



 victoria @10
baroque

GEORGE FRIDERIC HANDEL

MESSIAH PARTS 2 & 3

EASTER



CHURCH OF ST JOHN THE DIVINE
MARCH 31, 2021 AT 7:30 PM



WE GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THAT WE MAKE
THIS MUSIC ON THE TRADITIONAL TERRITORIES
OF THE LEKWUNGEN-SPEAKING PEOPLE

GENEROUSLY SUPPORTED BY



Performers

SOLOISTS

Jennifer Turner, soprano
Deanna Sills, mezzo soprano *
Isaiah Bell, tenor
Nathan McDonald, bass
Char Hodgins, soprano 2 in "Lift up your heads"

VICTORIA BAROQUE

†Christi Meyers, violin/leader Mieka Michaux, viola‡
Kathryn Wiebe, violin Amy Laing, cello
Elyssa Lefurgey-Smith, violin David Michaux, trumpet
Tyson Doknjias, violin David Stratkauskas, harpsichord & organ

sponsored by: * Harald and Sharon Krebs, in memory of Klara Krebs and Harry Lutzer
†anonymous donors ‡Keith Gladstone

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Co-presented by Victoria Baroque, Cowichan Symphony
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VICTORIA BAROQUE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR: SOILE STRATKAUSKAS

Now in its tenth season, Victoria Baroque brings together early music specialists from Vancouver Island and beyond. The ensemble's repertoire ranges through chamber, orchestral, vocal, and choral works from the Baroque and Classical periods. Guest performances have included Early Music Vancouver, Early Music Society of the Islands, Cowichan Symphony Society, and ArtSpring. Past guest directors and soloists have included Tafelmusik's Jeanne Lamon; leader of the English Baroque Soloists, Kati Debretzeni; British harpsichordist Steven Devine; Pacific Opera Victoria's Timothy Vernon; and soprano Nancy Argenta. Victoria Baroque's debut CD, *Virtuosi*

of the Baroque on Marquis Classics, was nominated for a Western Canadian Music Award in 2014. In summer 2020 Victoria Baroque partnered with violinist Chloe Kim, the Early Music Society of the Islands, Christ Church Cathedral Victoria, and Early Music Vancouver in presenting a highly popular online concert series, Music for the Pause. Victoria Baroque is passionate about outreach and engaging with emerging young talent through community workshops, school concerts, and collaborations with the University of Victoria School of Music, Victoria Conservatory of Music, and the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra.

Messiah

PART TWO

Chorus

Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. (John 1: 29)

Air (Alto)

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off His hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting. (Isaiah 50: 3, 6)

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. And with His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. (Isaiah 53: 4–6)

Accompagnato (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)

Air (Tenor)

Behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto His sorrow. (Lamentations 1: 12)

Accompagnato (Tenor)

He was cut off out of the land of the living: for the transgressions of Thy people was He stricken. (Isaiah 53: 8)

Air (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)

Air (Soprano)

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things. (Isaiah 52: 7; Romans 10: 15)

Air (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. (Psalm 2: 1–2)

Recitative (Tenor)

*He that dwelleth in Heav'n shall laugh them to scorn;
The Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2: 4)*

Air (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, 16; 11: 15)

PART THREE

Air (Soprano)

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God. For now is Christ risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep. (Job 19: 25–26, 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)*

Accompagnato (Bass)

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. (1 Corinthians 15: 51–52)

Air (Bass)

*The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.
(1 Corinthians 15:52)*

Air (Soprano)

If God be for us, who can be against us? 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 8:31, 33–34)

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 power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever. (Revelation 5:12–14)
Amen.*

Programme Notes

First performed in 1742 in Dublin, *Messiah* is one of the very few pieces from the Baroque Era to have remained as a popular staple in the concert repertoire ever since. The text was compiled by Charles Jennens, whom was also the librettist for several of Handel's oratorios. Unlike Handel's other oratorios, *Messiah* does not have characters or a narrative drama. The text, derived from the Old and New Testaments, could be described as commentary and meditation around the very idea of the Messiah.

Parts Two and Three of *Messiah* include excerpts from several Old Testament prophecies and the Psalms, and Paul's letters from the New Testament. Whereas Part 1 focused on the prophecies around the arrival of the Messiah and finished with the jubilant birth of the Christ, Part 2 begins with the drama and tragedy around Christ's Passion. The suffering is turned around with the tenor recitative "But thou didst not leave his soul in hell" followed by the chorus "Lift up your heads," acclaiming Christ's resurrection and ascension. The rest of the oratorio meditates on the themes of Gospel preaching ("How beautiful are the feet") and the world's rejection of the Gospel ("Why do the nations so furiously rage together?"), God's ultimate victory (the Hallelujah Chorus), the promise of eternal life ("I know that my Redeemer liveth"; "Since by man came death"), the day of judgement ("The trumpet shall sound"), the final conquest of sin ("If God be for us"), and the acclamation of the Messiah ("Worthy is the Lamb").

Due to the current restraints around the pandemic, this production is performed by smaller-than-usual forces: just one person per part. This gives us the opportunity to explore Handel's

masterwork in a uniquely intimate, nimble, and transparent manner. As was common in *Messiah* performances in Handel's time, we have taken the liberty of cutting a few numbers. Today, Handel's *Messiah* is typically considered a Christmas piece; however, in Handel's time the oratorio was traditionally performed around Easter and was associated with the Easter season.

Soile Stratkauskas



Biographies

JENNIFER TURNER – SOPRANO

Jennifer is a soprano known for her expressive singing and ringing tone. Her warm and engaging presence has captivated audiences on operatic and concert stages alike. She has been fortunate to work as a soloist with musical organizations throughout Canada including Pacific Opera Victoria, Manitoba Underground Opera, the Linden Singers, the Victoria Civic Orchestra, the Victoria Philharmonic Choir, the Sooke Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Okanagan Festival Singers. Concert repertoire includes Bach's *Magnificat*, Mozart's *Requiem* and *Coronation Mass*, Haydn's *Creation*, Handel's *Messiah* and *Judas Maccabeus*, Vivaldi's *Gloria* and Fauré's *Requiem*.

Jennifer sang the role of Donna/Siren in Handel's *Rinaldo* with Pacific Opera Victoria. She also received extensive operatic training through the Victoria Conservatory of Music Opera Studio including the role of Fiordiligi in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* under the stage direction of Glynis Leyshon and Maestro Giuseppe Pietrarora, and the role of Countess in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* with stage director Julie McIsaac and Maestro Timothy Vernon.

Jennifer holds a M.Mus. from the University of Manitoba where she studied with Tracy Dahl and a Diploma in Music Performance from the Victoria Conservatory of Music where she studied with Ingrid Attrot and Nancy Argenta.

DEANNA SILLS – MEZZO SOPRANO

Deanna Sills has a Bachelor's Degree in Voice Performance from the University of Victoria, where she studied with Susan Young. Over the years, she has performed in the chorus of several Pacific Opera productions and with the Victoria Gilbert & Sullivan Society. Currently studying voice with Ingrid Attrot at the Victoria Conservatory of Music, Ms. Sills has taken part in several of the VCM's programs in the recent past including the Vaughan Williams and Mahler Song Projects (under the direction of Kathryn Whitney and Anna Cal), the 2018 Summer Baroque Adult Soloist program and as a featured student in the VCM's annual Spark to Flame concert in February 2020.



ISAIAH BELL – TENOR

Isaiah Bell is a tenor, a composer, and a writer of prose and poetry. This season he combines these disciplines in his critically acclaimed solo show, *The Book of My Shames*, which will be performed in Victoria as part of a Canadian tour in early 2021. He also stars in his own new translation/adaptation of Poulenc's *La voix humaine*, in a digital production with City Opera Vancouver.

Last season Isaiah appeared with Vancouver Opera (*Almaviva*, *The Barber of Seville*), the Toronto Symphony (*Messiah*), and the Bethlehem Bach Festival. Some of his COVID postponements included a return to Carnegie Hall to premiere a new oratorio, and to Opera Atelier for Handel's *The Resurrection*. He was also scheduled to present Schubert's *Schwanengesang* for the Société d'art vocal de Montréal, and to stage direct *Dido and Aeneas* at Opera NUOVA.

Previously, Isaiah created the role of Antinous in the world premiere of Rufus Wainwright's *Hadrian* at the Canadian Opera Company, and his interpretation of the Madwoman in Mark Morris' *Curlew River / Dido and Aeneas* double-bill was described as "a performance of exquisite poignancy" by the *The New York Times*.



Photo Credit: Chelsea Brooke Roisum

NATHAN MCDONALD – BARITONE

Praised for his "Rich Tone" (*Coastal Spectator*), baritone Nathan McDonald commands a repertoire spanning centuries, from renaissance polyphony to modern Opera and Musical Theatre.

Active as an oratorio singer, Nathan has appeared with numerous Western Canadian ensembles including the Pacific Baroque Orchestra, Cowichan Consort, and Vox Humana Chamber Choir. Some recent highlights include: Bach's *Christmas Oratorio* with the Okanagan Festival Singers; Handel's *Messiah* with the Civic Orchestra of Victoria and Sooke Philharmonic; and Handel's *Apollo e Dafne* with Victoria Baroque and Steven Devine.

On the operatic stage, Nathan has interpreted such roles as Marcello (*La Bohème* – Puccini), Dandini (*La Cenerentola* – Rossini), Il conte (*Le nozze di Figaro* – Mozart), and Don Alfonso (*Così fan tutte* – Mozart). He has presented recitals in Canada and the United States, and has sung professionally in choirs on 4 continents. During the pandemic, Nathan has been especially focused on his teaching activities, and appreciating the opportunity to spend extra time with his two young children. Nathan is a member of the Voice Faculties at the Victoria Conservatory of Music and the Canadian College of Performing Arts.



CHRISTI MEYERS – VIOLIN/LEADER

Christi Meyers has played a prominent role in the musical life of Victoria for over 15 years. She is the Assistant Concertmaster of the Victoria Symphony, a founding member of Victoria Baroque and the Odyssey String Quartet. She performs frequently with the Vancouver Symphony, Pacific Baroque Orchestra, and Early Music Vancouver and has been a leader or member of Sinfonia Rotterdam (NL), European Camerata (UK), and the Vancouver Opera Orchestra. A dedicated educator, Christi was for several years on faculty at UVic. She currently maintains a small private studio, is on faculty at the Victoria Conservatory, and coaches the violins of the Greater Victoria Youth Orchestra. She has recorded chamber music for CBC television and radio and can be heard on several discs for ATMA and Marquis. Born in Montreal and raised in Grande Prairie, Alberta, Christi studied at McGill, Western, UVic and the Vancouver Academy of Music under the tutelage of Gwen Thompson, Sonia Jelinkova and Paul Kling.



Photo Credit: K. Goodwin

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