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SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL
ORCHESTRA

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Handel's Messiah

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall
Fri 2 Jan 2026 3pm

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Handel's Messiah

Glasgow Royal Concert Hall Fri 2 Jan 2026 3pm

Hallelujah! Celebrate the New Year with the RSNO's annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*. Laurence Cummings directs an all-star cast alongside the RSNO and its mighty Chorus. From 'For Unto Us a Child is Born' to the unforgettable Hallelujah Chorus, enjoy all the glory and joy of this truly timeless masterpiece..

HANDEL Messiah [150']

INTERVAL

Parts II and III

Laurence Cummings Conductor

Anna Devin Soprano

Claudia Huckle Contralto

Nick Pritchard Tenor

George Humphreys Baritone

RSNO Chorus

Stephen Doughty Director, RSNO Chorus

Paul Whittaker BSL Performer

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The performance will be recorded for the RSNO Archive.
Supported by the Iain and Pamela Sinclair Legacy.

If viewing these notes at the concert, please do so considerately and not during performances.

**Please silence all mobile telephones and alerts, and refrain from taking photographs,
without flash, until the end of each piece.**

Royal Scottish National Orchestra



Formed in 1891 as the Scottish Orchestra, the company became the Scottish National Orchestra in 1950 and was awarded Royal Patronage in 1977. Many renowned conductors have contributed to its success, including Sir John Barbirolli, Walter Susskind, Sir Alexander Gibson, Neeme Järvi, Walter Weller, Alexander Lazarev and Stéphane Denève.

The Orchestra's artistic team is led by Danish conductor Thomas Søndergård, who was appointed Music Director in 2018. In March 2024, Austrian-born conductor, composer and musician Patrick Hahn became the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor.

The RSNO is supported by the Scottish Government and is one of the Scottish National Performing Companies. The Orchestra performs across Scotland, including concerts in Glasgow, Edinburgh, Dundee, Aberdeen, Perth and Inverness, and appears regularly at the Edinburgh International Festival and BBC Proms. The RSNO has made recent tours to China and Europe.

The RSNO has a worldwide reputation for the quality of its recordings, receiving a 2020 Gramophone Classical Music Award for Chopin's

Piano Concertos (soloist: Benjamin Grosvenor), conducted by Elim Chan, two Diapason d'Or awards (Denève/Roussel 2007; Denève/Debussy 2012) and eight GRAMMY Award nominations. In recent years, the RSNO has cultivated an international reputation for world-class film, television and videogame soundtrack recording. The Orchestra has recorded for BAFTA-winning series *Silo* (Apple TV) and worked with the likes of GRAMMY Award-winning composer Lorne Balfe on *Life on Our Planet* (Netflix). Other notable titles include *Nuremberg* (Sony Pictures), *Now You See Me: Now You Don't* (Lionsgate), *Horizon: An American Saga* (Warner Bros) and *Star Wars Outlaws* (Ubisoft). The Orchestra records at its bespoke in-house facility in Glasgow.

The RSNO believes that music can enrich lives, and aims to inspire, educate and entertain people throughout Scotland and beyond with its performances, recordings and engagement programmes. Supporting schools, families, young professionals and wider communities, the RSNO delivers high-quality initiatives for all ages and abilities.

On Stage

FIRST VIOLIN

Lena Zelizewska
ASSOCIATE LEADER
Patrick Curlett
Caroline Parry
Ursula Heidecker Allen
Elizabeth Bamping
Lorna Rough
Susannah Lowdon
Alan Manson

SECOND VIOLIN

Marion Wilson
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Jacqueline Speirs
Kirstin Drew
Nigel Mason
Robin Wilson
Colin McKee

VIOLA

Felix Tanner
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Susan Buchan
Nicola McWhirter
Beth Woodford

CELLO

Pei-Jee Ng
PRINCIPAL
Kennedy Leitch
Rachael Lee
Sarah Digger

DOUBLE BASS

Nikita Naumov
PRINCIPAL
Ben Burnley

OBOE

Peter Dykes
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL
Laura Ritchie

BASSOON

Jamie Louise White
ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL

TRUMPET

Christopher Hart
PRINCIPAL
Brian McGinley

TIMPANI

Paul Stoneman
GUEST PRINCIPAL

ORGAN

Stephen Doughty

HARPSICHORD

Will Cole

RSNO Chorus



The RSNO Chorus performs in around six different programmes in up to 20 concerts across Scotland with the Royal Scottish National Orchestra each year. The RSNO Chorus has also had great success in recording with the Orchestra. Its recordings, among others, of Prokofiev's *Alexander Nevsky*, conducted by Neeme Järvi, and Holst's *The Planets*, conducted by David Lloyd-Jones, have both attracted high critical acclaim.

In addition to its commitment to the Orchestra, the RSNO Chorus performs independently and has been invited to perform with orchestras in many parts of the world, establishing an international status and touring to Copenhagen, Hong Kong, Israel, Germany, Belfast, Australia, Trondheim, Amsterdam, Prague and, most recently, Budapest, performing with the MAV Orchestra in the Liszt Academy and Matthias Church, directed by Stephen Doughty. In 2018 it performed Britten's

War Requiem with the RSNO at the BBC Proms, joining the Orchestra again in the Royal Albert Hall in 2024 for Classic FM Live.

The RSNO Chorus evolved from a choir formed in 1843 to sing the first full performance of Handel's *Messiah* in Scotland. Today it is one of the most successful choruses in the UK. In recent years it has performed practically every work in the standard choral repertoire along with contemporary works by renowned composers, including John Adams, Magnus Lindberg, Howard Shore and, most recently, the critically acclaimed Scottish Premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*.

The RSNO Chorus is directed by Stephen Doughty, who was appointed to the role at the start of the 2022:23 Season.

SOPRANO 1

Alison Blair
Alison Pryce-Jones
Becky Ward
Caroline Cradock
Catherine Taylor
Charlotte McKechnie
Joanna Beaton
Karman Leung
Mhairi Hendry
Mary Fraser
Morag Kean
Morven MacDonald
Roberta Yule
Sarah Greer
Seonaid Eadie

SOPRANO 2

Beth Kean
Carol McLean
Elspeth Waugh
Frances Kennedy
Helen Hyland
Jenny Cheung
Kate Adams
Katie Dew
Laura Gorman
Mairi Therese Cleary
Miriam MacDonald
Sally Sandground
Theresa Hoare

ALTO 1

Ailie MacDougall
Angela McDonald
Anne Murphy
Brenda Williamson
Catriona Eadie
Fiona Taylor
Julia Haddow
Julia King
June Thomas
Kirstie Fairnie
Laura Macdonald
Lauren Hadley

Linda McLauchlan
Louise Reid
Marrian Murray
Mary Taylor
Marita McMillan
Maureen McCroskie
Olivia Howe Gillespie
Ruth Townsend
Siobhan Rodger
Sophy Ying
Uta Engelbrecht

ALTO 2

Alison Bryce
Ann Firth
Anne Newlands
Carol Leddy
Catharine Perrin
Denny Henderson
Eleanor McLaren
Elizabeth Stevenson
Gillian Downie
Hilde McKenna
Jane Stansfield
Janette Morrison
Martha Colvin
Moiria Allingham
Sonja Crossan

TENOR 1

Alex Rankine
Andrew Clifford
David Miller
Stuart Tait

TENOR 2

Calum Lowe
Cosma Gottardi
Frikki Walker
Graham Parsonage
John Harvey
Kerr Noble
Robert Paterson
Sandy Eadie

BASS 1

Alistair Laird
Andrew Lyons
Andrew Matheson
Fraser Dalziel
Ian Mackay
Keith Thomasson
Mark Millington
Martin Engelbrecht
Martin Waddell
Peter McMahon
Peter Saunders
Robin Watson
Stephen Penman
Stuart Corkindale
Toby Reed

BASS 2

Alan Maxwell
Brian Watt
Chris Morris
Graeme Simpson
John MacLellan
Kenneth Allen
Melvyn Davies
Stephen Lipton
Stewart Macfarlane
Tim Reilly
Tristan Stewart-Robertson

RSNO CHORUS DIRECTOR

Stephen Dougherty

RSNO CHORUS VOCAL COACH

Polly Beck

RSNO CHORUS REHEARSAL PIANIST

Edward Cohen

Laurence Cummings

Conductor



Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as a conductor and a harpsichord player. A noted authority on Handel, he is Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music and Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto, and has previously held positions as Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen (2011-21) and Musical Director of the London Handel Festival (1999-2024).

Frequently praised for his stylish and compelling performances in the opera house, his career has taken him across Europe, conducting new productions at houses including the Royal Ballet and Opera (*Jephtha*, *Bernice*), Opernhaus Zürich (*Belshazzar*, *King Arthur*), Oper Frankfurt (*Hercules*), Dutch National Opera (*Idomeneo*), Theater an der Wien (*Saul*), Gothenburg Opera (*Orfeo ed Euridice*, *Giulio Cesare*, *Alcina*, *Idomeneo*), Theater Basel (*L'incoronazione di Poppea*), Halle Handel Festival (*Agrippina*), Théâtre du Châtelet Paris (*Saul*) and Opéra National de Lyon (*Messiah*). He has worked with directors including Barrie Kosky, Sir David McVicar, Christoph Marthaler, Deborah

Warner, Adele Thomas, Claus Guth, Oliver Mears, Sebastian Baumgarten, John Caird, Graham Vick and Peter Sellars. In the UK he has appeared regularly with Glyndebourne Festival Opera, English National Opera, Garsington Opera and Opera North.

Equally at home on the concert platform, he is regularly invited to conduct both period and modern instrument orchestras worldwide. In recent seasons these have included the Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Netherlands Bach Society, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment, National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, Tonkünstler Orchester Grafenegg, Music of the Baroque Chicago, St Paul Chamber Orchestra Minneapolis, St Louis Symphony, Handel and Haydn Society Boston and the RSNO.

His recordings include discs with Emma Kirkby and the Royal Academy of Music on BIS, Angelika Kirchschrager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG, Maurice Steger and The English Concert for Harmonia Mundi and Ruby Hughes and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment on Chandos, as well as a series of live opera and concert performances recorded at the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen and released on Accent. He has released numerous solo harpsichord recital and chamber music recordings for Naxos.

In addition to his commitments with the Academy of Ancient Music and Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música, highlights for 2025/26 include productions of *Giulio Cesare* for Oper Frankfurt and *Il ritorno d'Ulisse in Patria* for Garsington Opera, as well as appearances with the Manchester Camerata, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Antwerp Symphony Orchestra and RSNO.

Stephen Doughty

Director, RSNO Chorus



Stephen Doughty has been Chorus Director of the RSNO Chorus since the start of the 2022:23 Season. Since his arrival the Chorus has seen an influx of new members, and an abundance of varied and critically acclaimed performances, including Verdi's *Requiem*, Britten's *War Requiem*, Bruckner's E Minor Mass and the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio*. He has also directed the Chorus in new and imaginative programmes in their own right, including Rheinberger's Mass in E flat for double choir, and concerts with percussion and organ featuring Bernstein's *Chichester Psalms*, the European premiere of McIntyre's *Missa Brevis* and Ives' final major choral work, *Psalm 90*.

Stephen's previous 12-year tenure as Chorus Master of Belfast Philharmonic Choir included a number of world premieres, most significantly James Whitbourn's *The Seven Heavens* and Philip Hammond's *Requiem for the Lost Souls of the Titanic*, performed exactly 100 years since the liner went down, and further European premieres of both Stuart Scott's *Requiem Brevis*, which saw the 100-strong choir separated into eight choirs spaced around the audience, and Christopher Marshall's *Earthsong*.

Stephen particularly enjoys working with amateur singers, not least leading regular singing days frequently involving up to 800 amateur singers. He was Musical Director of Edinburgh Bach Choir for seven years and has enjoyed directing the Garleton Singers for over 30 years, performing with them recently at the Lammermuir Festival.

Stephen plays harpsichord/organ continuo and orchestral piano and has given frequent organ recitals, including several on the grand Mulholland Organ in the Ulster Hall, Belfast. He is also in demand as an arranger and orchestrator, with a large portfolio of work particularly for young voices. He has produced a plethora of arrangements of the music of pianist Christopher Norton, including two publications of piano duets and a suite for wind sextet, and has received commissions from Children's Classic Concerts, the Ulster Orchestra and the RSNO. Commissions from the BBC have seen his work being performed on BBC Alba and at the Last Night of the Proms, and his pieces feature on several recordings, including with the RSNO Chorus.

Stephen is an Examiner for the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music.

George Frideric Handel (1685-1759)

Messiah



FIRST PERFORMANCE

Dublin, 13 April 1742

DURATION 150 minutes

The young Handel was a man of the theatre. He produced his first opera while in his teens, and in his early twenties lived in Italy where he met both Scarlatti and Corelli. Handel returned to his native Germany to take up the position of Kapellmeister to Prince George, Elector of Hanover (who in 1714 would become King George I), but it was a trip to London in 1710 and the success of his opera *Rinaldo* which set him on the road to riches. He settled permanently in London two years later, and for the next 30 years devoted much of his creative energies to supplying English audiences with Italian opera. Between 1712 and 1741, Handel produced over 40 works for the London stage, which brought him success, fame and money. Many, including *Giulio Cesare*, *Alcina*, *Ariodante* and *Serse*, remain in the repertoire today.

Throughout the 1730s, however, Italian opera became increasingly less fashionable and,

consequently, less profitable. The burgeoning Protestant middle class began to look for something new, something less elitist and something they could more readily understand. Handel's response was oratorio – dramatic, non-staged works for the concert hall, usually with a great deal of choral music, mostly with a biblical subject and always in English. Two recently completed oratorios – *Saul* and *Israel in Egypt* – were already bringing Handel success in this genre when he received an invitation from the Duke of Devonshire, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, to visit Dublin and stage a series of concerts.

Shortly after receiving this invitation, and in the space of just over three weeks in late August and early September 1741, Handel created a new oratorio. His friend Charles Jennens, who had provided the libretto for *Saul* and, possibly, *Israel in Egypt*, prepared the text, constructing his libretto from short biblical contemplations on the life of Christ and Christian redemption. Jennens had high hopes of the new work, writing to a friend that he fully expected Handel to 'lay out his whole Genius and Skill upon it, that the Composition may excel all his former Compositions, as the Subject excels every other Subject. The Subject is Messiah.'

Handel arrived in Dublin in November 1741, and immediately set about arranging a subscription series of six concerts of his music to be held between December and February. These proved so popular that a second series was quickly organised, but it was not until March 1742 that Handel met with various committees to discuss a charity concert, to be given in April, that would feature *Messiah*. Though the premiere was set for 13 April, Handel, ever mindful of the power of the press, arranged for a public rehearsal several days before. It caused a much-publicised sensation,

so much so that hundreds had to be turned away from the official first performance. As the *Dublin News-Letter* reported:

Yesterday Morning, at the Musick Hall, there was a publick Rehearsal of the Messiah, Mr. Handel's new sacred Oratorio, which in the opinion of the best judges, far surpasses anything of that Nature, which has been performed in this or any other Kingdom. The elegant Entertainment was conducted in the most regular Manner, and to the entire satisfaction of the most crowded and polite Assembly.

In order to make available the greatest space, it was requested that 'the Ladies who honour this Performance with their Presence would be pleased to come without Hoops [in their dresses], and Gentlemen to remove their Swords. As it will greatly increase the Charity, by making Room for more company.'

Handel had his own organ shipped to Ireland for the occasion, and the combined choirs of St Patrick's and Christ Church cathedrals, a total of 16 men and 16 boys, provided the chorus. Several of the cathedrals' men sang solo roles, though the soprano and alto soloists were singers that Handel brought from London. *Messiah* was a triumph. A report of the first performance in the *Dublin Journal* of April 17 described it as

... the most finished piece of music. Words are wanting to express the exquisite Delight it afforded to the admiring crowded Audience. The Sublime, the Grand, and the Tender, adapted to the most elevated, majestic and moving Words, conspired to transport and charm the ravished Heart and Ear. There were about 700 People in the Room, and the Sum collected for that Noble and Pious Charity amounted to about £400.

One Dublin clergyman, the Rev. Delaney, was so overcome by the alto soloist's rendering of 'He was despised' that he reportedly leapt to his feet and cried out: 'Woman, for this be all thy sins forgiven thee!'

Following the pattern of Italian Baroque opera, *Messiah* is organised into three parts. Part I deals with prophecies concerning Christ's coming, and an account of the Christmas story, beginning with the chorus 'For unto us a child is born', that mixes both Old and New Testament sources. Part I ends with the chorus singing 'His yoke is easy, His burden is light'.

Part II tells of Christ's passion, crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, culminating in the trumpets, drums and chorus triumphantly proclaiming 'Hallelujah!' It was at this point, during one of the early London performances of *Messiah*, that as the chorus sang 'For the Lord God omnipotent reigneth', King George II reportedly spontaneously rose to his feet in a spirit of exaltation, and remained standing for the rest of the chorus. Audiences across the world have repeated this practice ever since.

Part III is an extended hymn of thanksgiving, and a meditation on the theme of Christian redemption. Here is some of Handel's most inspired writing. It begins with the radiant soprano aria 'I know that my redeemer liveth', includes the bass aria 'The trumpet shall sound' and concludes with the majestic chorus 'Worthy is the Lamb' and the exultant fugal 'Amen'.

© Mark Fielding

Part I

OVERTURE

RECITATIVE – 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.

AIR – TENOR

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

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.

RECITATIVE – BARITONE

Thus saith 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. The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

AIR – CONTRALTO

But who may abide the day of His coming? And who shall stand when He appeareth? For He is like a refiner's fire.

CHORUS

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

RECITATIVE – CONTRALTO

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, God with us.

AIR – CONTRALTO & 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! Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.

RECITATIVE – BARITONE

For Behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but the Lord shall rise 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.

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.

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.

PASTORAL SYMPHONY

RECITATIVE – SOPRANO

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

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.

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; for unto you is born this day in the City of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

RECITATIVE – SOPRANO

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

CHORUS

Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, goodwill towards men.

AIR – 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.

RECITATIVE – CONTRALTO

Then shall the eyes of the blind be opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing.

DUET – SOPRANO & CONTRALTO

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.
Come unto Him, all ye that labour and 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.

CHORUS

His yoke is easy and His burden is light.

INTERVAL

Part II**CHORUS**

Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.

AIR – CONTRALTO

He was despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He gave His back to the smiters, and His cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: He hid not His face from shame and spitting.

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. And with His stripes we are healed.

CHORUS

And with His stripes we are healed.

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.

RECITATIVE – TENOR

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

CHORUS

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

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.

AIR – TENOR

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

RECITATIVE – SOPRANO

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

AIR – SOPRANO

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

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 the 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 the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, He is the King of Glory.

AIR – CONTRALTO

Thou art gone up on high; Thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts for men, yea, even for Thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them.

CHORUS

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

AIR – SOPRANO

How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things.

AIR – BARITONE

Why do the nations so furiously rage together, and who 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.

CHORUS

Let us break their bonds asunder, and cast away their yokes from us.

RECITATIVE – TENOR

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

AIR – TENOR

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

CHORUS

Hallelujah: for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world has become the kingdom of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever. King of Kings, and Lord of Lords. Hallelujah!

Part III

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

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.

RECITATIVE – BARITONE

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.

AIR – BARITONE

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.

AIR – SOPRANO

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

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.

Anna Devin

Soprano



Irish soprano Anna Devin has gained recognition across the world for her work in the Baroque and Classical repertoire, particularly her interpretation of Handel's heroines.

Highlights of the 2025/26 season include Nicomede in Scarlatti's *Mitridate Eupatore* with *Vespres d'Arnadi* in Barcelona and Madrid under Dani Espasa, Handel's *Messiah* with the RSNO under Laurence Cummings, Schumann's *Das Paradis und die Peri* with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland under Alexander Shelley, and Angelica in *Orlando* with Longborough Festival Opera under Christopher Moulds.

Anna's successes on the opera stage include Gretel in *Hänsel und Gretel*, Nanetta in *Falstaff* and Lauretta in *Gianni Schicchi* for the Royal Opera House; Rosina in *Il barbiere di Siviglia* for English National Opera; Cleopatra in *Giulio Cesare* for Blackwater Valley Opera Festival, Early Opera

Company and Kilkenny Arts Festival; La Bergère Louis XV and La Chauve-Souris in *L'enfant et les sortilèges* for La Scala Milan; soprano soloist in Deborah Warner's production of *Messiah* for Opéra National de Lyon; Michal in *Saul* for the Théâtre du Châtelet Paris and Glyndebourne Festival; the title role in *La Calisto* in David Alden's iconic production; and Celia in *Lucio Silla* in Madrid under Ivor Bolton.

Recent concert highlights include Haydn's *Paukenmesse* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra under Vladimir Jurowski; Handel's *Messiah* in Benjamin Appl's conducting debut with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra; a tour of Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* with the Irish Chamber Orchestra, conducted by Christian Curnyn; a programme at the Winter Chamber Music Festival with the Fidelio Trio; Bach's Mass in B Minor on tour with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment; the title role in Handel's *Rodelinda* with the Moscow Philharmonic, conducted by Christopher Moulds; and a performance with the Orquestra Simfònica de Barcelona i Nacional de Catalunya in a world premiere by Josep Maria Guix.

Claudia Huckle

Contralto



Anglo-German contralto Claudia Huckle was a Grand Final Winner of the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the first female recipient of Operalia's Birgit Nilsson Prize for singing Wagner. She has appeared with opera companies and orchestras across Europe and the USA.

The 2025/26 season sees Claudia debut with the Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia as Schwertleite *Die Walküre*. On the concert platform, she sings Amastre in a semi-staged performance of *Serse* with the Academy of Ancient Music and Laurence Cummings and performs with the RSNO in Handel's *Messiah*.

Recent opera highlights include Dritte Dame *Die Zauberflöte* for Opéra de Paris; Prince Orlofsky *Die Fledermaus* for Grange Festival; The Innkeeper *Boris Godunov* for the Bayerischer Staatsoper; Galatea Aci, *Galatea e Polifemo* for the London Handel Festival; Meg Page *Falstaff* at the Teatro del Maggio Musicale Fiorentino; and at the Bregenzer Festspiele as Suzuki *Madama Butterfly*, a role she has also sung for Zürich Opera and Glyndebourne on Tour;

Blumenmädchen/Stimme von Oben in *Parsifal* for Opéra de Paris; and Erda/Flosshilde *Das Rheingold* at the Bregenzer Festspiele. She has also sung Erda for Oper Leipzig, Grand Théâtre de Genève and Opera North. She made her debut at La Scala Milan singing The Omniscient Seashell in Strauss' *Die Ägyptische Helena*, conducted by Franz Welser-Möst.

Claudia's notable concert appearances include Mahler's Symphony No8 with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and for her 2018 Proms debut with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales; Delius' *A Mass of Life* with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Sir Mark Elder for the BBC Proms; *Das Lied von der Erde* with the Stuttgart Ballet, 1st Norn *Götterdämmerung* with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski; Dritte Dame *Die Zauberflöte* at the Edinburgh International Festival under Maxim Emelyanychev; Haydn's *Paukenmesse* at the Maggio Musicale Fiorentino under Zubin Mehta; Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with Dunedin Consort and on tour with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Claudia has recorded Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde* in the composer's own arrangement for piano, with the conductor and pianist Justin Brown and tenor Nicky Spence, on the Champs Hill Records label.

Claudia studied at the Royal College of Music in London, the New England Conservatory in Boston and the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. She is a graduate of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program at Washington National Opera.

Nick Pritchard

Tenor



Tenor Nick Pritchard is fast gaining recognition for his performances of the music of Bach and, in particular, his interpretation of the Evangelist in the Passions. He has sung the role in Bach's *St John Passion* and *St Matthew Passion* around the world, and his recording of the *St John Passion* for Deutsche Grammophon with Sir John Eliot Gardiner was nominated for a GRAMMY Award for Best Choral Performance in 2023. This Season sees him performing Bach with Les Arts Florissants (Paul Agnew), the Tonkünstler Orchestra (Stefan Gottfried), Monteverdi Choir and Orchestra (Peter Whelan), Arcangelo (Jonathan Cohen), the Academy of Ancient Music (Laurence Cummings) and at the Thomaskirche Leipzig as part of the Bachfest Leipzig (Andreas Reize). Other highlights include *Messiah* with the RSNO and Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and Haydn's *The Creation* under Václav Luks with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment.

Nick celebrates the release of his debut recital album in 2025 on the Signum label, titled *Little Wanderer*, with his long-term collaborative

partner Ian Tindale. The album includes songs by Benjamin Britten, Imogen Holst and the first recording of Daniel Kidane's *Songs of Illumination*, commissioned for Nick by Leeds International Song. He has given recitals with Simon Lepper, Sholto Kynoch, Christopher Glynn, Graham Johnson and Malcolm Martineau, with performances at London's Wigmore Hall, Oxford International Song Festival and at the Ryedale, Aldeburgh and Lammermuir festivals.

Other recent concert highlights include Mendelssohn's *Lobgesang* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Sir András Schiff, George Benjamin's *Written on Skin* (John/ Angel 3) with the Finnish Radio Symphony conducted by the composer, Britten's *St Nicolas* for the Aldeburgh Festival in a recreation of the first concert given at the festival in 1948, his Japanese debut with the Yomiuri Nippon Symphony Orchestra under Masato Suzuki, and Bach Passions (Evangelist) with the Residentie Orkest (Richard Egarr), Stavanger Symphony (Masato Suzuki) and Irish Baroque (Peter Whelan).

Operatic engagements include a new production by Oliver Mears of Bernstein's *A Quiet Place* for the Royal Ballet and Opera, and his debut at Park Avenue Armory in a world premiere co-commission with the Asia Society, performing a selection of Bach cantatas staged by Peter Sellars. Other opera roles include Oronte *Alcina* for Opera North, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Aldeburgh Festival, *Die Zauberflöte* for Glyndebourne on Tour and Irish National Opera, *Così fan tutte* for Opera Holland Park, *The Return of Ulysses* for RBO and *The Indian Queen* for Opéra de Lille, Théâtre de Caen, Opera Vlaanderen and Grand Théâtre Luxembourg.

George Humphreys

Baritone



In the 2025/26 season, George Humphreys will perform the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, Onegin in Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* and Franz Biberkopf in Vivan and Ketan Bhatti's *Berlin Alexanderplatz* at the Salzburger Landestheater. On the concert platform, he appears in Handel's *Messiah* with both the RSNO and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

Previous engagements include Lord Sidney in Rossini's *Il viaggio a Reims*, Peter Besenbinder in Humperdinck's *Hänsel und Gretel*, Plunkett in Flotow's *Martha*, Il Conte in Haydn's *Il mondo alla rovescia* and Kilian in Weber's *Der Freischütz*, all at the Salzburger Landestheater.

Operatic appearances also include Count Almaviva *Le nozze di Figaro* for Glyndebourne Festival on Tour; Figaro *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, Zurga *Les pêcheurs de perles*, Falke *Die Fledermaus*, Roberto (Nardo) *La finta giardiniera*, Escamillo *Carmen*, Prior Walter *Angels in America*,

Papageno *Die Zauberflöte*, Music Teacher *Ariadne auf Naxos*, title role *Don Giovanni*, Count Almaviva and Valentin *Faust* all as an ensemble member at the Salzburger Landestheater; title role *Eugene Onegin* at the Buxton Festival, Leporello *Don Giovanni* at Nederlandse Reisopera; and roles at English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, the Aldeburgh Festival and the Royal Opera House.

Recent concert highlights include Mahler's *Symphony No 8* with Daniel Harding and the Swedish Radio Orchestra, Bach's *Weihnachts Oratorium* with the Australian Chamber Orchestra, *Dido and Aeneas* at London's Wigmore Hall, the *Matthäus Passion* at the London Handel Festival and performances of Handel's *Messiah* with the Gabrieli Consort, Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. He has given Lieder recitals at Opéra de Lille, Opernhaus Zürich, Wigmore Hall and the Oxford Lieder Festival, and was recently made an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music.

George was born in Oxford and educated at St John's College, Cambridge, the Royal Academy of Music and the International Opernstudio Zürich.

Paul Whittaker

BSL Performer



Paul Whittaker was born in Huddersfield in 1964 and has been deaf all his life. After being awarded a music degree from Wadham College Oxford and a postgraduate diploma from the Royal Northern College of Music, he founded Music and the Deaf, a charity he ran for 27 years before leaving to pursue a freelance career.

Paul has signed many shows and concerts across the UK, and performed with The King's Singers, Voces 8, Tenebrae, Children's Classic Concerts, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and at many festivals, including the Cumnock Tryst and the BBC Proms. He previously signed with the RSNO for the Scottish premiere of Sir James MacMillan's *Christmas Oratorio* in November 2023, and the New Year 2025 performance of Handel's *Messiah*.

Paul was awarded an OBE for services to music in 2007 and continues to promote music and deafness wherever possible.

A photograph of a choir singing, with a woman in the foreground wearing glasses and singing enthusiastically. The background is slightly blurred, showing other choir members.

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