

CIRENCESTER
CHORAL
SOCIETY

Conductor: Carleton Etherington



Handel *Messiah*

Iria Perestrelo

soprano

Catherine Backhouse

alto

Paul Curievici

tenor

Thomas Schütz

bass

Cirencester Choral Society

Corinium Camerata

Andrew Court *leader*

Margaret Wills *cello*

William Baldry *harpsichord*

7:00 pm Saturday 10th December 2011
Cirencester Parish Church

MESSIAH

by G.F. Handel (1685-1759)

New Novello Choral Edition (Shaw)



PART ONE

- 1 Sinfonia (Overture)
- 2 Recit Comfort ye my people (*tenor*)
- 3 Air Ev'ry valley shall be exalted (*bass*)
- 4 Chor And the glory of the Lord
- 5 Recit Thus saith the Lord (*bass*)
- 6 Air But who may abide the day of his coming (*alto*)
- 7 Chor And he shall purify
- 8 Recit Behold, a virgin shall conceive (*alto*)
- 9 Air (*alto*) & chor O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion
- 10 Recit For behold, darkness shall cover the earth (*bass*)
- 11 Air The people that walked in darkness (*bass*)
- 12 Chor For unto us a child is born
- 13 Pifa ('Pastoral Symphony')
- 14a Recit There were shepherds abiding in the field (*soprano*)
- 14b Recit And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them (*soprano*)
- 15 Recit And the angel said unto them (*soprano*)
- 16 Recit And suddenly there was with the angel (*soprano*)
- 17 Chor Glory to God
- 18 Air Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion (*soprano*)
- 19 Recit Then shall the eyes of the blind (*alto*)
- 20 Air He shall feed his flock like a shepherd (*alto and soprano*)
- 21 Chor His yoke is easy, and his burthen is light

INTERVAL (20 minutes)

Refreshments available in the North and South aisles. Please purchase ticket at the bar before collecting your drink.

PART TWO

- 22 Chor Behold the Lamb of God
- 23 Air He was despised (*alto*)
- 24 Chor Surely he hath borne our griefs
- 25 Chor And with his stripes
- 26 Chor All we like sheep
- 27 Recit All they that see him laugh him to scorn (*tenor*)
- 28 Chor He trusted in God
- 29 Recit Thy rebuke hath broken his heart (*tenor*)
- 30 Air Behold, and see if there be any sorrow (*tenor*)
- 31 Recit He was cut off out of the land of the living (*tenor*)
- 32 Air But thou didst not leave his soul in hell (*tenor*)
- 33 Chor Lift up your heads, O ye gates
- 34 - 35 omitted
- 36 Air Thou art gone up on high (*alto*)
- 37 Chor The Lord gave the word
- 38 Air How beautiful are thy feet (*soprano*)
- 39 Chor Their sound is gone out
- 40 Air Why do the nations so furiously rage together? (*bass*)
- 41 Chor Let us break their bonds asunder
- 42 Recit He that dwelleth in heaven (*tenor*)
- 43 Air Thou shalt break them (*tenor*)
- 44 Chor Hallelujah (*It is traditional for the audience to stand for this chorus*)

PART THREE

- 45 Air I know that my redeemer liveth (*soprano*)
- 46 Chor Since by man came death
- 47 Recit Behold, I tell you a mystery (*bass*)
- 48 Air The trumpet shall sound (*bass*)
- 49 - 52 omitted
- 53 Chor Worthy is the lamb that was slain

GEORGE FREDERICK HANDEL was born in Halle, Germany in 1685, the same year as J S Bach. Having eventually persuaded his father that his interests lay in musicianship rather than a career in law, he had secured a position as violinist and harpsichordist at the Hamburg opera house by the time he was eighteen. His love of opera soon drew him to Italy where his reputation as a composer of opera began to flourish. Returning north in 1710, he took up the post of Kappelmeister to Prince George, Elector of Hanover (the future King George I), and visited London the same year. Finding that the English shared his enthusiasm for Italian opera, he decided in 1712 to settle permanently in England, where his fame and influence continued to grow. He became a British subject in 1727.



Handel House, Brook St, Mayfair, where Handel lived from 1723 until his death in 1759

Until the early 1740s opera continued to be the mainstay of Handel's musical life - he composed 42 in all - but throughout his career the scope of his composition steadily broadened to include oratorios, cantatas, anthems, orchestral pieces and organ concerti. As well as for *Messiah*, Handel is also almost universally known for works written to celebrate Georgian royal occasions, including the *Water Music*,

played on the Thames in 1717, *Zadok the priest* and the other *Coronation Anthems* commissioned for the crowning of George II (1727) and *Music for the Royal Fireworks* (1749), the latter said to have been attended by an audience of 12,000 at its first performance.

In the 1750s Handel suffered progressively from poor health until his death in 1759. He was buried in Westminster Abbey following a funeral with full state honours.

MESSIAH was the inspiration not of Handel but of his librettist Charles Jennens, a literary scholar and editor of Shakespeare's plays, who had already worked with Handel on *Saul*. Jennens desired a scriptural anthology set to music and submitted the libretto to Handel in the summer of 1741. Handel's response was remarkable: he composed the entire work in just 24 days!

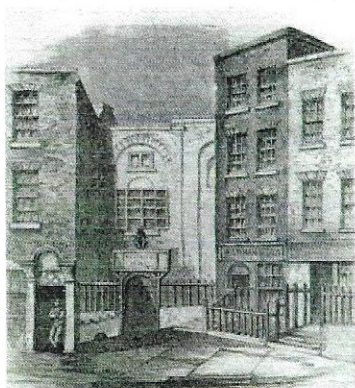
Messiah
an Oratorio

Title page of Handel's autographed score

Messiah is divided into three parts, covering Christ's birth, death and resurrection. Old Testament libretto comes from the book of Isaiah and the Psalms, with the rather fewer New Testament texts including verses from the Gospels, Paul's Letters and Revelation.

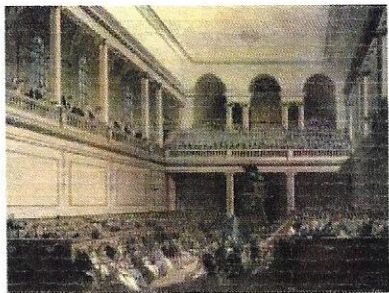
Following an invitation to stage a series of charity concerts in Dublin in late 1741, arrangements were made the following spring to give *Messiah* its first performance. This took place at the Great Music Hall in Fishamble Street, Dublin on 13th April 1742.

To maximise the hall's capacity, gentlemen were requested to remove their swords and ladies were asked not to wear hoops in their dresses. The performance delighted the audience of 700 and the press alike; the event was deemed an outstanding success. The substantial proceeds were donated to local charities and hospitals for the mentally ill at the request of Jonathan Swift, Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral.



The Great Music Hall, Fishamble Street, Dublin, the venue for the first performance of Messiah

Despite numerous performances in London from 1743 onwards, for which Handel continued to make modifications to the score, *Messiah* did not stir the emotions of the English as it had done the Irish until the institution in 1750 of the annual charity performances at the Foundling Hospital, which continued until Handel's death and beyond.



The chapel of London's Foundling Hospital, where annual charity performances of Messiah began in 1750

As the popularity of *Messiah* grew, a fashion for large-scale performances developed, with many hundreds of players taking part, including a series of concerts held at Westminster Abbey from 1784 under the patronage of King George III. At the same time, new orchestrations were being written to suit modern tastes, trends which continued into the 19th century as the work became one of the best known and most frequently performed choral compositions in western music.

By the 1880s, though, the tide was turning. Calls for a more historically accurate rendition of Handel's conception began to be heard. Initially these were resisted. Ebenezer Prout's 1902 edition, for example, contained additional orchestration that he felt was needed to support the large choral society performances of the day. Large choruses and alternative orchestrations are still popular today - this Society used the Mozart orchestration in its last performance in 1997, but the trend towards smaller choral forces and authentic instrumentation continued through the 20th century.



The final bars of the Hallelujah chorus from Handel's 1741 manuscript

Modern day acceptance of this approach to performing *Messiah* is due in no small measure to the painstaking work of Watkins Shaw (1911-1996), the musicologist whose edition, completed in the mid 1960s and revised in the early 1990s, has now become the modern standard. It is perhaps fitting that we use this edition of *Messiah* tonight in Shaw's centenary year.

Tonight's Soloists are from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama (GSMD) and appear by kind permission of the Principal.

Iria Perestrelo (*soprano*) graduated from GSMD, where she is currently undertaking the Guildhall Artist Masters in Historical Performance, under the tutelage of Susan Waters and supported by the Seary Charitable Trust, the Sir Richard Stapley Educational Trust, the Guildhall School Trust and the Southdown Trust.



Iria has performed widely and won awards both in the UK and her home country Portugal, where she has broadcast on radio. In 2007 she was invited to represent Guildhall School in the prestigious Kathleen Ferrier Bursary Competition for young singers and last year made her debut at the London Handel Festival.

Iria gained a broad experience of major choral works while singing in professional ensembles in Europe and the UK and is now a member of the *Guildhall Consort*, a professional ensemble comprising selected students from GSMD in collaboration with *The Sixteen*. Iria is also part of the female chamber choir *Alma Mater*. Most recently Iria performed in Jonathan Miller's staged production of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* at the National Theatre.

Catherine Backhouse (*mezzo soprano*) grew up in Edinburgh, graduated with an honours degree in music from Durham University and is currently on the Opera Studies course at GSMD, studying with John Evans. Catherine won second prize in the 2011 English Speakers and Singers Patricia Routledge Song Competition.

Her operatic roles include works ranging from Handel and Mozart to *Flat Pack: An Opera in IKEA* by Tom AZ Lane ("It was awesome" - Kate Muir, *The Times*). Recent solo oratorio work has included Bach's *Mass in B Minor* with The Rodolfus Choir and Handel's *Israel in Egypt* at the St. David's Festival Wales. Catherine has also performed with the period instrument ensembles *Symphonie des Plaisirs* and the *Squair Mile Viol Consort*.



Before focusing on solo singing and opera she spent three years touring the world as part of the professional a cappella group *Voces8*. She currently works with the *BBC Singers*, *Polyphony*, *Philharmonia Voices* and *London Voices*.

Catherine is supported by the Sir James Caird Travelling Scholarships Trust, the Ruby and Will George Trust and the Worshipful Company of Plaisterers.

Paul Curievici (*tenor*) followed a more circuitous route than some to conservatoire life - taking a degree in Philosophy and Politics and then a graduate job before deciding that none of that was as much fun as singing.



Paul recently completed his studies on the Opera Course at GSMD under John Evans. Recent performances include Sam Kaplan in the American opera *Street Scene* by Weill at the Young Vic for The Opera Group, Count Vaudemont in Tchaikovsky's *Iolanta*, and Chevalier de la Force in *Dialogues des Carmélites* by Poulenc at the Guildhall.

His previous oratorio and concert experience includes the *Stabat Mater* of Rossini and Dvorak, Handel's *Israel in Egypt*, Haydn's *The Seasons* and *Creation* and Mendelssohn's *Saint Paul*, and Finzi's song cycle *A Young Man's Exhortation* with Iain Burnside.

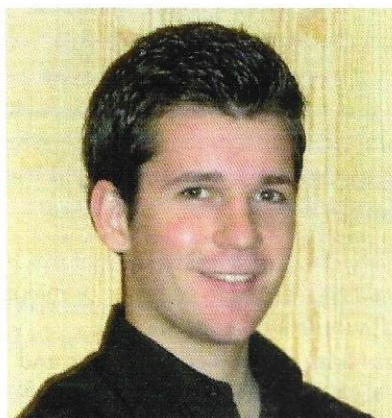
Paul is extremely grateful for the continuing support he receives from Serena Fenwick.

Thomas Schütz (*baritone*) received his first musical education from his father Rainer Schütz. He studied at the Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln with Christoph Prégardien and graduated in 2010. Since 2007 he has held a scholarship from "LiveMusicNow", the association founded by Yehudi Menuhin.

He has performed in concerts across Germany, Austria, France, Italy, England, Spain and Belgium. His repertoire extends from old masters to contemporary works, his oratorio experience including the significant baritone solo roles in the cantatas and passions of Bach, works by Brahms, Schubert, Mozart and Mendelssohn, the Fauré *Requiem* and Stravinsky's *Requiem Canticles*.

Thomas is an exponent of art song and has received many invitations for song recitals in Germany, including the Schumannfest at the Tonhalle Düsseldorf. A 2010 CD recording of Schumann's *Der Rose Pilgerfahrt* features Thomas in the role of the Müller.

He was a prizewinner in the vocal ensemble category at the 2010 Mendelssohn Bartholdy competition in Berlin and has completed master classes with the Hilliard Ensemble, Emma Kirkby, Franz-Josef Selig and Wolfgang Rihm.



Thomas currently attends the Guildhall Vocal Artist Masters course at GSMD. Recently he won the Paul Hamburger prize in the Graham Johnsons Schumann concert series at GSMD and was elected for the Young Songmakers Almanac.

About the Choral Society

Cirencester Choral Society was founded in 1863 and currently has over 120 members. We are all amateur singers but strive to perform to the highest possible standards with the resources available to us. We employ a professional conductor and a professional accompanist to train us. Our Conductor **Carleton Etherington**



has been directing us since January 2005. He is Organist of Tewkesbury Abbey, directs the Abbey Choir and accompanies the Tewkesbury Abbey Schola Cantorum. Carleton features on many CD recordings and broadcasts regularly on the BBC, including last Christmas morning with the service from Tewkesbury Abbey on BBC1. Our accompanist **Jenny Rees** also joined us in January 2005. She is a freelance professional musician and teacher, and ably assembles orchestral players under the banner of the *Corinium Camerata* when required for our concerts.



Our success relies on regularly attracting new singers to our ranks and you can learn more about our activities, and what we look for in potential new members, from our website www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk. If you are interested in joining us, please submit the application form that you will find there or contact our Membership Secretary, Anne Vickers, on 01285 659114. We rehearse on Tuesday evenings from 7:30 to 9:30 pm at St Peter's Hall, St Peter's Rd, Cirencester. Our main season runs from September to May and rehearsals for our May 2012 concert begin on Tuesday 10th January.

Our members

Soprano

Catherine Bagnall, Liz Beak, Sybil Bride, Sue Burton, Pamela Clayton, Janine Coleridge, Alison Crooks, Anne Davies, Sandra Dent, Marta Ferro, Alison Goodall, Jenny Hall, Sara Harvey-Craig, Julia Hasler, Diana Heywood, Judith Ivison, Patsy Jackson, Angela Jones, Valerie Joyce, Catherine Kirwin, Valerie Lambert, Beryl Le Bars, Billie Llewelyn, Mary Ludbrook, Diane Martin, Margaret McIvor, Anne Miggins, Margaret Mullin, Jennette Murphy, Shirley Nicholas, Eunice Page, Penny Phillips, Susie Rigsby, Jacqueline Shepherd, Barbara Smith, Jilly South, Michelle Stephenson, Bethany Straw, Wiggy Talbot Rice, Anne Vickers, Diane Welch, Amanda Wheatley

Alto

Frances Angus, Sally Bew, Meg Blumsom, Sarah Borg, Sue Brayne, Sophie Brown, Gemma Butcher, Heather Church, Mary Clayton, Caroline Coates, Fiona Cordiner, Diana Crane, Fiona Fry, Nicola Grinham, Dorothy Hartridge, Ruth Hayman, Debbie Hewitt, Claire Hoad, Ingela Jacob, Sonia La Fontaine, Lorna Lane, Mary Macdonald, Liz McGlynn, Olivia Murray, Alison Norris, Londa Ntotila, Laura Patterson, Ann Pole, Ann Price, Jane Read, Margaret Reynolds, Anne Smith, Chris Sutton, Ghislaine Venn, Pat Westall, Adrienne Winter, Gill Young, Joanna Young, Shan Zamiri

Tenor

Amiyo Banerjee, Andy Crane, Rob Crow, Sue Gilks, Vic Gilks, Mike Harvey, Ros Ivison, Alastair Macdonald, Brian Marston, John Martin, John Pinnington, Graham Shearn, Robin Thompson, Pamela Varey, Anne Williams, Michael Winter

Bass

John Appleton, Nicholas Arbuthnott, Digby Bew, William Brereton, Anthony Cole, Bernard Crooks, Richard Davies, Garth De Courcy-Ireland, Anthony Eyre, Raymond Fenton, Keith Greenwood, Roger Heafield, John Hicks, Richard Kent, Colin Levine, Bob Merrill, Richard Mullings, Tim Page, Geoff Richards, Bob Selby, David South, Graeme Tonge, Phil Tubbs

Corinium Camerata

Oboe – Andrew King, Rachel Moody; **Bassoon** – Deb Coleman;

Trumpet – Richard Colquhoun, James Bennett; **Timpani** – James Bower;

1st Violin – Andrew Court, Nicolette Brown, Sonia Nash, Elin White;

2nd Violin – Margaret Debley, Catherine Fowles, Therese De Souza, Thomas Payne;

Viola – January Tewson, Rachael Birkin; **Cello** – Margaret Wills, Avril Rump; **Double bass** – Imogen Fernando;

Harpichord – William Baldry

Cirencester Choral Society Concerts in 2012

Sat 5th May 2012

Cirencester Parish Church

Hummel - Mass in B flat

Haydn - Stabat Mater

*with the Corinium Camerata and
soloists from the
Guildhall School of Music and Drama,
London*

Sat 8th December 2012

Cirencester Parish Church

Purcell

Dido & Aeneas

(concert performance)

Te Deum and Jubilate in D

O Sing unto the Lord

Tickets go on sale one month
before the concert dates and
are available from members, from the
Cirencester Visitor Information Centre
or via the Society's website
www.cirencester-choral-soc.org.uk

Thank you to our supporters

The Society gratefully
acknowledges:

- the concert sponsorship of
Sewell, Mullings and Logie, Solicitors;
- the generous support provided by
The Letter Press in the printing of this
programme;
- the *Cirencester Visitor Information
Centre* for providing box office
facilities;
- the *Parish Church* for making the
venue available for concert
performances;
- *you, our audience*, without whose loyal
following our future would be bleak!



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