

December 21-22, 2024

Mezzo-soprano Emily D'Angelo has regrettably withdrawn from these performances of Handel's *Messiah* due to illness. The Philadelphia Orchestra is extremely grateful to mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke for agreeing to step in on short notice.

Two-time GRAMMY Award-winning mezzo-soprano Sasha Cooke has sung at the Metropolitan Opera. San Francisco Opera. English National Opera, Seattle Opera, the Opéra National de Bordeaux, and the Gran Teatre del Liceu, among others, and with over 80 symphony orchestras worldwide. Recent and upcoming highlights include her debut at La Monnaie in Brussels as Emilie Ekdahl in the world premiere of Mikael Karlsson's Fanny and Alexander. Marguerite in Berlioz's The Damnation of Faust at the Bard Festival, Brangane in Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* at the Gstaad Festival, Venus in Wagner's *Tannhäuser* at Houston Grand Opera, and appearances with the Vienna, San Francisco, and St. Louis symphonies; the Los Angeles and Oslo philharmonics; and London's Philharmonia, among others. In recital, she returns to Wigmore Hall and Carnegie Hall. Her recordings can be found on the Hyperion, BIS, Chandos, Pentatone, Naxos, Bridge Records, Yarlung, GPR Records, and Sono Luminus labels. Ms. Cooke is a graduate of Rice University and the Juilliard School. She also attended the Music Academy of the West, the Aspen Music Festival, the Ravinia Festival's Steans Music Institute, the Wolf Trap Foundation, the Marlboro Music Festival, the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Development Program, and Seattle Opera and Central City Opera's Young Artist Training Programs. She made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2013.

2024–2025 | 125th Season Marian Anderson Hall

The Philadelphia Orchestra

Saturday, December 21, at 7:00 Sunday, December 22, at 2:00

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Conductor Lucy Crowe Soprano Emily D'Angelo Mezzo-Soprano Spencer Britten Tenor Christian Van Horn Bass-Baritone Avi Stein Harpsichord Philadelphia Symphonic Choir Joe Miller Director

Handel Messiah

Part I

Overture

Tenor Accompagnato: "Comfort ye my people"

Tenor Air: "Ev'ry valley shall be exalted" Chorus: "And the glory of the Lord"

Bass Accompagnato: "Thus saith the Lord of Hosts" Alto Air: "But who may abide the day of His comina?"

Chorus: "And He shall purify"

Alto Recitative: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive"

Alto Air and Chorus: "O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion" Bass Accompagnato: "For behold, darkness shall cover the earth"

Bass Air: "The people that walked in darkness"

Chorus: "For unto us a Child is born"

Pastoral Symphony

Soprano Recitative: "There were shepherds abiding in the field"

Soprano Accompagnato: "And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them"

Soprano Recitative: "And the angel said unto them"

Soprano Accompagnato: "And suddenly there was with the angel"

Chorus: "Glory to God in the highest"

Soprano Air: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion"

Alto Recitative: "Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd"

Alto and Soprano Duet: "He shall feed His flock"

Chorus: "His yoke is easy"

Intermission

Part II

Chorus: "Behold the Lamb of God"

Alto 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"

Tenor Accompagnato: "All they that see Him, laugh Him to scorn"

Chorus: "He trusted in God"

Tenor Accompagnato: "Thy rebuke hath broken His heart" Tenor Arioso: "Behold, and see if there be any sorrow"

Tenor Accompagnato: "He was cut off out of the land of the living"

Tenor Air: "But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell"

Chorus: "Lift up your heads, o ye gates"

Tenor Recitative: "Unto which of the angels said He at any time"

Chorus: "Let all the angels of God worship Him"

Alto Air: "Thou art gone up on high" Chorus: "The Lord gave the word" Soprano Air: "How beautiful are the feet" Chorus: "Their sound is gone out into all lands"

Bass Air: "Why do the nations so furiously rage together?"

Chorus: "Let us break their bonds asunder"
Tenor Recitative: "He that dwelleth in heaven"
Tenor Air: "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron"

Chorus: "Halleluiah"

Part III

Soprano Air: "I know that my Redeemer liveth"

Chorus: "Since by man came death"

Bass Accompagnato: "Behold, I tell you a mystery"

Bass Air: "The trumpet shall sound"

Esteban Batallán, trumpet

Soprano Air: "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

Chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain"

Christoph Gauthier, portative organ; Hai-Ye Ni, cello; Joseph Conyers, bass

This program runs approximately 2 hours, 30 minutes.

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Spotlight Series

The Philadelphia Orchestra

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The Philadelphia Orchestra

The world-renowned Philadelphia Orchestra strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust education initiatives. a commitment to its diverse communities. and the embrace of digital outreach, the ensemble is creating an expansive and inclusive future for classical music and furthering the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. In June 2021 the Orchestra and its home, the Kimmel Center, united. Today, The Philadelphia Orchestra and Ensemble Arts brings the greatest performances and most impactful education and community programs to audiences in Philadelphia and beyond.

Yannick Nézet-Séguin is now in his 13th season with The Philadelphia Orchestra, serving as music and artistic director. His connection to the ensemble's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics, and he is embraced by the musicians of the Orchestra, audiences, and the community. In addition to expanding the repertoire by embracing an ever-growing and diverse group of today's composers, Yannick and the Orchestra are committed to performing and recording the works of previously overlooked composers.

Your Philadelphia Orchestra takes great pride in its hometown, performing for the people of Philadelphia year-round, at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts and around the community, in classrooms and hospitals, and over the airwaves and online. The Kimmel Center has been the ensemble's

home since 2001, and in 2024 Verizon Hall at the Kimmel Center was officially rededicated as Marian Anderson Hall in honor of the legendary contralto, civil rights icon, and Philadelphian. The Orchestra's award-winning education and community initiatives engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members of all ages through programs such as PlayINs; side-by-sides: PopUP concerts: Our City. Your Orchestra Live; the free annual Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert; School Concerts; sensory-friendly concerts; open rehearsals; the School Partnership Program and School Ensemble Program; All-City Orchestra Fellowships; and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global ambassador and one of our nation's greatest exports. It performs annually at Carnegie Hall, the Mann Center, the Saratoga Performing Arts Center, and the Bravo! Vail Music Festival. The Orchestra also has a rich touring history, having first performed outside Philadelphia in its earliest days. In 1973 it was the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, launching a now-five-decade commitment of people-to-people exchange.

Under Yannick's leadership, the Orchestra returned to recording with 14 celebrated releases on the Deutsche Grammophon label, including the GRAMMY® Award—winning Florence Price Symphonies Nos. 1 & 3. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of radio listeners with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM. For more information, please visit www.philorch.org.

ThePhiladelphiaOrchestra



Soprano **Lucy Crowe** made her Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2011. Born in Staffordshire, England, she studied at the Royal Academy of Music, where she is a fellow. Widely regarded as one of the most versatile and accomplished singers of her generation, she was made an OBE in the 2023 King's Birthday Honours. With repertoire ranging from Purcell, Handel, and Mozart to Donizetti's Adina, Verdi's Gilda, and Janáček's Vixen, she has sung with opera companies

throughout the world, including the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden; the Glyndebourne Festival; English National Opera; the Teatro Real Madrid; the Deutsche Oper Berlin; the Bavarian State Opera; and the Metropolitan Opera. Recent opera highlights include Musetta in Puccini's *La bohème* and Poppea in Handel's *Agrippina* at the Royal Opera House, Susanna in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the Met, and Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* at the Liceu in Barcelona.

Globally renowned for her interpretations of Handel's heroines, Ms. Crowe sang the title role of *Rodelinda* with the English Concert and Harry Bicket last season on tour to Asia and the United States, culminating in a concert at Carnegie Hall. Having sung staged performances of *Rodelinda* in Madrid, Frankfurt, and Amsterdam, she will revive the roll at the Garsington Festival in 2025. Elsewhere, she sang Haydn and Weber arias with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe and Maxim Emelyanychev, Mendelssohn's "Lobgesang" Symphony with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and András Schiff, and made her role debut as Tytania in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Garsington Festival. This season she makes her role debut as Malinka/Etherea/Kunka in Janáček's *The Excursions of Mr. Brouček* at the Berlin State Opera and in concert with the London Symphony (LSO) and Simon Rattle, and will sing Mozart arias with the San Francisco Symphony and Bernard Labadie and Brahms's Requiem with the Bavarian Radio Orchestra and Mr. Rattle.

Ms. Crowe has appeared at Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Carnegie Hall, and the Aldeburgh, Edinburgh, Mostly Mozart, and Salzburg festivals. She is a regular guest at the BBC Proms and Wigmore Hall where, in a special focus this season, she makes six appearances. Her recordings include Mendelssohn's "Lobgesang" with the LSO and John Eliot Gardiner; Handel's *Il pastor fido* and *Handel & Vivaldi* with La Nuova Musica and David Bates for Harmonia Mundi; and works by Lutosławski with the BBC Symphony and Edward Gardner. She received a GRAMMY nomination in 2021 for Best Opera Recording for Janáček's *The Cunning Little Vixen* with the LSO and Mr. Rattle.



Mezzo-soprano **Emily D'Angelo** makes her Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. The first and only vocalist to have been presented with the Leonard Bernstein Award from the Schleswig Holstein Festival, she is a 2020 Lincoln Center Emerging Artist, one of Canada's "Top 30 Under 30" Classical Musicians, and a WQXR NYC Public Radio "40 Under 40" singer to watch. She made her professional operatic debut at age 21 as Cherubino in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at the

Spoleto Festival dei Due Mondi; for this performance, broadcast nationwide on Italy's RAI network, she was awarded the 2016 Monini Prize.

In addition to these current performances, highlights of Ms. D'Angelo's 2024–25 season include the leading role of Jess in the Metropolitan Opera premiere of two-time Tony Award—winning composer Jeanine Tesori's opera *Grounded*, a role she created in the world premiere with Washington National Opera. She returns to the Berlin State Opera for her role debut of Octavian in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, a role she reprises at the Vienna State Opera later in the season. Also in Berlin she sings Idamante in Mozart's *Idomeneo*. At the Vienna State Opera she revives Donna Elvira in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and Dorabella in Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. She returns to the role of Cherubino twice: at the Bavarian State Opera and at the Met. A sought-after concert performer, Ms. D'Angelo stars at the annual Advent concert of the ZDF, German national television, with the Staatskapelle Dresden under the baton of Riccardo Minasi; returns to her native Canada to perform Handel's *Messiah* with the Orchestre Métropolitain under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin; and joins the Berlin Radio Symphony and Vladimir Jurowski for the New Year concerts of Beethoven's Symphony No. 9.

Born in Toronto, Ms. D'Angelo was a member of the Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist Program, where her roles included Sister Mathilde in Poulenc's *Dialogues of the Carmelites* conducted by Nézet-Séguin. She is a Deutsche Grammophon exclusive recording artist. Her latest recording, *freezing*, features music by Dowland, Purcell, Kodály, Philip Glass, Randy Newman, and Tesori, among others. The album comprises 17 songs drawn from the folk tradition, art song, and beyond. Her debut album, *energeia*, presents music from the 12th and 21st centuries by Hildegard von Bingen, Hildur Guðnadóttir, Missy Mazzoli, and Sarah Kirkland Snider. It was named one of the 50 best albums of 2021 by NPR and the best Canadian classical album of 2021 by the CBC, was featured on NPR's 100 best songs of 2021, and received JUNO and *Gramophone* awards in 2022



Chinese-Canadian tenor **Spencer Britten** makes his Philadelphia Orchestra debut with these performances. A former member of the International Opera Studio at the Berlin State Opera, his roles included Janke Prus in a new production of Janáček's *The Makropulos Case*, First Priest in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*, Faninal's Majordomo in Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*, Silango in Gluck's *Le cinesi*, Kalil in Christian Jost's *The Arabian Night*, Postillione in Puccini's *The Girl of the Golden West*. Officer

in Strauss's Ariadne auf Naxos, and Borsa in Verdi's Rigoletto. He also recently made his house and role debut at the Bregenz Festival in Austria as Lindoro in Rossini's The Italian Girl in Algiers. Following a summer covering Don Ottavio in Mozart's Don Giovanni at the Glyndebourne Festival, his 2023–24 season included a debut at the Hungarian State Opera in The Italian Girl in Algiers, a cover of Tonio in Donizetti's The Daughter of the Regiment, Handel's Messiah with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and the Orchestre Métropolitain at the Notre Dame Basilica in Montreal, and a house and role debut as Pepe/Official in Opera Southwest's production of Jorge Martín-Buján's Before Night Falls. In addition to these current performances, highlights of the 2024–25 season include Messiah with the Vancouver Bach Choir and Leslie Dala.

Mr. Britten spent two seasons with the Glimmerglass Festival, where he performed both musical theater and operatic repertoire including productions of Kern's Show Boat (Beau/Dealer/Dancer), Rossini's The Barber of Seville (Count Almaviva cover), Kevin Puts's Silent Night (French Soldier No. 2), and Bernstein's Trouble in Tahiti (solo trio). He also played the role of Gee-Tar in Bernstein's West Side Story, set by Julio Monge to the original Jerome Robbins choreography, and was selected as one of several cast members to continue with the production at the Lyric Opera of Kansas City and Atlanta Opera. He has performed as tenor soloist with the Choeur Metropolitain in Montreal, collaborating with conductors François A. Ouimet, Pierre Tourville, and Nézet-Séguin in Benjamin Britten's Rejoice in the Lamb and Dvořák's Mass in D major.

Mr. Britten was recently a finalist in the Opera Crown Tbilisi International Voice Competition and the Edmonton Opera Rumbold Vocal Prize. He has received career development grants from the Jacqueline Desmarais Foundation for Young Canadian Opera Singers and the Vancouver Opera Guild. He was a semi-finalist in the Paris Opera Competition and a final rounds singer at the Neue Stimmen international vocal competition. He was also a member of L'Atelier Lyrique de l'Opéra de Montréal.



Bass-baritone **Christian Van Horn** made his Philadelphia Orchestra debut in 2021 and most recently appeared with the ensemble in June 2024 as Colline in Puccini's *La bohème*, a role he has also performed at the Metropolitan Opera. He has appeared in many of the great opera houses of the world including the Lyric Opera of Chicago, San Francisco Opera, Santa Fe Opera, Los Angeles Opera, the Canadian Opera Company, Paris Opera, the Bavarian State Opera, Rome

Opera, Stuttgart Opera, the Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Netherlands Opera. He has also appeared at the Salzburg and Munich festivals. Recent performance highlights include Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* with the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin at Carnegie Hall; his debut at the Vienna State Opera in the title role of Mozart's *Don Giovanni*; and returns to the Paris Opera in Offenbach's *The Tales of Hoffman*, the Bavarian State Opera in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Philadelphia Opera in Verdi's *Simon Boccanegra*, the Lyric Opera of Chicago as Silva in Verdi's *Ernani*, and the Metropolitan Opera as Oroveso in Bellini's *Norma* and Ramfis in Verdi's *Aida*

Mr. Van Horn's operatic roles also include the title roles in Boito's Mefistofele and Mozart's The Marriage of Figaro, Nick Shadow in Stravinsky's The Rake's Progress, Méphistophélès in Gounod's Faust, Claggart in Britten's Billy Budd, Escamillo in Bizet's Carmen, Enrico in Donizetti's Anna Bolena, Alidoro in Rossini's La Cenerentola, Timur in Puccini's Turandot, Banquo in Verdi's Macbeth, Narbal in Berlioz's Les Troyens, Zaccaria in Verdi's Nabucco, Gessler in Rossini's William Tell, and Frère Laurent in Gounod's Romeo and Juliet. He also appeared in the world premieres of Tan Dun's Tea: A Mirror of the Soul at Santa Fe Opera and Marco Tutino's Two Women at San Francisco Opera and in the American premiere of Thomas Adès's The Exterminating Angel at the Metropolitan Opera. In concert he has appeared with the Cleveland and Royal Concertgebouw orchestras, the New York and Berlin philharmonics, and the Chicago, San Francisco, and Melbourne symphonies.

Mr. Van Horn has recorded the title role of *The Marriage of Figaro* for SONY Classical and appeared in the Metropolitan Opera's HD broadcasts of Verdi's *Falstaff* and *The Exterminating Angel*. He is the 2018 Winner of the Richard Tucker Award and a 2003 winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions. He received his master's degree in music from Yale University and is a graduate of the Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Opera Center at the Lyric Opera of Chicago.

Harpsichord



Avi Stein is the organist and chorusmaster at Trinity Church in New York and on the faculty at the Juilliard School, where he teaches continuo accompaniment, vocal repertoire, and chamber music. He is artistic director of the Helicon Foundation and has directed the International Baroque Academy of Musiktheater Bavaria and the young artists's program at the Carmel Bach Festival. He has conducted a variety of ensembles including Tafelmusik, the Portland (OR)

Baroque Orchestra, the Bang on a Can All-Stars, and the Opéra Français de New York. He conducted Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas* at Juilliard in a production that toured to London and the Royal Opera at the Palace of Versailles. A recent production at Juilliard, Luigi Rossi's *Orfeo*, was named one of the *New York Times*'s best performances of 2021. The *New York Times* described Mr. Stein as "a brilliant organ soloist" in his Carnegie Hall debut and he performed on the GRAMMY Award—winning recording for best opera by the Boston Early Music Festival.

Choir



The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir made its debut in December 2016, performing in three programs with The Philadelphia Orchestra that season. Consisting of talented vocalists auditioned from around the country, the ensemble was created to marry gifted and unique voices of Philadelphia and beyond with the legendary Philadelphia Sound. Performance highlights with the Orchestra include the world premiere of the concert version of Kevin Puts's opera *The Hours* and Beethoven's

Missa solemnis in Philadelphia and at Carnegie Hall. The ensemble has also sung in performances of Haydn's *The Seasons*, Puccini's *Tosca*, Bernstein's Symphony No. 3 ("Kaddish"), Rossini's Stabat Mater, Bruckner's "Christus factus est" and Te Deum, Brahms's A German Requiem, and Mozart's Requiem, as well as holiday performances of Menotti's Amahl and the Night Visitors and multiple season performances of Handel's Messiah.

The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir is directed by Joe Miller, professor of conducting and director of choral studies at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM). He is also artistic director of choral activities for the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina. He has served as conductor of the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir since 2016 and made his conducting debut with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2021 leading *Messiah*. Featured concerts in the 2024–25 CCM season include touring with the CCM Chamber Choir with Bach's "Singet dem Herrn," Mahler's Symphony No. 2 ("Resurrection"), Brahms's *A German Requiem*, and a residency with renowned Latvian composer Ēriks Ešenvalds. He closes the season with new works and projects for the Spoleto Festival USA.

The Philadelphia Symphonic Choir joined The Philadelphia Orchestra earlier this season for performances of Mahler's Symphony No. 3 with Yannick Nézet-Séguin and Verdi's Requiem with Riccardo Muti. The choir returns later this season for Holst's *The Planets* with Daniele Rustioni, as well as Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde* with Yannick Nézet-Séguin. Last season marked the premiere of the film *Maestro*, a collaboration with Bradley Cooper and Netflix featuring the Philadelphia Symphonic Choir and the music of Leonard Bernstein. The movie received a Best Picture nomination for the Academy Awards. Music from the film has been released on Deutsche Grammophon. The American Guild of Musical Artists, AFL-CIO, the union of professional singers, dancers, and production personnel in opera, ballet, and concert, represents the choral artists in these performances.

Philadelphia Symphonic Choir Joe Miller Director

Sopranos

Elise Brancheau Katharine Burns

Lily Carmichael Lauren Cohen

Maria Palombo Costa

Marisa Curcio Jina Jang Rachael Lipson Sophia Santiago Pei Ying Wang

Altos

Robin Bier
Katie Brown
Marissa Chalker
Alyson Harvey
John Irving
Jessica Kerler
Natasha Nelson
Rebecca Roy
Cecelia Snow
Liyao Yu

Tenors

Brendan Barker Sam Denler

Bryan Umberto Hoyos

Joshua John Josh Lisner Max Marques

Michael McCormick

Kev Schneider Daniel Taylor Shane Thomas, Jr.

Basses

Max Brey Roy DeMarco Loren Greer Gabriel Lukijaniuk Matthew Marinelli John D. Miles Alexander Nguyen Erik Potteiger John T.K. Scherch Kirby Traylor

The Music

Messiah

George Frideric Handel Born in Halle, Germany, February 23, 1685 Died in London, April 14, 1759



To enter the National Portrait Gallery in London is to take a stroll through the annals of British history, art, drama, and music. Upon reaching the galleries devoted to 18th-century worthies, visitors are often drawn to the large portrait of George Frideric Handel (left) by the great British artist Thomas Hudson (1701–79). Hudson painted Handel dressed in elaborate finery with a copy of his famous oratorio *Messiah*. Viewers who are familiar with other paintings of the composer

will notice a marked difference between those portrayals and this one, however. Earlier portraits invariably emphasize the expressiveness of his eyes, but in Hudson's grand portrait Handel's eyes are staring, blank, and inert. Beneath the grandeur of this painting lies a poignant tragedy. Upon closer inspection, it dawns gradually upon the viewer that Hudson has painted a subject the lavishness of whose attire cannot distract from his blindness. Commissioned by Handel's librettist Charles Jennens (1700–73), this "court portrait" was painted after 1753, by which time Handel's eyesight had been extinguished completely after he had endured a fruitless series of unsuccessful operations.

Drawing upon a remarkable reserve of inner courage, Handel continued to play the organ in public despite his blindness, most notably at the annual benefit performances of *Messiah* that took place in the chapel of the Foundling Hospital, a London orphanage. These concerts, which had begun in 1750, decisively altered the way in which *Messiah* was received by the public, the press, and, especially, the Anglican clergy. During this period, oratorios were advertised as "entertainments," and their presentation was usually restricted to theaters. Indeed, the performances of *Messiah* at the Foundling Hospital's chapel were considered exceptions to the rule, exempt from criticism only because of their charitable purpose.

Initial Controversy Indeed, the first London appearance of *Messiah* in 1743 was highly controversial. An article appeared in the *Universal Spectator* that sharply queried the propriety of taking Christ's life as the subject for a musical "entertainment." At that time, Jennens, the wealthy High Church Anglican clergyman who had compiled the text of *Messiah*, reported "a clamour about

Town, said to arise from the B[isho]ps, against performing it." To avoid further protests, *Messiah* was advertised simply as "A New Sacred Oratorio." Jennens was well aware that he risked charges of blasphemy by creating an oratorio text based on the life and ministry of the Christian Savior. He sought to deflect such pious opprobrium by intermingling passages drawn from 14 books of the King James Version of the Bible with selections from the Book of Common Prayer, the principal service book of the Church of England. Through his selections, Jennens cunningly unfolded the narrative in a manner at once oblique and reverent. Despite his caution and Handel's sublime music, *Messiah* ran for only three performances, a chilly reception that one contemporary writer attributed to "Scruples, some Persons had entertained, against carrying on such a Performance in a Play House."

No such finicky scruples had been evident the year before, however, when *Messiah* was premiered to enormous success in Dublin on April 13. Indeed, a member of the audience in the "New Musick-Hall in Fishamble-street" on that occasion was Edward Synge, the Anglican Bishop of Elphin, who wrote approvingly that the listeners "Seemed indeed thoroughly engag'd from one end to the other. ... Many, I hope were instructed by it and Proper Sentiments inspir'd in a Stronger manner in their Minds." Handel himself may have echoed Synge's comments in his reported reply to Lord Kinnoull, who had complimented him on *Messiah* as a "noble entertainment": "My lord," replied the composer, "I should be sorry if I only entertained them. I wish to make them better."

A Closer Look Following Jennens's text, Handel divided his oratorio into three parts. After a dignified Overture, Part I presents prophecies of the coming of the Messiah and the birth and ministry of Jesus Christ. Part II deals with His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension, concluding with a jubilant chorus, the stirring "Hallelujah." Part III looks forward to the second coming of Christ, the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. As Christopher Hogwood observes, "Most important of all is the clarity and confidence with which Jennens displays the divine scheme, a coherent progress from Prophecy, through Nativity, Crucifixion, Resurrection, and Ascension to the promise of Redemption (Part III is based largely on the Anglican Burial Service)." Although now a regular feature of the Christmas season, Messiah encompasses all of the festivals of the Christian liturgical year. (Both Jennens and Handel associated Messiah with Holy Week and Eastertide.)

To express the sacred text fully, Handel drew upon a wide range of European musical styles for *Messiah*. The severe dotted rhythms of the opening measures proclaim an overture in the French style. The gentle swaying of the siciliana, a dance that originated among Sicilian shepherds, permeates both the radiant Pastoral Symphony and "He shall feed his flock." In Part II the tenor soloist becomes a narrator in a manner reminiscent of the Evangelists—also sung by tenors—that play a crucial role in the Lutheran Passions, most famously in

Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Matthew Passion.

Given its iconic status, it is not surprising that legends have accrued around *Messiah*, such as the unsubstantiated tale of an inspired King George II leaping to his feet at the beginning of the "Hallelujah" Chorus. Equally dubious is the story that Handel once exclaimed, "I did think I did see all Heaven before me, and the great God Himself," words which, in Hogwood's trenchant phrase, "ring so false." What is miraculous, however, is the speed with which Handel composed *Messiah*—24 days in August and September of 1741. As was his practice, he drew upon his own works, as well as "borrowing" themes from such contemporaries as Georg Philipp Telemann, Giovanni Porta, and Arcangelo Corelli, to enable him to complete his task on time. In the case of *Messiah*, however, Handel surely made such "borrowings" in the service of a larger purpose: "I wish to make them better."

—Byron Adams

Byron Adams is Emeritus Distinguished Professor of Musicology at the University of California, Riverside. Both composer and musicologist, he specializes in French and British music of the 19th and 20th centuries. Among his publications are two edited volumes, Edward Elgar and His World (2007) and Vaughan Williams and His World (2023), which he co-edited with Daniel M. Grimley.

Handel composed Messiah in 1741.

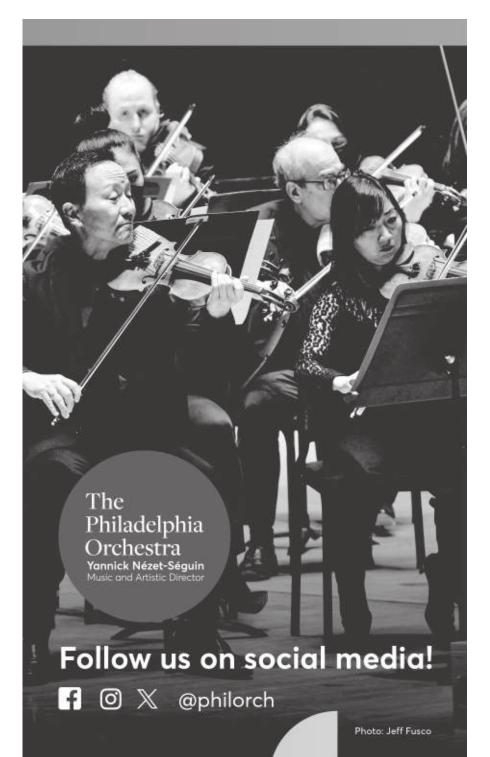
Eugene Ormandy conducted the first official Philadelphia Orchestra performances of Messiah, in October and November of 1958; the soloists were Leontyne Price, Martha Lipton, Davis Cunningham, William Warfield, and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. The series opened on Halloween (!) and was so popular the first year that an extra performance was added. (Actually the Orchestra had performed Messiah much earlier, as far back as 1902, with the now-defunct Choral Society of Philadelphia, but not on its own concert series.) Since 1961, the Orchestra has performed Messiah every year.

The Philadelphians recorded Messiah in 1958 for CBS with the above forces, except Eileen Farrell replaced Ms. Price. This recording earned the Orchestra one of its three gold records. The Orchestra also recorded excerpts from the work twice: the Pastoral Symphony was recorded in 1929 for RCA with Leopold Stokowski, and "For unto us a Child is born" and the "Hallelujah" Chorus were recorded in 1964 for CBS with Ormandy and the Temple University Concert Choir.

The instrumentation in this performance calls for two oboes, bassoon, two trumpets, timpani, harpsichord, organ, strings, mixed chorus, and four vocal soloists.

These performances of Messiah run approximately two hours and 30 minutes.

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Audience Services: 215.893.1999 Mon.-Fri., 10 AM-6 PM Sat.-Sun., 11 AM-6 PM Performance nights open until 8 PM

Box Office: Mon.–Sun., 10 AM–6 PM The Academy of Music Broad and Locust Streets Philadelphia, PA 19102 Tickets: 215.893.1999

Concert dates (two hours before concert time and through intermission): The Kimmel Center Broad and Spruce Streets Philadelphia, PA 19102

Web Site: For information about The Philadelphia Orchestra and its upcoming concerts or events, please visit philorch.org.

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PreConcert Conversations: PreConcert Conversations are held prior to most Philadelphia Orchestra subscription

concerts, beginning one hour before the performance. Conversations are free to ticket holders, feature discussions of the season's music and music-makers, and are supported in part by the Hirschberg-Goodfriend Fund in memory of Adolf Hirschberg, established by Juliet J. Goodfriend.

Lost and Found: Please call 215.670.2321.

Late Seating: Late seating breaks usually occur after the first piece on the program or at intermission in order to minimize disturbances to other audience members. If you arrive after the concert begins, you will be seated only when appropriate breaks in the program allow.

Accessible Seating: Accessible seating is available for every performance. Please call Audience Services at 215.893.1999 or visit philorch.org/patron-services/plan-your-visit/accessibility for more information.

Assistive Listening: With the deposit of a current ID, hearing enhancement devices are available at no cost from the House Management Office in Commonwealth Plaza. Hearing devices are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Large-Print Programs: Large-print programs for every subscription concert are available in the House Management Office in Commonwealth Plaza. Please ask an usher for assistance

Fire Notice: The exit indicated by a red light nearest your seat is the shortest route to the street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run. Walk to that exit.

No Smoking: All public space in Ensemble Arts Philly venues is smoke-free.

Cameras and Recorders: The taking of photographs or the recording of Philadelphia Orchestra concerts is strictly prohibited, but photographs are allowed before and after concerts and during bows. By attending this Philadelphia Orchestra concert you consent to be photographed, filmed, and/or otherwise recorded for any purpose in connection with The Philadelphia Orchestra.

Electronic Devices: All watch alarms should be turned off while in the concert hall and all cellular phones should be switched to silent mode.