounding it. As winter closes in and our appreciation of this miraculous oratorio is renewed, the observations from past seasons—like the music itself—sound fresh. Papa Haydn, always generous in praising the merits of other composers, called Handel “der Meister von uns allen,” “the master of us all,” at a performance of *Messiah*. Beethoven, who was far more grudging with his approval, used almost the same words—“der unerreichte Meister aller Meisters,” “the unequalled master of all masters,” to describe the composer of *Messiah*. Always concerned with dramatic intensity and profound ideas, Beethoven added, “Go and learn from him how to achieve vast effects with simple means.” *Messiah* is certainly rich with them, along with beautiful melodies and the insistent rhythms that are characteristic of the Baroque era—easy to love and hard to forget. “What the English like is something that they can beat time to, something that hits them straight on the drum of the

ear,” writes Handel biographer Richard Alexander Streatfeild, citing Anton Schmid, the 20th-century Austrian intellectual and resistance fighter against the Nazis. Today, *Messiah* still bangs us straight on the drum of the ear, inspiring reinterpretations in swing, rap, and jazz styles.

Master of both sacred and secular music, Handel was born in 1685, at the height of the Baroque era. He was a native of Germany, but his early travels included Italy, where he assimilated the Italian styles of operatic composition before settling in England. Successful in all vocal and instrumental music forms, he was the English court’s go-to composer for the nation’s most important ceremonial music. His gifts seem to converge in *Messiah*, with its endlessly expressive melodies and towering drama so perfectly suited to expressing the story and the glory of Christ’s birth.

Although *Messiah* was originally composed for performance during Lent, it has been universally adopted as a musical high point of the Advent season. For Handel himself and for millions of listeners, it is not only a thrilling entertainment but also a deep expression of religious faith that sounds new no matter how many times we have heard it. Handel famously described the process of composing the “Hallelujah” chorus as the heavens opening to him. Yet *Messiah* was also a commercial imperative for him. He composed it at a time when he was in need of a major success: he had enjoyed a hugely successful run writing and producing his own operas, but the public taste for his operas was fading. Having already written operas on sacred themes, he turned to the unstaged oratorio form. *Messiah* is the foremost example of what became known as the English oratorio, which combines religious texts with elements of intense drama, sometimes in ways hard to distinguish from opera. Most of them combine biblical and non-biblical texts, though *Messiah* is drawn entirely from the Bible.

Composition of *Messiah* was completed within 24 days, a breakneck pace for so expansive a work. The text was provided by Charles Jennens, drawn mainly from the biblical books of Isaiah and the Gospel of St. Matthew—a selection that, according to some sources, reflected Jennens’s and possibly even Handel’s anti-establishment political leanings. After all, who but a radical egalitarian would so potently emphasize Isaiah’s prophecy that “every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low?” Still, a message of straightforward religious inspiration was overriding for Handel and remains so for his audiences. There are many traditional accounts of seemingly divine inspiration as he worked. In one, his assistant walked into the room where he was composing after shouting to him for minutes on end with no response. He supposedly found Handel in tears, pen in hand, and asked what was wrong. “I thought I saw the face of God,” Handel said.

The immediate popularity of Handel’s *Messiah* made it an instant tradition in England and elsewhere, and annual performances gradually moved from Eastertide to the Christmas season. By 1784, *Messiah* performances at events such as the Handel Centenary Commemoration were commonplace, often drawing together huge choral and orchestral forces. As an impresario, Handel was accustomed to tailoring his works for specific performers and production circumstances, and various editions of *Messiah* existed even within his lifetime. He also expected soloists to interpolate vocal ornamentations as appropriate, a practice that reappeared during the bel canto revival that began during the 1960s.

The sheer theatricality of *Messiah* contributed greatly to its success, and still does. Though not staged, it is religion made theater. Its drama and beauty flow first from its beautiful melodies, which inspire us while capturing the revelatory

emotions described in the text. But they also gain extraordinary intensity through the Baroque compositional technique of “word painting,” in which the flow of notes in the music actually seems to replicate a shape or contour that the notes describe. One frequently cited example of word painting occurs early in Part I, in the tenor aria “Every valley shall be exalted.” On the word “mountain,” the tenor’s voice rises, creating a literal peak of sound; then it drops by an octave, showing how the mountain is made low. *Messiah* teems with effects like these.

For all of its vividness, Handel’s mastery of word painting accounts for just part of the dramatic impact of *Messiah*. It combines with his gift for melody and a sympathetic understanding of psychology that appeals to us in a way that is less literal but more deeply human. When we hear the soprano soloist singing “Come unto Him, all ye that...are heavy laden,” who can fail to take comfort at the tenderness of her vocal line? Equally intense are the passages of joyful anticipation and of triumph, as in the prophecy expressed in “For unto Us” and in the glorious “Hallelujah” chorus, which so overwhelmed Handel’s contemporary audiences that, we are told, they spontaneously rose to their feet in awe—a tradition that persists to this day in many parts of the world.

Today, there is no definitive performing edition or single “correct” approach to performing *Messiah*, and every conductor who leads it must make critical decisions in order to do so. But those decisions are informed by the living traditions that we all enjoy as listeners and by the work of Handel scholars and performers. For example, the soprano aria “Rejoice greatly” exists in both 4/4 and 6/8 tempos, each with its own unique appeal; the 4/4 version is graceful and dignified, while the 6/8 version dances with joy.

Such decisions are often the result of collaboration between singer and conductor, and with the death of Joan Sutherland, we lost a singer who was one of the great modern exponents of Handelian vocal style. Sutherland and her husband, the conductor Richard Bonyngne, collected Handel manuscripts and researched principles of vocal ornamentation in Handel operas and oratorios including *Messiah*, which she recorded. In fact, it was her performance in another Handel oratorio—as the Israelite Woman in *Samson*—that cued alert Covent Garden listeners to her extraordinary talent back in the late 1950s. But the association between diva soprano and the soprano solo role in *Messiah* extends more than a century earlier, back to the legendary Jenny Lind, who sang *Messiah* and barnstormed the U.S. as a Barnum-sponsored headliner in the 1840s. On one of her transatlantic crossings, the Swedish Nightingale asked her ship’s captain to wake her before dawn, without specifying a reason for her request. At the appointed hour, she stood with him at the ship’s railing as the sun rose over the waters and sang “I Know That My Redeemer Liveth.”

---

Michael Clive is a cultural reporter living in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. He is program annotator for Pacific Symphony and has written numerous articles for magazines and newspapers in the U.S. and U.K. and hundreds of program notes for orchestras and opera companies. [Operahound.com](http://Operahound.com)

# LIBRETTO

## The Words selected from Holy Scripture by Charles Jennens



### PART I

#### Sinfonia

##### Recitative (Tenor)

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God; speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardon'd. 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)

##### Aria (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry 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)

##### Recitative (Bass-Baritone)

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns 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; ev'n the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Malachi 3:1)

##### Aria (Bass-Baritone)

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)

##### Recitative (Countertenor)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us."

(Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23)

##### Aria (Countertenor) 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! O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

(Isaiah 40:9; Isaiah 60:1)

##### Recitative (Bass-Baritone)

For, behold, the 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)

##### Aria (Bass-Baritone)

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)

##### Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

##### Recitative (Soprano)

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

(Luke 2:8)

##### Recitative (Soprano)

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)

##### Recitative (Soprano)

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."

(Luke 2:10-11)

##### Recitative (Soprano)

And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying:

(Luke 2:13)

##### Chorus

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

(Luke 2:14)

##### Aria (Soprano)

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. Rejoice greatly... da capo.

(Zechariah 9:9-10)

##### Recitative (Countertenor)

Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, 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)

##### Duet (Soprano and Countertenor)

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, come unto Him 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.

(Isaiah 40:11; Matthew 11:28-29)

##### Chorus

His yoke is easy, and His burthen is light.

(Matthew 11:30)

### PART II

##### Chorus

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

(John 1:29)

##### Aria (Countertenor)

He was despised, 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 His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. He was despised . . . da capo

(Isaiah 53:6)

**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.

(Isaiah 53:4-5)

**Chorus**

And with His stripes we are healed.

(Isaiah 53:5)

**Chorus**

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

(Isaiah 53:6)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

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 (Tenor)**

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)

**Aria (Tenor)**

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

(Lamentations 1:12)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken.

(Isaiah 53:8)

**Aria (Tenor)**

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

(Psalm 16:10)

**Chorus**

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)

**Chorus**

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

(Psalm 68: 11)

**Aria (Soprano)**

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

(Romans 10:15)

**Chorus**

Their sound is gone out into all lands, and their wounds unto the ends of the world.

(Romans 10:18)

**Aria (Bass-Baritone)**

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)

**Chorus**

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

(Psalm 2: 3)

**Recitative (Tenor)**

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

(Psalm 2:4)

**Aria (Tenor)**

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. Hallelujah!

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

**PART III****Aria (Soprano)**

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the Earth. And tho' 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; 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)

**Recitative (Bass-Baritone)**

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

(1 Corinthians 15:51-52)

**Aria (Bass-Baritone)**

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. The trumpet . . . da capo

(1 Corinthians 15:52-53)

**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 honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the Throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. Amen.

(Revelation 5:12-14)

