

Cantori

Dr. Robert L. Harris, conductor

Messiah

by G. F. Handel

with members of the
Savannah Symphony Orchestra

December 15 - 8:00

St. John's Episcopal Church

December 16 - 8:00

Skidaway Island Presbyterian Church

CANTORI
Savannah's Professional Choral Ensemble



Part I

Overture

Recitative: **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 pardon'd.

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.

Aria: **Ev'ry valley shall be exalted,** and ev'ry mountain and hill made low, the crooked straight and the rough places plain. *(Isaiah 40:1-4)*

Billy Wooten, tenor

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)

Recitative: **Thus saith the Lord of Hosts:** yet once, a little while, and I will shake the heav'ns 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, ev'n the messenger of the Covenant, whom ye delight in; behold, he shall come, saith the Lord of Hosts.

(Haggai 2:6)

Nathaniel Roper, baritone

Aria: **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 3:1-2)*

Sonia Yoder, mezzo soprano

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

Recitative: **Behold, a virgin shall conceive,** and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel, "God with us." *(Isaiah 7:14)*

Aria 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)*

O thou that tellest good tidings to Zion, arise, shine for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. *(Isaiah 60:1)*

Sonia Yoder, mezzo soprano

Recitative: 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)*

Aria: 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 9:6)*

Gregory Allen Johnson, bass

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)*

Recitative: There were shepherds, abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock 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.

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 heav'nly host, praising God, and saying:

Chorus: Glory to God in the highest, and peace on earth, good will towards men! *(Luke 2;8-11, 13-14)*

Diane R. O'Brien, soprano

Aria: 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. *(Zachariah 9:9-10)*

Heidi Bindhammer, soprano

Recitative: Then shall the eyes of the blind be open'd, and the ears of the deaf unstopped; then shall the lame man leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing. *(Isaiah 35:5-6)*

Aria: 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. *(Isaiah 40:11)*

Come unto him all ye that labour, come unto him that 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.

Sonia Yoder, mezzo soprano *(Matthew 11:28-29)*

Diane R. O'Brien, soprano

Chorus: His yoke is easy, his burthen is light. *(Matthew 11:30)*

Part II

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

Aria: He was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.
(Isaiah 53:3)

Sonia Yoder, mezzo soprano

Chorus: Surely he hath born 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 ev'ry one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.
(Isaiah 53:6)

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

Billy Wooten, tenor

Chorus: He trusted in God that he would deliver him: let him deliver Him, if he delight in him.
(Psalm 22:8)

Recitative: 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)

Aria: Behold and see if there is any sorrow like unto his sorrow!
(Lamentations 1:12)

Billy Wooten, tenor

Recitative: He was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of thy people was he stricken.
(Isaiah 53:8)

Aria: But thou didst not leave his soul in hell; nor didst thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption.
(Psalm 16:10)

Diane R. O'Brien, soprano

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 the King of Glory? The Lord of Hosts, he is the King of Glory.
(Psalm 24:7-10)

Recitative: Unto which of the angels said he at any time: thou art my son, this day have I begotten thee?
(Hebrews 1:5)

Billy Wooten, tenor

Chorus: Let all the angels of God worship him.
(Hebrews 1:6)

intermission

Aria: How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace,
and bring glad tidings of good things *(Romans 10:15)*
Diane R. O'Brien, soprano

Aria: 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.
Nathaniel Roper, baritone *(Psalm 2:1-2)*

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

Recitative: He that dwelleth in heaven shall laugh them to scorn, the
Lord shall have them in derision. *(Psalm 2:4)*

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

Chorus: Hallelujah, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, Hallelujah!
The Kingdom of this world is become the Kingdom of our Lord, and of his
Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever, Hallelujah!
King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, and he shall reign for ever and ever,
Hallelujah! *(Revelations 19:6)*
(Revelations 11:15)
(Revelations 19:16)

Part III

Aria: 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.

Heidi Bindhammer, soprano *(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)*

Recitative: Behold, I tell you a mystery; we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be chang'd, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. *(I Corinthians 15:51-52)*

Aria: The trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be rais'd incorruptible, and we shall be chang'd. *(I Corinthians 15:52-53)*

Nathaniel Roper, baritone

Ed Kuhn, trumpet

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. *(Revelation 5:12)*

Blessing and honour, glory and pow'r be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever. Amen

(Revelation 5:13, 14)

In 1737 George Frideric Handel's career was in shambles. The English public was no longer interested in hearing his Italian operas, which were the basis of his support. He was bankrupt and suffered a physical-mental collapse. Many assumed that his career was over. A scant four years later he was to write the most revered work in the musical repertoire.

On August 22, 1741, after only 24 days work, he had completed the work which he called, simply, "Messiah, a Sacred Oratorio." It was not heard by the public until April of 1742 when it was first performed in Dublin, Ireland. The April performance date serves as a reminder that the composer did not intend "Messiah" to be a Christmas work. That tradition was beyond his control.

Tonight we seek to provide a performance not unlike the one Handel might have heard. The performance forces were more on the scale of chamber music. For most of his oratorio performances Handel had to pay each of the singers so a large chorus and orchestra was out of the question. Also, Handel rarely, if ever, limited himself to only four soloists, even including a boy soprano in many performances.

After the composer's death many commemorative festival "Messiah" performances achieved gargantuan size - up to as many as 3,000 in the chorus and 800 orchestra players! Many rescorings were also undertaken, the most noteworthy by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart who turned it into a work typical of the Classical period with clarinets and trombones. Many conductors have also "had their own way" with the score.

It should also be noted, however, that Handel was the ultimate practical musician. Over the years he rewrote many sections, adapting the music to suit the singers at hand. There is no one way to perform "Messiah," and Handel, himself, probably never did it precisely the same way twice. The conductor of a "Messiah" performance today has many choices to consider when trying to be faithful to Handel's intentions. In our chamber approach we hope that you will hear subtleties which may become lost in many "modernized" performances.

I Cantori

soprano

Heidi Bindhammer
Peggy Breese
Mimi Ellis
Mari Harris
Diane R. O'Brien
Stacie O'Connor

alto

Charlotte Caplan
Linda Estes
Carol Gray
Tonya Hillis
Elizabeth van Beest
Joan Warshauer
Sonia Yoder

tenor

Randy Canady
Raymond R. Ellis
Jamie Keena
Jody Turner
Timothy Wheelles
Billy Wooten

bass

Daniel C. Cohen
Sandy Gibbons
Gene L. Jarvis
Gregory Allen Johnson
Nathaniel Roper
James Ryan

manager
treasurer

Diane O'Brien
Raymond R. Ellis, jr.

orchestra personnel

violin I

Terry Moore, concertmaster
Marina Lindblom
Jennifer K. Lee

violin II

Grace Han-Grose, principal
Mimi Tam
Kerri P. Sellman

viola

LiZhou Liu, principal
Yvonne Johnson

violoncello

Sarah Shenkman, principal

bass

David Warshauer, principal

orchestra personnel

Marina Lindblom

trumpet

Ed Kuhn, principal
Jon Lindblom

oboe

Martin Hebert, principal
Pat Barry

timpani

Jim Brown, principal

harpsichord

Gene L. Jarvis

Sponsorship contributions can be designated for use in support of the I Cantori Scholarship in Choral Music. This award, which covers full tuition for one year, goes to an outstanding music student at Armstrong Atlantic University who is preparing for a career in choral music. The award winner for 1997-98 is Tim Wheelles. The past winners are Sonia Yoder, who is in her first year of teaching as the choral director at Groves High School, and Darren Harrison, who is scheduled to graduate this year.

I Cantori also welcomes support for our ongoing project of commissioning new compositions by eminent choral composers. In 1995 we premiered "Four Fragments from John Donne" by Daniel Pinkham.

In the Spring of 1996 we had the honor of presenting the first performance of "And the White Rose Is a Dove" which was commissioned from Williametta Spencer, and in December we presented the premier of "Hodie" by Vaclav Nehlybel.

In 1997 I Cantori premiered a new work based on the Beatitudes commissioned from the Czech composer, Zdenek Lukas. I Cantori had the honor of premiering his "Requiem" four years ago. We also presented the premier performance of "Morning Star" by Vera Kistler. Peter Schickele has been commissioned for a new work which will be premiered on March 9 of 1998, with the composer in attendance. We are also joining with Temple Mickve Israel in commissioning a new setting of the Jewish Sacred Service by the Republic of Georgian composer, Joseph Bardanashvili. Significant donors can have their name included in the printed edition of the work when it is published. Any support is most welcome. For more information call 925-7866.

We would like to add your name to our mailing list so that we can inform you of upcoming concerts. Won't you please take the time to fill in the information on this form and give it to an usher or to one of the singers.

Benefactors

in memory of Rev. John Roper
E. Shaver
Mr. and Mrs. Jim Emery
Renee McGehee

acknowledgments

St. John's Episcopal Church
Fr. William Ralston, rector
Kenneth Yates, choirmaster
Skidaway Island Presbyterian Church
Rev. Dr. G. Hariss Ricks
Armstrong Atlantic State University
Dr. James Anderson
Mark Johnson
Dr. James Russey

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!!

March, 9, 1998 - world premier of a new work
commissioned by I Cantori from
Peter Schickele
a reception in honor of the composer
will follow the concert

"No Man Is an Island"
a new work written by *Zdenek Lukas*
for I Cantori will also be premiered at
this concert