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20AUTUMN
26SEASON



WELCOME FROM GREGORY BATSLEER

The London Handel Festival is thrilled to present our most extensive and ambitious Autumn Season to date. Our 2026 Autumn Season offers a remarkable variety of performances from the heart of Handel's London. The season opens with a truly original Handelian experience as Cambridge Handel Opera returns to present *Dinner with Handel*, a witty and entertaining semi-staged production that imagines a chaotic evening in the composer's London home.

In addition, we are delighted to present two special events in partnership with Handel Hendrix House, providing audiences with the opportunity to experience music in the very rooms where Handel lived and worked. In October, our much-loved former Musical Director, Laurence Cummings, returns to explore Handel's world through music and correspondence in his brand-new programme, *Handel in Letters*, while December brings a festive candlelit celebration, *Christmas Party, Chez Handel*, transforming the house into an atmospheric seasonal gathering inspired by Handel's own time.

We are equally excited to welcome the rising-star ensemble *Spiritato*, making their London Handel Festival debut in a fascinating programme exploring the musicians, friendships, and charitable networks that shaped eighteenth-century musical life in London. This concert will offer fresh insight into the vibrant community of artists with whom the great composer worked.

To end the Autumn Season, we present our celebrated annual performance of *Messiah* with our very own London Handel Orchestra. The unique opportunity to hear Handel's timeless masterpiece in the very church where he worshipped makes this one of the most popular performances in the capital each Christmas. Early booking is advised to avoid disappointment.

All of us here at the London Handel Festival look forward to welcoming you to our 2026 Autumn Season. Whether you are joining us for one event or taking in the whole season, come and experience the power of this great composer in fresh new ways, and have your life enriched through his music.

Gregory Batsleer
Festival Director & CEO



**Performers**

Cambridge Handel Opera

Director/Keyboard

Julian Perkins

Musical Director

Julian Perkins

Mr Handel

James Laing

Mary Pendarves

Diana Moore

Johann Christoph Pepusch

William Wallace

Gustavus Waltz

Jonathan Brown

Francesca Cuzzoni

Ellie Neate

Tickets: £15 - £55

DINNER WITH HANDEL

ST GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE

24 SEPTEMBER | 7PM

It is 1733, and Gustavus Waltz, Handel's cook and an up-and-coming bass, has become increasingly disgruntled with his overworked and self-absorbed employer. Seeking revenge, Waltz takes it upon himself to organise a mischievous dinner party at Handel's house on Brook Street.

The guest list has been carefully chosen to antagonise the great composer. Among those invited are the widowed Mary Pendarves, Handel's closest friend, along with two people with whom he has not

been getting on particularly well: rival composer Johann Christoph Pepusch and the ageing, discarded diva Francesca Cuzzoni. A few drinks in, tempers flare, manners are forgotten, and all hell breaks loose.

This semi-staged work, conceived by librettist Stephen Pettitt, weaves together Julian Perkins's arrangements of re-texted music from across Handel's output with his newly composed recitatives. Drama, comedy and sentiment combine to create a dinner party not to be missed. Come and join us!



Handel is the subject of much correspondence in the 18th century. Patrons, colleagues, friends and foes couldn't resist writing about the latest pieces from Handel's pen, the glamorous opera successes, dramatic declines in popularity, rumours and gossip.

Laurence Cummings, joined by mezzo-soprano, Ciara Hendrick, presents a programme of the pieces Handel's contemporaries were discussing, alongside a recital of the letters themselves read by Joanna David and directed by the celebrated theatre director, Martin Parr.

Tickets: £45

HANDEL IN LETTERS

HANDEL HENDRIX HOUSE
6 OCTOBER / 5PM & 7PM

Keyboard/Presenter

Laurence Cummings

Devised & Directed by

Martin Parr

Mezzo-soprano

Ciara Hendrick

CHRISTMAS PARTY CHEZ HANDEL

HANDEL HENDRIX HOUSE
15 DECEMBER / 6.30PM

This special evening of Christmas joy invites audiences to explore the whole of Handel's House by candlelight, exquisitely adorned with festive decorations.

With a mince pie and a glass in hand, immerse yourself in a richly atmospheric and elegant celebration while being serenaded by musicians and carol singers presenting pop-up performances of seasonal music inspired by the sounds Handel himself would have known.

Tickets: £45

Full line-up to be announced in September.



HANDEL & THE NEW SOCIETY

ST GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE
3 NOVEMBER / 7PM

Moved by the plight of impoverished and ailing colleagues, a group of London's foremost musicians, including Handel, Boyce, Arne and Greene, came together in 1738 to establish a new society: the Fund for Decay'd Musicians. A charity that still exists today, now known as the Royal Society of Musicians, this nearly 300-year-old organisation remains the UK's oldest musical charity.

Regarded as one of the most exciting ensembles to emerge in recent years, Spiritato makes its London Handel Festival debut with a programme of joyful and evocative

instrumental treasures by key members of the Fund, alongside music by Pietro Castrucci, the virtuoso leader of Handel's orchestra. Himself a 'Decay'd Musician', Castrucci has largely been forgotten by history, though not by his friends.

This special debut performance offers audiences the opportunity to deepen their understanding of Handel, his peers, and the musical world they shaped together.

Tickets: £15 - £55



Performers

Spiritato

Repertoire

Highlights include Handel's overtures from *Alessandro Severo* and the trio sonatas Op. 2 No. 2 and Op. 5 No. 1, Boyce's overtures from *The Charms of Harmony* Display and *Ode for St Cecilia's Day*, Arne's dramatic Overture in 8 Parts No. 8, Greene's Overture in 7 Parts No. 5, and concerti grossi by Festing and Castrucci.

Full repertoire is available on the London Handel Festival website.



MESSIAH

ST GEORGE'S, HANOVER SQUARE
3 DECEMBER / 7PM

Join Richard Gowers, the London Handel Orchestra and the Choir of St George's for the London Handel Festival's annual performance of Messiah (HWV 56). This much-loved tradition offers a rare opportunity to experience Handel's timeless masterpiece in the very church where the composer himself worshipped.

This popular event regularly sells out, so early booking is strongly advised.

Tickets: £15 - £75

Conductor

Richard Gowers

Orchestra

London Handel Orchestra

Soprano

Nardus Williams

Alto

Lucija Varsic

Tenor

Nick Pritchard

Bass

Michael Ronan

LHF 2027 MEMBERS' LAUNCH

THE FOUNDLING MUSEUM
7 OCTOBER / 6.30PM

We are delighted to share details of superb Handel performances taking place in the 2027 Festival. For our devoted patrons and Friends, this evening event is an invitation to share your passion for Handel's music with fellow members over a glass of wine, enjoy a performance of the music you love and browse through your copy of the Festival brochure.

Tickets: booking in advance is required. Tickets are limited to 2 per member.



BOOKING DATES & INFORMATION

Priority Booking opens for Members of the London Handel Festival from Monday 6 July. We extend our sincere thanks for your ongoing support and look forward to welcoming you to what promises to be a very special Autumn Season.

Director's Circle & Major Donors

Monday 6 July

Gold Patrons & Patrons' Circle

Tuesday 7 July

Benefactors

Wednesday 8 July

Associate Benefactors

Thursday 9 July

Friends

Friday 10 July

General Booking

Monday 13 July

Priority booking opens from 10am on the respective booking date. Please ensure you are logged into your account before attempting to book.

www.london-handel-festival.com
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