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# MESSIAH

## GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL



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Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 2:30 p.m.  
Cathedral of the Assumption

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# MESSIAH

By

## GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL

Sunday, December 18, 2011 at 2:30 p.m.

Cathedral of the Assumption

433 S. Fifth Street, Louisville, KY

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December 18, 2011

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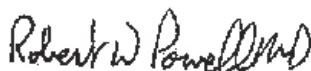
Welcome! On behalf of the Musicians and Board of the Louisville Master Chorale, we extend to you a very warm December greeting! We are thrilled that you have joined us this very special afternoon for our inaugural performance: George Frederick Handel's *Messiah*.

Since our formation last summer and through all the subsequent preparations for today, so many people have shown remarkable energy and enthusiasm. We expect that to continue right through today's performance and hope that you will experience it yourself.

We have every confidence that we are standing at the threshold of a bright, new chapter in Louisville's long and distinguished history of artistic excellence in choral music. To participate today, whether as a singer, player or audience member, in this place of beauty should be the spiritual experience Handel intended. We are honored to have had a role in bringing it to you. Thank you for being a part of it!



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## PRE-CONCERT LECTURE



The pre-concert lecture this afternoon will tell us the colorful story of how one of the most popular classical works of all time transformed from an eighteenth-century musical collage into the stuff of twenty-first century movies and flash mobs. Even if you think you know the history of Handel's Messiah, you won't want to miss this presentation that challenges us to reconsider how permanent—or not—a piece of music truly is. A husband-and-wife musicological duo, our speakers are Dr. Douglas Shadle, a lecturer in music history at

the University of Louisville, and Dr. Karen Shadle, the director of liturgical music for the Catholic Community of Jeffersonville. Plan now to join the Shadles prior to future concerts as they explore the fascinating character of our favorite choral works.



## PROGRAM NOTES

"I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God himself." — The words of George Frederick Handel, uttered as he was composing what is universally considered to be the greatest oratorio ever written, *Messiah*. There is no overstating its impact. Huge in scale, sublime in concept, unfaltering in its eloquence, *Messiah* is a work of musical majesty and spiritual nobility that has never been surpassed.

*Messiah* was composed over a period of less than a month – from August 22nd and September 14th, 1741 – and received its premiere in Dublin on April 13th, 1742. While Handel based his other oratorios on the Old Testament and themes from Jewish history, the *Messiah* text was largely drawn from the New Testament. It was compiled by Handel's friend and part-time poet, Charles Jennens, and relates in compressed form the story of the life of Christ. The late Handel scholar Jens Peter Larsen gave this succinct description of *Messiah*: "Messiah is not, as is often popularly supposed, a number of scenes from the Life of Jesus linked together to form a certain dramatic whole, but a representation of the fulfillment of Redemption through the Redeemer, Messiah. *Messiah* is divided into three Parts, the contents of which can be summarized as follows: 1.) The prophecy and realization of God's Plan to redeem mankind by the coming of the Messiah; 2.) The accomplishment of redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus, mankind's rejection of God's offer and mankind's utter defeat when trying to oppose the power of the Almighty; and 3.) A Hymn of Thanksgiving for the final overthrow of Death."

Having been composed in the incredibly short period of twenty-four days, during the writing of *Messiah* Handel was obviously never more inspired. While known during his lifetime as a "worldly" man, e.g., who can forget Berlioz's characterization of Handel as "a tub of pork and beer"? And never seen as a religious man in the same sense as Bach – by all accounts Handel was for over three weeks a man spiritually on fire. The stories go that over and over servants found him in tears and in a trance-like state as if under an uninterrupted spell. He did not leave his house, allowed no visitors to disturb him, left virtually all food brought to him untouched except for an occasional piece of bread, and shunned sleep so that it would not interrupt his furious creativity. Handel believed that he served as the vehicle through which God Himself wrote *Messiah*. The inspiration behind what has to be considered Handel's greatest masterpiece is truly remarkable.

Even those of different faiths cannot help but be moved by the composer's utter sincerity. Perhaps Handel put it best when he remarked to a Lord Kinnoul after a performance of *Messiah*: "My Lord, I should be sorry if I only entertained them; I wished to make them better." Paul McCreesh amplifies with these words: "Like any conductor, I can only hope that this *Messiah* will reflect something of my passion and respect for this awesome work. Many will no longer approach *Messiah* as a testament to the endurance of the Christian message, but believer and non-believer alike can recognize in *Messiah* one of the great triumphs of human endeavor. For that reason, this masterpiece is eminently capable of speaking confidently across the centuries from the Foundling Hospital in the 1750's (its first performance) into the new millennium [and beyond]."

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart prepared the version of *Messiah* with which many of you are most accustomed. After London audiences eventually made *Messiah* a tradition from 1750 on, Mozart probably heard the work as a young child from as early as eight years old. His father, Leopold, took

him to the English capital in 1764 to showcase his son's amazing precocity. A quarter of a century later, Mozart arranged Messiah for a premiere in Vienna in 1789. The purpose of the reworking was to update the music of "old-fashioned composers" (by late 18th-century standards) to the contemporary taste of Mozart's day. Just about all alterations involved orchestration changes to include the full instrumental complement of the Classical symphony orchestra; and harmonies were sometimes enriched and new instrumental lines included so that solo movements – arias – would balance better with what is essentially a chorus-dominated oratorio.

However, in recent decades, advances in musical scholarship and the implementation of the early music movement have led many to go for "authentic" performances of Messiah. But finding a single definitive version of Messiah is virtually impossible. There are a bewildering number of ostensibly original versions and who is to say which is the most authentic? Suffice it to say that the performance and version we will enjoy this afternoon is closer to what Handel's initial audiences would have experienced (and this is to take nothing away from Mozart's achievement). For this performance, the Louisville Master Chorale has chosen the Novello edition of Handel's Messiah, intended to be authentic to Handel's original manuscripts.

It has become customary in the U.S. and Great Britain to perform Messiah in December and, as a result, an inextricable connection to Christmas has been established. The first part of Messiah does declare the advent of the Messiah. Here the focus is on the meaning of Advent and Christmas, presenting the comfort and promise of God's plan for redemption, and centering on the story of the birth of Christ. However, the Second and Third parts of the oratorio deal with the drama of Christ's sacrifice and thus become the focus of the work. In this sense then, "Messiah" is as much appropriate for Easter as for Christmas. This afternoon Louisville Master Chorale will be performing Parts I and II.

The theme of the Second part of Messiah is the victory of Christ over sin and the perpetuation of His kingdom on earth. The culmination of Part II is the exhilarating and rejoicing "Hallelujah Chorus," without question the most celebrated and popular chorus ever written. On composing it, Handel said: "Whether I was in my body or out of my body as I wrote it I know not. God knows." On hearing it, Haydn declared, "He is the master of us all." Regarding the custom of standing during the "Hallelujah Chorus," Messiah scholar Donald Burrows questions whether King George II, who presumably led the audience to rise, ever attended a Messiah performance! Regardless of what prompted the custom, its endurance certainly attests to the majesty and grandness of the music.

From its complete musical mastery to its journey taking us from compassion and pathos to serenity, spirituality, and ecstatic joy, Handel's Messiah is unequalled. As a critic wrote after its first performance to a packed house in Dublin in 1742: "Words are wanting to express the exquisite delight it afforded to the admiring crowded audience. The sublime, the grand, and the tender, adapted to the most elevated majestic and moving words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished heart and ear."

- Program notes by David Glerum

# MESSIAH

## 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 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.

#### ARIA

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

#### 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.

#### RECITATIVE (Bass)

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.

#### ARIA

But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

#### CHORUS

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

#### RECITATIVE (Alto)

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

#### ARIA & 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.

#### RECITATIVE (BASS)

For Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise 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.

## **ARIA**

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.

## **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.

## **PASTORAL SYMPHONY**

### **RECITATIVE (Soprano)**

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.

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.

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

## **CHORUS**

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

### **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.

### **RECITATIVE (Alto)**

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.

### **ARIA (Alto & Soprano)**

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.

## **CHORUS**

His yoke is easy and His burthen is light.

# INTERVAL (15 minutes)

## PART II

### CHORUS

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

### 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.

### 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.

### ARIA

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

### CHORUS

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

### RECITATIVE (Tenor)

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

### ARIA

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

### 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 this King of Glory shall come in. Who is the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

### ARIA (Bass)

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

### CHORUS

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

### ARIA (Soprano)

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

## **CHORUS**

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

## **ARIA (Bass)**

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.

## **CHORUS**

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

## **RECITATIVE (Tenor)**

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

## **ARIA (Tenor)**

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

## **CHORUS**

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world has 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!

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Sunday, March 18, 2012 at 2:30 p.m. at the Cathedral of the Assumption

**MOZART:** *Coronation Mass / No 15, KV 317*

**HANDEL:** *Organ Concerto Op. 4, No. 2*  
Organist: Philip Brisson

**LAURIDSEN:** *Lux Aeterna*

## ARTISTIC LEADERSHIP



**MARK WALKER**, Louisville Master Chorale's Conductor and Artistic Director, has extensive experience in Choral Conducting, Organ Performance, Choral Music Education, and Liturgical Church Music. He currently serves as Director of Music and Organist at historic St. Martin of Tours Catholic Church in Louisville, Kentucky, where he oversees a very vibrant and busy liturgical music program. He has served parishes in Kentucky, Tennessee, Texas, and North Carolina and he has taught in schools in Kentucky and North Carolina. Mark most recently served as Assistant Conductor for the Louisville Bach Society. Walker has a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Western Kentucky University and a Master's Degree in Organ Performance from East Carolina University.

His conducting experience with extended choral-orchestral works includes the works of Bach, Handel, Mozart, Vivaldi, Pergolesi and contemporary composers Rutter and Lauridsen. As an organ recitalist, Walker has performed extensively throughout the Eastern and Southern U.S. He currently serves regularly as conductor and organist for various Diocesan events in Louisville, and during the summer of 2011 served as both choral conductor and guest organ recitalist for the National Associations of Pastoral Musicians Conference. He currently serves as Dean of the Louisville Chapter of the American Guild of Organists.



**PHILIP BRISSON**, Louisville Master Chorale's Associate and Accompanist, is Director of Music and Organist at the Cathedral of the Assumption in downtown Louisville, the oldest inland Catholic cathedral in continuous use in the country. In addition to leading the Cathedral's traditional worship, he manages the Cathedral's Kelty Endowed Concert Series and has led the Cathedral Choirs in this country and on concert tours in Europe. Prior to his work with the LMC, he was Chorusmaster for the Kentucky Opera and prepared choruses for performances of works ranging from Verdi to Tchaikovsky. As a teacher, he has served on the faculties of Bellarmine University and Indiana University Southeast. Brisson has a BM in Organ Performance from the Aaron Copland School of Music at Queens College, CUNY, a Master's Degree in Sacred Music at Westminster and a Doctorate in Organ Performance from the Eastman School of Music.

As an organ soloist, he has given recitals in 23 states and has appeared with the Louisville Orchestra as guest soloist. Brisson is active in the American Guild of Organists and also founded the concert artist cooperative [EastWestOrganists.com](http://EastWestOrganists.com), which represents several prominent young American organists.



**JACK GRIFFIN** is Concertmaster with the Louisville Master Chorale. He has held the Principal Viola position with the Louisville Orchestra since 1984, having joined the Orchestra during high school. He received his Bachelor's Degrees from the University of Louisville and has also studied at The Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music and Indiana University.

Griffin also owns Commonwealth Musicians which provides ensembles such as string quartets, jazz ensembles and other musicians for events such as weddings and corporate events.

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## MISSION

The mission of the Louisville Master Chorale is:

- To enrich our community through the performance of outstanding choral music from varied traditions.
- To reward audiences with choral programs that elevate, provoke, educate, and entertain.
- To inspire excellence in performance by welcoming challenge, discovery, and diversity.
- To enthusiastically support and promote the performing arts in the greater Louisville community at large.

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## **SOLOISTS**



**SELENA WALKER**, *soprano*, has sung with orchestras in Florida, Kentucky, and North Carolina with solo work including Handel's *Messiah*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Mass in C Minor*, and Rutter's *Requiem*. For ten years she has served as the voice model for the Kentucky All-State Children's Chorus. She holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Music Education from Western Kentucky University. She has also served as a choir director, arts and humanities instructor, and general music teacher in both the Kentucky and North Carolina public school systems.



**MARY ELIZABETH OLLIGES**, *mezzo-soprano*, has sung with the Kentucky Opera, and a number of local choruses, including the Louisville Orchestra MasterWorks Chorale, SBTS Oratorio Chorus, and Louisville Bach Society. Her theatrical experience includes performing with Music Theatre Louisville, CenterStage, Mummers and Minstrels, Little Colonel Playhouse. She has a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Bellarmine University and graduate work at the University of Louisville. She also serves as musical director, choreographer, and assistant director for the musicals and plays at Bethlehem High School in Bardstown.



**AARON LUNDY**, *tenor*, has performed throughout the United States and toured throughout Italy, Ireland, Wales and England. He has performed roles in Verdi's *Falstaff* and Britten's *Turn of the Screw*, as well as Bach's comical *Coffee Cantata*. His solo concert work includes Mozart's "Requiem" at St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna. His Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance is from Murray State University and his Masters of Music is from the Eastman School of Music. He is on the faculty at Indiana University South East.



**ALEXANDER REDDEN**, *baritone*, is a veteran soloist in and around the greater Louisville area. He has been featured as a soloist with the Louisville Bach Society, Kentucky Opera, Louisville Vocal Project, Louisville Chorus, Louisville Youth Choir, Bellarmine University, the Youth Performing Arts School Choirs, Calvary Episcopal Church and the Stephen Foster Story. He toured Italy with the Louisville Vocal Project, performing concerts in many historic venues including St Peter's Basilica in the Vatican. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Music from Western Kentucky University.

## **FOUNDERS**

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Director of Music & Organist, Cathedral of the Assumption

**Colin Andrews** February 10

Adjunct Professor of Organ, Indiana University

**Kui-Im Lee** March 9

Associate Professor of Organ, University of Northern Iowa

**Samuel Porter** April 27

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