



JAAP VAN ZWEDEN
MUSIC DIRECTOR

HANDEL'S *MESSIAH*

**Presented by
Gary W. Parr**

Tuesday, December 12, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
16,967th Concert

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
16,968th Concert

Thursday, December 14, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
16,969th Concert

Saturday, December 16, 2023, 7:00 p.m.
16,970th Concert

Fabio Biondi*, Conductor
Hera Hyesang Park**, Soprano
Hannah Ludwig*, Alto
John Matthew Myers*, Tenor
Joshua Conyers*, Baritone
Handel and Haydn Society Chorus

Wu Tsai Theater
David Geffen Hall at Lincoln Center
Home of the New York Philharmonic

This program will last approximately two and
one-half hours, which includes one intermission.



December 12–14 & 16, 2023

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Hera Hyesang Park**, Soprano
Hannah Ludwig*, Alto
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HANDEL (1685–1759)

Messiah (1741)

Part I

Sinfonia (Overture)

Recitative (Tenor): Comfort ye my people

Air (Tenor): Ev'ry valley shall be exalted

Chorus: And the glory of the Lord

Recitative (Baritone): Thus saith the Lord of Hosts

Air (Alto): But who may abide the day of His coming

Chorus: And He shall purify

Recitative (Alto): Behold, a virgin shall conceive

Air (Alto and Chorus): O thou that tellest

Recitative (Baritone): For behold, darkness shall cover the earth

Air (Baritone): The people that walked in darkness

Chorus: For unto us a Child is born

Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony")

Recitative (Soprano): There were shepherds abiding in the field

Recitative (Soprano): And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them

Recitative (Soprano): And the angel said unto them

Recitative (Soprano): And suddenly there was with the angel

Chorus: Glory to God in the highest

Air (Soprano): Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion

Recitative (Alto): Then shall the eyes of the blind

Duet (Alto and Soprano): He shall feed his flock

Chorus: His yoke is easy, His burden is light

Intermission

Part II

Air (Alto): He was despised

Chorus: Surely, He hath borne our griefs

Chorus: And with His stripes we are healed

Chorus: All we like sheep have gone astray

Recitative (Tenor): All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn

Chorus: He trusted in God

Recitative (Tenor): Thy rebuke hath broken His heart

Air (Tenor): Behold, and see if there be any sorrow

Recitative (Soprano): He was cut off out of the land of the living

Air (Soprano): But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell

Chorus: Lift up your heads

Recitative (Tenor): Unto which of the angels

Chorus: Let all the angels

Air (Alto): Thou art gone up on high

Chorus: The Lord gave the word

Air (Baritone): Why do the nations so furiously rage together

Recitative (Tenor): He that dwelleth in heaven

Air (Tenor): Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron

Chorus: Hallelujah!

Part III

Air (Soprano): I know that my Redeemer liveth

Chorus: Since by man came death

Recitative (Baritone): Behold, I tell you a mystery

Air (Baritone): The trumpet shall sound

Recitative (Alto): Then shall be brought to pass

Duet (Alto and Tenor): O death, where is thy sting?

Chorus: But thanks be to God

Air (Soprano): If God be for us

Chorus: Worthy is the Lamb

Chorus: Amen

CARTER BREY, Cello

MATTHEW MUCKEY, Trumpet

KENT TRITLE, Organ

PAOLO BORDIGNON, Harpsichord

*New York Philharmonic debut

**New York Philharmonic subscription debut

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Notes on the Program

Messiah

George Frideric Handel

When George Frideric Handel received an invitation to produce a series of concerts in Dublin in 1741, the idea of a change of scenery from the failing fortunes of his operatic ventures in London appealed to him. He traveled to Ireland in November of that year and remained there until August 13, 1742. He took along with him the score to his new oratorio *Messiah*, which would become the high point of his Dublin season when it was premiered in April 1742.

Early in the summer of 1741, Charles Jennens had assembled a libretto that drew creatively on Biblical passages from the Books of Isaiah, Haggai, Malachi, Matthew, Luke, Zechariah, John, Job, Psalms, Lamentations, Hebrews, Romans, I Corinthians, and Revelation to create a loose story comprising narrative and reflections about the life of Jesus. This he organized in three discrete sections: the first relating to the prophecy of Christ's coming and the circumstances of his birth; the second to the vicissitudes of his life on Earth; and the third to events surrounding the Resurrection and the promise of redemption. Handel leapt into action on August 22. He finished the draft of Part One on August 28, of Part Two on September 6, and of Part Three on September 12 — and then he took another two days to polish details on the whole score. That so great — and large — a masterpiece as *Messiah* should have been created in so brief a span as three weeks seems all but incredible to most of us. In fact, this prodigious pace was not exceptional for Handel, and it is no more than

romantic fantasy to view it (as it once was routinely) as a fever of divine inspiration peculiar to the composition of *Messiah*. In fact, he allowed himself about a week's rest after finishing *Messiah* before embarking on his next oratorio, *Samson*, which he wrote in the relatively leisurely span of five weeks.

Messiah was unveiled in an open rehearsal on April 9, 1742, and two official performances, on April 13 and June 3. The premiere was given as a benefit,

In Short

Born: February 23, 1685, in Halle, Prussia (Germany)

Died: April 14, 1759, in London, England

Work composed: August 22–September 14, 1741, in London

World premiere: April 13, 1742, at the Great Music Hall in Dublin, Ireland; an open rehearsal had been held four days earlier

New York Philharmonic premiere: December 28, 1878, by the New York Symphony (which merged with the New York Philharmonic in 1928), Leopold Damrosch, conductor, with soprano Minnie Hauk, contralto Anna Drasdl, tenor George Simpson, bass Myron William Whitney, and the Oratorio Society of New York

Most recent New York Philharmonic performance: December 17, 2022, Masaaki Suzuki, conductor, with soprano Sherezade Panthaki, countertenor Reginald Mobley, tenor Leif Aruhn-Solén, baritone Jonathon Adams, and the Handel and Haydn Society Chorus

Estimated duration: ca. 120 minutes

organized with the assistance of the Charitable Musical Society, “For Relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the Support of Mercer’s Hospital in St. Stephen’s-street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inns Quay” (as *The Dublin Journal* announced a couple of weeks in advance). After the open rehearsal, *The Dublin News Letter* pronounced that the new oratorio,

in the opinion of the best judges, far surpasses anything of that Nature, which has been performed in this or any other Kingdom.

The *Journal* concurred that it

was allowed by the greatest Judges to be the finest Composition of Musick that ever was heard, and the sacred Words as properly adapted for the Occasion.

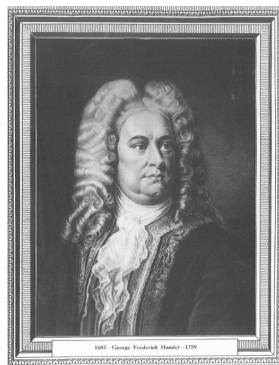
It continued with advice for persons lucky enough to hold tickets to the official premiere:

Many Ladies and Gentlemen who are well-wishers to the Noble and Grand Charity for which this Oratorio was composed, request it as a Favour, that the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence would be pleased to come without Hoops as it

Problematic Contexts

Art lovers often must face a conflict between the magnificence of a work and difficult, sometimes painful issues that it raises. Can one enjoy Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* without addressing its blatant antisemitism? Everybody loves Orff’s *Carmina burana*, but for too many years we’ve been silent about the composer’s Nazi affiliations. Even Handel’s *Messiah* — an audience favorite as well as a virtuosic oratorio — must be scrutinized through an ethical lens.

Musicologist Dr. David Hunter reported that, starting in the 1710s, George Frideric Handel invested in the South Sea Company and the Royal African Company, both of which were involved in the transatlantic slave trade. In fact, Handel used the returns from these investments to cover losses from his own opera and oratorio productions. Unfortunately, this wasn’t noteworthy at the time; 32 percent of the investors and subscribers in the Royal Academy of Music during the 1720s also invested in the Royal African Company. In fact, Ellen Harris, another Handel scholar, infers that the composer may not have actively purchased these investments, but rather received them as payment, in light of how quickly he cashed them out. Either way, he did profit from the slave trade. Today, we must acknowledge that music we cherish benefited from institutionalized racism, and ask ourselves how we can reconcile the joy of Handel’s *Messiah* with this dark past.



Royal African Company logo

— The Editors

will greatly encrease the Charity, by making Room for more Company.

To which it added in a follow-up article:

The Gentlemen are desired to come without their Swords, to increase audience accommodation yet further.

Messiah was an immense success, and its reputation spread to London, which had to wait almost a year to hear it. That event finally took place on March 23, 1743, at Covent Garden. The *Universal Spectator* ran an article that wondered about the propriety of performing such a sacred work in any setting but a church:

An *Oratorio* either is an *Act of Religion*, or it is not; if it is, I ask if the *Playhouse* is a fit *Temple* to perform it in, or a Company of *Players* fit *Ministers of God's Word*, for in that

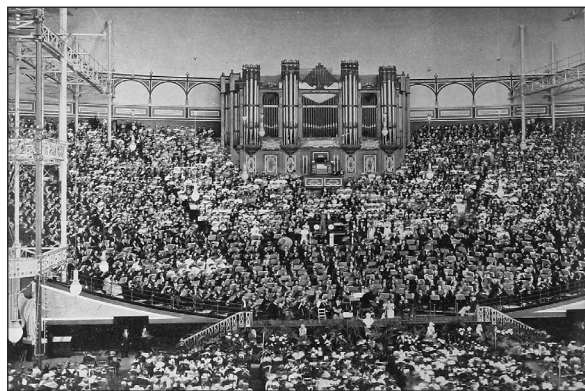
Case such they are made ... In the other Case, if it is not perform'd as an *Act of Religion*, but for *Diversion* and *Amusement* only (and indeed I believe few or none go to an *Oratorio* out of *Devotion*), what a *Prophana-tion of God's Name and Word* is this, to make so light Use of them?

Many a London wag lent his voice to the ensuing fray, either in poetry or prose. In the end, however, it all added up to a tempest in a teapot, and audiences seem to have enjoyed Handel's "New Sacred Oratorio" all the more for the altercation it provoked.

Messiah's popularity would live on unabated. When London set out to commemorate Handel in May–June 1784, two of the five festival concerts were given over to the oratorio he wrote in three weeks in 1741. The following year music historian Charles Burney

Handel on a Grand Scale

The Crystal Palace in London became the venue of choice for Handel performances in the second half of the 19th century. The high point — or low point, depending on one's point of view — came in 1883 when Sir Michael Costa, a conductor much chastised by critics for lapses of taste (his



A performance of Handel's *Messiah* at London's Crystal Palace, between 1887 and 1889

additions to the score of *Messiah* included crashing cymbals and more), stood on the podium before an ocean of 500 players, 4,000 singers, and an audience of 87,769. It was just then that Thomas Edison's phonograph came into existence, and, naturally, somebody thought to record one of these mammoth Handel performances. It had to be on location, of course, since 4,500 performers couldn't have fit into a recording studio, then or now.

published a detailed description of the events under the title *An Account of the Musical Performances at Westminster-Abbey and the Pantheon*, in which he waxed ecstatic over the *Hallelujah* chorus:

I hasten to speak of the Allelujah, which is the triumph of HANDEL, of the COMMEMORATION, and of the musical art.

The opening is clear, cheerful, and bold. And the words, “*For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth*” (Rev. xix. 6), set to a fragment of canto fermo, which all the parts sing, as such, in unisons and octaves, has an effect truly ecclesiastical. It is afterwards made the subject of

fugue and ground-work for the Allelujah. Then, as a short episode in plain counterpoint, we have “*The kingdom of this world*” (Ib. xi. 15) — which being begun *piano*, was solemn and affecting. But the last and principal subject proposed, and led off by the base — “*And he shall reign for ever and ever*,” is the most pleasing and fertile that has ever been invented since the art of fugue was first cultivated. It is marked, and constantly to be distinguished through all the parts, accompaniments, counter-subjects and contrivances, with which it is charged. And, finally, the words — “*King of Kings, and Lord of Lords*” (Ib. xix. 16),

Standing Tradition

“When *Messiah* was first performed in London, when the chorus struck up ‘For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth,’ reportedly the audience and King stood and remained standing untill the chorus had ended.”

This anecdote was recorded in 1780, almost 40 years after that 1743 performance (at the Covent Garden Theatre, at which George II would have been the monarch in attendance). It is the first known explanation of the genesis of a tradition in which the audience rises to its feet on hearing the great D-major chord that begins the famous chorus, “Hallelujah.”

The most popular explanation of why the king stood is that he was moved by the power of this proclamation; the audience followed suit, out of respect, and a tradition was born. However, contradictory theories abound. His Majesty was tired, and had to stretch his legs. Or was it gout? Another theory: he was partially deaf, and so mistook the opening for the strains of the national anthem. Some opine that he had dozed off, and shot up from his seat when he heard the loud choral entry.

The custom of standing during this passage continues to this day, although not universally. In fact, the American master of choral conducting, the late Robert Shaw, had his concert programs ask the audience to remain seated during the “Hallelujah” chorus so as to avoid disruption.

What should you do at this performance? Since this isn’t a monarchy, in the spirit of democracy we leave it up to you.

— The Editors



King George II

always set to a single sound, which seems to stand at bay, while the other parts attack it in every possible manner, in “*Allelujah — for ever and ever*,” is a most happy and marvelous concatenation of harmony, melody, and great effects.

Instrumentation: two oboes, bassoon, two trumpets, timpani, strings, and basso continuo (comprising cello, organ,

and harpsichord in these performances), plus a mixed chorus and four vocal soloists — soprano, alto, tenor, and baritone in these performances.

— James M. Keller, *former New York Philharmonic Program Annotator, San Francisco Symphony program annotator, and author of Chamber Music: A Listener’s Guide (Oxford University Press)*

The New York Philharmonic Connection

Handel’s *Messiah* is programmed the world over during the holiday season, so it might be surprising to learn that the oratorio was not always the ubiquitous offering it is today. The New York Philharmonic did not perform the complete oratorio on a subscription concert until the 1956–57 season — concerts that marked the first and only time that Leonard Bernstein conducted it with the Orchestra.

Bernstein did not take a standard approach. Instead of presenting the oratorio in its usual three-part form, he regrouped it into two sections corresponding to Christmas and Easter, reflecting the Biblical texts related to the story of Christ. The presentation rankled some purists. Critic Harold Schonberg of *The New York Times* grumbled that Bernstein’s “high-handed” rearrangement scrambled the order of the arias, recitatives, and choruses in some places and required “wholesale



Countertenor Russell Oberlin and soprano Adele Addison during a New York Philharmonic *Messiah* recording session in 1956, led by Leonard Bernstein

musical transpositions” and “several major cuts” in order to flow.

However, others noted that Bernstein’s version demonstrated an unusual sensitivity to historically informed details. He traded the piano continuo that was typically used in the mid-20th century for a period-appropriate harpsichord, and he featured the then unusual choice of a countertenor in place of the mezzo-soprano or alto soloist — a practice common in Handel’s time but almost unheard of in the 20th century. The concerts helped launch the career of 28-year-old Russell Oberlin, who would later be credited with leading the countertenor renaissance in the United States.

— The Archives

Text

Messiah

George Frideric Handel

Libretto assembled by Charles Jennens from passages in The Bible

Part I

Sinfonia (Overture)

Recitative (Tenor)

Comfort ye my people, saith your God.

Isaiah XL: 1

Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplish'd, that her iniquity is pardon'd.

Isaiah XL: 2

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 XL: 3

Air (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight, and the rough places plain.

Isaiah XL: 4

Chorus

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

Isaiah XL: 5

Recitative (Baritone)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts: Yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns and the earth, the sea and the dry land,

Haggai II: 6

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

Haggai II: 7

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple; ev'n the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

Malachi III: 1

Air (Alto)

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 III: 2

(Please turn the page quietly.)

Chorus

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

Malachi III: 3

Recitative (Alto)

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

Isaiah VII: 14

Air (Alto and Chorus)

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

Isaiah XL: 9

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

Isaiah LX: 1

Recitative (Baritone)

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.

Isaiah LX: 2

And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising.

Isaiah LX: 3

Air (Baritone)

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

Isaiah IX: 2

Chorus

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder; and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace!

Isaiah IX: 6

Pifa ("Pastoral Symphony")

Recitative (Soprano)

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

Luke II: 8

Recitative (Soprano)

And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

Luke II: 9

Recitative (Soprano)

And the angel said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

Luke II: 10

For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord."

Luke II: 11

Recitative (Soprano)

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

Luke II: 13

Chorus

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

Luke II: 14

Air (Soprano)

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee. He is the righteous Saviour,

Zechariah IX: 9

and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.

Zechariah IX: 10

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.

Isaiah XXXV: 5-6

Duet (Alto and 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.

Isaiah XL: 11

Come unto Him, all ye that labour, come unto Him that are heavy laden, and He will give you rest. Take his yoke upon you, and learn of Him, for He is meek and lowly of heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

Matthew XI: 28-29

Chorus

His yoke is easy, His burden is light.

Matthew XI: 30

(Please turn the page quietly.)

PART II

Air (Alto)

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

Isaiah LIII: 3

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

Isaiah L: 6

Chorus

Surely, He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows!

Isaiah LIII: 4

He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him.

Isaiah LIII: 5

Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed.

Isaiah LIII: 5

Chorus

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

Isaiah LIII: 6

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Psalms XXII: 7

Chorus

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

Psalms XXII: 8

Recitative (Tenor)

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart; He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort Him.

Psalms LXIX: 20

Air (Tenor)

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

Lamentations I: 12

Recitative (Soprano)

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

Isaiah LIII: 8

Air (Soprano)

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

Psalm XVI: 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 XXIV: 7–10

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Hebrews I: 5

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship Him.

Hebrews I: 6

Air (Alto)

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.

Psalm LXVIII: 18

Chorus

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

Psalm 68: 11

Air (Baritone)

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing?

Psalm II: 1

The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed.

Psalm II: 2

Recitative (Tenor)

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

Psalm II: 4

(Please turn the page quietly.)

Air (Tenor)

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

Psalm II: 9

Chorus

Hallelujah! For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Revelation XIX: 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.

Revelation XI: 15

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Revelation XIX: 16

PART III**Air (Soprano)**

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

Job XIX: 25

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

Job XIX: 26

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

I Corinthians XV: 20

Chorus

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

I Corinthians XV: 21

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

I Corinthians XV: 22

Recitative (Baritone)

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd,

I Corinthians XV: 51

in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

I Corinthians XV: 52

Air (Baritone)

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall
be chang'd.

I Corinthians XV: 52

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

I Corinthians XV: 53

Recitative (Alto)

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

I Corinthians XV: 54

Duet (Alto and Tenor)

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 XV: 55–56

Chorus

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

I Corinthians XV: 57

Air (Soprano)

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

Romans VIII: 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 VIII: 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.

Revelation V: 12

Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.

Revelation V: 13

Amen.

Revelation V: 14

New York Philharmonic

2023–2024 SEASON

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The Artists



Driven by a deep cultural curiosity, conductor **Fabio Biondi** is ceaselessly in pursuit of a style that is free from constraints — an “original language” expressed both in

globally known works and in his commitment to researching and illuminating lesser-known masterpieces. In 1989, following extensive work with specialist ensembles, Biondi founded Europa Galante, which quickly became the foremost Italian period ensemble. Performing at leading international festivals and stages, Biondi and his ensemble have forged a reputation for breathing new life into Baroque, Classical, and early Romantic repertoire, and have received numerous awards for their broad discography.

Biondi brings this authentic and engaging approach to modern symphony and chamber orchestras, which he both conducts and directs from the violin. Highlights of his recent and forthcoming engagements include the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra (in Washington, DC), Orchestra dell’Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia, RAI Torino, Orchestre national du Capitole de Toulouse, Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra, Finnish Radio Symphony Orchestra, Bamberg Symphony, Berlin Radio Symphony Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Mahler Chamber Orchestra, Mozarteum Orchestra Salzburg, and the Hong Kong Philharmonic Orchestra. For 11 years he served as artistic director for Baroque music at the Stavanger Symphony Orchestra, until 2016.

His passion for opera takes him to major houses, including Opernhaus Zurich, Berlin’s Staatsoper unter den Linden, Grand Théâtre de Genève, and Theater an der Wien. From 2015 to 2018 he was music director of Valencia’s Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, where he conducted productions of works by Donizetti, Rossini, Haydn, and Verdi. As a violinist, he is respected as a virtuoso, performing in recital across the world including at Carnegie Hall, London’s Wigmore Hall, Auditorio Nacional de Música Madrid, and Paris’s Cité de la Musique.

Fabio Biondi has been an academican of the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia since 2011, and in 2015 was named an Officer of the National Order of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture. In 2019 he was awarded the medal of Courage and Veracity by the Polish Government in recognition of outstanding cultural achievements. He plays a 1768 Gennaro Gagliano violin, owned by his teacher, Maestro Salvatore Cicero, and kindly lent to him by the Salvatore Cicero Foundation in Palermo, where he was born.



Soprano **Hera Hye-sang Park** is an exclusive Deutsche Grammophon recording artist working with orchestras and opera houses worldwide. The Korean soprano has made house and role debuts as Adina in Donizetti’s *The Elixir of Love* (at Deutsche Staatsoper Berlin), Despina in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte* (Bavarian Staatsoper and Glyndebourne Festival), Musetta in Puccini’s *La*

bohème (Komische Oper), Juliette in Gounod's *Roméo et Juliette* (Korean National Opera), and Pamina in Mozart's *The Magic Flute* (Teatro Colón Buenos Aires). Her concert appearances have included Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* at Carnegie Hall, Mahler's Symphony No. 4 with the Naples Philharmonic and San Diego Symphony, Handel's *Acis and Galatea* at Tanglewood and Caramoor with Philharmonia Baroque, Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Seoul Philharmonic Orchestra, and recitals at Vocal Arts DC, Alice Tully Hall, Friends of Chamber Music Miami, Montreal's Bourgie Hall, and Madrid's Auditorio Nacional de Música.

As a participant in The Metropolitan Opera's Lindemann Young Artist program, Park made her Met debut as the First Sprite in a new production of Dvořák's *Rusalka* conducted by Mark Elder. She sang Barbarina in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* and Dew Fairy in Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, and has since returned as Pamina, Amore in Gluck's *Orfeo ed Euridice*, and Nanetta in Verdi's *Falstaff*.

In the 2022–23 season Park returns to Opéra National de Paris as Despina, Seoul City Opera as Rosina, and Korean National Opera as Violetta in Verdi's *La Traviata*. She sings Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic, makes her London Philharmonic Orchestra debut in Mozart's Great C-major Mass, and gives solo recitals at Milton Court London, Stoller Hall Manchester, and across Mexico.



In the 2023–24 season mezzo-soprano **Hannah Ludwig** makes her New York Philharmonic debut singing Handel's *Messiah* conducted by Fabio

Biondi; this follows her first collaboration with him on the same piece in the 2022–23 season with the National Symphony Orchestra. Also last season she returned to the Colorado Symphony for Elgar's *Sea Pictures* and sang Handel's *Messiah* with the Las Vegas Philharmonic. She reprised the roles of Isabella in Rossini's *L'italiana in Algeri* (at Eroica Berlin) and Maddalena in Verdi's *Rigoletto* (Utah Opera), and sang Floßhilde in Wagner's *Das Rheingold* at Dallas Opera.

A prolific interpreter of the repertoire of Rossini, she has performed at Teatro Nuovo as Calbo in *Maometto II*, Pippo in *La gazza ladra*, Isaura in *Tancredi*, and Rosina in *The Barber of Seville*; she appeared in this last role with Annapolis Opera. Also in the bel canto realm, she sang Giovanna Seymour in Donizetti's *Anna Bolena* (Baltimore Concert Opera), Alisa in Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Opera Philadelphia), and selections of Adalgisa in Bellini's *Norma* (Sacramento Philharmonic).

Ludwig made her Dallas Opera debut as the Third Lady in Mozart's *The Magic Flute*. She joined Portland Opera as the District Attorney in Anthony Davis's *Central Park Five* and Boston Lyric Opera as Ljubica in Ana Sokolović's *Svadba*. On the concert stage, she has sung Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky* (Colorado Symphony) and the Mozart Requiem (Columbus Symphony Orchestra), both conducted by Rossen Milanov; Mahler's Symphony No. 2, *Resurrection* (Flint Symphony Orchestra); and Handel's *Messiah* (Baltimore Symphony Orchestra).

Hannah Ludwig attended the Academy of Vocal Artists and received her bachelor of music degree from the University of the Pacific.



Tenor **John Matthew Myers** is widely recognized for his distinctive, warm, and vibrant voice. He is equally at home in recital, orchestral, and operatic repertoire,

and regularly garners acclaim for his emotional depth and range in a variety of settings. A champion of new music as well as a classicist, he brings his nuanced and powerful voice to repertoire ranging from John Adams to Puccini.

In addition to his appearance with the New York Philharmonic at David Geffen Hall, conducted by Fabio Biondi, Myers's 2023–24 season highlights include debuts with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and Manfred Honeck and the Rhode Island Philharmonic Orchestra with Patrick Dupré Quigley singing Handel's *Messiah*; the roles of The Tenor and Bacchus in Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*, at Venice's Teatro La Fenice, and Froh in Wagner's *Das Rheingold*, with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Gustavo Dudamel; and singing Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 with the Santa Barbara and Oregon Symphony Orchestras. He makes his debut at Milan's Teatro alla Scala singing Britten's *Serenade for Tenor, Horn, and Strings* conducted by Vakhtang Kakhidze with Cameristi della Scala.

Recently, Myers has covered roles for The Metropolitan Opera's productions of Britten's *Peter Grimes*, Musorgsky's *Boris Godunov*, Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*, Tchaikovsky's *Queen of Spades*, and Richard Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. His 2021–22 season included singing an Offstage Voice in The Met's premiere of Brett Dean's *Hamlet*. Myers made his New York Philharmonic debut in the 2018–19 season in the World Premiere of David

Lang's fully staged opera *prisoner of the state*; directed by Elkhannah Pulitzer, the performance was released as an album on Decca Gold in June 2020. His debut solo album — *Desiderium*, with pianist Myra Huang — was released on AVIE Records in 2022.



A native of the Bronx, Grammy-nominated baritone **Joshua Conyers** is known for his captivating performances and recognized as one of the promising

young dramatic voices of today. His 2023–24 season includes performing and covering the role of Reginald in Anthony Davis's *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at Seattle Opera and The Metropolitan Opera, Beethoven's Ninth Symphony with Chattanooga Symphony and Opera, and Iago in Verdi's *Otello* with Vashon Opera, as well as Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic. He also debuted his solo recital, *Journey: My American Story*, at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts.

Conyers's engagements in recent seasons have included his English National Opera debut as Policeman / Congregant 3 in Jeanine Tesori and Tazewell Thompson's *Blue*, and Reginald in *X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X* at Opera Omaha, which he also performed at Detroit Opera and Odyssey Opera (where he recorded the role). In concert, Conyers made his Brevard Music Center debut in Orff's *Carmina burana*, appeared as soloist in Handel's *Messiah* with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, and returned to Brooklyn Art Song Society. He also joined Seattle Opera for *Blue*, Boston Lyric Opera

as Count Capulet in Gounod’s *Romeo and Juliet*, Memphis Symphony Orchestra for Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, and the Cecilia Chorus of New York for *Carmina burana* at Carnegie Hall. Other roles have included Eustis in Philidor’s *Le Maréchal ferrant* with Opera Lafayette, Sprecher in Mozart’s *The Magic Flute* with Aspen Opera Theater, and Tonio in Leoncavallo’s *Pagliacci* at Atlanta Opera, where he also performed Tiger Brown in Weill’s *The Threepenny Opera* and covered Kaiser Overall in Ullmann’s *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*.

Boston’s Grammy-winning **Handel and Haydn Society** (H+H) performs Baroque and Classical music with a freshness, a vitality, and a creativity that inspires all ages. H+H has been captivating audiences for 209 consecutive seasons (the most of any performing arts organization in the United States), speaking to its singular success at converting new audiences to this extraordinary music, generation after generation.

H+H performed the *Hallelujah* chorus from Handel’s *Messiah* in its first concert in 1815, gave the complete oratorio’s American premiere in 1818, and ever since has been

both a musical and a civic leader in the Boston community. During the Civil War, H+H gave numerous concerts in support of the Union Army (H+H member Julia Ward Howe wrote *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*), and on January 1, 1863, H+H performed at the Grand Jubilee Concert celebrating the enactment of the Emancipation Proclamation. Two years later, H+H performed at the memorial service for Abraham Lincoln.

Today, H+H’s Orchestra and Chorus, under the leadership of artistic director Jonathan Cohen, delight more than 50,000 listeners annually with a nine-week subscription series at Boston’s Symphony Hall and other leading venues. Through the Karen S. and George D. Levy Education Program, H+H supports seven youth choirs of singers in grades two through twelve, and provides thousands of complimentary tickets to students and communities throughout Boston, ensuring the joy of music is accessible to all. H+H has released 16 CDs on the CORO label and has toured nationally and internationally. In all these ways, H+H fulfills its mission to inspire the intellect, touch the heart, elevate the soul, and connect all of us with our shared humanity through transformative experiences with Baroque and Classical music.

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Logan Trotter
Motomi Tanaka

ALTO

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Wee Kian Chia
Doug Dodson
Elizabeth Eschen
Katherine Growdon
Catherine Hedberg
Emily Marvosh
Ashley Mulcahy
Lindsay Pope
Benjamin Rausch

TENOR

Colin Campbell
Marcio de Oliveira
Ethan DePuy
Brent Gerike
Francesco Logozzo
Michael Martin
Patrick T. Waters
Steven Caldicott Wilson

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Glenn Billingsley
Woodrow Bynum
Ryne Cherry
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Craig Juricka
Christopher Short
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Scott Allen Jarrett, *resident conductor*
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Current as of December 5, 2023

Jaap van Zweden and the New York Philharmonic



Jaap van Zweden became Music Director of the New York Philharmonic in 2018. In 2023–24, his farewell season celebrates his connection with the Orchestra's musicians as he leads performances in which six Principal players appear as concerto soloists. He also revisits composers he has championed at the Philharmonic, from Steve Reich and Joel Thompson to Mozart and Mahler. He is also Music Director of the Hong Kong Philharmonic, since 2012, and becomes Music Director of the Seoul Philharmonic in 2024. He has appeared as guest with the Orchestre de Paris; Amsterdam's Royal Concertgebouw and Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestras; Vienna, Berlin, and Los Angeles philharmonic orchestras; and London Symphony, Chicago Symphony, and Cleveland orchestras.

Jaap van Zweden's NY Phil recordings include David Lang's *prisoner of the state* and Julia Wolfe's Grammy-nominated *Fire in my mouth* (Decca Gold). He conducted the first performances in Hong Kong of Wagner's *Ring Cycle*, the Naxos recording of which led the Hong Kong Philharmonic to be named the 2019 *Gramophone* Orchestra of the year. His performance of Wagner's *Parsifal* received the Edison Award for Best Opera Recording in 2012.

Born in Amsterdam, Jaap van Zweden became the youngest-ever concertmaster of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra at age 19 and began his conducting career almost 20 years later. He was named *Musical America's* 2012 Conductor of the Year, was profiled by CBS *60 Minutes* on arriving at the NY Phil, and in the spring of 2023 received the prestigious Concertgebouw Prize. In 1997 he and his wife, Aaltje, established the Papageno Foundation to support families of children with autism.

The **New York Philharmonic** connects with millions of music lovers each season through live concerts in New York and around the world, broadcasts, streaming, education programs, and more. In the 2023–24 season — which builds on the Orchestra's transformation reflected in the new David Geffen Hall — the NY Phil honors Jaap van Zweden in his farewell season as Music Director, premieres 14 works by a wide range of composers including some whom van Zweden has championed, marks György Ligeti's centennial, and celebrates the 100th birthday of the beloved Young People's Concerts.

The Philharmonic has commissioned and / or premiered important works, from Dvořák's *New World Symphony* to Tania León's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Stride*. The NY Phil has released more than 2,000 recordings since 1917, and in 2023 announced a partnership with Apple Music Classical, the new streaming app designed to deliver classical music lovers the optimal listening experience. The Orchestra builds on a longstanding commitment to serving its communities — which has led to annual free concerts across New York City and the free online New York Philharmonic Shelby White & Leon Levy Digital Archives — through a new ticket access program.

Founded in 1842, the New York Philharmonic is the oldest symphony orchestra in the United States, and one of the oldest in the world. Jaap van Zweden became Music Director in 2018–19, following titans including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler. Gustavo Dudamel will become Music and Artistic Director beginning in 2026 after serving as Music Director Designate in 2025–26.

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