



HANDEL'S Messiah

2000

DUBLIN

Sunday 10th December

St. Michael's Church, Dun Laoghaire

LONDON

Saturday 16th December

St. Luke's Church, Chelsea

Word Book & Programme £1.

REFLECTIONS ON "MESSIAH"

Every year brings countless performances of Handel's *Messiah* all over the world and perhaps especially in London and in Dublin, where the work was first performed in 1742. What is it that draws choirs to sing it and audiences to hear it over and over again? In this apparently non-religious time, when church congregations are dwindling, and scant recognition is given to any driving force beyond material desire, why should people want to hear an old fashioned work, based on words from the Bible which relatively few people understand or believe in? The power of Jennens' inspired choice of words and the total conviction of Handel's response to these words still ring true. They have the potential to lift us all, be we performers or audience, out of the small and narrow world of our normal perception of existence to something much larger and more universal. Emerson, the great New England philosopher speaks of this larger view:

"There is but one reason...Every man is an inlet to all of the same...Raphael paints wisdom, Handel sings it, Phidias carves it, Shakespeare writes it, Wren builds it..."

"Messiah" literally means Anointed One. Christ is the same word in Greek. The words of Handel's oratorio do not attempt to tell the story of Christ's life so much as to offer reflections on His coming into the world, the suffering He underwent and the glorious victory that was won for the benefit of all through His resurrection, as well as through His example and teaching. The words of the oratorio can speak to us all, not only about the Son of God, the great teacher and healer, but also about ourselves. Is it not in our power to give comfort, to make the crooked straight and the rough places plain? May we not reveal (or cover up) the glory of the Lord, may we not arise and shine with light? Do we not often feel that we are walking in darkness, even in the land of the shadow of death and cannot the memory of our own birth-right lift the darkness and the shadow from our lives, just as the joy and lightness of "For unto us a child is born" may do whenever we sing it or listen to it? Is there not something in us which recognises the gentleness of "He shall feed his flock" and the freedom of "His yoke is easy" because those qualities are in all of us? Then the great drama of the second part, taking us from the apparent tragedy of suffering and including the viciousness of "He trusted in God" to the certainty of "He is the King of Glory".

Handel, inspired by the words chosen by Jennens, takes us on a great journey of self discovery, in music of endless variety and drama - and ineffable beauty. Our lives may be reinvigorated, given more meaning, more depth and more vividness by these words and this music. An audience can easily listen to and watch a performance from the outside but on this occasion you are invited to join with the performers in a celebration of the unity which underlies the whole creation. "I know that my redeemer liveth" is for NOW not for some distant future; let us be truly awakened by the trumpet sounding and thereby put on immortality NOW. Let us join with the choirs as they sing Amen, remembering that this means, "So be it", a total surrender to whatever must be.

So we may discover what Marsilio Ficino, the great Renaissance philosopher, meant when he stated plainly and unequivocally:

"Music was given to us by God to still the body, temper the mind and render Him praise."

MESSIAH

A Sacred Oratorio

Words selected from Holy Scripture by
Charles Jennens.

Music by Georg Friedrich Handel.

(Shaw's Edition, Novello & Co. Ltd.)

Kirtanam Choir Dublin

DISCANTVS London

In Dublin

Sylvia O'Brien soprano Simon Baker alto
Matthew Gilsenan tenor Jeffrey Ledwidge bass
Orchestra led by Camilla Gunzl

In London

Laura Mitchell soprano Simon Baker alto
Nicholas Watts tenor Jared Holt bass
The Linden Baroque Orchestra
leader Nichola Hayston

Conductor David Ward

David Ward

David Ward - pianist, fortepianist and conductor - was born in Sheffield and educated at Bryanston School, Caius College, Cambridge and at the Royal College of Music in London. His teachers included Cyril Smith and Katharina Wolpe; he also studied in Paris with the legendary Nadia Boulanger. His interpretations of Mozart in concerts and on recordings have won high praise for their clarity and sensitivity. He has played in the major concert halls in London as well as all over the British Isles and in Europe, America, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand. His interest in and love for the music of the classical period led him to play the instruments of the time. He now has copies of two Viennese fortepianos as well as a harpsichord and a clavichord. These often travel with him for concerts, lecture-recitals or classes.

He presents a variety of programmes of words and music, using composers' letters and contemporary accounts, as well as an unusual recital combining Mozart and Shakespeare entitled "The Marriage of True Minds".

As a conductor David directed his own orchestra, "La Spiritata", for many years with whom he gave a large number of concerts based on the Mozart repertoire, including choral works and operas. He also worked with the New Sadler's Wells Opera Company and last year with The Opera School Wales ("Cosi fan Tutte"). Most recently he was the assistant conductor for the touring company Opera Box directing performances of "Don Giovanni".

He teaches piano and fortepiano at the Royal College of Music in London and is also on the staff of the Birmingham Conservatoire.

Sylvia O'Brien Soprano Dublin

Sylvia's musical training began at the College of Music in Dublin where she studied piano. She furthered her musical studies at Trinity College and began vocal training with her father in 1995. At present she studies with Irene Stanford and Jeannie Reddin. As a member of the National Chamber Choir she has performed a wide variety of music from Opera Ireland chorus to contemporary Irish music. She has also recorded many CDs as a member and soloist with the NCC and she has recently performed and recorded Rutter's *Requiem* with Orla Barry for RTE. Sylvia is a founder member of Premier Crew, a group who perform operatic and song recitals around the country including many performances at the National Gallery of Ireland. As part of the Anna Livia Opera Festival she performed a group of recitals with Alison Thomas at the Gaiety Theatre and the Bank of Ireland Arts Centre where she also premiered Haflidi Hallgrímsson's *Mini Stories*. Her recent oratorio performances have included *Israel in Egypt* with the Tallaught Choral Society and *Messiah* with the Third Day Choral. Future engagements include Bach's *Magnificat* in the National Concert Hall.

Laura Mitchell Soprano London

Laura started singing at the age of eleven. Her teachers were John Bentick and Patricia Clark. She entered the Royal College of Music in 1998 where she is a student of Margaret Cable. She has sung in various concerts at the RCM and elsewhere including performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall (Nielsen *Symphony no. 3*) and at St. John's, Smith Square (Bach's *St. John Passion* with Peter Schreier). She works with the guitarist Morgan Szymanski on South American music; they have performed at the Mexican Embassy before the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester and in 2001 they are planning a tour of Mexico. Laura is currently on a gap year and in 2001 she is aiming to do VSO for 5 months in South Africa.

Simon Baker Alto Dublin & London

Born in Edinburgh, Simon Baker was educated at the Edinburgh Academy and Christ's Hospital School in Sussex. Supported by a generous award from the Scottish Education Department, he studied at the Royal College of Music with Ashley Stafford and graduated with distinction in 2000, being awarded the Dulcie Nutting Prize for his final recital.

During this time his many engagements included the *St. John Passion* at Chelmsford

Cathedral, *The Chichester Psalms* at Southwark Cathedral, *Dixit Dominus* at the Snape Maltings, *Israel in Egypt* in Karlsruhe, *Ottone* and *Silla* for the London Handel Festival and appearances in Dortmund and Jerusalem. He has already sung under conductors such as Ivor Bolton, Denys Darlow, Paul Goodwin, Ivor Settlefield and others. He has also given recitals in St. Stephen's, Gloucester Road and in the Spitalfields Winter Festival.

Recent engagements have included *Xerxes* for British Youth Opera (when he was featured in The Times "Great British Hopes") and covering Nero in *The Coronation of Poppea* for English National Opera. His recording as Claudio in *Silla* is now available on Somm and his future engagements include the Monteverdi *Vespers* in Sheffield Cathedral.

Matthew Gilsenan Tenor Dublin

A multiple Feiseanna winner and more recently a finalist in RTE's Young Singer of the Future competition. Matthew has sung with Opera Ireland and at many concerts, both oratorio and recital programmes. As a member of the Celtic Tenors he recently released their first CD album and he will be performing in the National Concert Hall on December 28th. This is the third time he has sung in the Kirtanam Choir's performance of *Messiah*.

Nicholas Watts Tenor London

Born and bred in Yorkshire, Nicholas Watts played violin from the age of seven. He began singing eight years ago and in 1996 he was awarded a foundation scholarship to study under Margaret Kingsley at the Royal College of Music. During his time at the College Nicholas has sung as a soloist with the RCM Chorus and the Chamber Choir, and he has participated in masterclasses by Emma Kirkby, Michael Chance, Roger Vignoles and Wolfgang Holzmair.

Nicholas performs regularly in and around London, both in choirs and as a soloist. Recent solo appearances have included Haydn's *Nelson Mass* at King's College Chapel, Cambridge under Sir David Wilcox and Bach's *St. John Passion* at St. John's, Smith Square under Peter Schrier.

Nicholas has been awarded a place on the postgraduate course at the RCM to continue his studies for the next two years.

Jeffrey Ledwidge Bass Dublin

Jeffrey began singing in 1982 as a treble with the Palestrina Choir and he was Head Chorister from 1987 to 1988. He began training with Dr. Veronica Dunne and is currently studying with Philip O'Reilly. In 1994 he won the bass solo at Feis Ceoil and then toured Italy and Germany as a soloist with the Choir of the Italian Institute. In 1996 he performed in *Madame Butterfly* at the RTE Proms and in *La Boheme* for Opera Ireland. Jeffrey is currently a member of the National Chamber Choir with whom he has made several recordings for RTE, BBC and Naxos Records. He sang the role of Mityuka in Opera Ireland's acclaimed production of *Boris Godunov* and the most recently in *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*. This is his second year of *Messiah* with the Kirtanam Choir.

Jared Holt Bass London

Jared is a 25 year old baritone from New Zealand. He is studying singing as a post-graduate at the Royal College of Music thanks to the Karaviotis Scholarship. As well as studying voice, Jared has spent the last five years in New Zealand completing an arts degree in classical studies and a law degree with honours.

In New Zealand he has appeared in many operas including *Faust*, *Die Fledermaus*, *La Traviata*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Rigoletto* and most recently *La Boheme*. In oratorio he has performed in Fauré's *Requiem*, Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *St. John* and *St. Matthew Passions*.

In September this year Jared won New Zealand's largest singing competition, The Mobil Song Quest.

Kirtanam Choir

Choir Masters Suzie Spratt & Dr. Michael Telford

The Kirtanam Choir was founded in 1976 by the School of Philosophy and Economic Science in Dublin. Since the word Kirtanam in Sanskrit means "Singing the praises of the Lord" the choir has sung sacred music in many venues in Dublin. It has become known for its performances of *Messiah* with David Ward.

- Sopranos Marie Buckley, Therese Byrne, Lydia Campbell, Eva Franklin, Sarah Hennessy, Agnes Horan, Maria Murray, Mona Nangle, Mary Noone, Rita O'Mahony, Margaret Plunkett, Pauline Ryan, Suzie Spratt, Mary Telford.
- Altos Ellen Bailey, Noelle Coleman, Katherine Duff, Rosemary Fitzpatrick, Linda Griffin, Alice Horan, Frances Horan, Laura McGeough, Caroline Mulhall, Sarah Mulhall, Claire Murphy, Vivienne Tobin, Annie Van de Belt, Mary White.
- Tenors John Alexander, Stephen Gordon, Des Howett, Timothy Joyce, Kieran Maguire, Gerard McManus, Pierce O'Brien, Camillus Power.
- Basses Alan Cambell, Michael Collins, Rutger Kortenhorst, Michael McCarthy, Roy O'Gliasain, Michael Telford.

DISCANTVS

Director Bruce Ramell

DISCANTVS, the choir of the School of Economic Science in London, was founded in 1988. It gives performances both within the organization and beyond. The repertory covers music from all periods up to the end of the 18th century, as well as newly written pieces, some of which have been composed specifically for the choir. Recent performances include a New Music concert in June, "Art in Action" in July, a concert at Waterperry House near Oxford in September and evensong at Norwich cathedral in November.

- Sopranos Jill Crehan, Annette Currington, Ann Garry, Monica Gilbert, Janet Kennedy, Kate Meltzer, Catherine Rimmer, Gillian Thompson, Odile Wythe.
- Altos Anthea Douglas, Danniella Downs, Deirdre Francis, Mary Goymour, Emily Johnston, Helen de Mattos, Frances Smith, Katherine Toole, Elizabeth Ward, Lucy Ward, Ros Wyatt.
- Tenors Michael Gilbert, Nicholas de Mattos, Dominic O'Flynn, Derek Saunders, Daniel Wright.
- Basses Keith Ashworth, Edmund Chadwick, Brendan Crehan, James Collier, David Fletcher, David Goymour, Peter Keggey, Andrew Sisson, Stephen Thompson, Peter Weigall.

Orchestra in Dublin

- Violins Camilla Gunzl, Catherine Briscoe, Paul Fanning, Anne Harte, Liz McLaren, Sylvia Roberts, Mary Wheatley.
- Violas John Lynch, Randel Devine, Neil Martin.
- Cellos Stephen Sensbach, Claire Fitch, Adrian Gallagher.
- Bass Val Mizein.
- Oboes Sylvain Gnemmi, Sile Daly.
- Bassoon Robert Dulson.
- Trumpets Colm Byrne, Killyan Bannister.
- Harpsichord Rodney Baldwyn.
- Organ David Leigh.

Linden Baroque Orchestra

Linden Baroque Orchestra was formed in 1982 by a group of early music enthusiasts in the front room of a house in Linden Gardens, Chiswick. Unusually still - and uniquely anywhere at that time for a 'period instrument' orchestra - it combines the talents of amateurs, students (from the UK and many other countries) and young professionals, many of whom have later moved on to prominent careers in the early music field. Paul Goodwin, the well-known baroque oboist and conductor, was musical director until Walter Reiter, a leading baroque violinist, took over in 1996. Paul, now busy with an international conducting career, remains our President.

The orchestra has played at venues from Norfolk to Rome (where it gave the first performances there of Purcell's King Arthur) and has a wide-ranging repertoire ranging from the familiar to the unheard. Many concerts are given with the Linden Baroque Choir, formed in 1993 to combine with the orchestra in an appropriate musical style. Together they gave first complete performances in this country of music by Jean Gilles and J. F. Fasch.

Apart from a National Lottery grant in 1999, Linden Baroque is unsupported and depends on you, the audience, to survive. If you know of anyone who would like to sponsor a concert or event, or for any other information please contact: telephone 020 7586 0553, email selwyn@willowtree.u-net.com. Linden Baroque is a member of National Federation of Music Societies and is a Registered Charity No. 1014921.

Linden Baroque has recently released its first CD on the Meridian label. It is a varied collection of music by J. F. Fasch including pieces given first modern performances, the delightful Missa Brevis in B flat and a stirring Concerto for Violin with oboes, trumpets and drums. There is also a colourful suite of dances for 3 oboes and strings. The music is bright, tuneful and attractive and was recently awarded 3 stars in the BBC Music Magazine. Copies will be available after this concert at the special price of £10 (usual price £13.95).

Violins	Nicola Hayston, Giovanna del Perugia, Ken Fudge, Michael Jenner, Liz Kenna, Linda Mc Donald, Sarah Moffatt, Anna Ramell, Alan Selwyn, Hiroko Tominaga.
Violas	Patricia Hohman-Barker, Kay Dixon, Debbie Johnson.
Cellos	Tatty Theo, Barney Morse-Brown, Graham Walker.
Basses	Johnathan Gee, Kate Aldridge.
Oboes	Simon Galton, Jean McCreary.
Bassoon	Matthew Dart.
Trumpets	Peter Reid, Michael Diprose.
Drums	Scott Bywater.
Harpsichord and Organ	Andrew Welsh.

Acknowledgements and Thanks

Dublin

We take this opportunity to express a sincere thank you to our many sponsors who by their generosity have made it possible to present this year's "Messiah".

We would also like to thank

The Parish Church of St. Michael, Dun Laoghaire,
and especially Fr. Paddy Morgan for his keen interest and help.
Camilla Gunzl who assembled the orchestra.
The Royal Hospital, Donnybrook, for the use of their hall for rehearsals.
David Hodgkinson for playing for the choir rehearsals.
Many others who have given much time and energy in many different ways to help mount the event.

London

We are grateful to our sponsors without whose generous support this event would not have been possible:

Garry Associates
Intellexis
M&C Saatchi
Northcote Manor Hotel, Devon
Purves & Purves
and many other friends.

We would also like to thank

The Rector and the Churchwardens of St. Luke's, Chelsea, for their permission to use the church.
Vincent Stokes, the verger, for his willing assistance.
David Lambert for designing the beautiful posters.
Dr. Nicholas Jackman for arranging the players in Linden Baroque.
Noel Skinner for accompanying the choir rehearsals.
Jane Jarvis, Jenny Turnbull and others at 90 Queensgate for manning the box office.
Andrew Purves and his colleagues for invaluable assistance in organising, mounting and dismounting the event and for serving the choir and orchestra with refreshments during rehearsals and the audience and performers with welcome interval refreshments.

The logistics of travel and accommodation in both cities have been greatly facilitated by various members of the choirs or friends, including Stephen Gordon and Kevin Grace in Dublin and Jill Crehan and David Goymour in London. Accommodation has been generously provided by the choir members and their friends.