



QUEEN'S PARK
SINGERS



QUEEN'S PARK
Junior
SINGERS

Messiah

by G. F. Handel

Mary Phillips, soprano

Rachel Maby, contralto

Guy Withers, tenor

Charles Naylor, bass

Queen's Park Singers

Queen's Park Junior Singers, director Mary Phillips

Asyla Ensemble

Oliver Till - conductor

Sunday 11th December 2016,
St. Martin's Church, Kensal Green

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2016,
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Kensal Green

Dear Friends

Despite Handel's *Messiah* being a story of redemption and resurrection it has become associated with the celebrations of the Christmas season and Queen's Park Singers are proud to continue the tradition. Tonight's performance is accompanied by the talented Asyla Ensemble playing on baroque instruments and therefore pitched as Handel would have heard it.

The choir have greatly enjoyed working with our new Music Director Oliver Till and our accompanist Hamish Brown both of whom have brought a new energy and enthusiasm to rehearsals.

We would like to thank the Vicar and staff of St Martin's for their assistance, and of course the Vicar and staff of St Anne's & St Andrew's who offer hospitality and support for rehearsals.

Live music is *alive* and well in Kensal Rise. We thank you for coming and hope you enjoy the performance. We wish you the compliments of the season.

Monica Healy
Chair
Queen's Park Singers

Queen's Park Singers would like to thank our sponsors for their generous support:



MASSERIA
GROUP



Messiah by George Frideric Handel (1685 - 1759)

Words compiled and edited by Charles Jennens (1700 - 1773)

Part I

Sinfonia

Comfort ye my people (Tenor)

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted (Tenor)

And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed (Chorus)

Thus saith the Lord of Hosts (Bass)

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

And He shall purify (Chorus)

Behold, a virgin shall conceive (Alto)

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion (Alto, Chorus)

For behold, darkness shall cover the earth (Bass)

The people that walked in darkness (Bass)

For unto us a child is born (Chorus)*

Pifa (Pastoral Symphony)

There were shepherds (Children's choir)*

And the angel said unto them (Children's choir)*

And suddenly there was with the angel (Children's choir)*

Glory to God in the highest (Chorus)*

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion (Soprano)

Part II

Behold, the Lamb of God (Chorus)

He was despised (Alto)

Surely, He hath borne our griefs (Chorus)

And with His stripes we are healed (Chorus)

All we like sheep have gone astray (Chorus)

All they that see Him (Tenor)



He trusted in God (Chorus)
Thy rebuke hath broken His heart (Tenor)
Behold, and see if there be any sorrow (Tenor)
He was cut off out of the land of the living (Soprano)
But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell (Soprano)
Lift up your heads, O ye gates (Chorus)

INTERVAL: 20 MINUTES

Unto which of the angels (Tenor)
Let all the angels of God worship Him (Chorus)
Thou art gone up on high (Alto)
The Lord gave the word (Chorus)
How beautiful are the feet (Soprano)
Why do the nations so furiously rage together? (Bass)
Let us break their bonds asunder (Chorus)
He that dwelleth in heaven (Tenor)
Thou shalt break them (Tenor)
Hallelujah (Chorus)*

Part III

I know that my redeemer liveth (Soprano)
Since by man came death (Chorus)
Behold, I tell you a mystery (Bass)
The trumpet shall sound (Bass)
Then shall be brought to pass the saying (Alto)
O death, where is thy sting? (Alto, Tenor)
But thanks be to God (Chorus)
If God be for us (Soprano)
Worthy is the Lamb that was slain ... Amen (Chorus)

* with Queen's Park Junior Singers



“I know that my redeemer liveth.”

Messiah (1741) is not only Handel's most famous work, it is by far the most frequently performed choral work in any language. From a Christian perspective it is a three-act drama of the whole history of mankind: Part 1, the prophecy of Christ's Nativity fulfilled; Part 2, the darkness of the Passion; Part 3, the glorious hope of Redemption afforded by the Son's sacrifice.

Handel, a devout Lutheran Pietist, and his librettist Jennens were passionately concerned to challenge the watering down of what they saw as the literal truth of the Christian story by rationalists, deists and dissenters. Their intention was to depict the miracle of God's intervention in human affairs through the inspiration of their text and music, and to convince the audience of this truth. The reduction of *Messiah* to a jolly set of yuletide choruses would frankly have appalled them; because the Nativity, joyful as it is, was intended merely to anticipate what for them were the central events of Part 3 - some of which, ironically, in our secular/multi-faith age, are sometimes perceived as an embarrassment and cut from performance.

Handel has popularly been depicted as a mere showman (as distinct from Bach “the profound Christian”); but *Messiah*, his eighth Oratorio, hinges on

that central declaration of faith: “I know that my redeemer liveth” which he caused to be inscribed both on his sister's tomb and his own monument in Westminster Abbey; and the cathartic moment in *Messiah* is the miraculous promise of Redemption: “And with his stripes we are healed”. In the nineteenth century Edward Fitzgerald, leader of a neo-Pagan movement, successfully created the image of Handel as “a good old pagan at heart” who craftily invented the Oratorio merely in order to bring in the religious audience. Fitzgerald admitted candidly that *Messiah* bored him to tears and this can be attributed in part to the performance style of his period. In mid-Victorian England, veneration for the work as a kind of substitute national



Handel, by Balthasar Denner



anthem was at its height and performances were thunderously overweighty: during the week-long 1887 Handel Festival, no fewer than 4000 choral and orchestral musicians took part.

Messiah's debut in the Fishamble Hall, Dublin, on the other hand, was given by a modest choir of thirty-two voices (basses, tenors, male altos and male trebles) and a small orchestra, and was rapturously received. However it was furiously denounced by the Anglican hierarchy when Handel attempted to perform it in London. Why? Because Handel had premiered it in a *music hall*, had used Gospel texts to *entertain* people and vulgarly arouse their senses - worse still, Handel had employed his close friend, the contralto Susannah Cibber to sing the aria *He was despised*. She had been involved in a salacious sex-scandal just as Handel was composing *Messiah* and had effectively been banished from public life in England. It was characteristic of Handel, who loved his friend's simple unaffected singing, that he dared to make a fallen woman like Susannah the very mouthpiece for Christ's suffering; and so profoundly moving was her performance of the aria in Dublin, that at its close a clergyman in the audience stood up and shouted "Woman, for this thy sins are forgiven thee!"

Nearly a decade would pass until *Messiah* was taken to English hearts, when in 1749 Handel began to perform

it annually on behalf of the Foundling Hospital, over the years raising so much money for the charity that Charles Burney wrote that *Messiah* "fed the hungry and clothed the naked."

What is the secret of *Messiah's* appeal to those of all faiths and none? It is something that goes well beyond the lyricism, polyphonic ingenuity and majestic instrumentation of the score. It generates a quality of attention and spiritual elevation that is unique in many people's experience, and reaches well beyond its overtly Christian message in its universal narrative of joy, struggle, loss, and the discovery of new hope.

Helen Dymond, formerly Lecturer in Handel Studies at the City Lit, London.

Hallelujah!

The first London performance of *Messiah* was attended by King George II. According to legend, the King was so moved by *Hallelujah* that he stood up and remained standing until the end of the chorus. Alternative theories have it that His Majesty had nodded off and woke up with a start on hearing the opening of *Hallelujah*, or that he assumed that these majestic strains must signal the imminent end of the performance, so got up to leave. Whatever the reason, protocol dictated that that everyone in the royal presence had to stand as well. Thus began the tradition according to which the audience stands for the *Hallelujah* chorus. We invite you to observe this custom this evening.

The libretto

PART I

Tenor

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God. Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. 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 40: 1-3*)

Tenor

Ev'ry valley shall be exalted, and ev'ry mountain and hill made low; the crooked straight and the rough places plain. (*Isaiah 40: 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 40: 5*)

Bass

Thus saith the Lord, the Lord of hosts: Yet once a little while and I will shake the heavens and the earth, the sea and the dry land. And I will shake all nations; and the desire of all nations shall come. (*Haggai 2: 6-7*)

The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the Covenant, whom you delight in; behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. (*Malachi 3: 1*)

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 3: 2*)

Chorus

And He shall purify the sons of Levi, that they may offer unto the Lord an offering in righteousness. (*Malachi 3: 3*)

Alto

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel, God with us. (*Isaiah 7: 14; Matthew 1: 23*)

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 40: 9*)
Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. (*Isaiah 60: 1*)

Bass

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. And the Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (*Isaiah 60: 2-3*)

Bass

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 9: 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 9: 6*)



Children's Chorus

There were shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night. 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 2: 8 - 9)*

Children's Chorus

And the angel said unto them: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." And suddenly there was with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God, and saying: *(Luke 2: 10 - 13)*

Chorus

"Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men."
(Luke 2: 14)

Soprano

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh unto thee; He is the righteous Saviour, and He shall speak peace unto the heathen.
(Zechariah 9: 9-10)

PART II

Chorus

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

Alto

He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. *(Isaiah 53: 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 53: 6)*

Chorus

Surely He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows! He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him. *(Isaiah 53: 4-5)*

Chorus

And with His stripes we are healed.
(Isaiah 53: 5)

Chorus

All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way. And the Lord hath laid on Him the iniquity of us all. *(Isaiah 53: 6)*

Tenor

All they that see Him laugh Him to scorn; they shoot out their lips, and shake their heads, saying: *(Psalm 22: 7)*

Chorus

"He trusted in God that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him." *(Psalm 22: 8)*



Charles Jennens, librettist

Tenor

Thy rebuke hath broken His heart: He is full of heaviness. He looked for some to have pity on Him, but there was no man, neither found He any to comfort him. *(Psalm 69: 20)*

Tenor

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

Soprano

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

Soprano

But Thou didst not leave His soul in hell; nor didst Thou suffer Thy Holy One to see corruption. *(Psalm 16: 10)*

Chorus

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord strong and mighty, The Lord mighty in battle.

Lift up your heads, O ye gates; and be ye lift up, ye everlasting doors; and the King of Glory shall come in. Who is this King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory. *(Psalm 24: 7-10)*

Tenor

Unto which of the angels said He at any time: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee?" *(Hebrews 1: 5)*

Chorus

Let all the angels of God worship Him. *(Hebrews 1: 6)*

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 68: 18)*

Chorus

The Lord gave the word; great was the company of the preachers. *(Psalm 68: 11)*

Soprano

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

Bass

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and why do the people imagine a vain thing? The kings of the earth rise up, and the rulers take counsel together against the Lord, and against His anointed. *(Psalm 2: 1-2)*

Chorus

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us. *(Psalm 2: 3)*

Tenor

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

Tenor

Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. *(Psalm 2: 9)*

Chorus

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. *(Revelation 19: 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 11: 15)

King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

(Revelation 19: 16)



PART III

Soprano

I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.

(Job 19: 25-26)

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

(I Corinthians 15: 20)

Chorus

Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. *(I Corinthians 15: 21-22)*

Bass

Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet.

(I Corinthians 15: 51-52)

Bass

The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption and this mortal must put on immortality. *(I Corinthians 15: 52-53)*

Alto

Then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory." *(I Corinthians 15: 54)*

Alto & 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 15: 55-56)

Chorus

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

(I Corinthians 15: 57)

Soprano Alto

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

(Romans 8: 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 8: 33-34)*

Chorus

Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, and hath redeemed us to God by His blood, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.

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

Amen. *(Revelation 5: 12-14)*



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Mary Phillips played the clarinet in the National Youth orchestra of Great Britain before reading music at the University of York. After winning the John Lobb Memorial Prize for

singing, she went on to study with Corinne Shirman-Sarti and then Liz Brice. For many years she has sung with London Voices, London Sinfonietta and the BBC Singers as well as the Electric Voice theatre, Britten Sinfonia and Opera Ra Ra, and is a regular soloist in oratorio and recitals at home and abroad.

She is director of the Queen's Park Junior Singers who performed Benjamin Britten's *Noyes Fludde* in 2013 and *The Happy Prince* by Malcolm Williamson in 2014. QPJS has recently completed a recording project of the Happy Prince which will be released in 2017. This is the first recording including children, although the opera was written for children's voices.

Mary teaches singing at South Hampstead High School and Trevor-Roberts Preparatory School, and freelances as a choral conductor.



Rachel Maby is a mezzo-soprano from London who studied on the prestigious Joint Course at the Royal Northern College of Music and University of Manchester. Rachel studied

alongside Queen's Park Singers conductor Oliver Till and has performed with him in numerous roles, including Mélisande in the final act of *Pelléas et Mélisande* by Debussy with Arch Sinfonia Orchestra and Susanna in *Le Nozze di Figaro* by Mozart with the University of Manchester Opera Society.

Rachel's other notable solo performances include collaborations with the Constella OperaBallet conducted and founded by Leo Geyer. Performances include the company launch at Sadler's Wells in July; Charlotte Brontë in *Glasstown* by Leo Geyer at the Arts Theatre in 2015 and premiering *Sideshow* one-woman opera-ballet by Leo Geyer at the 2015 Grimeborn Opera Festival at the Arcola Theatre; 2015 Edinburgh Festival at C Venues and 2014 Tête à Tête Opera festival at King's Place.

As a concert soloist, Rachel's notable performances have included the *Lakmé* duet in the Nottingham Philharmonic Orchestra 2015 family concert (conducted by Mark Heron); *Feel the Spirit* by John Rutter with Salford Choral Society (conducted by Justin Doyle); and *Cinq Mélodies Populaires Grecques* by Ravel with Settle orchestra (conducted by Leo Geyer).





Guy Withers is a light-lyric tenor from Bristol. A Cardiff University Music graduate, Guy was awarded The Cardiff University Vocal Scholarship, The David Lloyd Prize for Singing and The

Elizabeth Griffiths Prize. Since 2015 he has worked as a soloist and chorus member with Opera Holland Park, and has most recently devised work for The Theatre Royal Bath Dance Umbrella and Mahogany Opera Group. Guy has also sung around the UK with the Helios Collective, Opera'r Ddraig, Opera South, Opera Lyrica, Aylesbury Opera Group and The Ryedale Festival Opera among others.

Principal roles include: Un Cenciaiuolo (*Iris*, for Opera Holland Park), Albert Herring (*Albert Herring*), Prologue/Quint (*The Turn of the Screw*), Ferrando (*Così Fan Tutte*), Tamino (*The Magic Flute*), Basilio (*The Marriage of Figaro*), Don Ottavio (*Don Giovanni*), Sailor and Aeneas (*Dido and Aeneas*), Mr Rushworth (*Mansfield Park*), Edmondo and Lamplighter (*Manon Lescaut*), M. Triquet (*Eugene Onegin*), Jaquino (*Fidelio*), Schoolmaster (*The Cunning Little Vixen*), Panatellas (*La Perichole*), Frederic (*The Pirates of Penzance*), Nanki-Poo (*Mikado*), Gastone (*La Traviata*), Sellem (*The Rake's Progress*) and Steersman (*The Flying Dutchman*). An experienced oratorio soloist, Guy is also co-founder and Co-Artistic Director of Indomitable Productions, an emerging contemporary performance collective.



Charles Naylor was a choral scholar at St John's College Cambridge and studied singing at the Royal Academy of Music and the National Opera Studio. After winning first prize at an opera

competition in Belgium he started his career as a principal at the Vienna State Opera and has sung at Glyndebourne and the English National Opera. At 30 he decided to change career, working in the oil industry and financial services. Since then he has kept up his singing with local opera companies in roles such as Onegin, Don Giovanni, Germont Pere in *La Traviata* and Tonio in *Pagliacci*.

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Oliver Till is a conductor and répétiteur praised by The Times for “ambitious, intelligent programming”. He started his musical life as a chorister at

Westminster Cathedral. Having studied composition and piano at the Royal College of Music Junior Department, Ollie gained his bachelor's at the University of Manchester and received further training at Dartington, RNCM and the Järvi Academy.

He has conducted *Die Zauberflöte* and *Don Giovanni* for St Paul's Opera, Clapham and has recently accompanied solo recitals and recordings, led choral workshops and assisted *The Marriage of Figaro* at Grimeborn. Ollie has also conducted the London Sinfonietta Academy, Dartington Festival Orchestra, Nottingham Philharmonic, the Baltic Academy Orchestra, Vaganza Ensemble, St. Bartholomew's Orchestra and St. Albans Rehearsal Orchestra.

Dedicated to new music Ollie has conducted over 50 works by living composers including 35 premières. Upcoming projects this year include the premiere of *Liturgie*, a new ballet-oratorio with Spectra Ensemble, and he looks forward to Monteverdi's *Il combattimento di Tancredi e Clorinda* and playing the solo in CPE Bach's Keyboard Concerto in A minor wq.7 in 2017.

The Asyla Ensemble

Leader Mark Seow

Founded in 2013, the Asyla Ensemble, is named after the eponymous work by British composer Thomas Adès. The ensemble ventures to present thought-provoking programmes, whereby works and composers are contextualised in a didactic yet accessible setting. Recently praised by The Times as “a young ensemble with bags of promise”. Asyla has presented performances of rare works by Ives, Berio, CPE Bach, Kaya Saariaho, Rossini, Janacek, Schoenberg and Schubert, featuring 15 young soloists in only five concerts, and is fortunate that its members, past and present have played in almost every major professional orchestra in the UK.

Oboe

Bethan White, Amy Roberts

Trumpet

Paul Bosworth, Gwyn Owen

Timpani

Daniel González

Violin 1

Mark Seow, Claudia Norz

Violin 2

Emma Lake, Oliver Cave

Viola

Matyas Csiba

Cello

Alex Rolton

Double Bass

John Henry Baker

Continuo

Hamish Brown



QUEEN'S PARK Junior SINGERS

Queen's Park Junior Singers is a choir open to children between the ages of eight and 18.

Serious choral skills are at the core of Queen's Park Junior Singers. The choir's director Mary Phillips imparts vocal training with the belief that children are quite easily capable of handling more challenging music than they are usually given credit for.

As well as performing in concert, children are also given the chance to take part in fully staged opera productions.

Performing this evening:

Alesia Avasiloaie
Estelle Bulku
Jiannoula Couling-Dini
Lola Greenaway
Peter Laleye-Thomas
Natalie Lawson
Raffi Melkonian Payne
Anaia Mulinda
Arianne Mulinda
Samara Seth
Astrid Stoddart
Emily Thomson
Laurel Timpson
Asiyah Zayaan-Kharodia



QUEEN'S PARK SINGERS

Soprano

Evanthe Blandy
Christine Cargill
Louise Clark
Gabrielle Crockett
Stephaele de
Kermadec
Hinda Golding
Gillian Hallifax
Jo Hurley
Anne Louise
Jennings
Una O'Gara
Margaret Page
Katy Payne
Stella Ruszczyński
Kathryn Worth

Alto

Julia Bell
Graziella Doardo
Rachel Donnison
Helen Dymond
Frances Freeman
Monica Healy
Katherine Lawson
Maria Nowicka
Denise O'Reilly
Rebecca Payne
Tania Spooner
Liz Till
Evelyn Velleman

Tenor

Philip Crockett
Nick Dibb
Colm Doherty
Cathie Hammond
Glyn Jones
Julie Krausz
Mario Mansilla
Amanda Robinson
Sebastian Timpson

Bass

Roger Bloomfield
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