

Messiah

Sunday, December 5, 2010 • 3:00 PM
First Free Methodist Church



Orchestra Seattle
Seattle Chamber Singers
Zon Eastes, conductor

Catherine Haight, soprano
Melissa Plagemann, alto
Stephen Wall, tenor
Brian Box, baritone

GEORG FRIDERIC HANDEL (1685–1759)
Messiah, HWV 56

Symphony
Accompagnato: "Comfort Ye"
Air: "Every valley shall be exalted"
Chorus: "And the glory of the Lord"
Accompagnato: "Thus saith the Lord"
Air: "But who may abide"
Chorus: "And He shall purify"
Recitative: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive"
Air and Chorus: "O thou that tellest"
Accompagnato: "For behold, darkness"
Air: "The people that walked in darkness"

Chorus: "For unto us a child is born"
Pastoral Symphony
Recitative: "There were shepherds"
Accompagnato: "And lo, the angel"
Recitative: "And the angel said unto them"
Accompagnato: "And suddenly there was with the angel"
Chorus: "Glory to God in the highest"
Air: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion"
Recitative: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened"
Air: "He shall feed His flock"
Chorus: "His yoke is easy"

—Intermission—

Chorus: "Behold the Lamb of God"
Air: "He was despised"
Chorus: "Surely He hath borne our griefs"
Chorus: "And with His stripes"
Chorus: "All we, like sheep"
Accompagnato: "All they that see Him"
Chorus: "He trusted in God"
Accompagnato: "Thy rebuke hath broken His heart"
Arioso: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow"
Accompagnato: "He was cut off"
Air: "But Thou didst not leave"
Chorus: "Lift up your heads"

Recitative: "Unto which of the angels"
Chorus: "Let all the angels"
Air: "Thou art gone up on high"
Chorus: "The Lord gave the word"
Air: "How beautiful are the feet"
Chorus: "Their sound is gone out"
Air: "Why do the nations"
Chorus: "Let us break their bonds asunder"
Recitative: "He that dwelleth"
Air: "Thou shalt break them"
Chorus: "Hallelujah"

—Intermission—

Air: "I know that my Redeemer liveth"
Chorus: "Since by man came death"
Accompagnato: "Behold, I tell you a mystery"
Air: "The trumpet shall sound"
Recitative: "Then shall be brought to pass"

Duet: "O death, where is thy sting?"
Chorus: "But thanks be to God"
Air: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"
Chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb"

Please disable cell phones and other electronics. The use of cameras and recording devices is not permitted during the performance.

Program Notes

Georg Frideric Handel

Messiah, HWV 56

Handel was born in Halle, Germany, on February 23, 1685, and died in London on April 14, 1759. He composed Messiah between August 22 and September 14 of 1741. The oratorio was first performed in Dublin on April 13, 1742, under the direction of the composer. In addition to a quartet of vocal soloists and choir, the work calls for 2 oboes, bassoon, 2 trumpets, timpani, harpsichord and strings.

Handel, renowned in his day as an organist and as a highly prolific writer of Italian operas and English oratorios, was born in Germany in 1685 about a month before J.S. Bach. He received his musical training in Italy, and later became 18th-century England's "national composer." Between February and November 1741, Handel—suffering at the age of 56 from various ailments, both financial and physical—withdrew increasingly from public life. At some point that year, the composer received from the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland and the governors of Dublin's three major charitable institutions an invitation to travel to that city to aid the charities through the performance of his music. Handel was well known in Dublin as a church-music composer, and his works were often played there to benefit charities. It may thus have been this invitation that provided the incentive for Handel to compose "a new sacred Oratorio." In July of 1741, Charles Jennens, who was responsible for the texts of Handel's oratorios *Israel in Egypt* and *Saul*, gave the struggling Handel the libretto of *Messiah*, a compilation of biblical texts from both the Old and New Testaments.

On August 22, Handel began to set Jennens' text to music. He finished the first part of his new oratorio (which deals with the prophecy of Christ's coming and his nativity) in six days, the second part (which describes Jesus' suffering, death, resurrection, and ascension, the spread of his gospel, the resistance of the heathen, and the vision of the ultimate triumph of the gospel in the establishment of God's kingdom) in nine days, and the third part (which celebrates the gift of resurrection and eternal life offered to all through Christ's victory over death) in six more days, with two or three additional days for completing the orchestration. Regarding Handel's state of mind during *Messiah's* composition, biographer Jonathan Keates observes in his 1992 book *Handel: The Man and Music* that "etherealized visions of the elderly master refusing food, weeping into the semiquavers and having angelic hallucinations are mostly moonshine."

In the autumn of 1741, Handel accepted the invitation to visit Dublin, arriving there on November 18 with the completed score of *Messiah* in his traveling bags, but it was not until April 13, 1742, that the oratorio received its premiere. Seven hundred people were able to squeeze into Dublin's Musick Hall in Fishamble-street to hear the work performed by the choirs of Dublin's two cathedrals (totaling fewer than 40 men and boys) and the string band (reinforced occasionally by trumpets and timpani—oboe and bassoon parts were written later), all directed from the keyboard by Mr. Handel himself. The work created a sensation: "Words

are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience," exulted *Faulkner's Journal*. "The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestick and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear." Handel divided his share of the proceeds (about £400), as did the other performers, among Dublin's three most important charities.

Messiah is unique among Handel's works, being his only biblical oratorio using texts from the New Testament, and his only "Christian-contemplative" oratorio. Although the text is not a dramatic narrative but an epic-lyric poem celebrating Christian redemption, Handel's musical approach in setting Jennens' libretto was decidedly dramatic. The work's three parts recall the three acts of Italian operas, and the oratorio is indeed a piece designed by a seasoned operatic professional to "entertain," in the best sense of the word, listeners in a concert room, not chiefly to instruct or edify a congregation or to be used in any sort of worship.

Handel synthesizes the best elements of the three musical traditions in which he was steeped: the Italian, the German and the English. He makes use of Italian forms of musical expression, borrowing, rearranging and transforming into "duet-choruses" (such as "And he shall purify") some passages from his own Italian love duets. In the "Pastoral Symphony" (entitled *Pifa*) that introduces the shepherds, Handel alludes to the music of the *pifferari*, the country bagpipers who descend the Italian mountains during the Christmas season to play in village streets. Handel employs German musical ideas, particularly in the music describing Jesus' suffering and death, where the jagged dotted rhythms and forceful harmonies have a particularly German expressive quality. In that great "coronation march," the "Hallelujah Chorus," melodic fragments echoing the German chorale "Wachet auf" may be heard in "The kingdom of this world" and in "And he shall reign for ever and ever." Handel's melodic shapes, vocal treatment, grand anthem-like choruses, and text-setting display the "English character" that has ensured *Messiah's* unchallenged supremacy in the English choral repertoire: in such arias as "He was despised" and "I know that my Redeemer liveth," the rhythms of the music grow out of the natural speech rhythms of the words, so that the music expresses the text directly and powerfully, and then illustrates it almost visually (e.g., "Every valley shall be exalted," "The people that walked in darkness," and "All we, like sheep").

The easy accessibility and glorious variety of the music that results from the confluence of these elements (and which often conceals the exalted art underlying it) has helped to guarantee *Messiah's* survival, through a seeming infinitude of "arrangements," versions and types of presentation, as one of the most popular pieces ever composed. As R.A. Streatfeild observes, "*Messiah*, if not Handel's greatest work, is undoubtedly the most universal in its appeal" because it continues to sing to "high and low, rich and poor, wise and foolish alike" a magnificent song of salvation, fresh, vital and full of aesthetic and spiritual grace.

—Lorette Knowles

Part One

Symphony

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

Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill made low: the crooked straight, and the rough places plain:

Isaiah 40:4

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

Isaiah 40:5

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of Hosts; Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land;

And I will shake all nations, and the desire of all nations shall come.

Haggai 2:6-7

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Malachi 3:1

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

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness.

Malachi 3:2

Behold, a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a Son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, "God with us."

Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, get thee up into the high mountain; O thou, that tellest good tidings to Jerusalem, lift up thy voice with strength; lift it up, be not afraid; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God!

Isaiah 40:9

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

Isaiah 60:1

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

The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

Isaiah 9:2

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)

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

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 2:8-9

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 Savior, which is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11

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

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

Luke 2:13-14

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee.

He is the righteous Savior and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Zechariah 9:9-10

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

He shall feed His flock like a shepherd: He shall gather the lambs with His arm, and carry them in His bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young.

Isaiah 40:11

Come unto Him, all ye that labor 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.

Matthew 11:28-29

His yoke is easy, His burthen is light.

Matthew 11:30

Part Two

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

John 1:29

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

Isaiah 53:3

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

Isaiah 50:6

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

And with His stripes we are healed.

Isaiah 53:5

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

Isaiah 53:6

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

Psalms 22:7

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

Psalms 22:8

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.

Psalms 69:20

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

Lamentations 1:12

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

Isaiah 53:8

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

Psalms 16:10

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.

The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

Psalms 24:7-10

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

Hebrews 1:5

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

Hebrews 1:6

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

Psalms 68:18

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

Psalms 68:11

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

Romans 10:15

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

Romans 10:18

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.

Psalms 2:1-2

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

Psalms 2:3

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

Psalms 2:4

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

Psalms 2:9

Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:6

The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah!

Revelation 11:15

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and He shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah!

Revelation 19:16

Part Three

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth:

And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

Job 19: 25-26

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

I Corinthians 15:20

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead.

For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.

I Corinthians 15:21-22

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

I Corinthians 15:51-52

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

For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality.

I Corinthians 15:52-53

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.

I Corinthians 15:54

O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?

The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law.

I Corinthians 15:55-56

But thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

I Corinthians 15:57

If God be for us, who can be against us?

Romans 8:31

Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.

Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is at the right hand of God, who makes intercession for us.

Romans 8:33-34

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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Solo Artists

Guest conductor **Zon Eastes**, originally from Kansas, served as music director of the Windham (Vermont) Orchestra for over 20 years and has conducted for Raylynmor Opera (New Hampshire), the Rose City Chamber Orchestra (Oregon) and the Bainbridge Symphony. As a cellist, he has performed regularly with the New England Bach Festival Orchestra, Arcadia Players Baroque Orchestra and New Mexico Symphony. He has performed concerts throughout the northeast, Europe and China, played with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra and Bella Rosa String Quartet, and participated in such festivals as Boston Early Music, Waterloo, Aix-en-Provence (France) and Lameque International Music (Canada). Mr. Eastes has taught cello and coached chamber music at Dartmouth, Amherst and Keene State Colleges, as well as at the Brattleboro Music Center, the Putney School and Northfield Mt. Hermon School. As arts administrator, Mr. Eastes has served as director of the New England Bach Festival and executive director of the Bainbridge Island Arts and Humanities Council, during which time he performed in the Orchestra Seattle cello section for three years. He is particularly pleased to rejoin his OSSCS colleagues for this performance.

Soprano **Catherine Haight** is well known to Seattle audiences for her performances of Baroque music. She is an accomplished performer of the oratorio repertoire, including all of the major works of Handel and Bach. Ms. Haight has been a guest soloist with the Pacific Northwest Ballet in their acclaimed production of *Carmina Burana*, traveling with them to Australia to perform as part of the Melbourne Festival in 1995, and to the Kennedy Center for three performances in 1996. Her recordings include Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* with Philharmonia Northwest, Orff's *Carmina Burana* with Seattle Choral Company and Handel's *Messiah* with OSSCS under the direction of George Shangrow. She is currently a member of the voice faculty at Seattle Pacific University.

Mezzo-soprano **Melissa Plagemann** has been praised by audiences and the press for her "clear, burnished voice" (*Tacoma News Tribune*) and "attractively expressive mezzo" (*Crosscut Seattle*). She performs frequently with the finest musical organizations throughout the Pacific Northwest, and is rapidly becoming known for the passion and musical intelligence she brings to performances on opera and concert stages alike. A first-prize winner in competitions of the Ladies' Musical Club, the Seattle Musical Art Society and the Seattle Gilbert and Sullivan Society, she holds degrees from the University of Victoria and Indiana University. This season she performs *Nutcracker* with Pacific Northwest Ballet, *Messiah* with the Bellevue Philharmonic and Tacoma Symphony, and Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with OSSCS.

Tenor **Stephen Wall** has appeared frequently with OSSCS since 1985 and can be heard on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah*. During that time he has also been featured in leading and supporting roles with Seattle Opera, in addition to roles with Portland Opera, Utah Festival Opera and Tacoma Opera, and appearances with the symphonies of Seattle, Vancouver, Spokane, Everett, Bellevue, Yakima, Pendleton, Great Falls and Sapporo (Japan). Mr. Wall has also served as the director for many musical theater productions and maintains an active voice studio in Seattle.

Baritone **Brian Box** received his Master's degree in vocal performance from Western Washington University in 1985. He performs frequently with many local ensembles, including OSSCS, Seattle Choral Company, Seattle Pro Musica, Bellevue Chamber Chorus and Choir of the Sound, and has sung Mahler's *Songs of a Wayfarer* to accompany Rudolf Nureyev's dance. Mr. Box has collaborated with OSSCS in works ranging from the Bach Passions and *Christmas Oratorio* to world premieres by Huntley Beyer, and is featured on the OSSCS recording of Handel's *Messiah*. The regional winner of San Francisco Opera's 1988 Merola Opera Program, he made his Seattle Opera debut as the Corporal in Donizetti's *Daughter of the Regiment*. For Tacoma Opera, Mr. Box created the role of Franz in Carol Sams' *The Pied Piper of Hamelin*.

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Sunday, February 27, 2011 • 3:00 PM

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Wagner Overture to *The Flying Dutchman*

Liszt Piano Concerto No. 2

R. Kechley Bassoon Concerto

WORLD PREMIERE

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Sunday, March 13, 2011 • 3:00 PM

...featuring works for small ensembles

St. Matthew Passion

Palm Sunday, April 17, 2011 • 3:00 PM

Hans-Jürgen Schnoor, conductor

Wesley Rogers, Evangelist

J.S. Bach *St. Matthew Passion*

Season Finale

Sunday, May 15, 2011 • 3:00 PM

Darko Butorac, conductor

Ronald Patterson, violin

Verdi Choruses from *Nabucco*

Sams *Cantata to the Moon* WORLD PREMIERE

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