

HANDEL SINGING COMPETITION

Final

Wednesday 2 December 2020, 7pm
St George's, Hanover Square



Handel's Church

St George's Church, Hanover Square

St George Street, London W1S 1FX

www.stgeorghanoversquare.org

St George's was built between 1721 and 1724 to the design of John James, one of Christopher Wren's assistants, as one of 50 churches for the Cities of London and Westminster by Act of Parliament in 1711. It cost just £10,000 (about £850,000 in today's terms).

During two and a half centuries St George's has been a centre of musical activities from the time of Thomas Roseingrave, appointed the church's first organist in 1725, to our own day and the present musical director, Simon Williams. In 1978 the then organist, Denys Darlow, founded the London Handel Festival. The church was built when Handel was in his thirties. In 1723 he rented a house nearby in Brook Street and remained there until his death in 1759. He was often to be seen in the church, especially in his later years, and this makes St George's a particularly appropriate venue for the London Handel Festival.

The past 10 years have seen an extraordinary period of restoration and renewal at St George's. In 2010 comprehensive repair and refurbishment of the interior of the church took place and in 2012 a brand new organ was installed. The process of planning, crafting, and then installing a first class organ (by Richards, Fowkes & Company of Tennessee) took a full four years and after its dedication to the glory of God and a superb inaugural recital in October 2012, those now coming to the church as worshippers or concert-goers are able to hear the results of these labours for themselves. In January 2013 St George's and its sister church, the Grosvenor Chapel, launched a combined weekly lunchtime recital series known as Mayfair Organ Concerts. Both churches are delighted that the 2020 London Handel Festival will once more incorporate recitals in this series into its own programme. But the work of St George's is not all musical! As an enduring presence at the heart of the

Mayfair community, St George's tries to be responsive not only to the needs of those that live or work in the area, but also to those who simply pass by. Eight years ago, in partnership with the Cabmen's Shelter on the northern side of Hanover Square, the church embarked on a feeding programme for the homeless in our midst. As a result homeless people no longer just pass by but come into the church along with worshippers, cultural tourists, concert givers and attenders, and those who simply come in for a moment's quiet reflection in their busy lives.

Soon this mix of people coming to St George's will change still further, as those emerging from the new Crossrail station in Hanover Square and heading south walk down St George Street. It is with this growing, complex and ever-changing social mélange in mind that St George's has taken the bold decision to open up its Undercroft.

This attractive vaulted space beneath the church, with a floor area greater than that of the church itself, has historically been used for storage. The ambitious and exciting plan is to turn an unloved and under-utilised space into a vibrant, accessible, multi-purpose venue. This has been a mammoth endeavour and will shape how St George's is used in future generations. The church's vision is driven by three aims: to generate sufficient funds to support its own and others' work with the homeless; to improve its accessibility to everyone; and to expand the range of its activities.

Work on converting the space and providing access to it from the church and street has now been completed and discussions are underway with potential catering partners.

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The Board of Directors of the London Handel Festival would like to thank all those involved in the Handel Singing Competition 2020 and is very grateful to our community of donors and those who have supported the London Handel Festival philanthropically.

We extend a special warm thank you to all the performers who are taking part in this year's Final, and to the many volunteers who give their time and skill, to ensure the ongoing success of the Festival.

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Samir Savant
Festival Director

Dear Audience Members,

Thank you for joining us for the Final of the 2020 international Handel Singing Competition, organised by the London Handel Festival. This is the 19th year of the competition, and we have had a record number of entries, with nearly 190 applicants from over 20 countries around the world. We are proud to support young and talented singers, just like George Frideric Handel himself did.

It has been a sad year for the London Handel Festival. In mid-March this year we were a third of the way through this year's Festival with its engaging theme of 'Handel and the Hanoverians' when we received the fateful news about the imminent lockdown, and we had no choice but to cancel the remainder of the Festival. The effect was devastating, not only for the Festival itself, but for the artists involved, who were all stood down at the last minute.

Luckily, the Festival had a huge amount of support from our Trustees, to work on our finances and secure the future of the Festival for the time being, as well as our audience members, two thirds of whom opted to convert their ticket purchases into full or partial donations. I am so very grateful to all these generous individuals for their spontaneous support, and pleased that we were able to pass all of the donated funds received directly to the performers. Many of the Festival's artists are freelancers, and the impact on their work during lockdown has been almost unthinkable.

We are so pleased to bring you the Final as a free live-streamed event this evening, which will also be available to view on our YouTube channel afterwards - www.youtube.com/londonhandelfestival. We are sorry that we could not have a live audience, but it would be too difficult to us to manage with the changing lockdown situation in the United Kingdom. This is an expensive undertaking for us, with the added costs of live streaming and no ticket income, but we were determined to do it, to support our brilliant young finalists and to bring music to you all in these dark times. We are sure we can look forward next year to full churches and concert halls for our live events, but for now we face an uncertain financial future, so if you are able to help with any donations, or connections to, or ideas for sources of philanthropic income, please visit our website <https://www.london-handel-festival.com/support-us/> or e-mail directly with your ideas - festivaldirector@londonhandelfestival.org.uk.

Join us on 3 December for our imaginative *Messiah Reimagined* project combining live performance with pre-recorded virtual choirs filled with singers from all over the world.

Thank you for reading and for your support.



Robert Meters

*Head of Marketing & Sales,
Financial Services & Global
Business*

SCHUMANN
Prof. Schumann GmbH

Dear visitors, participants and guests,

This year the Handel Singing Competition is under the very special impression of the Corona Pandemic. Artists and cultural workers are particularly hard hit during this time. It is therefore all the more important that the young singers are able to present their extraordinary skills again this year.

Admirable is also the unconditional will of all finalists, even in difficult times, to bring the uniqueness of music to the people and to commit themselves to a vibrant, diverse cultural life. In times of crisis, people become more sensitive to their own view of the important things in life and how they relate to each other. In Handel's music the diversity of human existence becomes audible and tangible. How wonderful that we are allowed to participate in the musical performances at the Handel Festival.

As a sponsor, we feel obliged to make a contribution so that young musicians enjoy recognition and support on their professional path. The Handel Singing Competition is a great opportunity to compete with other talented and hard-working singers. But the competition also shows that musicians are subject to audience judgement at every performance. A very intensive preparation before each performance is necessary and this alone demands the respect of the audience.

And yet there is a magic in Handel's music that captures the audience and makes the singers an immediate and indispensable part of the whole. Therein lies the special nature of the finalists' art.

We wish all singers and musicians every success and much success in their future careers.

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We like to support talented young people: here at the Festival and at our company. We wish all the singers great success, today on the stage at this Festival and tomorrow in the continuation of their professional careers.

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Handel Singing Competition

Handel was known to encourage and train young singers, many of whom rose to fame as his star soloists. One of them, Caterina Galli, who sang at the world premieres of *Judas Maccabeus*, *Theodora* and *Jephtha*, was referred to as ‘the last of Mr Handel’s Scholars’. We continue Handel’s great tradition of nurturing talent through our Handel Singing Competition, which is presented as part of the annual London Handel Festival.

The competition was inaugurated in 2002 with Ian Partridge and James Bowman as the first adjudicators, and has grown to become a major international singing event. This year’s competition attracted 187 singers from over 20 countries around the world, from Canada to Croatia.

All singers are required to present all-Handel programmes. The Competition comprises a First Round, where the singers are heard live or can submit sound or video files, followed by a Semi-Final of around a dozen singers, accompanied by harpsichord, which is open to the public. The Final takes place at St George’s, Hanover Square, when all Finalists are accompanied by the London Handel Orchestra, conducted by Laurence Cummings.



Galina Averina, 2016 runner-up

© Chris Christodoulou



David de Winter, 2019 runner up

In addition to the cash prizes awarded to each Finalist in the Handel Singing Competition, we support the continuing professional development of our talented young artists by offering them guaranteed performance opportunities. All Finalists in the Handel Singing Competition are guaranteed recitals in the 2021 London Handel Festival, and many past finalists are also asked to perform solos in other prestigious concerts during

the Festival, and in other concerts and recitals both in the UK and abroad. For example, recent Finalists have performed at the Handel Festivals both in Göttingen and Halle, and the winner of this year’s competition will be invited to give a recital at the Halle Handel Festival and for the City Music Society in London.

As regular audience members will know, we also regularly book alumni of the Handel Singing Competition to take a variety of solo roles in our high-profile performances each year. The 2019 London Handel Festival featured some 20 past Finalists, and this is an opportunity for our audiences to hear how their voices and careers have developed.

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Laurence Cummings with 2019 finalists Eszter Balogh, Patrick Terry, David de Winter and William Thomas

Adjudicators

David Pickard chair

Catherine Denley

Michael George

Ian Partridge

Prizes

We are very grateful to our generous donors for supporting the prizes in the 2020 Handel Singing Competition. For the second time, we invited audience members to support a prize in this year's competition by making an additional voluntary donation at the time of booking their tickets, and we are pleased that these contributions have been directed towards the Audience Prize tonight.

First Prize

Supported by The Carne Trust

Second Prize

Supported by Professor Schumann GmbH

Audience Prize

Supported by London Handel Festival audiences

Finalists Prizes

In memory of Howard and Nan Hopkin

Handel Singing Competition prizewinners and finalists

2002

First Prize:

Andrew Kennedy tenor

Second Prize:

Natalie Clifton-Griffith soprano

Finalists:

Lucy Crowe soprano

Christopher Dixon baritone

Christian Immler baritone

2003

First Prize:

Elizabeth Atherton soprano

Second Prize:

Miriam Allan soprano

Finalists:

Grace Davidson soprano

Alexandra Gibson mezzo-soprano

Caitlin Hulcup mezzo-soprano

2004

First Prize:

Angharad Gruffydd Jones soprano

Second Prize & Audience Prize:

Iestyn Davies countertenor

Finalists:

Ildikó Allen soprano

Rabihah Davis soprano

Kevin Kyle tenor

Clare Wilkinson mezzo-soprano

2005

First Prize & Audience Prize:

Fflur Wyn soprano

Michael Oliver Prize:

Tim Mead countertenor

Finalists:

Katherine Manley soprano

Nicholas Mulroy tenor

Andrew Radley countertenor

2006

The Adair Prize & Audience Prize:

Nathan Vale tenor

Michael Oliver Prize:

Helen Withers soprano

Finalists:

Jane Harrington soprano

Maria Kontra mezzo-soprano

Lisa Rijmer soprano

2007

The Adair Prize:

Derek Welton baritone

Michael Oliver Prize:

Christopher Ainslie countertenor

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Anna Devin soprano

Finalists:

Gillian Ramm soprano

Julia Riley mezzo-soprano

Joana Seara soprano

2008

The Adair Prize:

Erica Eloff soprano

Michael Oliver Prize:

Rhona McKail soprano

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Clara Mouriz mezzo-soprano

Finalists:

Lisandro Abadie baritone

Greg Tassell tenor

2009

The Adair Prize &
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Ruby Hughes soprano
Michael Oliver Prize:
Anna Huntley mezzo-soprano

Finalists:
David Allsopp countertenor
Gary Crichlow countertenor
Luanda Siqueira soprano

2010

The Adair Prize:
Sophie Junker soprano
Michael Oliver Prize:
Christopher Lowrey countertenor
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Katie Bray mezzo-soprano

Finalists:
Francesca Lombardi Mazzulli soprano
Sarah Power soprano
Elinor Rolfe Johnson soprano

2011

The Adair Prize:
Stefanie True soprano
Michael Oliver Prize:
Keri Fuge soprano
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Emilie Renard mezzo-soprano

Finalists:
Carleen Ebbs soprano
Rachel Kelly mezzo-soprano

2012

The Adair Prize &
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Anna Starushkevych mezzo-soprano
Michael Oliver Prize:
Alexander Sprague tenor

Finalists:
Anna Gorbachyova soprano
Lucy Hall soprano
Niel Joubert tenor
Raphaella Papadakis soprano

2013

Regina Etz Prize &
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Rupert Charlesworth tenor
Michael Oliver Prize:
Stephen Chambers tenor

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach
Memorial Awards:
Heimi Lee soprano
Frederick Long bass-baritone
Natalie Montakhab soprano
Hagar Sharvit mezzo-soprano

2014

Regina Etz Prize:
Ewa Gubańska mezzo-soprano
Michael Oliver Prize &
Michael Normington Audience Prize:
Maria Valdmaa soprano

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach
Memorial Awards:
Susanna Fairbairn soprano
Edward Grint bass-baritone
Timothy Nelson bass-baritone

2015

Regina Etz Prize &

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Josep-Ramon Olivé baritone

Michael Oliver Prize:

Maria Ostroukhova mezzo-soprano

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach

Memorial Awards:

Ingrida Gápová soprano

Sarah Hayashi soprano

Alice Privett soprano

2016

Regina Etz Prize:

William Wallace tenor

Michael Oliver Prize:

Galina Averina soprano

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Marie Lys soprano

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach

Memorial Awards:

Shaked Bar soprano

Pavla Flámová soprano

Marie Lys soprano

2017

Regina Etz Prize:

Marcjanna Myrlak mezzo-soprano

Prize in memory of Janet Bolus:

Arianna Vendittelli soprano

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Jungkwon Jang countertenor

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach

Memorial Awards:

Jungkwon Jang countertenor

Héloïse Mas mezzo-soprano

Max Riebl countertenor

2018

First Prize in memory of Stephen Cooke:

Helen Charlston mezzo-soprano

The Carne Trust Prize &

Michael Normington Audience Prize:

Lauren Lodge-Campbell soprano

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach

Memorial Awards:

Ed Ballard baritone

Daniel Mullaney tenor

Emma Stannard mezzo-soprano

Jacquelyn Stucker soprano

2019

First Prize supported by The Carne Trust:

Eszter Balogh mezzo-soprano

Second Prize supported by donations from London

Handel Festival audiences and Handel Supporters:

Patrick Terry countertenor

Audience Prize supported by Angela Hyde-Courtney:

William Thomas bass

The Selma D and Leon Fishbach Memorial Awards:

William Thomas bass

David de Winter tenor

‘The London Handel Singing Competition was for me the perfect platform from which I was able to demonstrate what I thought I could do; I’m not a fan of competition in singing but this competition allows you to focus on the repertoire choices and stylistic decisions you make, first and foremost. For me it was absolutely the turning point. I secured an agent from my performance which opened a new chapter in my singing career at the time. It really was the taking part that counted;

I didn’t win!’

Iestyn Davies MBE, 2004 runner-up

‘It came as a big surprise to win the first prize and audience prize all those years ago. Singing in the Handel competition was a super opportunity to focus on one glorious composer and his unique style, exploring his heavenly musical output. I learned so much about baroque style and vocal technique and it gave me a solid foundation from which to build later repertoire.’

Ruby Hughes, 2009 winner

‘Winning the Handel competition, just as I was finishing music college, gave me the confidence to go out into the industry with a sense of purpose and self-assuredness that I otherwise wouldn’t have had. It was also the basis for developing an invaluable musical and working relationship, as well as a friendship, with Laurence Cummings.’

Rupert Charlesworth, 2013 winner

‘After a few years as a postgraduate student, winning the Handel Singing Competition was for me a great platform that opened many doors as a professional singer here in the UK. It also meant to me great recognition and projection here and abroad, where the HSC is very much appreciated as well.’

Josep-Ramon Olivé, 2015 winner

‘The Final of the very first Handel Singing Competition had a rather sparse audience. James Bowman and I were the entire Jury and at the end we looked at each other and said ‘Andrew Kennedy’. The young tenor had enthralled us with an outstanding performance of an aria that had just surpassed a brilliant performance from a burgeoning Lucy Crowe – already an amazing young singer who we knew would have a wonderful career. Since then this Competition has become a truly International event. The jury has grown to at least five for the Final (all past or present singers plus a Handel expert) and I’m not sure if there has ever been another unanimous decision again! It has been a great privilege to be part of this exciting and rewarding competition for 18 years.’

Ian Partridge CBE, Chair, HSC Jury (2002–2016)

Handel Singing Competition Final

Wednesday 2 December 2020, 7pm

St George's, Hanover Square

Jerome Knox baritone

Pensa a chi geme *Alcina* HWV 34
I rage, I melt ... O ruddier than the cherry
Acis and Galatea HWV 49
How willing my paternal love *Samson* HWV 57
Tirannia gli diede il regno *Rodelinda* HWV 19

Jessica Cale soprano

Spietati io vi giurai *Rodelinda* HWV 19
Non disperar *Giulio Cesare* HWV 17
Ah, mio cor! *Alcina* HWV 34

Ruairi Bowen tenor

Mistaken wretches...Dread the fruits of Christian folly
Theodora HWV 68
Deeper, and deeper still & Waft her, angels *Jephtha* HWV 70
E il soffrirete...Empio, per farti guerra *Tamerlano* HWV 18

Morgan Pearse baritone

Go my faithful soldier go *Theodora* HWV 68
Come rosa in su la spina *Apollo e Dafne* HWV 122
Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori *Aci, Galatea e Polifemo* HWV 72
Piangi pur *Tolomeo, Re d'Egitto* HWV 25

There will be no interval in tonight's Final which will end at approximately 9pm

Laurence Cummings conductor & harpsichord

London Handel Orchestra

violin I
Adrian Butterfield
Jean Paterson
Diane Moore

violin II
Oliver Webber
William Thorp
Kathryn Parry

viola
Rachel Byrt
Vanessa McNaught

cello
Katherine Sharman
Melanie Woodcock

bass
Cecelia Bruggemeyer

oboe
James Eastaway
(and sopranino recorder)
Mark Baigent

bassoon
Rebecca Hammond

Jerome Knox baritone

Pensa a chi geme *Alcina* HWV 34

I rage, I melt ... O ruddier than the cherry *Acis and Galatea* HWV 49

How willing my paternal love *Samson* HWV 57

Tirannia gli diede il regno *Rodelinda* HWV 19



In *Alcina*, Melisso (or Melissa, in Ariosto's original) has accompanied Bradamante to make her wayward lover Ruggiero see sense. In Act II, Melisso assumes the form of Atlante, Ruggiero's tutor, and admonishes him for his infidelity and weakness. He gives Ruggiero a ring, which breaks Alcina's spell over Ruggiero; as his parting shot, Melisso sings to Ruggiero, reminding him of Bradamante and her mistreatment by him. *Acis and Galatea* was written for Cannons in 1718, with a libretto by John Gay and others based on John Dryden's translation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In Act II, the Cyclops Polyphemus erupts on the stage and declares his love to Galatea. His love song is justly famous. It is often played for comic laughs, but it is actually more touching than farcical. The accompanied recitative 'I rage' shows Polyphemus conquered by the diminutive god of love; his gigantic size helpless. That size is shown by his cavernous compass of, in just six notes, D above middle C to F an octave and a half below (and Handel carries this depiction on with octave leaps in 'O ruddier than the cherry'). Even his 'hundred reeds

of decent growth' are small compared to him – represented by a sopranino recorder. Polyphemus is a sincere, if rather galumphing and ungainly, suitor.

William Savage's first role for Handel was as the boy Oberto in *Alcina*. When he grew up, he became a bass, and created several more roles, including Manoah, Samson's father in *Samson*. Savage had 'clear articulation, perfect intonation and... good expression'; this aria has a delicate tenderness to it, which requires a certain lightness of touch. It is in E major, the key which signified a wrenching of body and soul.

Garibaldo is the real, and unabashed, villain in *Rodelinda*. He eggs Grimoaldo on, not just to usurping Bertarido, but to killing his child. In a private conversation, Unulfo (alongside Rodelinda, the hero of the piece) gets Garibaldo to reveal his wickedness. The D minor key of 'Tirannia' shows Garibaldo's true devotion to autocratic ruthlessness, and the repeated Ds at the beginning and the use of strident arpeggio phrases emphasise his brutality.

© Katie Hawks 2020

Pensa a chi geme

Pensa a chi geme d'amor piagata,
e sempre teme abbandonata
crudel, da te.
Torna ad amarla, e la consola,
né mesta e sola così lasciarla
senza mercè.

Think on her, sighing from love's sores,
and always fearing abandonment,
cruel man, by you.
Turn to love her, and console her,
Nor leave her sad and alone,
without mercy.

I rage, I melt, I burn ... O ruddier than the cherry

I rage – I melt – I burn!
The feeble god has stabb'd me to the heart.
Thou trusty pine,
prop of my godlike steps, I lay thee by!
Bring me a hundred reeds of decent growth
to make a pipe for my capacious mouth;
in soft enchanting accents let me breathe
sweet Galatea's beauty, and my love.

O ruddier than the cherry,
O sweeter than the berry,
O nymph more bright
than moonshine night,
like kidlings blithe and merry.

Ripe as the melting cluster,
no lily has such lustre;
yet hard to tame
as raging flame,
and fierce as storms that bluster!

How willing my paternal love

the weight to share
of filial care,
and part of sorrow's burden prove!
Though wand'ring in the shades of night,
whilst I have eyes he wants no light.

Tirannia gli diede il regno

Tirannia gli diede il regno,
gliel consevi crudeltà.
Del regnar base e sostegno
è il rigor, non la pietà.

Tyranny gave him the crown;
cruelty conserved it.
To sustain his reign,
he needs harshness, not pity.

Jessica Gale soprano

Spietati io vi giurai *Rodelinda* HWV 19

Non disperar *Giulio Cesare* HWV 17

Ah, mio cor! *Alcina* HWV 34



After a difficult beginning to their working relationship, Handel gave Francesca Cuzzoni some of her greatest roles. The second of these was the eponymous heroine of *Rodelinda* (1725). Rodelinda's husband Bertarido has been usurped by Grimoaldo and his conniving henchman Garidbaldo, and is missing, presumed dead. Garibaldo has persuaded the lovestruck Grimoaldo that the way to win Rodelinda's hand is to threaten the life of her son: she, with her customary poise, dismisses him. Her aria opens with a dotted motif, like a French overture (suggesting her majesty), and her first utterance stops all time and action. Her first phrase uses the 'friends-Romans-countrymen' rule of three brilliantly, with two fifths and an octave (an effect also used in the B section). She pauses three times also on 'serbarvi', emphasising the fate Grimoaldo has brought on himself. Rodelinda walks off, gracefully but forcefully, leaving Grimoaldo bewitched and dumbfounded.

In *Giulio Cesare* Cleopatra and Tolomeo are vying for control of Egypt. Tolomeo likes to rely on force; Cleopatra on wit. Tolomeo's

approach has rather backfired: Cesare was not pleased by his gift of Pompey's head on a plate. Cleopatra is pleased – she knows that Cesare will find her feminine wiles irresistible, and her supremacy over her brother Tolomeo will be assured. Cleopatra taunts him, calling him an effeminate lover, and, in this cheeky aria, tells him not to bother trying to rule, as he is not cut out for it. The role of Cleopatra was written for Cuzzoni, whose vocal agility and dynamic range was legendary.

'Ah! mio cor' is the turning point of Alcina's existence: she realises that she is in love's power, and that she has no control over her beloved, Ruggiero – who himself has realised that his love for her was but enchantment. This aria is a superb musical depiction of a heart breaking, with the strings being the beating heart. At this point in the opera, Alcina at least still has her powers, and in the B section, she swears furious revenge, before collapsing again, broken.

© Katie Hawks 2020

Spietati io vi giurai

Spietati, io vi giurai,
se al mio figlio il cor donai
di serbarvi e duolo e affanno.
Non potrebbe la mia mano
stringer mai quell'inumano
ch'è cagion d'ogni mio danno.

Non disperar

Anzi tu pur, effeminato amante,
va' dell'età sui primi nati albori,
di regno invece a coltivar gli amori!

Non disperar, chi sa?
se al regno non l'avrai,
avrà sorte in amor.
Mirando una beltà,
in essa troverai
a consolar un cor.
Ah, mio cor

Ah! mio cor! schernito sei!

Stelle! Dei! Nume d'amore!
Traditore! t'amo tanto;
puoi lasciarmi sola in pianto,
oh Dei! perché?
Ma, che fa gemendo Alcina?
Son reina, è tempo ancora:
resti o mora, peni sempre,
o torni a me.

Pitiless men, I swear to you,
to my son I give my heart,
to save up grief and pain for you.
My hand could never
clasp that monster
who is the cause of all my grief.

It's you, though, effeminate lover,
just at the beginning of your life,
who should work on love, not reigning.

Don't despair: who knows?
even if you can't have the kingdom,
you'll be lucky in love.
Looking at a lovely woman,
in her you'll find
comfort for your heart.

Ah, my heart, you are scorned!
Stars! Gods! God of love!
Traitor! I love you so much;
you can leave me alone in tears,
O gods! Why?
But, what are you doing grieving, Alcina?
I'm queen, there's still time;
stay here, or die, suffer eternally,
or come back to me.

Ruairi Bowen

tenor

Mistaken wretches...Dread the fruits of Christian folly *Theodora* HWV 68

Deeper, and deeper still & Waft her, angels *Jephtha* HWV 70

E il soffrirete...Empio, per farti guerra *Tamerlano* HWV 18



In *Theodora* ‘Dread the fruits’ comes at a dramatic moment in Act I when Septimius arrives and berates the eponymous heroine for worshipping as a Christian in private when she should be following the decree to celebrate the Emperor Diocletian’s birthday. This tempestuous aria is full of vocal fireworks and is one of Handel’s most challenging for tenor on account of its demanding coloratura passages.

Like Agamemnon, Jephtha is punished for his rash promise to sacrifice the first being he encounters following his victory over the Ammonites: that first being is his daughter, Iphis. He ends Act II in utter grief with the accompanied recitative ‘Deeper, and deeper still’, ‘passing’, as Ruth Smith noted, ‘through 15 keys in 44 bars before staggering into silence.’ Reconciling himself to heaven’s will, Jephtha starts Act III in despair, but prays that angels will look after Iphis in the tenderest, most touching aria, ‘Waft her, angels’, in which the gentle throbbing strings represent the angels’ wings, but hint of Jephtha’s own weeping. As in *Tamerlano* and *Ariodante*, Handel encapsulates

perfectly a father’s profoundest feelings for his daughter.

Bajazet and his daughter Asteria have been conquered and captured by Tamerlano. Tamerlano wishes to be magnanimous, but Bajazet is implacable and thwarts Tamerlano at every turn, eventually goading him to cruelty. By Act III, Bajazet’s plan to kill Tamerlano has failed and resulted in Tamerlano’s command for the despoliation of Asteria: the only solution for Bajazet is his own death. Stunned at first into an accompanied recitative, he quickly regains his martial strength in a fiery G minor aria. This aria is a brilliant piece of rhetorical writing – for example, the melisma on ‘svegliera’ to waken the gods; the constant downward phrases (suggesting his descent to the underworld), and his final threat, a long low G that rises the octave, only to fall again.

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Mistaken wretches...Dread the fruits of Christian folly

Mistaken wretches! Why thus blind to fate,
do ye in private oratories dare
oppose the President's decree, and scorn
with native rites to celebrate the day
sacred to Cæsar and protecting Jove?

Dread the fruits of Christian folly,
and this stubborn melancholy
fond of life and liberty.
Chains and dungeons ye are wooing,
and the storm of death pursuing;
rebels to the known decree.

Deeper, and deeper still...Waft her, angels, through the skies

Deeper, and deeper still, thy goodness, child,
pierceth a father's bleeding, and checks
the cruel sentence on my falt'ring tongue.
Oh, let me whisper it to the raging winds,
or howling deserts; for the ears of men
it is too shocking. Yet have I not vow'd?
And can I think the great Jehovah sleeps,
like Chemosh, and such fabled deities?
Ah no; Heav'n heard my thoughts and wrote them
down;
it must be so. 'Tis this that racks my brain,
and pours into my breast a thousand pangs
that lash me into madness. Horrid thought!
My only daughter, so dear a child,
doom'd by a father! Yes, the vow is past,
and Gilead hath triumphed o'er his foes.
Therefor, tomorrow's dawn...I can no more.

Waft her, angels, through the skies,
far above yon azure plain.
Glorious there like you to rise;
there, like you, forever reign.

E il soffrirete...Empio, per farti guerra

E il soffrirete, d'onestade, o numi?
la raccomando a voi, poiché a me resta
onde togliermi a lui la via funesta.

And will honesty hurt you, o gods?
I recommend it to you, for it remains to me
how to take away from him the fatal way.

Empio, per farti guerra,
dal regno di sotterra
l'ombra ritornerà.
E l'ira degli dei
al suon de' sdegni miei
forse si sveglierà.

Wicked one, to make war on you
from the realm of the underworld
my ghost will return.
And the anger of the gods
at the sound of my scorn
perhaps will be awoken.

Morgan Pearse baritone

Go my faithful soldier go *Theodora* HWV 68

Come rosa in su la spina *Apollo e Dafne* HWV 122

Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo* HWV 72

Piangi pur *Tolomeo, Re d'Egitto* HWV 25



Valens is full of the spirit of festivity, declaring that for the Emperor Diocletian's birthday, sacrifices are to be made, and anyone caught refusing to participate be punished. In 'Go, my faithful soldier, go' he sends Septimius off to carry out his orders, in a celebratory D major, even letting his hair down a little contemplating the wafts of 'fragrant incense'. Needless to say, such triumphant happiness, and Valens' good temper, cannot last.

Like Polifemo, who appeared earlier this evening, Apollo is a forceful but unwanted lover in another episode from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. Handel started work on *Apollo e Dafne* in Venice in 1709, and it has all the hallmarks of his Italian musical education, but he finished it back in Hanover the following year, having taken up his post at the court of the Elector George and his wife Caroline. Apollo has just slain the terrible Python, and is even more full of himself than a normal Greek god; he cannot understand why Dafne does not want to fall into his arms. After some rebuffs from her, he warns her that she should make hay while the sun shines: her looks will soon go. This aria, 'Come rosa in su la spina', is in a dazzling A major – but this belies Apollo's increasing desperation. The cello obbligato is feverish, and suggest taught nerves; the violin lines protest a little too much insouciance. It's no wonder that Dafne remains unmoved, turning into a laurel to escape his further advances.

Handel wrote *Acì, Galatea e Polifemo* in

Naples in 1708, possibly as part of the wedding celebrations of Princess Beatrice di Montemiletto and the Duke d'Alvito. It is not known who the singers were, but Polifemo was possibly played by Antonio Manna, a priest and a bass at the Viennese court chapel. Whoever he was, his range was stunning. The gorgeous 'Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori' (which Handel would later use in *Sosarme*) goes from A flat above middle C to D nearly two octaves below it, and the aria suggests Polifemo's size by lots of two-octave leaps. The trilling instruments, meanwhile, suggest the fluttering of moths. As we have already heard this evening, Handel liked writing for Polyphemus. In *Tolomeo*, the eponymous hero has fled Egypt and is living on Cyprus in disguise as a humble shepherd with his wife Seleuce. Unfortunately Araspe, the tyrant of Cyprus, has fallen for Seleuce but she remains steadfast to Tolomeo. In his aria 'Piangi pur' Araspe describes his anger with the lovers. Araspe was played by Giuseppe Boschi, the singer of some of Handel's great bass roles, including Argante (*Rinaldo*), Achilla (*Giulio Cesare*) and Garibaldo. Boschi's voice was apparently well suited to strong, martial types, and Araspe's wrathful dismissal of Seleuce shows off his vocal range and flexibility, in a not too dissimilar way to Garibaldo's aria of earlier this evening.

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Go my faithful soldier go

Go, my faithful soldier, go:
let the fragrant incense rise
to Jove, great ruler of the skies.

Come rosa in su la spina

Placati ai fin, o cara.
La beltà che m'infiamma
sempre non fiorirà; ciò che natura
di più vago formò passa, e non dura.

Come rosa in su la spina
presto viene e presto va:
tal con fuga repentina,
passa il fior della beltà.

Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori

Fra l'ombre e gl'orrori
farfalla confusa
già spenta la face
non sa mai goder.
Così fra timori
quest'alma delusa
non trova mai pace
ne spera piacer.

Piangi pur

Piangi pur,
ma non sperare
di smorzare
col tuo pianto l'ira mia!
S'anche un mar di pianto è poco
per estinguere quel foco
ch'arde al gel di gelosia!

Calm down, dear.
The beauty which inflames me
will not flower forever; that which nature
makes more lovely passes, and does not last.

As the rose, in which the thorn
quickly comes and quickly goes:
so with unexpected haste
passes the flower of beauty.

Between shadows and horrors
the confused butterfly,
the torch already having gone out,
does not ever know how to rejoice.
So among fears
this deceived heart
never finds peace
nor hopes for pleasure.

Cry if you want,
but don't hope
to diminish
with your tears my anger!
Even a sea of tears is too little
to put out that fire
that burns on the ice of jealousy.

Biographies

Ruairi Bowen

Ruairi Bowen started singing as a chorister at St Davids and St Paul's Cathedrals, later taking up a choral scholarship at King's College, Cambridge under the late Sir Stephen Cleobury. Much in demand as an interpreter of Baroque repertoire, he recently made his debut at Wigmore Hall and Leipzig Bachfest, performing Bach's *Johannes-Passion* 1725 with Solomon's Knot. A regular with UK choral societies, he has sung numerous performances of Handel's *Messiah* as well as *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Alexander's Feast*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Nisi Dominus*, and will sing San Giovanni in *La resurrezione* for Chad Kelly this spring. Recent engagements include multiple roles in Purcell's *The Indian Queen* with Le Concert d'Astrée and Emmanuelle Haïm at Opéra de Lille in the autumn, and *Johannes-Passion* (arias) with both Adelaide and Tasmania Symphony Orchestras and Stephen Layton, as well as the annual Good Friday performance with Polyphony/Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment at St John's Smith Square. Future engagements include Bach's *Matthäus-Passion* with Ben Nicholas/Florilegium in Passiontide at Merton, and Bach's *Mass in B minor* with Stephen Layton and the Slovenian Philharmonic Orchestra.

Ruairi volunteers as a cricket coach for the children's section of the Refugee Council and studies with Paul Farrington and Caroline Dowdle.

Jessica Cale

Welsh soprano Jessica Cale studies with Rosa Mannion at the Royal College of Music International Opera Studio, where she is the Robert Lancaster scholar. Jessica holds a Master of Performance with distinction from the RCM, and a First Class Honours degree from Cardiff University. Jessica's operatic experience includes the roles of Flaminia in Haydn's *Il mondo della luna*; Susan in Berkeley's *A Dinner Engagement*; Second Bridesmaid in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro*; Despina in Mozart's *Così fan tutte* and Serpette in Mozart's *The Garden of Disguises* (both Ryedale Festival Opera). Jessica has participated in masterclasses with Ann Murray and Gerald Finley.

In addition to her studies, Jessica has a successful career performing regularly with ensembles including the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and Gabrieli Consort. Jessica has performed as a soloist for Sir John Eliot Gardiner in Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* at the Barbican Centre, for Paul McCreech in Purcell's *King Arthur* and *The Fairy Queen*, and for Mark Padmore in Bach's *St Matthew Passion* with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. In 2019 Jessica gained second prize at the Llangollen International Eisteddfod Pendine Voice of the Future competition.

Jessica is hugely grateful for the support of a Help Musicians UK Sybil Tutton Award, the Josephine Baker Trust and the Countess of Munster Trust.

Laurence Cummings

Laurence Cummings is one of Britain's most exciting and versatile exponents of historical performance both as conductor and harpsichord player. He has been Musical Director of the London Handel Festival since 1999 and Artistic Director of the Internationale Händel-Festspiele Göttingen since 2012, as well as Music Director of the Orquestra Barroca Casa da Música in Porto. His most recent appointment is Music Director of the Academy of Ancient Music from the 2021-22 season. He is the William Crotch Professor of Historical Performance at the Royal Academy of Music.

He has conducted productions for English National Opera, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Buxton Festival Opera, Opera North, Royal Academy of Music, Garsington Opera, English Touring Opera, Opera Theatre Company, Linbury Theatre Covent Garden, Göteborg Opera, Opernhaus Zurich, Opéra de Lyon, and the Handel and Haydn Society. He regularly conducts The English Concert and the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment and has worked with the Hallé, Bournemouth Symphony, Britten Sinfonia, Royal Northern Sinfonia, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Ulster Orchestra, Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Royal Academy of Music Baroque Orchestra, Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Wiener Akademie, National Symphony Orchestra (Washington), Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Jerusalem Symphony, Basel Chamber Orchestra,

Musikkollegium Winterthur, and Moscow Chamber Orchestra.

His numerous recordings include the first recording of Handel's newly discovered *Gloria* with Emma Kirkby, and Handel Arias with Angelika Kirchschlager and the Basel Chamber Orchestra for Sony BMG. Highlights this season include a new production of *Belshazzar* at Zürich Opera and *Saul* at the Théâtre du Châtelet, along with appearances with the Croatian Baroque Ensemble, The English Concert, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, and the MDR Orchester; as well as his regular commitments at the London and Göttingen Handel Festivals and Casa da Música.

Catherine Denley

Catherine Denley studied at Trinity College of Music. After two years with the BBC Singers she embarked on an international solo career which has spanned many years; she has worked with all the major British orchestras and with many renowned conductors.

Her concert experience has been extensive: a few highlights include the premiere of *Europera* by John Cage in London, Paris and Berlin; Handel's *Messiah* with the Boston Symphony Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony amongst countless others; Beethoven's 9th Symphony with John Eliot Gardiner in Japan; Mahler's *Resurrection Symphony* in Odessa, Kiev and Boston, and his 8th Symphony for TV in Dublin; Bach's *St Matthew Passion* in the Leipzig Gewandhaus; Mozart's

Requiem in the Salzburg Mozartwoche and at the Proms... and of course frequent appearances at St George's, Hanover Square.

Catherine has well over 60 recordings to her credit, covering a wide range of repertoire. She is particularly renowned for her Handel roles however, many of which she has also sung on the operatic stage.

She now acts as an external assessor in the conservatoires, and travels worldwide as an examiner for Trinity, bringing her almost back to where she started!

Michael George

Bass-baritone Michael George began his musical life as a chorister at King's College Cambridge. He later studied at the Royal College of Music, where he was a major prize winner. His career has included performances with all the leading orchestras in Britain and in many international festivals. He has worked with renowned conductors including Marriner, Eliot Gardiner, Norrington, Mackerras, Christophers, Pinnock, Handley, Sanderling, Zinman, Muti, Elder and Nagano.

His recordings include most of Handel's oratorios, Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Haydn's *Creation*, Bach's *Passions* and 35 cantatas, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and *Symphony No. 9*, the complete songs, odes and church anthems of Purcell, contributions to six volumes of Graham Johnson's Schubert Series, Gurney's songs, Finzi's *Let Us Garlands Bring* and Zelenka's *Lamentations*.

He has worked at English National Opera, Scottish Opera and Buxton Opera and toured various baroque opera projects with Philip Pickett and Jonathan Miller in Europe, Mexico and China. In 2014 he was involved in productions of Purcell's *Faerie Queen* in Mexico.

Jerome Knox

Born in Harrow, British baritone Jerome Knox was the inaugural Gleneagles scholar on the Opera course at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, studying with Scott Johnson. He completed a Master's in Vocal Performance at the Royal College of Music and previously read Classical Studies at Edinburgh University. Operatic engagements include Dandini in Rossini's *La Cenerentola* (British Youth Opera); Faust in Prokofiev's *The Fiery Angel* (Scottish Opera); Flora's Servant in Verdi's *La traviata* (Glyndebourne Tour); the title role in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* (Waterperry Opera and Hampstead Garden Opera); Leporello in *Don Giovanni* and Marcello in Puccini's *La bohème* (Rye Arts Festival); Oreste in Gluck's *Iphigénie en Tauride* (Euphonia); Melisso in Handel's *Alcina* (Ryedale Festival); Schaunard in *La bohème* (Magnetic Opera); Death in Ullmann's *The Emperor of Atlantis*, Dr Falke in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus* and Pallante in Handel's *Agrippina* (RCS).

Solo concert highlights include Handel's *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall with the Really Big Chorus. Samling artist Jerome was recently a finalist in the Grange Festival International Singing Competition and was awarded the Villa Medici Prize. He has performed with

groups such as Ludus Baroque and Dunedin Consort as well as being a member of the Glyndebourne Festival Chorus. As an Alvarez Young Artist with Garsington Opera, he covered Masetto in *Don Giovanni* in 2019 and returns to make his solo main stage debut in the role of Hunter in Dvořák's *Rusalka* this summer.

London Handel Orchestra

The London Handel Orchestra was formed in 1981 by Denys Darlow to perform at the annual London Handel Festival. The orchestra is made up of some of London's finest period instrument players and is today directed by Adrian Butterfield and Laurence Cummings. It has gained an excellent reputation for historically informed performance and contributed greatly to the revival of interest in Handel's music. The orchestra appears throughout the London Handel Festival at venues across the capital, and has now performed the great majority of Handel's operas, oratorios and orchestral works as well as numerous works by his contemporaries. This year, the Festival takes the theme 'Handel and the Hanoverians' and the orchestra will perform at St George's, Hanover Square, Handel's own church, the Linbury Theatre, Royal Opera House, and Wigmore Hall.

The orchestra also gives concerts across the country and abroad outside the Festival period, and has appeared at the Chelsea, Windsor, Three Choirs and Oslo Church Music Festivals and at the Barber Institute. Recordings include the first recording of the 1732 version

of the oratorio *Esther* (2007) which was Editor's Choice in *Gramophone* magazine, a live recording of *Joshua* (2009) and Chandos Anthems (2018). The orchestra made its debut at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, in 2019 in a critically acclaimed production of *Berenice* as part of the London Handel Festival, the first time the work had been performed there since Handel directed it himself in 1737!

Ian Partridge

Ian Partridge has an international reputation as a concert singer and recitalist. His wide repertoire encompassed the music of Monteverdi, Bach and Handel, Elizabethan lute songs, German, French and English Song and first performances of new works. Ian's phenomenal list of recordings includes *Die schöne Müllerin*, (twice first choice on BBC Radio 3's Building a Library); Schumann's *Dichterliebe*; Britten's *Serenade*; Vaughan Williams' *On Wenlock Edge* and Warlock's *The Curlew*. He sang the Evangelist in Bach's *St John Passion* and in the complete set of Handel's *Chandos Anthems* recorded with Harry Christophers and The Sixteen. He was awarded the CBE for services to music.

Ian has enjoyed taking masterclasses on Lieder, English Song and early music. In the last few years he has given masterclasses in Moscow and coached students of the Conservatoire in Voronezh in Handel's *Messiah*. He is presently working on a book covering all aspects of singing which he is co-writing with the soprano Linda Esther Gray.

Morgan Pearse

A proud Londoner with both Aussie and Kiwi heritage, Morgan Pearse is already recognised as one of the most talented and versatile baritones of his generation. Concerts and operas have taken him to the Bolshoi and Tchiakovsky Hall (Moscow), Amsterdam's Concertgebouw, Wigmore Hall, Händel-Festspiele Karlsruhe, Verbier Festival, Sydney Opera House, Houston Grand Opera and the Barbican, with ensembles including the Birmingham Philharmonic, Philharmonia Orchestra, Academy of Ancient Music, Netherlands Radio Philharmonic, Russian National Orchestra, Sydney Symphony, Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Hallé.

The remainder of this season sees Morgan complete a new production at the Badisches Staatstheater's Handel Festival of *Tolomeo* and debuts with Zurich Opera in Haydn's *Die Schöpfung* with Riccardo Minasi and Gabrieli Consort in Haydn's *The Seasons* with Paul McCreech. He will then reprise Figaro in Lindy Hume's *Barbieri* in Adelaide for the State Opera and perform both Valens in Handel's *Theodora* and Polyphemus in Handel's *Acis and Galatea* in Moscow, before his role debut as Ned Keene with the Auckland Philharmonic Orchestra later in the year.

Morgan has also been lucky enough to have success in both the ROSL Gold Medal and Cesti Early Music competitions in recent years.

David Pickard

David Pickard studied Music at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, before starting his career as Company Manager of the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. In his early career, David worked at the Open Air Theatre in Regent's Park and was the Assistant Director for the Japan Festival (1991) before becoming Sir John Drummond's deputy at the European Arts Festival. In 1993 he was appointed Chief Executive of the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment where he significantly increased the orchestra's artistic reputation and international profile, helping to establish the OAE as the pre-eminent period-instrument orchestra in the world.

In 2001 he was made General Director of Glyndebourne Festival where throughout his tenure he created an extensive digital programme including online streaming, big-screen and cinema relays and broadened the company's audience base through specially priced performances for young people and a pioneering education programme.

In November 2015, David took up the role of Director of the BBC Proms. In his first two years David introduced a number of initiatives including an innovative series called 'Proms at...' exploring music in new spaces. Passionate about bringing new audiences to classical music and identifying and nurturing emerging talent, David has also made youth music-making and youth audiences a major focus of his work at the BBC Proms. In 2018, David steered the BBC Proms' commitment to PRS'

Keychange Scheme, pledging 50/50 gender balance in new commissions by 2022. The 2019 BBC Proms season saw a reappraisal of the Proms' central mission – to bring 'the best of classical music to the widest possible audience' – in the 150th-anniversary year of founder-conductor Sir Henry Wood's birth.

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Thanks in advance for your interest.

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The London Handel Society is the charity which runs the annual London Handel Festival. We have been very fortunate in receiving a small but significant number of legacies in recent years, which have made a valuable contribution to our continued growth and success. Ticket sales alone do not cover the costs of running the Festival, and therefore we are hugely reliant on the generosity of our family of supporters, including our legacy donors, for our survival.

We are lucky to have such a loyal audience and core group of supporters and it is to you I turn to ask if you would consider remembering the London Handel Society in your Will?

A gift made in your Will ensures that future generations can enjoy Handel's music as much

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Please do not hesitate to contact me personally if you are thinking of supporting us in this way, or have already remembered us in your Will. I would be happy to discuss specific wording which you might wish to use, and also if there is a particular area of our work which interests you and how you might therefore designate your gift.

Richard Hopkin

Chairman, London Handel Society

chairman@londonhandelfestival.org.uk