



Palouse Choral Society & Washington Idaho Symphony

present

Lynette Pfund

Soprano

Madelein Bowman

Mezzo-Soprano

Christopher Pfund

Tenor

Aaron Agulay

Bass



Giselle Hillyer Concert Master

Paul H. Thompson

Artistic and Music Director

Part I

Sinfonia

Comfort Ye

Every Valley

And the Glory of the Lord

Thus Saith the Lord

But Who May Abide

And He Shall Purify

Behold a Virgin

O Thou That Tellest Good Tidings

For Behold, Darkness

The People that Walked in Darkness

For Unto Us a Child is Born

Pastoral Symphony

There Were Shepherds Abiding

And Lo, the Angel of the Lord
And the Angel Said Unto Them
Suddenly There was with the Angel
Glory to God in the Highest
Rejoice Greatly
Then Shall the Eyes of the Blind
He Shall Feed His Flock /Come Unto Him
His Yoke is Easy

Part II

Hallelujah

Part III

Amen

For the enjoyment of all listeners and the integrity of our audio recording, we kindly request that crying, or otherwise distracting, children be attended to in the lobby.

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Although he was born in Halle, Germany, and though he had a life-long love for Italian opera and spent his entire fortune trying to produce it in London, George Frideric Handel (1685-1759) was England's greatest composer of English oratorio. Handel's oratorios appeared at the intersection of the end of his career as a composer of Italian opera and the beginning of his formulating, and ultimately perfecting, the English oratorio. His last Italian opera was composed in 1741, and his first English oratorio, *Esther*, in 1732. By 1738, Handel began to focus mainly on oratorio composition. So, it's significant that Handel's first love, greatest energy, and precious treasure were poured into the composition and production of Italian opera in England. Although those efforts met with some initial success, they eventually had a deleterious effect on his health, and ultimately left him nearly bankrupt. In fact, the composition of *Esther* was an attempt to recoup losses from his latest failed opera production.

The origin of the oratorio is, itself, also Italian, more specifically Roman, and in its earliest manifestations involved sung liturgical or religious dramas in Latin. During the 17th century, the form found its way to Germany through the works of Heinrich Schütz, the greatest Protestant German composer before Bach. His oratorio passions were sung in German and were composed for performance in church. But at the hands of Handel, the English oratorio, unlike its predecessors, found an audience in the public theater.

Though *Messiah* shares many common characteristics with Handel's other twenty or so oratorios, it is the least typical in several respects: it has more choruses than any other except *Israel in Egypt*; it does not have a newly written libretto but one compiled from existing short passages from the Bible; and it has no named characters or overall narrative, presenting instead a series of contemplations on the life of Christ and Christian redemption.

The work is divided into three parts. The entire work is preceded by an overture (orchestral introduction) in the French style: a slow, solemn march in a dotted rhythm (long-short-long-short long). This section is followed by a fast moving section with imitative entries of instruments for the bulk of the movement, finally returning to the mood of the opening as it concludes. The French overture was originally used during the reign of Louis XIV to reflect the splendor of his court. The overture preceded each opera and signified the entry of the king into the opera house. It is significant that Handel chose to use the French overture for the opening of his oratorio that would proclaim the Messiah.

The first part of the oratorio deals with the prophecies concerning Christ's birth. An appealing sequence of Christmas movements follows, comprising the chorus 'For unto us a child is born', with its powerful setting of the words 'Wonderful' and 'Counsellor'; recitatives depicting the angels bringing the good news to the shepherds; and the imaginative final chorus, 'Glory to God', which ends with a *diminuendo* as the angels disappear from sight.

Part Two is the dramatic heart of the work. It tells of Christ's passion, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension. Here we find a wide range of emotional expression, from the crowd's derisive taunts in 'He trusted in God', to the heartbreaking alto aria, 'He was despised' and the bass soloist's fierce rage in 'Why do the nations'. This part ends, though, on a gloriously optimistic note, with trumpets, drums and chorus blazing out their triumphant 'Hallelujah!'. There are three distinct textual statements in this chorus, besides the exclamation "hallelujah!" The first of these is: "For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth" set for full chorus and orchestra all joined together in a single melodic line, seeming to reflect the monotheistic oneness of God. This is further amplified by the word "omnipotent" leaping up and down an octave encompassing the entire universe of a complete musical scale. One author describes the next section depicting "The kingdom of this World is become the kingdom of the Lord and of His Christ" as follows:

Handel sets the kingdom of this world in reduced orchestration (strings only) and restricted range, reserving an explosion of light and sound (expanding into a high register and adding trumpets and drums) for the "Kingdom of this World and of His Christ." The juxtaposition is startling, no matter how many times one hears it.

Then, in the final section, he sets the phrase "and He shall reign for ever and ever" in the form of a round (technically a fugue) which projects the infinite extent of Christ's reign since a round has no end. The buildup to the final declamation, following a haunting moment of silence just preceding it, of HAL-LE-LU JAH, brings to a conclusion the most famous movement of classical music in history.



Part Three consists entirely of commentary, principally on the resurrection and the theme of Christian redemption. In a work that abounds in superb music, this section contains some of Handel's most inspired writing, beginning with the radiant soprano aria, 'I know that my redeemer liveth'. Equally superb is the bass aria, 'The trumpet shall sound', with its spectacular trumpet solo. However, it is in the towering final choruses, 'Worthy is the Lamb' and 'Amen', that Handel truly surpasses himself with music that carries all before it in an exultant affirmation of faith.

Handel turned to the oratorio during Lent when opera was forbidden as a part of the penitential season of the Church. His treatment of the form differed markedly from Bach's oratorios. Instead of being devotional in attitude, Handel's works were more subjective, infusing elements of his more dramatic operatic style. Thus, his oratorios were intended for concert performances without staging. Unquestionably the most significant and distinguishing feature of his oratorios is the chorus, both musically and dramatically.

One important aspect of Handel's success among English audiences was his ability to compose music that they liked. Commenting on this in his *General History of the Science and Practice of Music* (1776), Sir John Hawkins said that Handel "was used to say, that, to an English audience, music joined to poetry was not an entertainment for an evening and that something that had the appearance of a plot or fable was necessary to keep their attention awake." Handel seemed to have an uncanny ability to compose music that actually delighted the English. He once told Gluck: "What the English like is something they can beat time to, something that hits them straight on the drum of the ear."

Having composed *Messiah* within the astonishingly short period between August 22 and September 14, 1741, Handel had, by then, completely abandoned his ill-fated efforts in the production of Italian opera in England. The opera he had written for the 1740-41 season—*Deidamia*—was his last. Although Handel had been most active in London, the venue for the premiere of his Messiah was in the less prominent city of Dublin where he had been invited to produce a series of concerts. The following notice appeared in Faulkner's Journal for March 23 to 27 under the heading "important notice:"

For relief of the Prisoners in the several Gaols, and for the support of Mercer's Hospital in Stephen's-street, and of the Charitable Infirmary on the Inn's Quay, on Monday the 12th of April, will be performed at the Musical Hall in Fishamble-street, Mr. Handel's new Grand Oratorio, called the MESSIAH, in which the Gentlemen of the Choirs of both Cathedrals will assist, with some concertos on the Organ by Mr. Handel.

The success of *Messiah* owes much to the fine libretto compiled for Handel by Charles Jennens, who had previously collaborated with him on his oratorio *Saul*. Jennens' extensive knowledge of literature and music made him in many ways an ideal creative partner for Handel, though the relationship was not without its tensions. Jennens was free to offer, and Handel apt to accept, incisive criticisms of text settings within a score. Their intellectual and religious compatibility with each other is reflected in the manner in which the texts assembled by Jennens are so powerfully expressed and proclaimed musically by Handel. These two were men of the world who shared views on heaven, a belief in Messianic prophecy, and miracles, and they were determined to communicate their convictions to the masses. Just as Handel's harmonies were basically simple but potentially sublime, so Jennens' ability to select and refine brought great power to his literary thrust, and it was this thrust that made Messiah what it is.

The libretto that Jennens assembled for Messiah comes directly from the Bible. His primary source was the King James Version of the Bible. For most of the Psalm texts, however, he used the 1662 *Book of Common Prayer* (the official prayer book of the church of England). In total, the libretto is derived from 81 Bible verses that come from 14 different books of the Bible. These books and the number of verses used from each are as follows: Isaiah – 21; Psalms – 15; 1 Corinthians – 10; Revelation – 7; Luke – 6; Romans – 5; Matthew – 4; Malachi – 3; Haggai – 2; Job – 2; Zechariah – 2; Hebrews – 2; Lamentations – 1; and John – 1.

Stephen Martin is Professor Emeritus of Music & International Studies at Portland State University. He and his wife Mary live on their farm in Northern Idaho.



Concert Master



Originally from New Zealand, **Giselle Hillyer** lives in Moscow where she is active in the region as a music teacher and performer.

She has had Suzuki training with James Hutchins, Edmund Sprunger and David Strom, as well as 20 years of experience teaching students of all ages and levels. From 2006-2013, Giselle was a lecturer in violin and viola at the University of Wisconsin River Falls, and before this she was an Associate Professor of Music at Mercer University in Macon, Georgia. Her students have been competition medal winners and scholarship winners at national summer festivals.

Giselle has a Bachelor of Music from the University of Adelaide, a Master of Music from the New England Conservatory and a Doctor of Musical Arts from the University of Kansas. Her violin teachers included Jan Tawroszewicz, Beryl Kimber, Michelle Auclair and Ben Sayevich.

A frequent performer of solo and chamber music recitals in the Palouse region as well as nationally and abroad, some of Giselle's recent concerts include solo recitals in Moscow, Pullman and New Zealand and chamber music concerts with Washington State University and University of Idaho faculty. She is currently co-concertmaster of the Washington-Idaho Symphony Orchestra, and has performed with the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Minnesota Opera Orchestra and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra.

A highlight of teaching for Giselle is the relationships with her students and their families that teaching in the Preparatory Division provides. She has been most pleased when she could help a student accomplish personal goals in his or her playing and life.

Soprano Soloist



Soprano Lynette Pfund was praised by the New York Times for her "easy stage manner" and "fluid vocal technique." She has performed roles with regional opera companies throughout the United States including the Chautauqua, Omaha, and Sarasota operas, as well as solo concert appearances at both Avery Fisher Hall and Carnegie Hall in New York City. Her wide-ranging opera repertoire includes Pamina in Mozart's *Die Zauberflöte*, Drusilla in Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, Frasquita in Bizet's *Carmen*, Rosalinda in Johann Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Gretel in Humperdink's *Hänsel und Gretel* as well as the title role in Verdi's *Luisa Miller*. Pfund can also be heard

singing the role of Miss Wordsworth in Britten's *Albert Herring*, on Vox Records. Lynette moved to Moscow, Idaho in the fall of 2014 with her husband Christopher Pfund and three children. In the fall of 2015 she joined the faculty at the University of Idaho as LHSOM's Opera Workshop's co-director.

Mezzo-Soprano Soloist



Mezzo-Soprano Madelein Bowman is currently a junior attending the University of Idaho. She is majoring in Vocal Performance and has been involved with U of I's Opera Workshop, the Vandaleers, and outside groups such as Opera Elect and the Sun Valley Summer Symphony. She has performed roles such as 'La Ciesca' in Puccini's Gianni Schicchi and 'Carmen' in Bizet's Carmen. She is so excited to be working with the Palouse Choral Society this December and wishes everyone a Merry Christmas.

Tenor Soloist



American tenor Christopher Pfund has performed to critical acclaim with countless major orchestras and oratorio festivals throughout North America including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, the Detroit Symphony, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, the Bach Festival Society of Winter Park, New York Oratorio Society and the Orchestra of St. Luke's. International engagements have included performances in the Czech Republic, Germany, Mexico and Brazil. Critics have praised his "rounded vocal beauty" and The New York Times called his voice an

"attractive tenor [that] helps define a sympathetic character."

Universally recognized for his irreverent portrayals of the roasting swan in Orff's Carmina Burana, Pfund has made the role a pillar of his career with over 150 performances on three continents. His wide repertoire includes not only the standard Baroque masterpieces such as Bach's Mass in B minor and Handel's Messiah but also much of the 20th century canon of concert repertoire including Britten's War Requiem and the Klaus-Narr from Schoenberg's Gurre-Lieder.

Recordings include the title role in Britten's Albert Herring on the Vox label, Distant Playing Fields: Vocal Music of Amy Beach and William Mayer on Newport Classics, and Carmina Burana with Fabio Mechetti and the Jacksonville Symphony. In addition to his active performance career, Pfund is currently Assistant Professor of Voice at the University of Idaho where he teaches studio voice and directs the opera program.

Bass Soloist



Baritone, Dr. Aaron Agulay is a Clinical Assistant Professor of Music and Voice at Washington State University where he teaches Studio Voice, Vocal Pedagogy, Vocal Literature and Diction for Singers. Prior to WSU, he earned his Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in performance, pedagogy and literature from James Madison University in 2016 and has been teaching with the vocal/choral department at the Conservatory of Shenandoah University.

In addition to his teaching career, Dr. Agulay has extensive performing experience in venues and organizations worldwide, ranging from summer-stock theaters to nationally and internationally

renowned opera houses. As the Grand Prize winner, Audience Choice and Director's Choice of the Annapolis Opera Competition, he was praised with "...strong sound and stage craft...an acting baritone," (The Baltimore Sun), and as the title character in Elena Kats-Cherin's The Rage of Life at Konzert Theater Bern, "Possesses rich and exciting baritone timbres... executes a fine technique in an almost tenorial tesitura role." (Kultureagenda, Bern, CH).

Some memorable performances include singing the role of Mr. Lindquist in "A Little Night Music" directed and designed by American fashion designer Isaac Mizarahi with Opera Theatre of St. Louis, and at the Banff Centre for the Performing Arts singing the baritone solo in "The Wound-Dresser" by John Adams under the composer's baton. Agulay made his operatic debut in Europe as a member of the Internationales Opern Studio and mainstage cast with Opernhaus Zürich. From his many mainstage roles, highlights include being a part of the world premiere of Marc-André Dalbavie's Gesualdo, Anno Schreier's Die Stadt der Blinden and also singing in Leo Nucci's last performance of Verdi's Rigoletto. He also was featured in a run of Moshe Leiser and Patrice Caurier's original production of Rossini's Le Comte Ory alongside Javier Camerena and Cecilia Bartoli, which is now featured on a Live Digital Video Recording by Decca Music Group Limited.

Dr. Agulay's musical training started with his Bachelors of Music under the tutelage of Kevin McMillan at the University of Western Ontario, Canada. He earned his Master Degree from the University of Maryland, College Park as part of the Maryland Opera Studio where he studied with Dominic Cossa, and was selected by Marilyn Horne during her artist in residency to be a part of The Song Continues master class series at Carnegie Hall. While attending Oberlin Conservatory for an Artist Diploma, he was part of the last studio of world-renowned voice pedagogue the late Richard Miller. Agulay was also a young artist with Opera Theatre St. Louis' Gerdine Young Artist Program, the Bonfils-Stanton Foundation Apprentice Program with Central City Opera, The Aspen Opera Center and The Opera Program at The Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity.

Dr. Agulay is an active recitalist and adjudicator. He also maintains a private voice studio as well as regularly teaching master classes and clinics for schools and universities. He is a native of London, Ontario, Canada.

Artistic and Music Director



Paul Thompson is assistant professor and Director of Choral Activities at the University of Idaho where he conducts choral ensembles, teaches graduate and undergraduate courses in choral conducting, choral methods classes, and oversees the master's program in choral conducting. He comes to this position from Francis Marion University in Florence, SC, where he was Director of Choral Activities and Voice Area Coordinator. Thompson has also been a member of the choral faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Mailwaukee and at the University of Wisconsin-Manitowoc and spent four years directing the choirs at St. Mary's Springs High School in Fond du Lac, WI.

In 2016, Thompson completed his DMA in Choral Conducting and Literature at CU-Boulder, where his TA duties included directing two vocal jazz ensembles, working with several choirs, and assisting in the teaching of undergraduate conducting. During this time, he won first place in the 2016 SWACDA Graduate Conducting Competition. Thompson also holds a MM in Choral Conducting from UW-Milwaukee, and a B.A. in Voice from Marian University in Fond du Lac, WI.

Thompson's primary research interest is in the area of conducting pedagogy. His current focus is an attempt to inform and re-frame non-verbal musical communication using ideas from Information Theory and Bloom's Taxonomy, a topic on which he has been invited to give workshops and presentations across the country.

Thompson is an active participant in the furtherance of choral music throughout the country, frequently appearing as a clinician and honor choir director. Also active as a singer, he has appeared as a soloist with the Boulder Philharmonic, North Carolina Baroque Orchestra, The Green Lake Festival, Bach Festival Florence, The King's Counterpoint, and the Florence Symphony Orchestra. In addition, he has appeared as a guest artist with Vocal Tapestry, Present Music in Milwaukee, and as a performer on the Yolanda Marculescu Vocal Arts Series.

Chorale Accompanist



Elena Panchenko is originally from Ukraine and studied at the Moscow Conservatory where she earned her degree in piano performance, music history and music theory. She served as the Musical Director of the Penn State Opera for four years and performed the debut of two new operas, including *Mrs. Satan*, an opera about the life of the first woman presidential candidate, Victoria Woodhall. Working extensively as an accompanist and church musician, Elena has performed with groups as varied as a children's dance group to such well-known musicians as Francis Orval and David Shifrin, clarinetist and Music Director of Chamber Music at the Lincoln Center. In addition to Elena's duties with the chorale, she is also the Music Director at St. James' Episcopal Church in Pullman. Elena's family includes her husband, Alex, WSU Math Professor and former Ukrainian rock star (as is Elena), and their son Ivan, an attorney.

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